



Castlecomer

# Castlecomer Loop Walks



<b>Trailhead</b>	Castlecomer Discovery Park
<b>Services</b>	Castlecomer
<b>Distance/Time</b>	<b>Ardra Loop:</b> 6km/1hr30mins-2hrs <b>Captains Loop:</b> 4km/45mins-1hr
<b>High/Ascent</b>	150m/30m
<b>Difficulty</b>	Easy
<b>Terrain</b>	Forestry tracks and woodland trails
<b>To Suit</b>	All levels of fitness
<b>Minimum Gear</b>	Hiking boots, rain gear and fluid
<b>Grid Ref.</b>	OS Sheet 61 S538734



## Directions to Trailhead

The Demesne comprises of a Visitor Centre; housing the *Footprints in Coal* exhibition and Jarrow Café, a playground and Tree Top Walk. The forestry offers a wide range of recreational opportunities for all ages, including fishing and boating on the wonderfully restored leisure lakes. There is a choice of waymarked walking loops which include the 1.5km Ladies Walk, the Arboretum Walk (2km), the Captain's Walk (4km) and the Ardra Loop.

## Walk Directions - Ardra Loop and Captain's Walk

**A-B** The walks start at the visitors' car park at the Discovery Park in Castlecomer Demesne, just 1km north of Castlecomer. From the mapboard, follow the purple arrow for the Ardra Loop (or the red arrows which are for shorter Captain's Walk) along the sandy roadway – keeping the high stone wall on your right, walk for 100m to reach a barrier – pass through it and immediately veer left at a Y-junction.

**B-C** Continue to follow the sandy roadway for 200m to reach a 3-way junction. Proceed straight here following the purple (and red) arrows. Continue to follow the sandy roadway for 600m to reach a bend – watch out for the marker on your right which directs you right for Ardra Loop onto a narrow woodland track. After 100m, you reach the shore of the upper lake – turn right. For Captain's Walk, at the marker proceed straight to the junction at point D, where you turn right and continue back to the car park.

**C-D** Approximately 100m later, veer right at a Y-junction and follow the sandy path to a T-junction with a sandy roadway where you turn left and cross to the other side of the lake. At the first marker stay on the lakeshore – following the purple arrow. At the end of the lake watch for a marker post on the right which directs you onto a woodland track – follow the track past the rock waterfall and ascend to reach a sand roadway where you turn left.

**D-E** After 50m reach a sharp left bend – you continue straight and join a woodland path which takes you by the ruins of Ardra Castle and through a section of mixed woodland for 800m. Then turn right onto the forestry road walking 600m to reach a crossroads – turn right here and travel a short distance to reach a picnic area and viewing point where you re-join the red loop and turn left.

**E-A** Stay on the forestry roadway for 400m to reach a 3-way junction. Continue straight to reach the metal barrier – turn left and it's only 100m back to the car park.