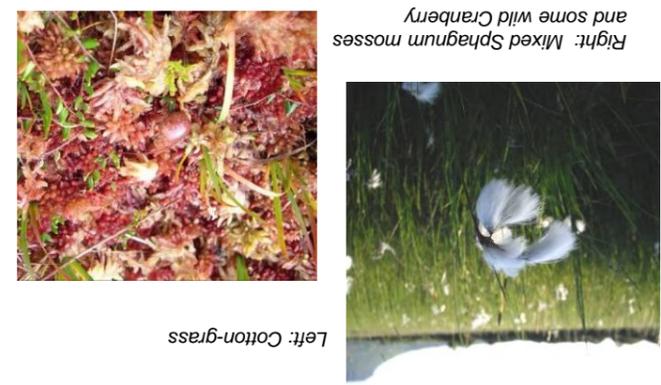


interest along the journey.

follow the path, along with any other features of the plants and animals that you can see as you Ireland. This leaflet aims to provide a guided tour Enterprise Group, with the support of Fálte been developed by the Ballinamuck Community A circular walk of about 4.5km around the bog has been in place for centuries. Turf cutting) rights for small sections around the edges. local community, many of whom have turf cut for the Peat provides an important source of fuel for the

Right: Mixed Sphagnum mosses and some wild Cranberry



Left: Cotton-grass

diversity of flora and fauna in the area. grassland and wetland habitats, which add to the edges of the bog support a range of woodland, that are only found on high quality raised bog. The pristine condition, and supports two rare mosses The centre of Edenmore bog is in relatively This habitat has become very rare in Europe. support a range of specialised plants and animals. waterlogged and nutrient-depleted habitats which of Ireland. Raised Bogs are highly acidic, Bogs that can be found throughout the midlands Edenmore Bog is one of a network of 'Raised

Introduction

Edenmore Bog

A 4.5km looped walk developed by the Ballinamuck Community Enterprise Group



This project was assisted by Longford Community Resources Ltd. through the Rural Development Programme which is part-financed by the European Union and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Ballinamuck village. An exhibition detailing some of the local history can be found in the Visitor Centre in the 98 Hall in rallies in the village.

The Ballinamuck area also suffered greatly during the Great Famine of 1845 and its subsequent land war. The community have always had a strong resistance to oppression and its inhabitants were again active in the War of Independence during the early 1900s, with Michael Collins speaking at

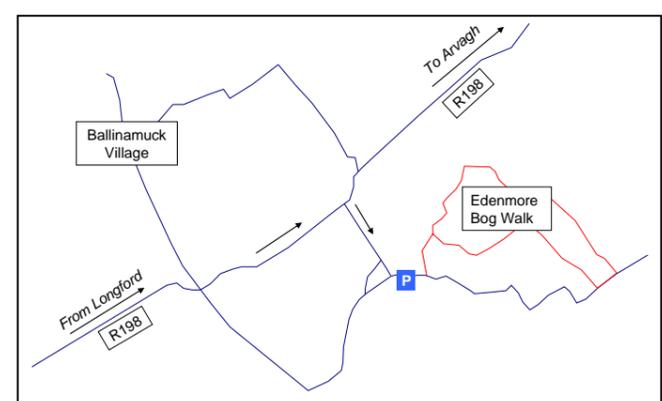
A handgun and cannonball from the Battle of Ballinamuck. Both were found in local bogs



managed to escape did so by hiding in local bogs. ever since as the 'Croppie's grave.' Anyone who uncereemoniously buried in a mass-grave, known hundred Irish soldiers. Their bodies were cavalry tore into them, killing an estimated five overlooking the village, the English muskets and As they stood defenceless on Shanmullagh Hill Irish were slaughtered in their droves.

troops were marched off as prisoners of war, the forced to surrender, but although the French army led by Lord Cornwallis. The rebel army were by a vast, numerically superior, English 'Redcoat' combined French and Irish force were confronted Rebellion. On the 8th of September 1798, a Ballinamuck is one of the most historic towns in the country, as it is the site of the war of the Irish

History of the Ballinamuck area



Directions

From Longford town travel north along the R198. Drive for about 16km until you reach the 'Gaique' crossroads (south-east of Ballinamuck village), where you will see a wooden sign for Edenmore Bog. Continue north-east and take the first right. Turn left at the T-junction and park at a small lay-by beside the information sign.

Contact Details

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For more information on raised bogs, please visit www.ipcc.ie, www.raisedbogrestoration.ie or www.npws.ie

Text for the leaflet by Nick Marchant of Scott Cawley Ltd and Tess Murphy. Photos by Nick Marchant, Tess Murphy and Jo Denyer.



habitat from Ireland and Europe. condition, in order to prevent the complete loss of this our remaining intact bogs while they are still in good For these reasons it is important that we try to protect times more carbon than tropical rainforests. dome. In fact, raised bogs are thought to store 10 the atmosphere and permanently store it in the peat climate change, because they remove carbon from Intact bogs play an important role in preventing grow on bogs, and are also at risk of extinction.

Due to the hostile environmental conditions that developed on the surface of a bog, many plants have developed special adaptations in order to survive there. For this reason, many of these plants can only grow on bogs, and are also at risk of extinction.

Before man reached Ireland, raised bogs covered about 5% of the land. However hand-cutting, mechanised harvesting and afforestation have left less than a tenth of this in its natural state. Despite such losses, Ireland still has more than 50% of the remaining raised bog in Europe! The U.K, Germany, Netherlands and Poland all possessed extensive raised bogs, but most were drained or cut away during the industrial revolution.

Why are our Raised Bogs important?

raised dome, in some cases up to 15 metres deep! form peat. This gradually built up until it formed a decaying, so all dead plants were packed down to These conditions prevented vegetation from waterlogged and nutrient-depleted environment. move in, changing the habitat into a highly acidic, At this stage the bog mosses and grasses began to until they became choked and stagnant.

Most started their development as shallow lakes on the floodplains of the Shannon. Over thousands of years the lakes became in-filled with aquatic plants The majority of 'raised bogs' in Ireland have been in continuous formation since the last ice age about 13,000 years ago.

Formation of a Raised bog

Saving the Turf

The bogs of Ballinamuck are a defining characteristic of the area and its people. Most families own a turf bank, and the cutting, drying and carrying of turf has long been a feature of their summer months.

Peat has always been the cheapest and most widely available fuel, and a good store was vital to bring families through the long winters.

The turf season begins in late spring, as soon as the weather starts to improve. In the past turf was cut and thrown by hand using a special spade called a slane, however for the last 20-30 years most turf has been cut by machine.



Right: Freshly cut turf stacked for drying

It is then stacked to dry and turned before it is collected and carried home. Some people love working in the bog for its peace and communion with nature, while others hate it for the back breaking-work and sunburn! However, everyone enjoys sitting in front of a cosy turf fire in the dark winter evenings.

In the past, turf was the cheapest and most widely available fuel for rural homes. However, some families have now stopped cutting their turf, due to lack of time and the availability of other sources of fuel.

While it is important to protect our bogs for their rare plants and animals, turf cutting is a part of the Irish culture, and many people feel that the tradition should not be completely lost.

1 As you enter the site there is plenty to see along the sides of the path. In late evening or early morning you might spot one of the local Pine Marten family, a large cat-sized mammal with a brown coat and yellow bib.

Down the path you can find Foxgloves, Woundwort (with large pink flowers) and Meadowsweet. There are Blackberries all along the sides, and a small patch of wild Raspberries half-way down.



Woundwort

3 As you turn the corner you can get a good view over the highest quality section of the bog. This area is very wet and soft, and is dominated by Heathers, mosses and Cotton-grasses.

Under the shrubs are Bog Rosemary, wild Cranberries and some rare Sphagnum mosses

4 A pair of Stonechat birds are often seen around here – you can recognise them by the black head, red breast and white stomach. Their call is quite harsh, and sounds like two stones being rubbed together.

You might also spot some small, brown Meadow pipits or Skylarks among the heather. Both species give amazing displays by soaring high into the air and parachuting back to land.



Stonechat
(Photo: Tess Murphy)

You can tell them apart by the song, which is a simple cheep-cheep for the Pipits and a complex chorus for the Skylarks.

5 On the right-hand side of the path are some small, neat bushes of Bog Myrtle. This strong-smelling plant is a natural insect repellent.

There are also some Rowan trees, which will be weighed down with red berries (and hungry birds) during the Autumn.

6 Along the roadside you can spot the large, pink flowered Rosebay Willow-herb, along with some giant Ox-eye Daisies. It is also a good spot for birds, and you might be lucky enough to spot a Kestrel hovering over the bog.



Rose-bay Willowherb

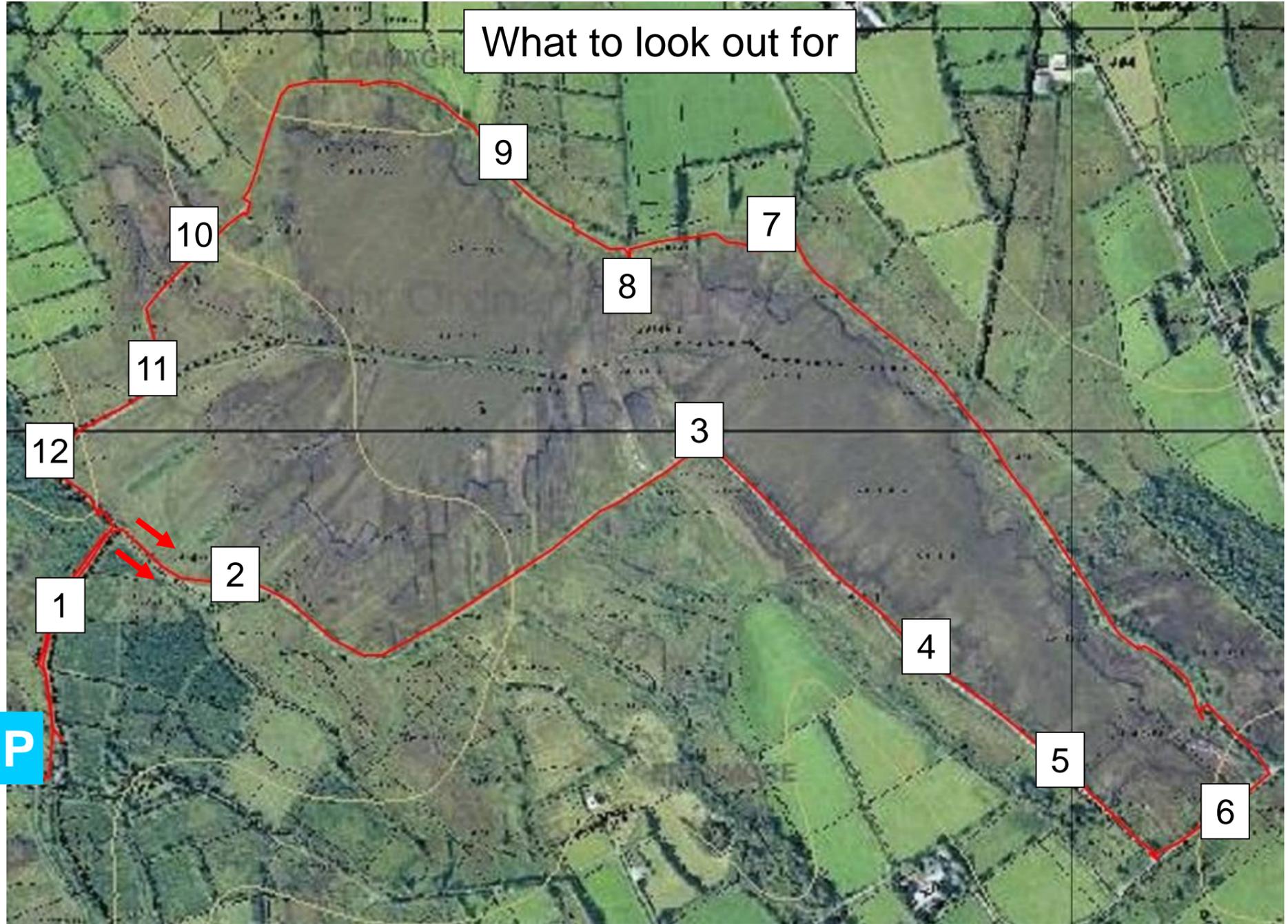
2 On the left side of the path you can find some bright-green Sphagnum moss – this is most important plant for the formation of peat.

You might also spot a little Bilberry bush behind a Willow on the left.



Mixed Sphagnum mosses
(Photo: Jo Denyer)

What to look out for



7 On the left side you can get some good views of typical bog plants, including mosses, Heathers, Cotton-grass (see photo overleaf) and the yellow, star-flowered Asphodel. Keep an eye out for Frogs, and if you're quiet you might also sneak up on a Hare.



Bog Asphodel

9 This tree-lined path is a hive of activity for Butterflies in the summer, including the Green-veined White, Speckled Wood and Meadow Brown. There are also some big Dragonflies around the ditches and trees.



Meadow Brown

11 On the corner you can find patches of Tufted Vetch, a member of the pea family with clusters of extravagant blue/pink flowers. Tormentil has little yellow flowers and jagged leaves, while Stitchwort has delicate little white flowers with divided petals.

12 Rounding the corner you can see Horsetails on the road-side, along with the dense purple-flowered heads of Knapweed. Angelica can be recognised by the large, stout stem and the circular clusters of white flowers.



Willow Warbler

8 If you take a few steps up the path on the left you can find some little red Sundew plants beside the drain. This plant feeds on insects, by trapping them in its sticky hairs and digesting them from the inside-out!



Sundew

Further up the path you can find more Woundwort, as well as some large yellow clusters of Birds-foot-trefoil, which has bird-foot shaped seed pods.

10 On the right is a large pool of creeping Bladderwort, another insect-eating plant that catches and digests little water creatures in its underwater pouches.



'Common Darter' Dragonfly

On the exposed peat faces you may see some plant remains in the lower layers of peat. At one metres depth it is about 2000 years old!

The trees here are often busy with Willow Warblers, Reed Bunting (with black heads and a white moustache!), Butterflies and Dragonflies. You might also spot a few 'Soprano Pipistrelle' bats in the late evening.