



**GLENDALOUGH AND WICKLOW MOUNTAINS  
NATIONAL PARK**

Draft Visitor Experience & Management Masterplan

**Appendix B3**

*Wicklow Wide Strategies*

*Author: The Paul Hogarth Company, Tandem Design*

## Wicklow Wide Strategy

County Wicklow has been visited by people from nearby and across the world for centuries. Glendalough has been a place of pilgrimage, recognising the beauty of its landscape as the setting for spiritual reflection; the upland trails of the Mountains, the traditional seaside town of Bray, the grandeur of Powerscourt and the fairways of the Druid's Glen Golf Course all have a long-established profile. Across the county, there are many places of quality and interest to visitors, some already attracting significant numbers of people, others which are 'hidden gems'.

The analysis and consultation undertaken as part of this plan highlighted that there is an existing pattern of day-visits to the County, including from the greater Dublin area and beyond. Overnight and longer stays in the County are limited, with people tending to visit a specific destination. The 'brand' awareness of the county is limited, with 'Wicklow Mountains' having prominence. Specific places, even in the case of Glendalough are not synonymous for visitors with Wicklow County.

It has been observed that there is little coherence to the overall Wicklow visitor proposition, with some places being over-stretched whilst others have significant potential to deliver more and better. The Wider Wicklow plan seeks to address this challenge.

### Increasing the length of stay

Central to the plan is the objective of encouraging people to stay longer, visiting other places in the area and enjoying the local hospitality.

Building on the Wicklow County Council Outdoor Recreation Strategy, the plan proposes a series of clusters. These will strengthen the synergy between places in parts of the county, consolidating their distinctiveness and the associated visitor experiences.

The following outlines the proposed clusters and the synergies to be consolidated:

#### Glendalough

Since St. Kevin journeyed to Glendalough in the 6th Century, inspired by the beauty of the lakes and valley, the area has been a place of pilgrimage and a place for people to visit from nearby and around the world. The valley is of international significance

for its religious heritage. The industrial lead, zinc and silver mining heritage, dating to the 1790s provides another layer of significance, within the outstanding landscape setting. Added to this heritage/cultural focus, the valley has become a magnet for a wide range of outdoor recreational visitors.

The plans for Glendalough Valley identify how the qualities of the area can be improved, by managing the impact of visitors, enhancing their experience and encouraging people to stay longer to enjoy and explore the area better. As outlined, key to this will be to encourage people to explore and enjoy other parts of the County, dispersing the pressure that is currently focussed on the Valley. It is in that context that the proposed 'clusters' are particularly important, spreading the pressure as well as the benefits of tourism.

#### Active Outdoors

To the north of the County, there is an existing 'cluster' around Roundwood and Ballinastoe, where the upland landscape is the setting for a wide range of outdoor activities, with a focus on destination mountain bike trails, that attract visitors from across Ireland and beyond.

It is proposed to consolidate the 'Active Outdoors' offer, strengthening the awareness of opportunities in the area, enhancing the quality of experience, including the hospitality/accommodation offer. A key element will be delivery of the Signature Trails identified in the Recreational Trails Masterplan.

#### Blessington

Blessington is the hub for an area of rolling landscapes and expanses of water. With the mountain backdrop, this area lends itself to a 'gentle' enjoyment of outdoor activities. The Greenway, provides an extensive, safe and easily accessible facility. Likewise, the lakes, as relatively sheltered water bodies provide opportunities for a range of safe, readily accessible watersports.

Opportunities to consolidate this offer should be pursued, improving and enhancing the existing provision, with hospitality and accommodation provided.

#### Baltinglass

Stakeholder engagement highlighted the wealth of points of heritage interest in the

area. The complex of hillforts is particularly impressive.

There is an opportunity for awareness of the heritage of the area to be strengthened, encouraging exploration of the towns, villages and surrounding landscape.

### **Tinahely & Shillelagh**

To the south of the county, is a landscape of rolling valleys and woodlands, with picturesque villages, steeped in history and culture and with a strong reputation for hospitality.

Opportunities to encourage exploration of this area and for it to strengthen its distinctive offer are encouraged.

### **Uplands**

The Mountains dominate the central part of the County. This landscape of peaks rising to over 900m, dramatic valleys, waterfalls and lakes attracts visitors from nearby and from abroad. This is a landscape with extensive and well-used trail networks. For people experiencing it from cars and coaches, the Wicklow Gap, Sally Gap and Military Road, with views over Lough Tay and Lough Dan provide dramatic introductions to the area.

The Recreational Trail Masterplan outlines how access to the uplands can be better managed, encouraging dispersal, which takes pressure off areas where the environment and visitor experience are currently compromised. Improved parking provision is proposed giving confidence in their security and with basic facilities, that encourage use.

### **Wicklow's Coast**

The County's 60Km of coastline includes dramatic headlands and sweeping beaches, traditional seaside towns, attractions such as the Sea Life Centre and rich maritime heritage. Long stretches are not easily accessed or even visible, greatly diminishing awareness of this outstanding asset.

It is in this context and cognisant of the environmental sensitivities that it is proposed to promote Wicklow's coast, encouraging dispersal of visitors and improving the quality of experience, including where possible, walking/cycling connections. The coastal towns should be the focus of sustained regeneration, developing their

specific visitor offer, accommodation and hospitality provision.

### **The Garden County**

Across the County there are many grand properties with beautiful, managed grounds, these include places such as Russborough House, Kilmacurragh Botanic Gardens and Druid's Glen Hotel and Golf Course.

These are jewels in the county's visitor offer. It is proposed to better promote these destinations, encouraging people who visit one to explore others.

### **Connectivity**

The M11 and N81 make Wicklow County an easy place to access, with proximity to Dublin making it a popular place for day-trips.

Key to sustainable development of tourism in the county will be using the main roads and rail links as points of connection, from where to enjoy exploring the county, at a slower pace and over a longer period.

Investment in the rail infrastructure is a priority, providing a regular service to Rathdrum, restoring the town's importance as a base for exploring the county. This will provide a viable alternative to access to Glendalough by car and coach, as well as strengthening connections along the coast.

Walking and cycling connections, including strategic routes from Arklow to Rathrum and onwards to Lara will support initiatives to deliver sustainable modal shift as well as being visitor attractors in their own right.

### **Hubs**

It is important that there should be a clear vision for each town and village to thrive, strengthening their distinctive identity and complementing each other.

The role of Laragh as a vibrant village that is synonymous with the Glendalough experience is outlined in the Glendalough Valley Plan.

Rathdrum will have a key role to play, providing access by rail and integrating existing attractions such as Clara Lara Fun Park and the major investment at Avondale. Elsewhere, Arklow should be developed strongly, with its maritime heritage.

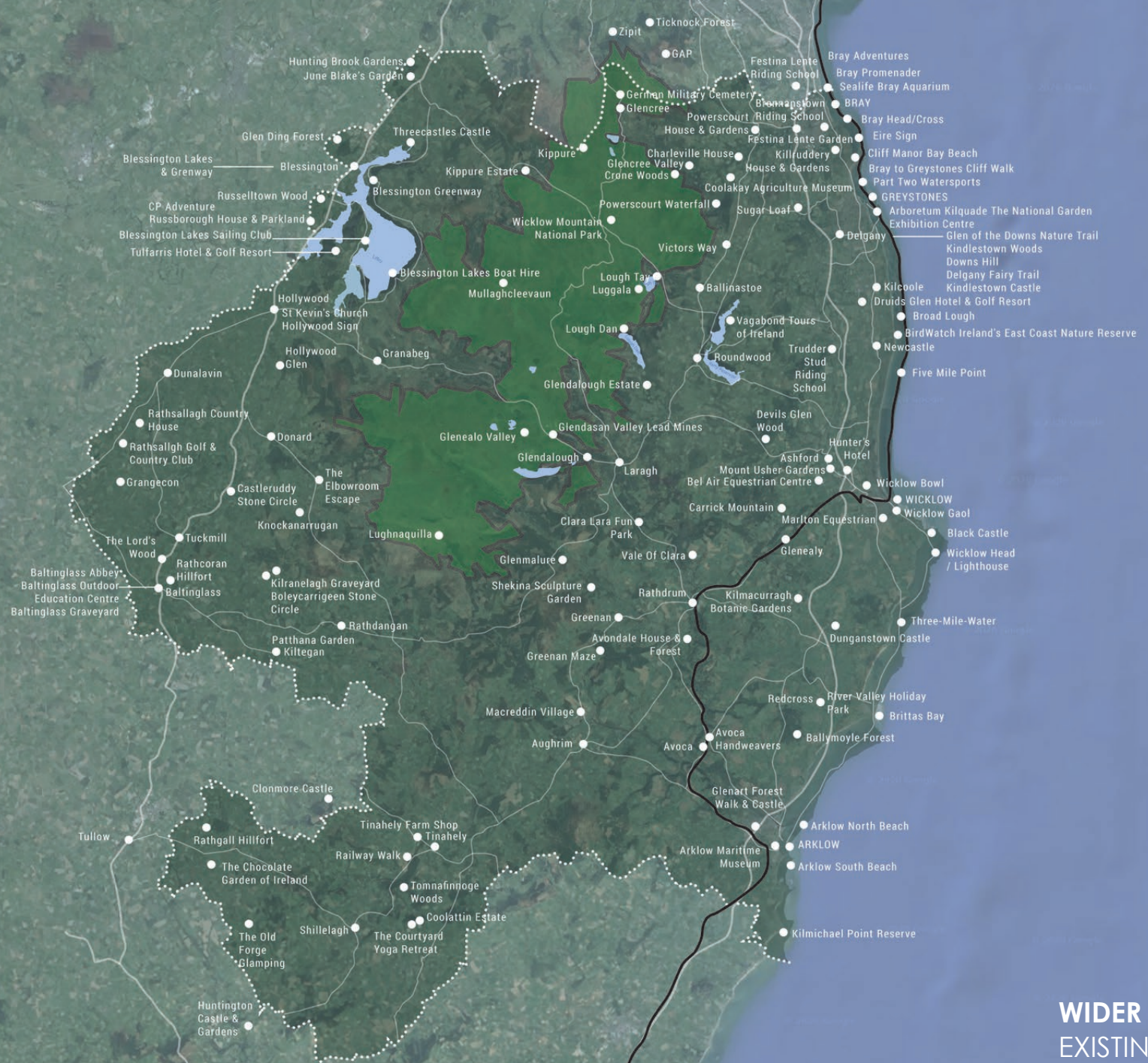
The hubs should become the focus for a diversity of types of accommodation, with assured quality standards and associated hospitality and cultural provision that will be central to the visitor experience.

**Establishing a Strong Cohesive Identity**

It is proposed to establish a strong 'brand' identity within which the various visitor destinations gain collective strength. This would apply principles similar to places such as the Lake District or Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

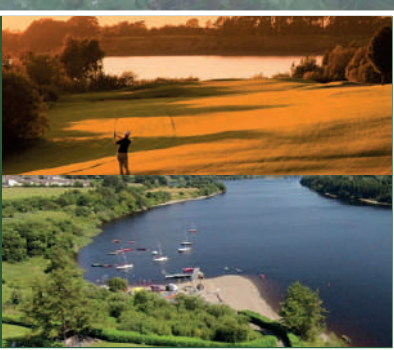
It is proposed to establish a 'Wicklow Mountains' brand for the uplands and their fringes. To the east of the M/N11 would be 'Wicklow's Coast'

Signage, online and promotional material will use this to strengthen cohesion, encouraging people to see these as areas to explore, rather than being individual locations to visit. The online presence will be particularly important facilitating visitors in understanding the breadth of offer and how to plan extended stays.



**WIDER WICKLOW**  
 EXISTING VISITOR  
 EXPERIENCES

Blessington



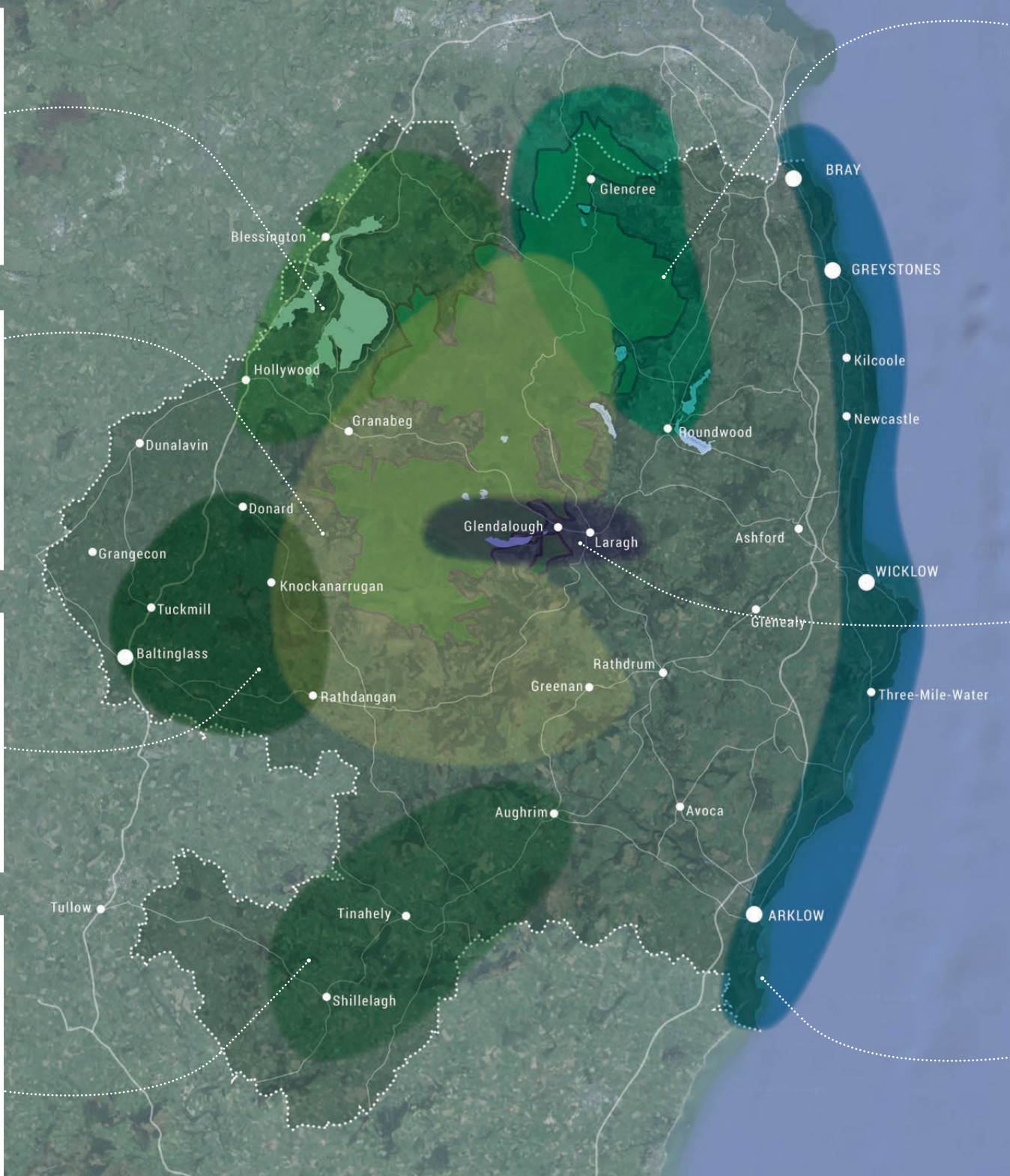
Uplands



Baltinglass



Tinahely & Shillelagh



Active Outdoors



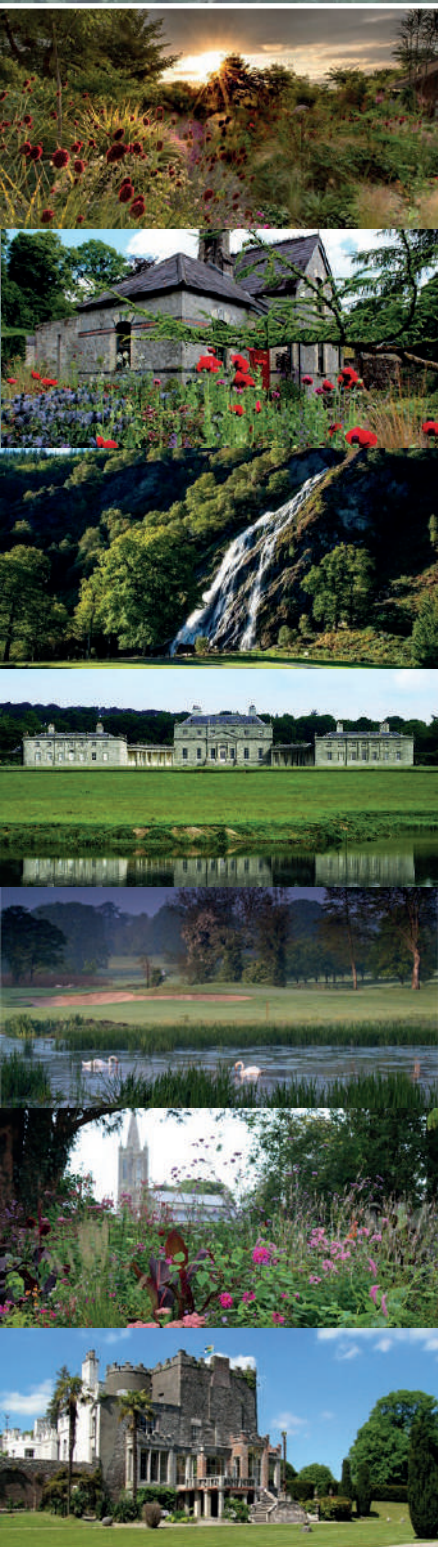
Glendalough



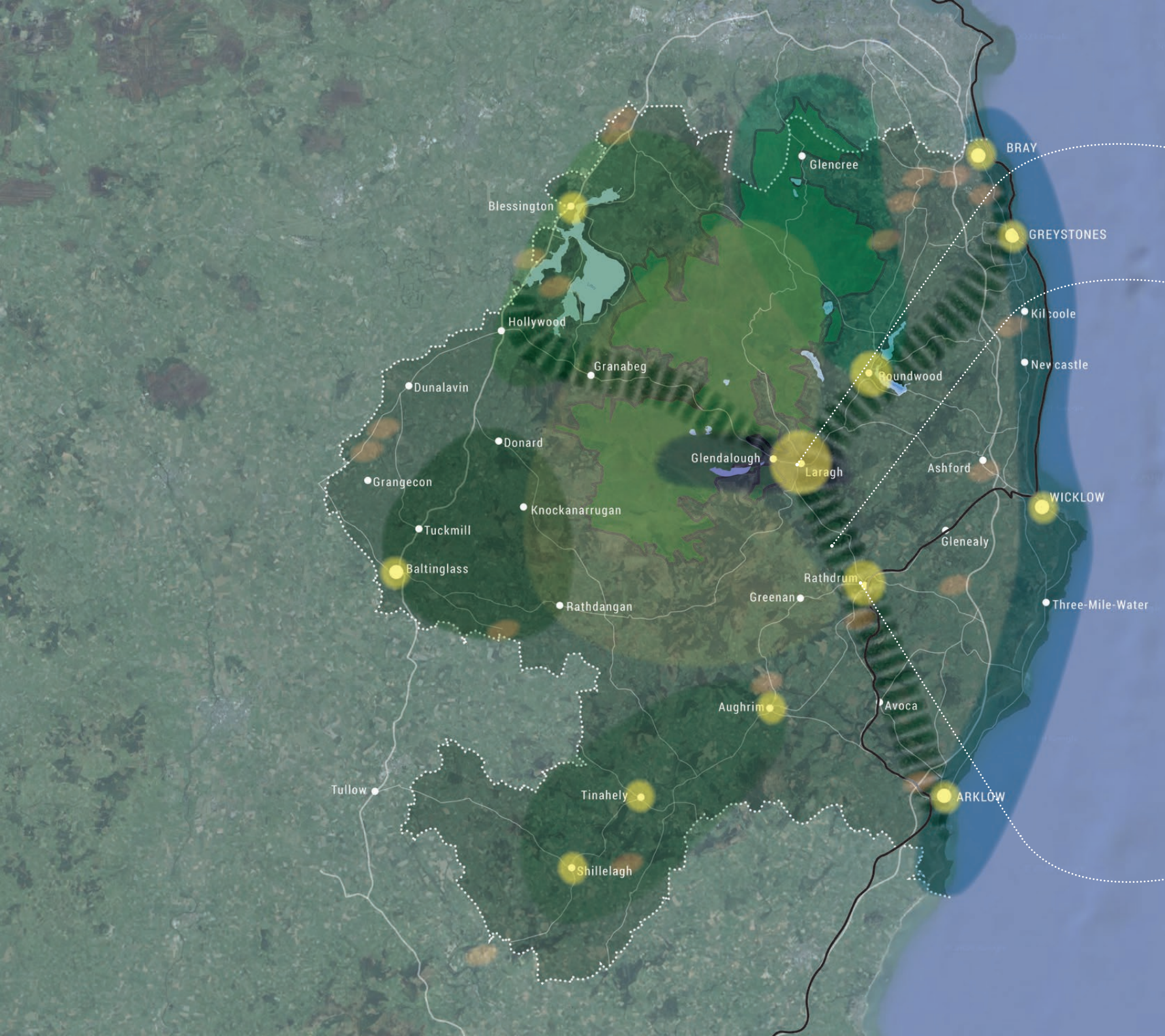
Wicklow Coast



WIDER WICKLOW PROPOSED CLUSTERS



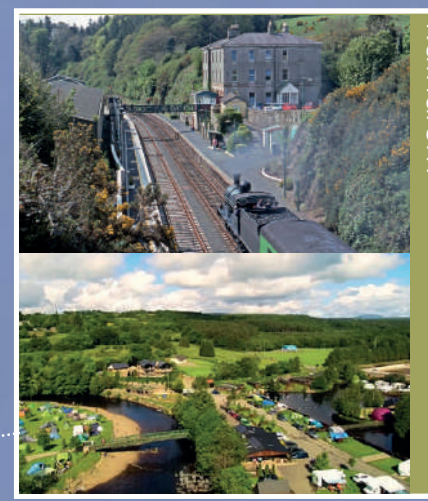
**WIDER WICKLOW**  
 THE GARDEN  
 COUNTY



Laragh



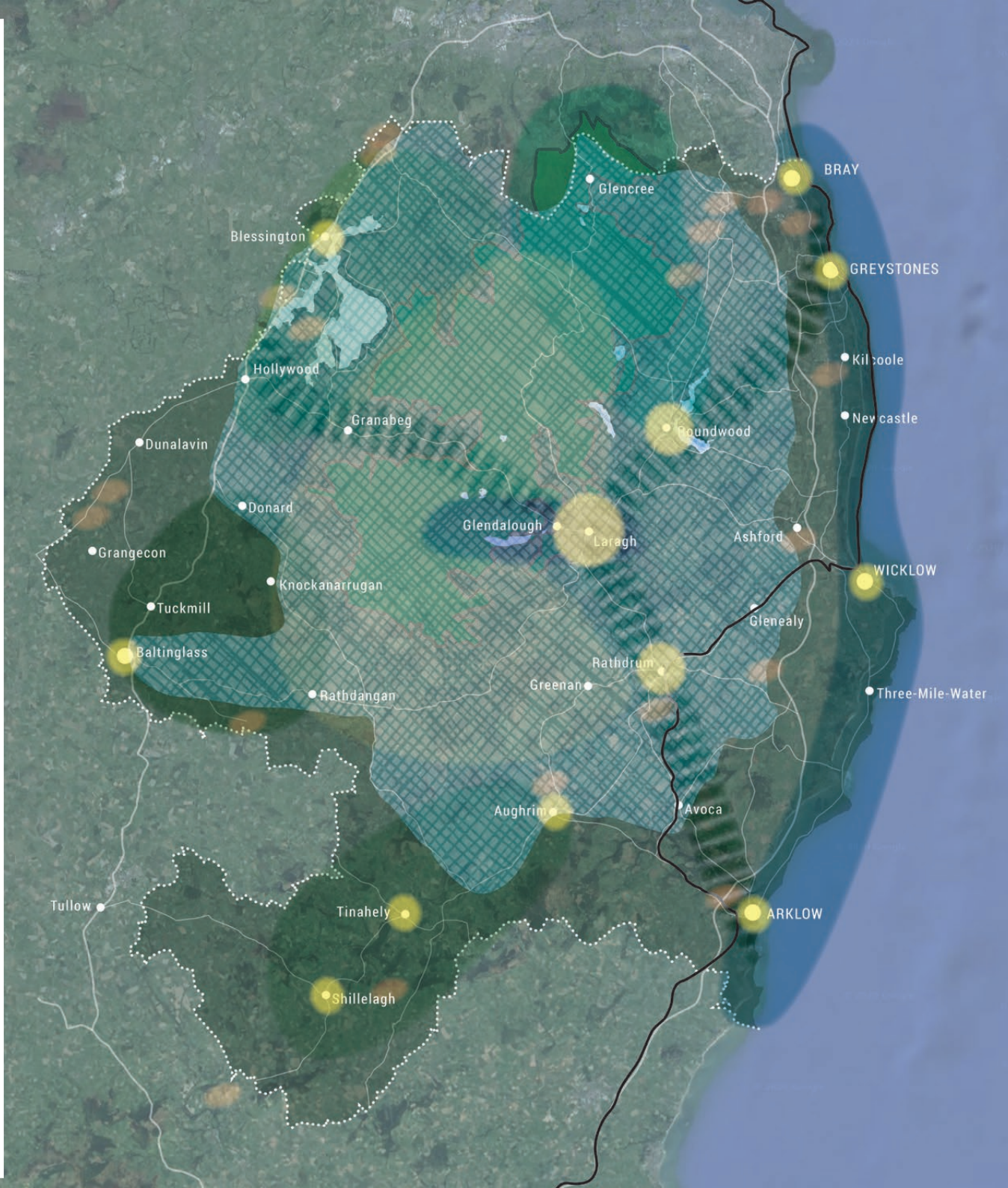
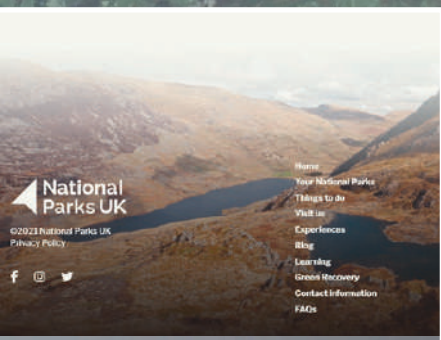
Valley Networks



Rathdrum

**WIDER WICKLOW**  
HUBS & CONNECTIONS





**WIDER WICKLOW**  
 WICKLOW MOUNTAINS  
 - A STRONG IDENTITY

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Glendalough and Wicklow Mountains National Park

# Wider Wicklow Interpretation Vision

06 December 2021



## *‘Identify what techniques could be developed to alleviate capacity issues at pressure points within Glendalough, Wicklow Mountains National Park and greater County Wicklow.’*

Fáilte Ireland

### **Invitation to Tender**

*Visitor Experience & Management Masterplan  
for Glendalough and Wicklow Mountains National Park  
and Visitor Orientation Recommendations for Co. Wicklow*

The purpose of this document is to explore opportunities to address an identified visitor capacity issue across the wider Wicklow area.

It is anticipated that by broadening the visitor proposition to include less visited County-wide attractions – and by facilitating greater appreciation of such sites through interpretation – ‘pressure points’ can be alleviated.

**In particular, the mining and military heritage of areas surrounding Glendalough can add a richness to the visitor proposition and, importantly, deepen the visitor’s understanding and appreciation of the unique natural and cultural heritage of the region.**

This document outlines some of the key narrative elements to be further explored through interpretation in the valleys and uplands near to Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains National Park.

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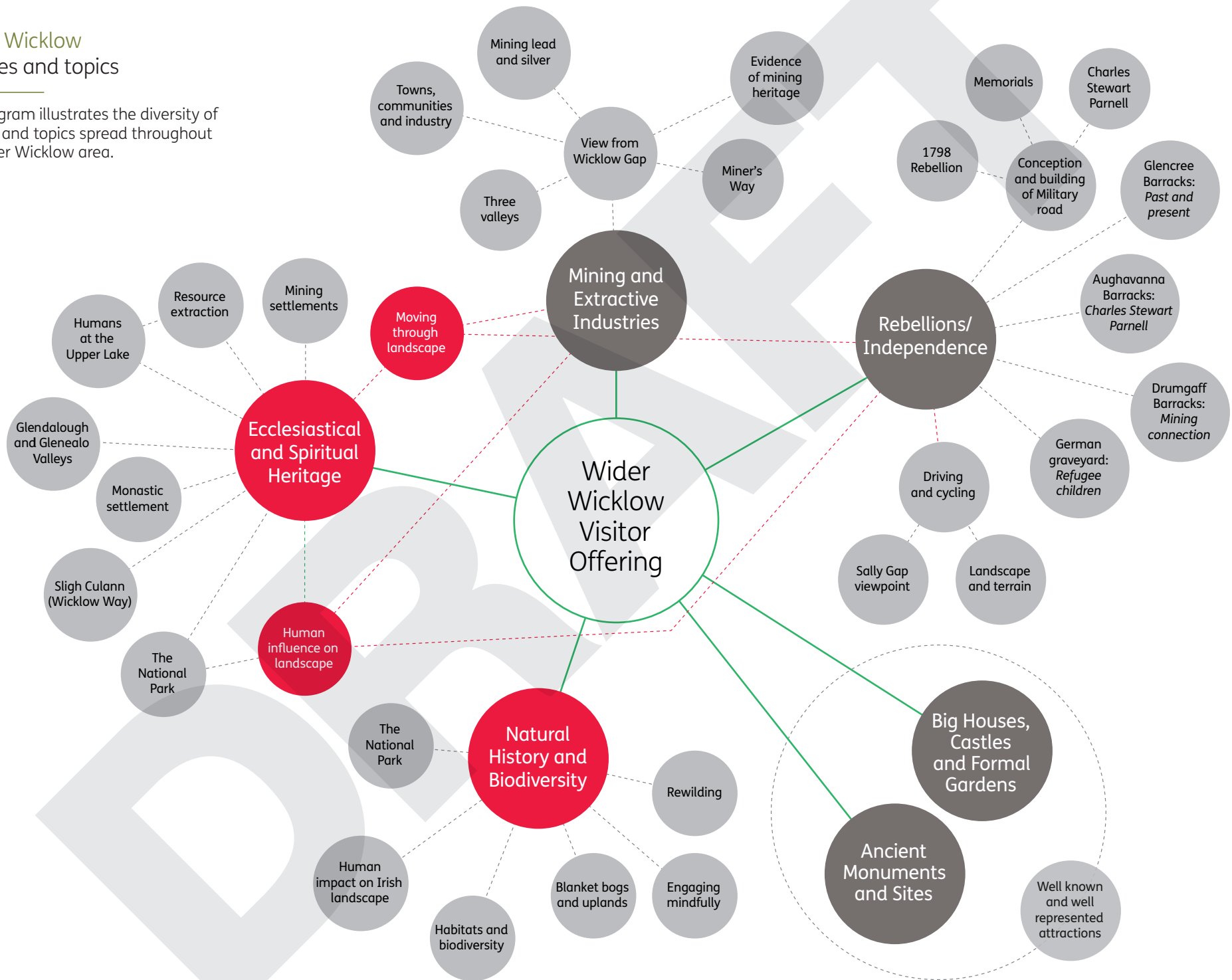
Wider Wicklow

# Themes and topics

DRAFT

## Wider Wicklow Themes and topics

This diagram illustrates the diversity of themes and topics spread throughout the wider Wicklow area.



## Weighting

The Wider Wicklow region has a series of themes and topics that can shape interpretation and visitor journeys throughout the county.

Thematic areas have been weighted with the following principles in mind, based on best practice significance assessments:

**Historic significance:**

A theme or topic may be historically significant for its association with people, events, places or themes; with local histories, events, or broader nationally important stories.

**Aesthetic significance:**

Stories of natural beauty, landscape or physical examples of craftsmanship and skill.

**Scientific or research significance:**

Themes or topics with potential and important scientific outcomes, including archaeological finds, ecological or biological research (land and marine), or sites containing documentary or oral history materials.

**Social/spiritual significance:**

Sites reflecting current cultural or social concerns or meanings, as well as sites with connections to religion or spirituality, whether organised or more casual.

With particular notice paid to representativeness, uniqueness/rarity and interpretative potential the significance of each theme/topic has been weighted accordingly, providing a framework which will help shape narrative experiences.

1

Natural  
History and  
Biodiversity

Ecclesiastical  
and Spiritual  
Heritage

2

Ancient  
Monuments  
and Sites

Big Houses,  
Castles  
and Formal  
Gardens

Rebellions/  
Independence

Mining and  
Extractive  
Industries

3

Marine and  
Coastal  
Biodiversity

Viking and  
Maritime  
Heritage

## Weighting

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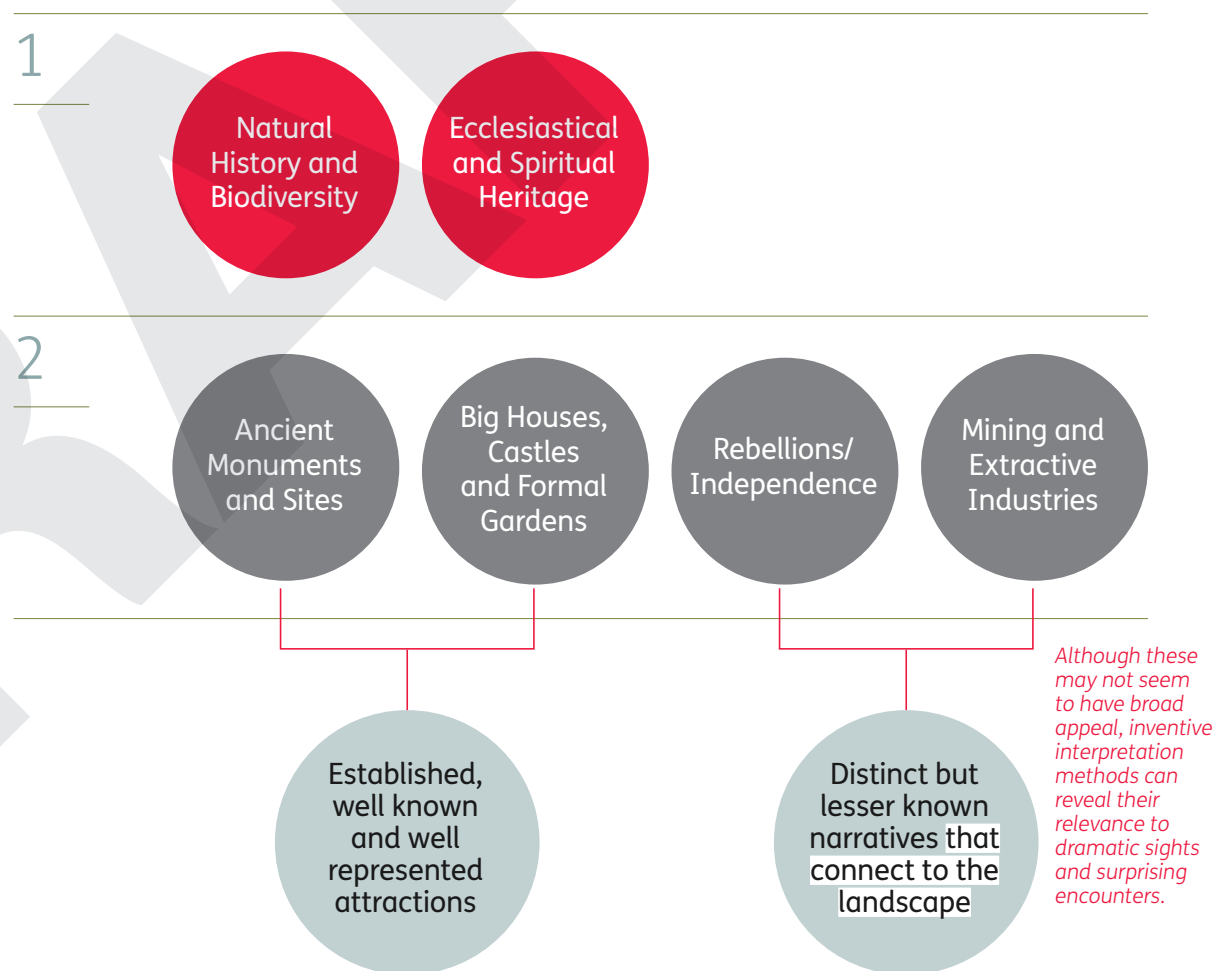
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## Natural History and Biodiversity

Weighting: 1

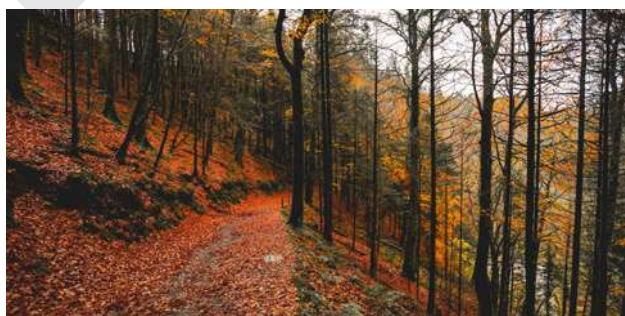
The importance of the National Park and areas of natural heritage within the region; its social significance as spaces for engaging with nature for those living in urban areas of Dublin and North Wicklow; historic significance relating to use of the land and its resources.

### Topics:

- Habitats and biodiversity
- Rewilding and human impacts on Irish natural landscapes
- Blanket bogs and uplands
- Engaging mindfully with natural world.

### Potential Sites and Activities:

- Tree felling and charcoal production in Glendalough – all landscape has been altered by human activities
- Tomnafinnoge Woodlands (last of Shillelagh Forest – original forest cover)
- Blanket bogs and heaths in the Uplands
- Vale of Clara oak forest
- The Lord's Wood
- Crone Wood
- Glen of the Downs forests and walks
- River systems e.g. Three-Mile-Water, east Wicklow River Trust, Meeting of the Waters
- Ballymoyle Forest
- Baltinglass Outdoor Education Centre





## Natural History and Biodiversity

Weighting: 1

*‘Ireland is a land where the past is ever present, both in the mind ... and in the landscape.’*

### **Estyn Evans**

Prehistoric and early Christian Ireland  
1966

*‘Wicklow is the garden of Ireland; its prominent feature is, indeed, sublimity – wild grandeur, healthful and refreshing; but among its high and bleak mountains there are numerous rich and fertile valleys, luxuriantly wooded and with the most romantic rivers running through them, forming in their course, an endless variety of cataracts’*

### **S C Hall**

Handbooks for Ireland: Dublin and Wicklow  
1853

*‘Landscapes are much more than one frozen moment. They are palimpsests revealing, once you learn how to look, layer after layer of dynamic natural and cultural changes.’*

### **Paddy Woodworth**

The Irish Times  
25 January 2020

## Ecclesiastical and Spiritual Heritage

Weighting: 1

Special stories of saints and ecclesiastical life still in existence in the landscape; one of the most complete monastic settlements in Ireland; geographic spread of sites across Wicklow an indication of the significance of religious heritage to the region. Connections to the landscape to a religious way of life now mostly lost.

### Topics:

- The life of St Kevin and the formation of Glendalough
- Monastic life in Wicklow
- Pilgrimage and journeys to knowledge
- Understanding and using the natural world
- Mindfulness and connection with nature

### Potential Sites and Activities:

- Baltinglass Abbey and Graveyard
- Aghowle Church
- Brittas Bay Landing Site and Inis Baithin Monastery
- Castletimon Ogham Stone
- Kiltranelagh Graveyard and standing stones (one of the oldest cemeteries operating in the world)
- St Kevin's Church and St Kevin's Way Pilgrim Trail
- Glendalough Monastic Settlement
- Tearmann Spirituality Centre
- Pilgrim Paths
- Glendalough Hermitage Centre
- Slighe Chualann – ancient road now mirrored by the Wicklow Way



## Ecclesiastical and Spiritual Heritage

Weighting: 1

*‘Most important of all, people come as pilgrims, responding to the sacred energy of the landscape which drew St. Kevin to withdraw here in search of his God. The spiritual heritage of Glendalough is unsurpassed. This is indeed holy ground. Pilgrim, go gently.’*

**Glendalough Hermitage Centre**

<https://glendaloughhermitage.ie/glendalough/>

*‘A prayer his body makes entirely  
For he has forgotten self, forgotten bird  
And on the riverbank forgotten the river’s name.’*

**St Kevin and the Blackbird**

Seamus Heaney  
1996

*‘Great is the pilgrimage of Coemgen,  
If men should perform it aright;  
To go seven times to their fair is the same  
As to go once to Rome.’*

**Bethada Náem nÉrenn:**

**Lives of Irish Saints, Vol. II**

**Translations, Notes, Indexes,**

ed. and trans. Charles Plummer

1922

## Wider Wicklow

### Themes and topics

## Military History

Weighting: 2

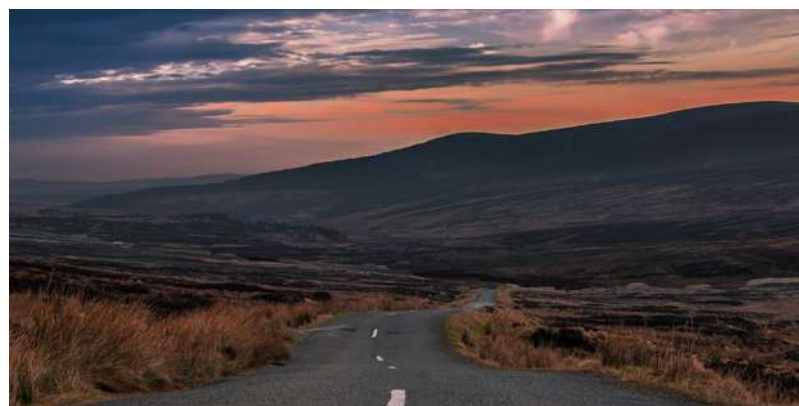
This Military Road and its associated stories of the nationally important 1798 Rebellion is both unique and highly representative for this important historical story. Remaining elements in the landscape can be used as guideposts for exploring further.

### Topics:

- 1798 Rebellion and activities in Wicklow
- Michael Dwyer's knowledge of Wicklow's uplands
- The Military Road – development and building
- Post-rebellion road use
- Connections to land and landscape by rebels and the need to control the terrain
- Changing use of road and associated buildings

### Potential Sites and Activities:

- The Military Road/1798 Rebellion key points: Glenree Barracks and German cemetery, plus access to turf bogs during World War Two fuel shortages
- Drumgoff Barracks (with crag called 'Dwyer's Lookout') and Aughavannagh Barracks with information about Michael Dwyer
- Eire sign on Bray Head
- Kilpedder Rifle Range
- Glen of Imaal
- Michael Collins and connection to Greystones
- Coastal Martello towers.



Wider Wicklow  
Themes and topics



Glencree Barracks



Lough Bray



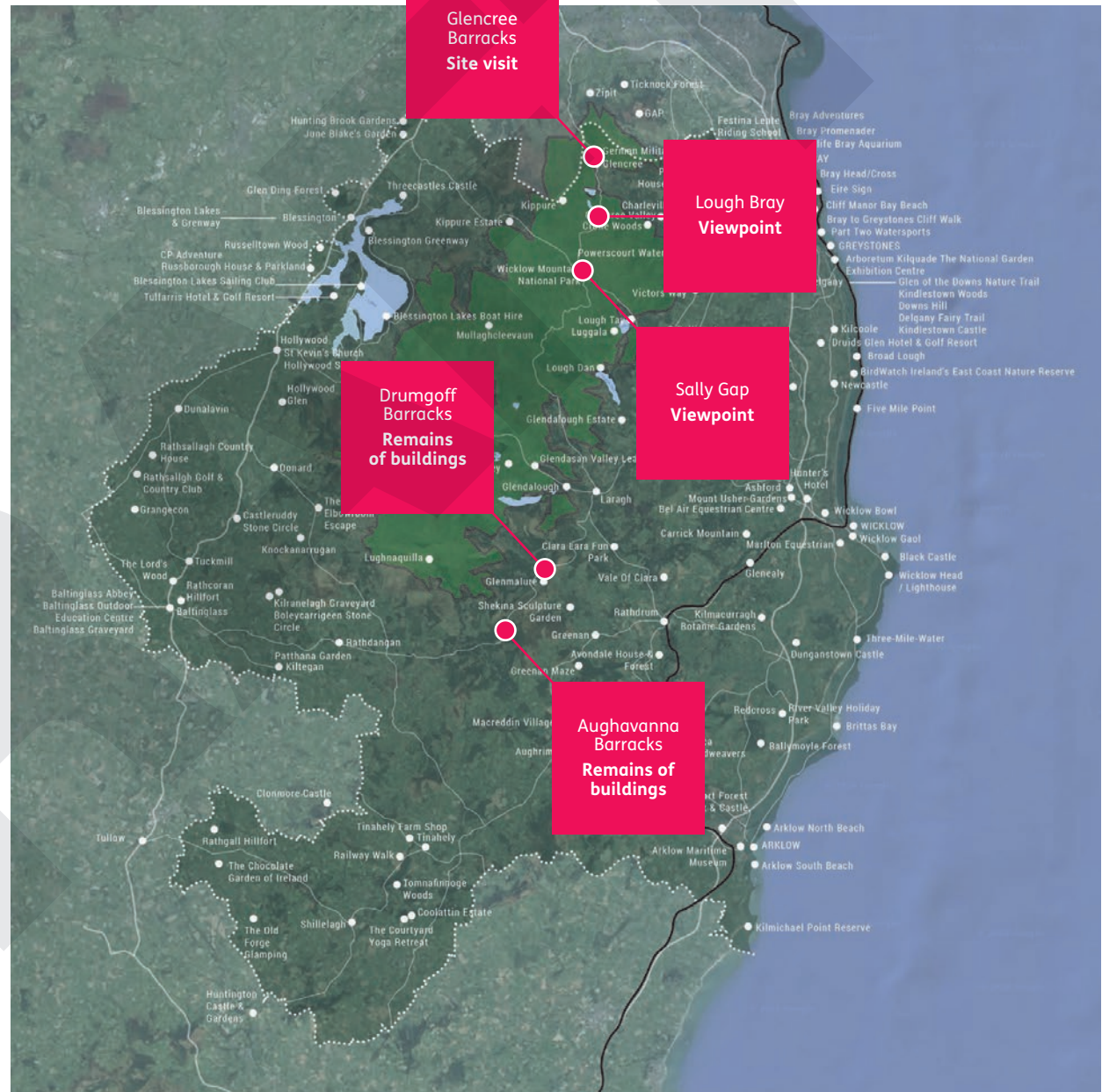
Sally Gap



Drumgoff Barracks



Aughavanna Barracks



## Military History

*‘Remaining elements in the landscape can be used as guideposts for exploring further.’*



Interpretation mechanisms



that focus the mind in your surroundings



Contextualising viewpoints through interpretation



Wide landscapes with hidden stories



**THE MILITARY ROADS, COUNTY OF WICKLOW**

The Roads and Aurora Camp, appear in the Middle ground – in the Foreground the Lord Lieutenant and Suit – with the Soldiery and Peasantry employed in blasting, and removing the huge rocks, so numerous in this romantic Country.

S. Alken sculpt.

1804



**THE MILITARY ROADS, COUNTY of WICKLOW.**

*The Roads and Aurora Camp, appear in the Middle ground – in the Fore ground the Lord Lieutenant and Suit – with the Soldiery and Peasantry employed in blasting, and removing the huge rocks, so numerous in this romantic Country.*

## Military History

Weighting: 2

*‘So we shall conduct him by the Military Road, from the cross-ways at Sally Gap, to Lough Bray. Here he finds himself in the heart of the most extravagantly wild mountain scenery, where numerous peaks raise their loft heath-clad brows on every side.’*

**G. N. Wright**

Guide To The County Of Wicklow  
1827

*‘Notice is hereby given that the mountain roads are now opened by the troops under my command. The possession of those roads, passes and mountains will most effectually open the country, and enable me to protect the persons and property of all its loyal inhabitants ... and I will give immediate protection to any of the inhabitants who shall assist me, or any detachment of the troops, in securing any of the gang of Robbers headed by Michael Dwyer’.*

**Lieut. Col. George Stewart**

Freeman’s Journal, 10 June  
1800

*‘The extreme tranquillity which has prevailed in this county for twenty years, has rendered these extensive structures quite unnecessary’.*

**G. N. Wright**

Guide To The County Of Wicklow  
1827



## Mining and extractive industries

Weighting: 2

Uniquely related to the valleys of Glenmalure, Glendasan and Glendalough, with strong connections to the extant landscape as well as telling individual stories of hardship and struggle.

### Topics:

- Wicklow's geology
- Early mining and iron production
- Lives of the miners; connection to the natural world
- Damage through extractive industries
- Decline of the industry

### Potential Sites and Activities:

- Glens of Lead Heritage Group - tours and talks
- Miner's Way
- International links to Scotland and Wales
- Fiddler's Row and Miner's Village in Glendasan
- Connection to mining structures in Glendalough valley
- Tunnels through Camaderry between two valleys
- Timber planting for tunnel supports
- Baravore rolls crusher house
- Lazy beds and gardens reflecting everyday life



Wider Wicklow  
Interpretation delivery mechanisms

Mining settlements

Text...

Many sites represent a rich heritage



## Mining Heritage

*‘Uniquely related to the valleys...  
with strong connections  
to the extant landscape.’*



Interpretation mechanisms  
that reflect the materiality of mining



Reading the landscape



Surviving evidence



Interventions that blend into the landscape



### GOLD MINES, COUNTY OF WICKLOW

In the Fore-ground are several Figures employed in working or buddeling; in the Middle ground they are seen digging & barrowing the Earth, which contains the particles of Gold: on the first discovery of these Mines, pieces of pure Gold were found valued at eighty pounds and upwards, one of which may be seen at the Levarian Museum. The Scene closes with Croughan and the adjoining Hills.

T. Sautell Roberts delt ; J. Bluck.



### GOLD MINES, COUNTY of WICKLOW.

*In the Fore-ground are several Figures employed in working or buddeling; in the Middle ground they are seen digging & barrowing the Earth, which contains the particles of Gold: on the first discovery of these Mines, pieces of pure Gold were found valued at eighty pounds and upwards, one of which may be seen at the Levarian Museum. The Scene closes with Croughan and the adjoining Hills.*

## Mining and extractive industries

Weighting: 2

*‘It is probably no surprise that the men drank and played hard as their working day down the mines was anything but easy...The work was dangerous and the risk of tunnels collapsing was always present.’*

### **Exploring the Mining Heritage of County Wicklow**

Wicklow County Council  
2008

*‘The vale of Glenmalure is one of the most remote, and arguably, one of the most beautiful of all of the glens of County Wicklow. In viewing its majestic tranquillity... it is perhaps hard to visualise the tides of events which have swept through this glen: from the time during the last Ice Age, to the periods of human occupation up to and beyond 36 the time of the events of the 1798 rebellion and 19th Century mining activity.’*

### **Exploring the Mining Heritage of County Wicklow**

Wicklow County Council  
2008

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Wider Wicklow

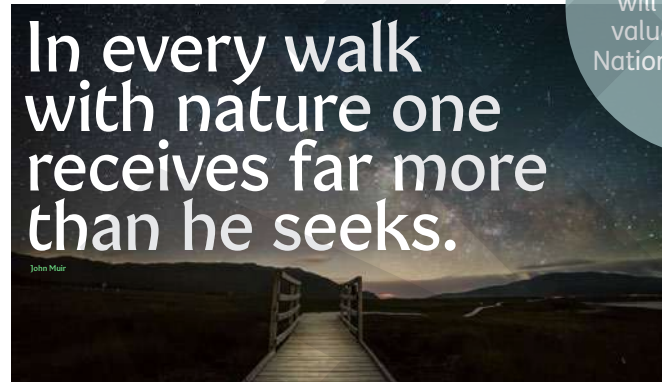
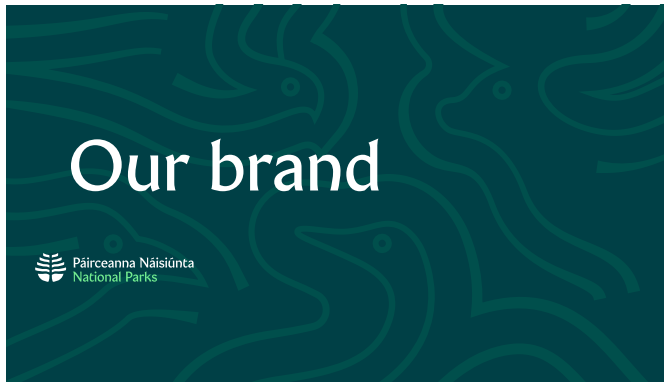
# Developing a visitor proposition

DRAFT

## Wider Wicklow Brand alignment

In developing a visitor proposition for the wider Wicklow we should be aware of other propositions that are closely related, for example that offered by the Glendalough Ecclesiastical site and by Wicklow National Park.

The Wider Wicklow visitor proposition will embrace the values of the new National Parks brand



National Parks Our brand

Our values

5

- 1 Oneness with nature**  
National Parks provide unique opportunities to be at one with nature; the purest of experiences in nature giving emotions of awe, wonderment, feelings of connectedness and peacefulness.
- 2 Guardians of Ireland's nature**  
National Parks are guardians of Ireland's unique geography and ecology for future generations.
- 3 Privilege & respect**  
Visiting National Parks is a privilege and visitors should treat their environments with appropriate respect.
- 4 Conservation education leader**  
National Parks' responsibilities and educational initiatives do not end at the park boundaries.
- 5 For everyone**  
National Parks welcome everyone to experience nature's wonder and benefits to their own level or ability.

National Parks Our brand

Our colours Wicklow palette

Our colours Wicklow palette applied

40

Wicklow Accent  
C63 M17 Y100 K3  
R113 G158 B14  
PANTONE 377c

Wicklow Shade  
C92 M38 Y89 K37  
R0 G87 B51  
PANTONE 7484c

Secondary Base  
C100 M82 Y45 K51  
R15 G38 B64  
PANTONE 389c

Wicklow Pastel  
C15 M1 Y25 K0  
R227 G236 B207  
PANTONE 9600c

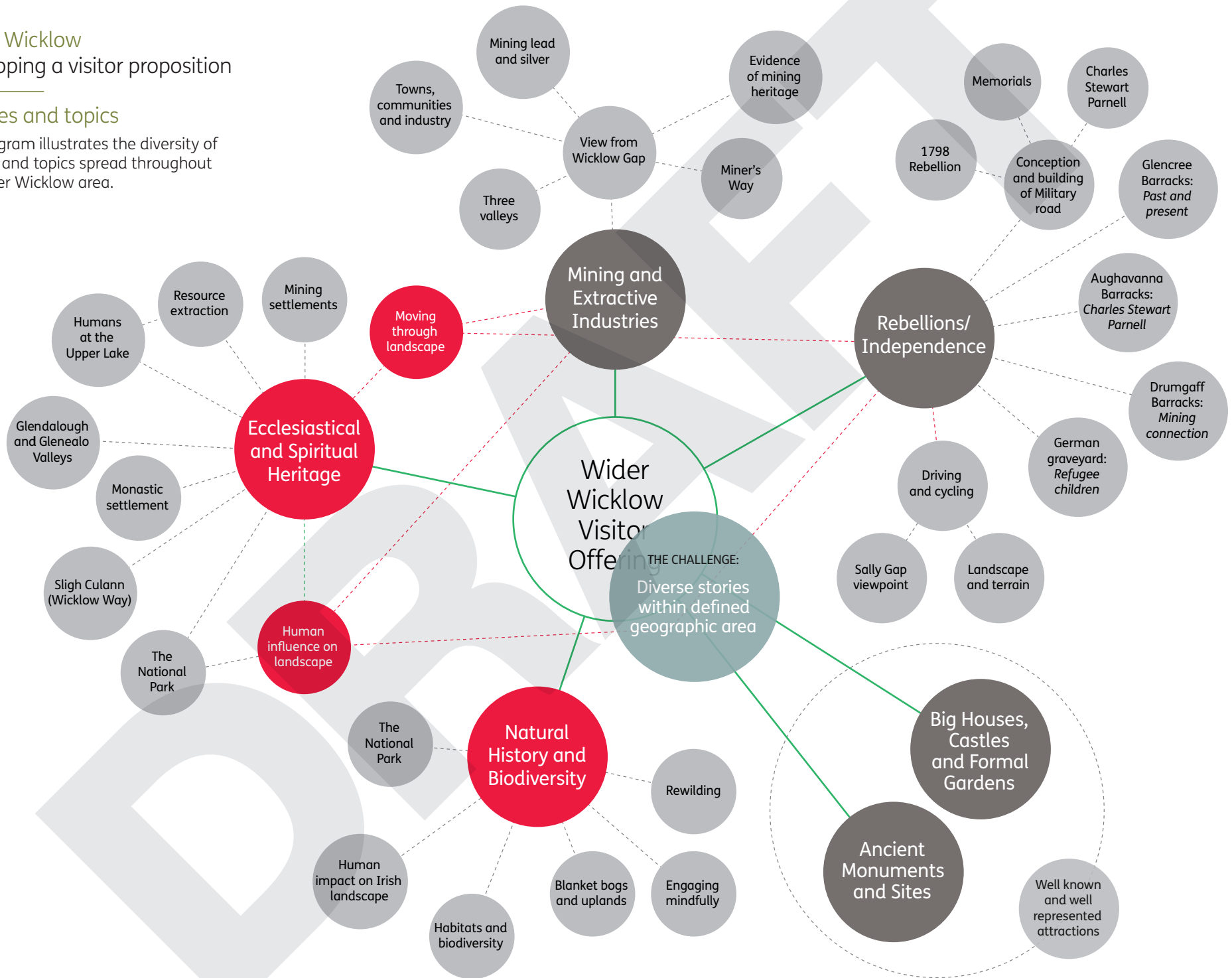
White  
C00 M00 Y00 K00  
R255 G255 B255

# Wider Wicklow

## Developing a visitor proposition

### Themes and topics

This diagram illustrates the diversity of themes and topics spread throughout the wider Wicklow area.





## Wider Wicklow

### Developing a visitor proposition

#### Draft visitor proposition

Not necessarily to 'external consumption' the proposition should capture the essence of the visitor offering and will guide visitor communications, including area-wide interpretation and marketing.



*Glendalough and Wicklow Masterplan*

# Wider Wicklow Interpretation Strategy

Issue: 02  
05/08/2021

Tandem™

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# Introduction

Alongside the interpretation vision for the Glendalough Valley, we have envisaged interpretation provision in the wider Wicklow region. In particular, the mining and military heritage in the areas surrounding Glendalough add a richness to the visitor experience and deepen the unique nature of the natural and cultural heritage of Wicklow.

This document outlines some of the key narrative elements to be further explored through interpretation in the valleys and uplands near to Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains National Park. It takes into account the extensive research and knowledge held by specialist interest groups and the local communities, and visualises how visitors could be effectively drawn throughout Wicklow and its amazing heritage and stories.

High profile and well-established attractions such as Powerscourt, Russborough House and parts of the Wicklow Mountains National Park experience significant capacity challenges.

It is anticipated that by focussing a visitor proposition on less visited county-wide attractions, and by facilitating greater appreciation of such sites through interpretation, pressure on over-visited locations can be alleviated.

*‘Identify what techniques could be developed to alleviate capacity issues at pressure points within Glendalough, Wicklow Mountains National Park and greater County Wicklow.’*

# Mining in Wicklow

## - A brief overview

The Wicklow Mountains have a rich mining history. Copper was mined in Avoca, and lead was mined in Glenmalure, Glendasan and Glendalough. Within the National Park, spoil heaps and ruined mining villages can be seen at Glendasan (on the Wicklow Gap road) and at the Miners' Village in Glendalough.

### Gold rush

A gold rush occurred in Wicklow in the 1790s, when a nugget of gold was found after forestry work alongside the Gold Mines River, flowing off Croghan Kinshelagh to join the Aughrim River, near Woodenbridge. A rush of people came to the area to dig and pan for gold, dramatically changing the landscape and bringing thousands of people to search for gold and provide the supplies required to support the searchers. The reputed largest nugget was of 22 oz and was given to King George III in 1796. It is rumoured that he had it made into a snuff box, but there is no certainty about this or many other gold stories originating in the Gold Mines River gold rush.<sup>1</sup>

### Lead and Iron

420 million years ago, two tectonic plates collided. The area that is now County Wicklow, buckled and twisted, and a large batholith of molten magma was squeezed up. The magma did

not break the surface, but cooled slowly underground, to form granite. At the edge of the magma, where it met the overlying rocks, minerals formed — lead, zinc, silver and others.

Over the following 420 million years, the overlying rocks were eroded, exposing the granite that now forms much of the Wicklow Mountains. Where the granite meets the mica-schist, the minerals became the target for a mining industry that operated between 1800 and 1963. The most successful areas of mining in the Wicklow Mountains were in the valleys of Glendalough and Glendasan. The vein of metal ore known as the Lukanure Vein ran through Camaderry Mountain which separates both valleys.

Lead was discovered in the Glendasan Valley in 1798 by Thomas Weaver, an engineer working on the Military Road. By 1809 mining had begun and the first vein to be exploited was Lukanure, situated high up on the slopes of Camaderry Mountain. By 1820, the mine had ceased to be profitable, and it was closed and sold.

A few years later, in 1824, the Mining Company of Ireland (M.C.I.), purchased the Lukanure Mine and worked it for the next 66 years. During this period profits fluctuated, but as a whole, the mines prospered, extracting 50,000 tonnes of lead and 25,000 ounces of silver, making it the most important lead mine in Ireland at the time. Most of the exploitation took place above the Glendasan Valley where eight tunnels were worked. Ore was transported to the Ballycorus lead smelting site to be turned into lead or sent for export.

Although probably better known to most visitors, the Glendalough Mines had a shorter history and extraction of ore was only done for 25 years, commencing in 1850. In 1850 a

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Meehan, Matthew Parkes, Vincent Gallagher, Ronan Hennessy and Sarah Gatley. 2014. 'The Geological Heritage of Wicklow: An audit of County Geological Sites in Wicklow'. This report is an action of the County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2009 – 2014.

series of eight connecting tunnels were bored between the Glendasan and Glendalough valleys, remains of which can still be seen today. Ore was transferred through to Glendalough and it was processed in the valley. In 1868, an inclined railway system was installed on the southern side of the Glenealo Valley, though no trace of it remains today. Today the area at the top of the Glendalough Valley is still referred to as Van Diemen's Land, the name for the penal colony in Tasmania given to the area by miners in the 1850s, referencing the remoteness of the site.

The mines were put up for sale in 1888 and although some mining continued at times into the 20th century, the mines ceased permanently in 1963. A fatal accident in 1957 also hastened the end of mining, when 24-year-old father, James Mernagh, was killed in an explosion. Toxic heavy metals from slag heaps and mining operations leached into watercourses within the valleys. In the Glendalough valley, a square shaped tailings pond was constructed to prevent this contaminated water from flowing into the upper lake, and this can still be seen today.

Mining in the Wicklow Mountains changed the landscape in a number of important ways. Requirements to house miners (given the distance from other settlements) and provide education to their children led to housing developments and schools being built on the valley floors, including Fiddler's Row. This was so named as it's recorded that good musicians lived here. Miners raised money to build the Catholic Church in Laragh (opened in 1851) and the Church of Ireland Church also in Laragh (1843). Timber to provide supports for the mining tunnels was in high demand, and in the 1850s and 60s The Mining Company of Ireland planted approximately one million trees in the Glendalough Valley for use as timber props in the mines. This timber was also used for commercial sales.

Life as a miner was tough and dangerous, with the average life expectancy for a miner in the 1840s and 1850s only 42 years. Drinking and other perceived vices were common amongst miners letting off steam from their physically exhausting work days.

Remnants of the mining operations can be visited particularly in the Glendasan Valley at the remains of the Fox Rock and Moll Doyle mines. Various pieces of machinery and items used to process ore during the 1950s remains. Some remains of housing and lazy beds for growing food can also be seen, indicating the lifestyles of the miners and their families.

The Glenmalure Valley also has a long history of mining, with evidence of mining operations being carried out from the late 1700s and during the 1798 Rebellion. Ballinafunshoge Mine was the earliest mine in operation in Co Wicklow and was the most productive mine in Glenmalure. The main mining centres in Glenmalure were at Ballinafunshoge, Ballinagoneen and Baravore. Remnants of a smelter, a school house and residential areas suggest approximately 30 men worked in the mines and may have lived with their families alongside. As with the Glendalough Valley there are mature Scots Pine trees nearby planted originally to support the nearby mines for pit props, building floors and joists, as well as other functions.

There are also remains of two crushing and grinding plants at the Baravore mine. One is from 1851 and housed a single Cornish rolls crusher. In 1851 the population of Baravore was 278 people living in small dwellings built by the mining company. Local folklore claims that 100 lights were carried across the paved ford in the River Avonbeg as mining families made their way to church services on Christmas morning. The newer crusher plant was built between 1859 and 1860, and has been described as 'undoubtedly the finest extant example in

Ireland of a rolls crusher house'. It was powered by a huge water wheel.<sup>2</sup>

### Stoneworking

Wicklow granite has been used as a building stone of choice for many centuries, especially in Dublin City, but also in innumerable buildings local to the outcrop of the rock. At its height some 200 men were employed in stonecutting particularly around the Ballyknockan area near Blessington. The rock was used to build very many of Dublin's finest buildings such as the railway stations, Glasnevin Cemetery Chapel,



Granite features in Ballyknockan. Source: Wicklow Heritage



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<sup>2</sup> Information sourced from: <https://glensoflead.wicklowheritage.org/> <https://www.wicklowmountainsnationalpark.ie/history/mining/> O'Toole, Carmel. 2015. *Glenmalure, The Wild Heart of the Mountains*. ERA-MAPTEC Ltd  
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gateway and mortuary, St Paul's on Arran Quay, the RDS entrance and many more. It was also used in buildings across

Ireland such as Kylemore Castle, and even exported to Liverpool, France and for the Cathedral of St John's in Newfoundland. The pride of the stonecutters in their work extended to their homes too, and the whole village of Ballyknockan is replete with quirky details of interest in the stonework of homes and even on barns and sheds, fenceposts, walls and pathways<sup>3</sup>. The tradition of stonecutting is still carried on but on a much smaller scale than during the famine period when over 400 people were directly involved with the quarries<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Meehan, Matthew Parkes, Vincent Gallagher, Ronan Hennessy and Sarah Gatley. 2014. 'The Geological Heritage of Wicklow: An audit of County Geological Sites in Wicklow'. This report is an action of the County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2009 – 2014.

<sup>4</sup> <https://wicklowheritage.omeka.net/items/show/10>



# The Military Road

## - A brief overview

The Great Military Road runs from Rathfarnham to Aughavannagh, with a side arm from Enniskerry to Glencree. The route from Rathfarnham to Aughavannagh covers 36 miles (58 km). It was constructed between 1801 and 1809, and is still an important north-south route across the Wicklow Mountains.

During the 1798 Rebellion, the inaccessibility of the Wicklow Mountains proved a problem for the government forces. Four roads crossed the county from east to west, but none ran north south to connect them. The rebel army, initially led by General Joseph Holt, used the Wicklow Mountains as a place to hide. After Holt's surrender in 1798, the role of rebel leader passed to Michael Dwyer. Dwyer was born in the mountains, and had family and friends there to help him. With a band of followers he lived a fugitive guerrilla life in the mountains.

The construction of a military road through the Wicklow Mountains was first suggested in the 1580s to deter Irish rebellion when the Elizabethan administration of the "Pale" experienced difficulty suppressing the "Tory" fighters of the O'Byrne and O'Toole septs. Construction of the road began in 1800 through parts of the county "infested with insurgent plunderers".

Towards the end of 1798, Colonel John Skerret of the Durham Fencibles suggested building a military road across the mountains. The idea was simple. The road would enable troops to travel quickly to wherever they were needed. At the same time, it would restrict the rebel's ability to move unseen. An additional factor was the fear of a potential French invasion on

the East coast at this time, which might necessitate rapid movement of troops.

The road was built mainly by soldiers working in four teams. Each team had an officer and 50 soldiers. Local people were also welcome to help, but most had no desire to. The locals felt that once the road was constructed, land in the area would become more valuable, and their rents would rise. The work was very physical, and the soldiers had to live in tents or houses made of sods. The bridges along the route were made of local stone. Tragically, by today's standards, the stone was often taken from local ancient ring forts.

The Great Military Road was finally finished in 1809. It cost £43,500, working out at over £1,000 per mile. It was twice what Taylor originally budgeted for. Dwyer surrendered in December 1803, long before the road was completed. At Waterloo, Napoleon was defeated and the threat of a French invasion receded. Eventually, the road ceased to be purely for military use. The local civilians were always permitted to use the road. Strangers who wished to travel the route had to obtain a permit of transit by application from the Barrack Master in Dublin.

### The Barracks

As the threat of a French invasion increased, it was decided to also make four permanent barracks along the route, with a fifth barracks at Glen of Imaal. Private contractors were employed to build barracks at Glencree, Laragh, Drumgoff (Glenmalure), Aughavannagh and Glen of Imaal. Each was to house 100 men, and the Glen of Imaal Barrack was to house 200.

Each of these structures was surrounded with a raised redoubt, which is a defensive wall with steep sides from which fire could

be brought to bear on all points. The redoubts were armed with two cannons.

### *Glencree*

Glencree was the headquarters of the Great Military Road, and the place where travellers collected their pass to travel the route. The barracks was only used by the military for 40 years. In the 1840's the building became a government store. The Ordnance Survey used it as a base for a while, and it was also used by the Post Office. In the 1850's, the Oblate Fathers ran an Industrial School in the building. It operated for 100 years. In 1946-49, German refugee children escaping the war were hosted here. Today the barracks is used as a Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

It is thought that close to one thousand children, aged from 5 to fifteen, travelled overland through mainland Europe and arrived by mail boat into Dun Laoghaire before continuing their journey by road to Glencree. The children were malnourished when they arrived, some were near death. Under the care of the French Sisters of Charity, they stayed at Glencree for a period of recuperation, rest and orientation. With health restored, they travelled onward again into the care of foster families throughout Ireland who had responded to newspaper advertisements placed by the Irish Red Cross.

Few records are available for the Industrial School period of Glencree's history. It seems like that despite the training, food and exercise provided to the boys, life was harsh and brutal for the most part. The reformatory closed its doors in 1940, when the staff and boys moved to Daingean Industrial School, County Offaly.

### *Laragh Barracks*

Nothing now remains of the Laragh Barracks. It was demolished in 1955. The site is known as the Ordnance Ground. Its last use was as a private residence, and before that it was used by the Laragh Mill as a store.

### *Drumgoff Barracks (Glenmalure)*

Drumgoff Barrack was only used by the military until 1844. It was then leased to the Wicklow Mining Company and was used as both office and living quarters. By 1868, mining had stopped in the valley, and the barracks site reverted to the land owner – the Kemmis family of Ballinacor House. Only a ruined shell of the building remains today.

### *Aughavannagh Barracks*

Aughavannagh Barracks still stands today, although it is deteriorating and is no longer considered safe. The building was only used militarily until 1825. The site then reverted to the landowner – William Parnell of Rathdrum, grandfather to Charles Stewart Parnell. They used part of the building as a hunting lodge. For some years the Irish Constabulary used part of the building as a garrison.

Another politician, John Redmond, acquired the property after Charles Stewart Parnell's death. In 1944, An Óige bought the property for £350. It was used very successfully as a youth hostel until 1998, when unfortunately, the building was declared unsafe and too costly to repair and maintain.

### *Leitrim Barrack (Glen of Imaal)*

Following the surrender of Michael Dwyer in 1803, Leitrim Barracks ceased to be very useful, and was expensive to maintain. A fire in 1914 resulted in the demolition of the building and very little now remains.<sup>5</sup>

### *Michael Dwyer*

Born in in the townland of Camara, in the Glen of Imaal in 1772, it's said he was influenced to enter into republicanism by his schoolteacher, Peter Birr. He joined the United Irishmen in 1797. In the summer of 1798, he fought with the rebels as captain under General Joseph Holt in battles at Arklow, Vinegar Hill, Ballyellis and Hacketstown. Under Holt's leadership, he withdrew to the safety of the Wicklow Mountains in mid-July.

Dwyer, with a small group of men began a guerrilla campaign in the Wicklow Mountains which was to last for the next five years, and would result in the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds on the part of the Government, in a massive military campaign to catch him. His force was strengthened by many deserters from the military, who headed to Wicklow as the last rebel stronghold and who became the dedicated backbone of his force. In December 1803, Dwyer finally capitulated on terms that would allow him safe passage to America but the government reneged on the agreement, holding him in Kilmainham Jail until August 1805, when they transported him to New South Wales (Australia) as an unsentenced exile.

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<sup>5</sup> Information sourced from: <https://www.glenree.ie/history/> <https://www.wicklowmountainsnationalpark.ie/history/military-roads/> [https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/people/michael\\_dwyer\\_1772\\_-1825](https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/people/michael_dwyer_1772_-1825) <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dwyer-michael-12896>

# Landscape Change in Wicklow

Within the Park, there is a great diversity of habitats with blanket bog, heath and upland grassland being the most dominant. The Park also contains important woodlands such as semi-natural oakwoods and pine plantations. Other important habitats include glaciated corrie lakes and valleys, river valleys and streams and exposed rock and scree. Many of the habitats within the Park are important on a European level and the Park has been designated a Special Area of Conservation as a result. It is the aim of the Park to protect and conserve these habitats for our wildlife, whilst enabling the public to benefit from and appreciate our natural heritage.

The flora composition of the Park and Ireland can be traced back 10,000 years to the end of the Ice Age. As the climate changed and became warmer, the huge ice sheets covering the country gradually melted. As a result, sea level rose and Ireland became an island, separate from Britain and mainland Europe. This isolation of Ireland effectively restricted any further natural migration of plants to this country, and left us with over 10,000 different species of flowering plants and ferns. Over subsequent years, human activities have caused about 300 more species of flowering plants to become naturalised. Some of these non-natives arrived here accidentally, possibly in the manure of imported livestock or mixed up in the seed of imported cereals and foodstuffs. Many others were brought here as attractive garden specimens, and have since managed to escape and thrive in the wild.

## Tree felling and charcoal production in Wicklow

The loss of Ireland's woodlands started with the beginnings of Agriculture, when small clearances were made. Subsequently, more than a 1,000 years later, the widespread plunder of the trees by occupying English landlords began. The timber was seen as a valuable resource and huge trees were felled and exported to England to build the cathedrals and ships, providing an extra source of income to many of the absentee 'Gentry' who had been granted ownership of land in Ireland as a payment for favours by English royalty.

Charcoal production for supporting iron smelting also had an extreme impact on Irish woodlands. Irish observers in the seventeenth century recording significant damage to woodlands, whereas others have argued that the iron industry would preserve the woods in its own interest. In Ireland, the exploitation of woodlands appears to have been part of a colonial, extractive economy, with little attempt to sustain the woodland resource. Indeed, 'the fact that Irish woods were being destructively rather than sustainably worked made Irish charcoal very cheap, its cheapness offsetting the cost of importing ore'. More sustainable management practices were developed, and the 'coppice with standards' system was widely used in Wicklow.

Arthur Young's account, *A tour in Ireland 1776-1779*, records that in Wicklow there were 'many copses on the sides of mountains of birch, oak, ash and holly, which are generally cut at 25 years for poles for building cabins; the bark for tan, and the smaller branches for charcoal'. Ten ironworks are listed in Wicklow during the seventeenth century, one of which is in Glendalough. In the 1640s, woodlands in the Wicklow valleys were exploited for fuel; some of the ironworks using this supply were in production for over a century. Before 1640 charcoal had been exported from Wicklow to south Wales. By the end of the

18th century it appears much of the Glendalough area was completely deforested.<sup>6</sup>

The woodlands within the National Park were often found in secluded valleys with acidic soil, leaving oak trees to flourish. The oak timber in them made the best charcoal. So these woods were largely felled and the trees made into charcoal to feed the mines in the glacial valleys of Wicklow and in Wales. The oaks were coppiced. That means that they were cut down to the ground in a twelve to fifteen year cycle. This method produced increased quantities of easily managed timber.

The oak and birch woods around Glendalough are mostly recently regenerated woodlands, some of which have been planted by Wicklow Mountains National Park with the support of Coillte and some is natural regeneration. Fences around some of the wooded areas are to deter the hybrid Red x Sitka deer population from destroying the natural regeneration of the woods by browsing the saplings. Today Wicklow is the most forested county in Ireland, supporting a sustainable forestry industry which employs over 1,000 people - an immense change to the 17th and 18th centuries, but leaving behind a vastly altered landscape.<sup>7</sup> Most of the trees at Glendalough today are only about 150-200 years old.

### Last original woodlands

Tomnafinnoge is the last surviving fragment of the great

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<sup>6</sup> Recent excavations of charcoal production platforms in the Glendalough valley, Co. Wicklow. Graeme Warren, Conor McDermott, Lorna O'Donnell and Rob Sands. *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* Volume XXI, 2012

<sup>7</sup> Carey, Michael. *If Trees Could Talk: Wicklow's Trees and Woodlands Over Four Centuries*. COFORD, 2009

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/environment-geography/flora-fauna/wild-wicklow/tomnafinnoge-wood/>  
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Shillelagh woods which once clothed the hills and valleys of south Wicklow. As early as 1444, these woods supplied timber for the construction of Kings College, Cambridge, and later for Westminster Abbey, St Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity College Dublin. In 1634, the woods were estimated to cover 'more than many thousand acres', but were heavily exploited especially for shipbuilding. In 1670, the woods were reported to be still extensive, 'being nine or ten miles in length' and a valuation in 1671 found a total of 3905 acres (1579 hectares) of woodland here.

The present oaks were planted within an existing coppiced wood in the mid-1700s when there were still extensive native woods in the locality so it provides an important link between the ancient forest of Shillelagh and the woodland of today. It occupies the valley of the Derry River which flows in a south-west direction to join the Slaney. Unlike many other Wicklow woodlands, Tomnafinnoge is growing on deep, fertile soils, the lowest of which are liable to winter flooding.<sup>8</sup>

### Rewilding

It should be noted that much of the Glendalough and Glendasan valleys have been markedly changed by human interventions over thousands of years of human habitation (along with Ireland more generally). The Republic of Ireland now has the lowest forest cover of any country in Europe.

Once, 80% of the land here was covered by native trees – the figure is now just 1%.<sup>9</sup>

*“Ireland has virtually no wild habitats, except the strip between the tides (and not always then). Most of the nature we know is a human construct, both in what we’ve added over centuries and – much more often – what we’ve taken away.”<sup>10</sup>*

Any suggestions for re-wilding the landscapes of Wicklow, particularly around the Glendalough valley, will need to incorporate the vastly altered landscapes. Our current thinking suggests that a re-wilding process to be more sympathetic to the monastic history of the Glendalough valley could incorporate more diverse planting, from wheat and barley close to the settlement to more diverse woodlands along the slopes and river valley. Throughout the National Park and Wicklow more widely there is enormous scope to diversify planting away from Sitka spruce and other commercial plantations, instead restoring native woodlands, wetlands and bogs to provide habitats for biodiversity to flourish.<sup>11</sup>

## Blanket Bogs and Heaths in the Uplands

Ireland has the largest coverage of blanket bogs in Europe (original cover was estimated at 773,860 ha – two-thirds of the original peatland cover in Ireland). Blanket bogs developed about 4,000 years ago but some are currently being created. They are most widespread in areas where the annual rainfall is greater than 1,250 mm and the number of rain days exceeds 225. Like raised bogs, blanket bogs are rain fed. Mountain blanket bogs occur on relatively flat terrain (across mountain plateaux and gentle slopes) in the higher Irish mountains above 200 m altitude<sup>12</sup>.

A typical area with blanket bog is found in the Sally Gap region. Blanket Bog in the Wicklow Uplands is important for biodiversity as it is the only example of extensive upland blanket bog in the east of Ireland. It is found wherever a deep layer of partially decomposed plant material has accumulated to form peat. It is a lack of oxygen that prevents the complete breakdown of plant material. Actively growing blanket bog will be very wet with pool systems and have a significant cover of bog moss, lichens, cowberry and heath rush. Low growing ling heather may also be present with some bilberry, white grass and tormentil.

Grasslands where heather and bilberry exceed 25% are considered as heath. Heath areas are of international importance and dominate large areas of the Wicklow Uplands. Wet heath is associated with wet conditions. However it can be

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210211-rewilding-can-ireland-regrow-its-wilderness>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/should-ireland-be-returned-to-the-wild-1.963784>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/wicklowpeople/news/weve-spent-our-lives-hiking-and-walking-in-wicklow-and-can-see-how-wildlife-has-been-in-decline-40124642.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/enfo/irelands-environment/peatlands/peatlands-in-ireland/>

distinguished from blanket bog due to a shallower peat depth and the absence of pool systems.<sup>13</sup>

Lugnaquilla and the Ow Valley is an area which has been less disturbed by human activity than other parts of the valleys and uplands. This is a vast and apparently empty place but it is rich in wild plants and animals. The lower slopes are mainly covered with heather and purple moor grass. Higher parts, such as the saddle between Slievemaan and Lugnaquilla, have a covering of blanket bog and can be quite wet and difficult walking after rainy weather. The summit of Lugnaquilla is a plateau with a closely grazed sward of bilberry, grasses and mosses, and is the highest peak in Wicklow at 925 metres (3034 feet).<sup>14</sup>



Vale of Clara. Wicklow Heritage.

### Vale of Clara Nature Reserve

A large area of fragmented oak-wood. It contains the largest area of semi-natural woodland in County Wicklow and is potentially one of the largest stands of native hardwoods in the country. The area has been at least partially under woodland since the Ice Age. The oak-woods are also of high scenic value.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://wicklowuplands.ie/wicklow-uplands/habitats/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/environment-geography/flora-fauna/wild-wicklow/lugnaquilla/>  
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# Ecclesiastical sites around Wicklow

Other than the well known and heavily visited monastic settlement of Glendalough, County Wicklow has an extensive range of monastic and other religious sites spanning across many centuries. Along with ancient pilgrim routes such as St Kevin's Way, Wicklow has a deep history of spirituality, linked to its natural beauty. Below is an outline of some of the sites outside of Glendalough which give an indication of the opportunities for interpretation journeys throughout the region.

## St Kevin's Way

Although often associated with Glendalough, St Kevin's Way takes in a relatively large swathe of the uplands, and includes a number of sites of religious interest. There may have been ancient trading routes along similar routes to where St Kevin's Way eventually formed. The Hollywood area marked a very important crossroads between the ancient north to south road known as the Slighe Chualann and the East to West trading route which connected the sea ports on the East coast with the fertile plains of Kildare at Church Mountain. Folklore suggests that St Kevin spent time at Glendalough in retreat before he headed across the Wicklow Mountains and founded the ecclesiastical site of Glendalough. It is possible that a small church or hermitage may have existed at Hollywood in the early medieval period.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.wicklowmountainnationalpark.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/St-Kevins-Way-2020.pdf> and <https://pilgrimagemedievalireland.com/2012/09/05/medieval-pilgrimage-at-hollywood-co-wicklow/>

It was documented that pilgrims from both North and South would meet at Ballinagee. They waited here until there were sufficient numbers to travel on towards Tonelagee and the Wicklow Gap, which was done in a group as the Wicklow Gap could have treacherous conditions. There are carved standing stones and boulders along the routes which would have marked the way for medieval pilgrims.<sup>15</sup>



Baltinglass Abbey. Wikimedia Commons

## Brittas Bay Landing Site and Inis Baithin Monastery

There are a number of historical references to St Patrick's landing at Three Mile Water, Brittas Bay. In addition to this, an important monastic site was founded on an island at the mouth of the Three Mile Water, known as Inis Baithin. It was second to Glendalough and is the burial place of St Baithin, its



abbot. He was the cousin and successor to St Columba who brought Christianity to Scotland.

St Patrick landed in 430 or 431 and was reported to have landed at a port called Ostium Dee. There is evidence that the Dee is the river now known as Three Mile Water. Inis Baithin monastery may have had a pilgrim path connecting to Glendalough.<sup>16</sup> It is thought that the old Three Mile Water graveyard is the continuation of the 6th-century monastery.<sup>17</sup>

### Castletimon Ogham Stone

The close proximity of the Castletimon Ogham stone suggests St Patrick's landing place at Brittas Bay may have been associated with the early Irish church. The inscription has been read by Macalister (1945, 51-2, no. 47) as 'NETA-CARI NETA-CAGI'.<sup>18</sup>

### Baltinglass Abbey

Developed as a sister abbey to Mellifont in Louth, the ruins here are dated to the foundation in 1148. It was Founded by Dermot MacMurrough (d.1171), king of Leinster as a Cistercian abbey in a valley which acted as a strategic pass for travelling between

north and south Leinster. The original place name Belach Conglais 'the pass of Cú Glas' retains the name of a mythological hero Glass who was reputedly killed by magical wild boars. The archaeology of the surrounding environs, and especially the substantial hillfort of Rathcoran on Baltinglass Hill overlooking the river valley testifies to strategic importance of Baltinglass from prehistory. The ruins of the twelfth-century romanesque church are all that survive of the monastery.<sup>19</sup>

### Aghowle Church

This 12th- century church occupies the site of an early monastery dedicated to St Finian of Clonard in the 6th century. The present ruins date from the 1100's and contain some good examples of early-Romanesque design. When St Finian was looking for a site to build his monastery on, he initially picked the site of the ring fort on the top of Barnacashel Hill. The stone which he placed there was moved to an orchard at the bottom of the hill during the night. It was said by angels he replaced the stone on the hill three further times and each time it returned to the orchard. After struggling with the land owner to have access to the land, eventually St Finian built his settlement among the apple trees.

There was limited water on the site so the industrious monks built wooden lined drains that brought the water from the hill

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<sup>16</sup> <https://visitwicklow.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Brittass-Bay-Saint-Patricks-Landing.pdf> and <https://monasticon.celt.dias.ie/showrecord.php?id=3885>

<sup>17</sup> [https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/co\\_wicklows\\_pure\\_miles/three\\_mile\\_water\\_pure\\_mile](https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/co_wicklows_pure_miles/three_mile_water_pure_mile)

<sup>18</sup> <https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>

<sup>19</sup> [https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/topics/county\\_wicklow\\_heritage\\_plan-3/wicklow\\_in\\_the\\_early\\_middle\\_ages-5](https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/topics/county_wicklow_heritage_plan-3/wicklow_in_the_early_middle_ages-5) [https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/baltinglass/baltinglass\\_heritage/baltinglass\\_-\\_the\\_abbey](https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/baltinglass/baltinglass_heritage/baltinglass_-_the_abbey)

by gravity to the monastery, and remains of these are now held in the National Museum. St Finian erected a 'Teampall Mór' or big Church as he had a large number of monks living in Aghowle. They lived in beehive cells, built around a wooden Church. St Finnian continued to live in Aghowle for 16 years. Around 1100AD the wooden Church was replaced with the present stone structure. The West gable door is a rare example of Gaelic-Romanesque architecture with only one other example in Ireland. The 12-foot cross dates from the very early stages of the Irish Church as it exhibits no sculpture or inscriptions.<sup>20</sup>

Located on the eastern side of the cross is a large granite baptismal font which is believed to be pre-Norman. Local tradition claimed that water from the font could cure headaches and skin ailments.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> [https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/coolattin/aghowle\\_a\\_legendry\\_place](https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/coolattin/aghowle_a_legendry_place)

<sup>21</sup> <https://wicklowheritage.omeka.net/items/show/37>

# Ancient Monuments

As in the previous segment exploring some of the ecclesiastical sites around Wicklow, there are extensive remains of ancient people and their lives in the county. Below is an outline of some of the sites which give an indication of the opportunities for interpretation journeys throughout the region.

## Baltinglass Hillforts

Around 1400 BC, Bronze Age communities in many parts Ireland began to construct large enclosures, known as hillforts, on strategically positioned hilltops overlooking broad expanses of lowland. Baltinglass is at the centre of a huge complex of five hillforts. These hillforts may be tentatively dated to around 1,000 BC or slightly earlier. They were not made by the Neolithic people, but by a later metal-using people. It is one of the most impressive and massive constructions of the period within Western Europe. However currently it is unknown if the complexes were intended for serious defence or had a more ritual function; if they were intended as sites for permanent habitation or to be used as strongholds in times of war or if the five hillforts represent a single, united power structure or rival groups.<sup>22</sup>

“Baltinglass could be regarded as the hillfort capital of Ireland. It was one of the first, if not the first, location to practice agriculture as we know it almost 6,000 years ago”.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> [https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/baltinglass/baltinglass\\_heritage/baltinglass\\_-\\_brusselstown](https://heritage.wicklowheritage.org/places/baltinglass/baltinglass_heritage/baltinglass_-_brusselstown)

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/wicklowpeople/news/baltinglass-could-be-hillfort-capital-37653694.html> and <https://cora.ucc.ie/handle/10468/3532>



*Rathgall Hillfort. Wikimedia Commons.*

## Rathgall Ringfort

This hillfort was the homestead of a significant family, possibly a chieftan or tribal leader. Legend suggests it may even have been the seat of the kings of South Leinster. The impressive defences and large volume of artefacts reinforces the high status of the occupants of this site. This impressive and important monument encompasses a total area of 18 acres. Excavations, started in 1969 by the late Barry Raftery revealed important evidence for Late Bronze Age settlement, industrial,

agricultural and funerary activity at Rathgall, dating to circa 800BC.<sup>24</sup>

accepted as the original type in Ireland, this cairn would appear to be a local variation, and, therefore, later in date, according to the general rule laid down by Professor Childe with reference to Scottish megalithic tombs”.<sup>27</sup>

### Seefin Passage Tomb

The Neolithic passage tomb of Seefin stands on top of a 650m high mountain in North Wicklow. It appears to be part of a series of tombs, as a number of other peaks in the area like Seefingan and Seahan also have similar large cairns covering passage tombs. When excavated, in 1931 this tomb was empty, an unexpected development given the size of the tomb and the amount of effort required to build it.<sup>25</sup>

Two rocks guarding the tomb’s entrance are adorned with diamond shapes that some say resemble a human face. An additional stone on the roof also bears a mysterious carving of five lines. A peat profile taken in the 1960s showed evidence of Neolithic land clearing, suggesting there was once a settlement nearby. It’s likely the tomb has been open and explored for a long time, as there is an Early Christian equal-armed cross added to one of the roof stones.<sup>26</sup>

“The cairn on Seefinn resembles some of those found at Loughcrew : the chamber has two lateral recesses at each side and one at the end, and thus seems to be a development of the more usual type of chamber with three recesses, the plan of which is of a cruciform shape. If the cruciform type is to be

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<sup>24</sup> <https://wicklowheritage.omeka.net/items/show/38>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.thejournal.ie/heritage-sites-hidden-ireland-seefin-wicklow-navan-fort-armagh-roscommon-castle-998600-Jul2013/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/seefin-passage-tomb-2>

<sup>27</sup> Price, Liam. ‘The Ages of Stone and Bronze in County Wicklow’. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, Vol. 42 (1934/1935), pp. 31-64

# Interpretation Journeys

## - some possibilities

- Linked journeys starting from Glendalough exploring the religious and spiritual histories of Wicklow. Incorporating the ideas of pilgrimage and returning to the original methods of travelling through Wicklow - by foot and on pilgrimage. See <https://www.tearmann.ie/what-we-offer/guided-pilgrimages/> <https://www.pilgrimpath.ie/st-kevins-way-activities-2/> and <https://www.wildernessireland.com/blog/irish-caminos-irelands-pilgrimage-routes/>
- Industrial and mining histories of Glendalough, bringing in elements of mining, charcoal burning, international links to England and Wales, and the impact this has had on the landscapes of Wicklow. Visitors should be attracted to the mining villages in the Glendasan valleys rather than concentrating in Glendalough/Glenealo. Miner's Way.
- Military Histories, guerrilla warfare and rebellion in 1798: linking the often desolate Military Road linking north and south Wicklow to Dublin to the amazing local stories of Irish rebellion. Marking out the barracks, both extant and lost, and potential for these to be destinations in their own right.
- Natural history and biodiversity: fostering understanding of the range of habitats and species within the national park, as well as throughout the county. It will be important that any sense of rewinding takes into account the long history of landscape change, from early settlements through to monastic farming and landscapes, to industrial impacts of tree felling, charcoal production and mining.
- Ancient lives: understanding the range of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments throughout Wicklow, giving a sense of the lives and rituals of ancient ancestors. Encourage greater respect, understanding and protection for these mysterious complexes and the people who worked so hard to build them.
- Connections to existing trails and journeys, such as the Celtic Route project developed with EU funding. This links the coastal regions of Wales and Ireland together through the stories of ancient Celtic people and their use of the landscape and natural resources.

# Key Interpretive Locations

## Laragh and Glendalough - Arrival Point

Visitors to Wicklow need a clear understanding of the county, its myriad opportunities for experiences and facilities to provide comfort and guidance before and after a visit. We envisage Laragh being an ideal location for visitors to better understand the National Park more widely; become aware of the different journeys available throughout Wicklow, and develop a sense of awe and wonder at this remarkable county.

The arrival point at Laragh has the potential to combine powerful storytelling with emotive messaging about the impact humans have had on the landscape and biodiversity of the Wicklow Mountains. We see this as a gateway into the monastic settlement of Glendalough and into the Glendalough/Glencalo valleys, providing visitors to these 'honeypot' sites with key information to provide a frame for their experience, whilst also encouraging them to explore more widely throughout the region.

Finally, the site at Laragh would provide important facilities such as food and drink vendors, commercial vendors, way finding and transportation options to encourage visitors to explore with confidence.

### Key themes and topics to explore

- Today the site is one of the largest and best-preserved medieval ecclesiastical sites in Ireland and is globally significant, with evidence of human occupation from Neolithic times. The main monastery at the lower lake was redesigned to form an ecclesiastical city in the 12th century, and the medieval gate leading into the complex is the only one of its type remaining in Ireland. The round tower is one of the best preserved examples in Ireland, and there is still evidence of the raised site for the main ecclesiastical sites. At the peak of Glendalough's importance, more than 1,000 laypeople along with the clergy would have worked and lived in the valley, producing food, crops, manuscripts and more. More prosaic buildings would have ringed the central, sacred section of the site near the Lower Lake which can still be seen today, with bakeries, food storage, gardens and accommodation all featuring.
- The Upper Lake has had a long history of human habitation and resource extraction, from tree felling to smelt iron to ecclesiastical sites and pilgrimage destinations (along with the sites at the Lower Lake). The ruins of the 10th-century Reefert Church are hidden amongst the trees near the Poulanass waterfall. A church was likely here at the time of St Kevin also. It was used as the burial place for the O'Toole family. St Kevin's Bed, a small man-made cave dug out of the cliffs rising from the lake shore, was used as a retreat for both St Kevin and later St Laurence O'Toole, but archaeological evidence suggests it was dug out much earlier and may date from the Neolithic period. Further along the shoreline are the remains of the mining settlement of the valley, with tunnels linking through Camaderry Mountain to the Glendasan Valley and further mining settlements.

- The natural environment of Glendalough and the wider valley setting has been extensively modified by human activities since likely Neolithic times. From tree felling and clearing, to mining, road building and tourism, the valley of Glendalough and the wider national park are very different to their original state. The visitor centre has the potential to give visitors an insight into the landscapes of the park as well as the ways in which human interaction has massively changed the landscape.
- Connected landscapes: better understand how people moved throughout the county, from pilgrim routes from Kildare to Glendalough, the Military Road and mining tracks throughout the valleys, as well as wider routes such as the Sligh Culann (now the Wicklow Way) and routes from Wales to the East coast of Ireland. Visitors will be encouraged to explore the beautiful landscapes of Glendalough and further afield mindfully, stepping out of their daily routines and into a landscape transformed by those seeking spirituality.

### Outcomes

- Visitors to Glendalough understand the range of experiences available within the Park and wider within the county, through themes of journeys and engagement with landscapes.
- They will understand how human activities have irrevocably changed the landscape of Glendalough and the surrounding valleys, but will also be amazed at how ecosystems have continued and in some cases flourished.
- Visitors will develop a deeper respect for the landscapes of the national park and visit with more understanding of the

delicate habitats and how human activities have interfered over thousands of years.

- They will understand the importance of the Glendalough monastic site to the history of early Irish Christianity, and better understand the importance of St Kevin to the valley.

## Glens of Lead - Engagement Point

The Glendasan, Glenmalure and Glendalough valleys have been rich sources of lead and silver, exploited by humans since the late 18th century, although there evidence of mining activity in the Wicklow Mountains since the Bronze Age including the copper mines in Avoca. We envisage a stand-alone engagement point at the Wicklow Gap, where visitors can explore the rich seams of history located in the valleys, while also encouraging visitors to take in the view.

We see this site as sympathetic additions to the landscape, providing a focal point to the history of mining around Glendalough as well as shelter to discover more. The aim of these structures would not be to remove all trace of the story from other sites - instead, providing an entry point to this important history which can be further explored using the Miner's Way walking trail.

### Key themes and topics to explore

- Connected landscapes: better understand how people moved throughout the county, from pilgrim routes from

Kildare to Glendalough, the Military Road and mining tracks throughout the valleys, as well as wider routes such as the Slighe Cualann (now the Wicklow Way) and routes from Wales to the East coast of Ireland. Visitors will be encouraged to explore the beautiful landscapes of Glendalough and further afield mindfully, stepping out of their daily routines and into a landscape transformed by those seeking riches and livelihoods.

- The landscape shaping lives in Wicklow - hard lives for miners, but created townships, communities and industry in a rural area.
- Understanding how the landscape today has been altered beyond recognition by thousands of years of human use - from tree clearances in Neolithic and Bronze Age times through to extractive industries and tree planting (and felling) to create mining tunnels.
- The boom and bust of lead mining in Glendalough and what visitors can still see today. Industrial heritage and archaeology within the landscape, and connections to the Miner's Way.

### Outcomes

- Visitors will understand how human activities have irrevocably changed the landscape of the Wicklow uplands and the surrounding valleys, but will also be amazed at how ecosystems have continued and in some cases flourished.
- They will understand the histories of mining across the valleys, and see the remnants of this once-bustling industry.

- Visitors will realise they can explore further on the Miner's Way, while getting an overview alongside the astonishing view at the Wicklow Gap site.

## The Military Road - Driving/Cycling Tour

The landscape of the Wicklow Uplands proved to be a secret weapon during the 1798 Rebellion, and the landscape still bears the traces of this pivotal time in Irish history. The rugged landscape and challenging terrain provided excellent cover for the rebels, who knew the area intimately. The British forces struggled to track and find the rebels and therefore the Military Road was planned and eventually constructed provide greater access to this region, and is still used as a driving and cycling route today.

We see this road, particularly through the Sally Gap and through the Uplands, as a driving or cycling route with key information points at sites along the route, giving visitors a sense of the dramatic events that took place in Wicklow. We also imagine visitors relating the desolate and difficult landscapes that they can see today with the events of the past, giving them a greater respect for this incredible landscape and the secrets it holds.

Key location points would include the Glenree Barracks, which still operates today as a Peace and Reconciliation Centre. We would see this as a key start and end point to a driving or cycling trail, particularly for those beginning their journey from Dublin. Along with this, the unique stories of the associated German graveyard and the site for German refugee children to



be housed would be included as unusual parts of this otherwise very national story.

As visitors travel either by car or bicycle, key points to include would be to look over the Sally Gap, giving visitors a sense of the vast and treacherous landscape the rebels knew so well; along with the Aughavanna Barracks and its association with Charles Stewart Parnell; and Drumgoff Barracks and its connection with mining heritage. This tour has the potential to thematically connect with key elements of other interpretation journeys, particularly around the ideas of human engagement with this landscape through rebellion and mining, as well as providing a vista for visitors to understand the scale of the landscape. Providing a listing of memorials to this uprising would also be included so visitors could engage with these elements of the story while on their journey.

### Key themes and topics to explore

- Background to the 1798 Rebellion - a major uprising against British Rule in Ireland, incorporating guerrilla warfare tactics across the country including in Wicklow.
- During the 1798 Rebellion, the inaccessibility of the Wicklow Mountains proved a problem for the government forces. Four roads crossed the county from East to West, but none ran north south to connect them. Rebels who knew the Wicklow uplands intimately were able to escape British troops with ease, seemingly vanishing into the hills and remote valleys.
- One such rebel was Michael Dwyer, from the Glen of Imaal. He led a band of rebels after the battle of Vinegar Hill in Wexford, and his deep knowledge of the landscape led to his evasion of British troops.

- Towards the end of 1798, Colonel John Skerret of the Durham Fencibles suggested building a military road across the mountains. The idea was simple. The road would enable troops to travel quickly to wherever they were needed. At the same time, it would restrict the rebel's ability to move unseen. An additional factor was the fear of a potential French invasion on the East coast at this time, which might necessitate rapid movement of troops.
- The road was built mainly by soldiers working in four teams. Each team had an officer and 50 soldiers. Local people were also welcome to help, but most had no desire to. The locals felt that once the road was constructed, land in the area would become more valuable, and their rents would rise.
- The Great Military Road was finally finished in 1809. It cost £43,500, working out at over £1,000 per mile.

### Outcomes

- Visitors will understand how human activities have irrevocably changed the landscape of the Wicklow uplands and the surrounding valleys, but will also be amazed at how ecosystems have continued and in some cases flourished.
- They will understand how the landscape of Wicklow aided the Irish engaged in the 1798 Rebellion, and why the Military Road was built to counter this.
- They will understand how the use of sites along the Military Road has changed over time.

# Wider Wicklow Themes and Topics

Alongside previously developed themes and topics for Glendalough more specifically, the wider Wicklow region has a series of themes and topics that can shape interpretation and visitor journeys throughout the county. The following information showcases the range of themes and stories which can frame visitor experiences around the county.

The different thematic areas have been weighted with the following principles in mind, based on widely accepted significance assessments of museum and heritage collections and exhibition design worldwide:

**Historic significance:** A theme or topic or area may be historically significant for its association with people, events, places or themes. This can be an association with local histories or events, or tied into broader nationally important stories.

**Aesthetic significance:** Stories of natural beauty, landscape or physical examples of craftsmanship and skill.

**Scientific or research significance:** Themes or topics which contain potential or have already yielded important scientific outcomes, including archaeological finds, ecological or biological research (land and marine), or sites containing documentary or oral history materials.

**Social/spiritual significance:** Sites reflecting current cultural or social concerns or meanings, as well as sites with connections to religion or spirituality, whether organised or more casual.

Each of these areas can be applied to themes and topics within Wider Wicklow with particular notice paid to representativeness, uniqueness/rarity and interpretative potential. In doing so, the significance of each theme or topic can be weighted accordingly, providing a framework which will assist in shaping narrative experiences throughout Wicklow.

The purpose of this document and the below weighting guide is to explore opportunities to address an identified visitor capacity issue across the wider Wicklow area.

High profile and well established attractions such as Powerscourt, Russborough House and parts of the Wicklow Mountains National Park experience significant capacity challenges, while also already being well regarded by visitors for a day out and rich experience.

It is anticipated that by focussing a visitor proposition on less visited county-wide attractions and by facilitating greater appreciation of such sites through interpretation, pressure on over-visited locations can be alleviated.

In particular, the mining and military heritage of Glendalough's surrounding areas can add a richness to the visitor proposition for Wicklow, and this has been referenced within each theme areas weighting.

## Natural History and Biodiversity

**Weighting:** 1 - due to the importance of the national park and other areas of natural heritage within the region; its social significance as spaces for engaging with nature for those living in urban areas of Dublin and North Wicklow; historic significance relating to human experiences of using the land and its resources.

**Topics:** Habitats and biodiversity; rewilding and human impacts on Irish natural landscapes; blanket bogs and uplands; engaging mindfully with natural world.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** Tree felling and charcoal production in Glendalough - all landscape has been altered by human activities ; Tomnafinnoge Woodlands (last of Shillelagh Forest - original forest cover); blanket bogs and heaths in the Uplands; Vale of Clara oak forest; The Lord's Wood; Crone Wood; Glen of the Downs forests and walks; river systems e.g. Three-Mile-Water, east Wicklow River Trust, Meeting of the Waters; Ballymoyle Forest; Baltinglass Outdoor Education Centre.

## Ecclesiastical and Spiritual Heritage

**Weighting:** 1 - special stories of saints and ecclesiastical life still in existence in the landscape; one of the most complete monastic settlements in Ireland; geographic spread of sites across Wicklow an indication of the significance of religious heritage to the region. Connections to the landscape to a religious way of life now mostly lost. Provision of interpretation at key points in Laragh as well as in the valley will aim to disperse current bottlenecks and deepen the experience of Glendalough and its associated spiritual and ecclesiastical stories.

**Topics:** The life of St Kevin and the formation of Glendalough; monastic life in Wicklow; pilgrimage and journeys to knowledge;

understanding and using the natural world; mindfulness and connection with nature.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** Baltinglass Abbey and Graveyard; Aghowle Church; Brittas Bay Landing Site and Inis Baithin Monastery; Castletimon Ogham Stone; Kiltranelagh Graveyard and standing stones (one of the oldest cemeteries still operating in the world); St Kevin's Church and St Kevin's Way Pilgrim Trail; Glendalough Monastic Settlement; Tearmann Spirituality Centre; Pilgrim Paths; Glendalough Hermitage Centre; Slighe Chualann - ancient road now mirrored by the Wicklow Way.

## Military History

**Weighting:** 2 - the Military Road and its associated stories of the nationally important 1798 Rebellion are unique and representative for this important historical story. Remaining elements in the landscape can be used as guideposts for exploring further and engaging with the wider landscape and its sense of desolation and spaciousness. We note that the specific historical narratives do not have as wide an appeal as topics such as nature and diversity, therefore will need to be carefully interpreted to provide easy understanding of the key themes and stories, with personal stories and connections to landscape and extant architecture drawn out.

**Topics:** 1798 Rebellion and activities in Wicklow; Michael Dwyer and his knowledge of Wicklow's uplands; the Military Road - development and building; post-rebellion road use; connections to land and landscape by rebels and the need to control the terrain; changing uses of the road and associated buildings over time.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** The Military Road/1798 Rebellion, with key points of Glenree Barracks and the German cemetery, as well as access to turf bogs during World War Two fuel shortages; Drumgoff Barracks (with crag called 'Dwyer's Lookout') and Aughavannagh Barracks with information also about Michael Dwyer; Eire sign on Bray Head; Kilpedder Rifle Range; Glen of Imaal; Michael Collins and connection to Greystones; coastal Martello towers.

## Mining and Extractive Industries

**Weighting:** 2 - uniquely related to the valleys of Glenmalure, Glendasan and Glendalough, with strong connections to the extant landscape as well as telling individual stories of hardship and struggle. We note that the specific historical narratives do not have as wide an appeal as topics such as nature and diversity, therefore will need to be carefully interpreted to provide easy understanding of the key themes and stories, with personal stories and connections to landscape and extant architecture drawn out.

**Topics:** Wicklow's geology; early mining and iron production; lives of the miners; connection to the natural world; damage through extractive industries; decline of the industry.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** Glens of Lead Heritage Group - tours and talks; Miner's Way; international links to Scotland and Wales; Fiddler's Row and Miner's Village in Glendasan; connection to mining structures in Glendalough valley; tunnels through Camaderry between two valleys; timber planting for tunnel supports; Baravore rolls crusher house; lazy beds and gardens reflecting everyday life.

## Ancient Monuments and Sites

**Weighting:** 2 - some of the largest ring fort complexes in Ireland, as well as sites significant to the human experience in Wicklow. Unique experiences for visitors to Ireland as well as local visitors as sites of interest and to build enjoyment and respect for their local areas. Similar monuments can be found in other jurisdictions.

**Topics:** landscape change over time; rewilding and human impacts on Irish natural landscapes; ancient lives in Wicklow.

## Big Houses, Castles and Formal Gardens

**Weighting:** 2 - well developed experiences within their own right, as well as being well represented throughout Ireland. A range of highly attractive visitor experiences, often with manicured and managed estates, which provide an interesting contrast to the concepts of rewilding being developed throughout Wicklow. These sites do not require significant interpretation development as they are already well developed and marketed, making them key destinations within Wicklow.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** Athgreany Stone Circle; Castelruddery Stone Circle; Rathcoran/Baltinglass Hillfort and Passage Tombs; Brusselstown Hillfort; Rathgall Ring Fort; Seefin Passage Tomb (also Seefingan and Seahan); Ringforts near Delgany/Glen of the Downs (Coolagad Hillfort); Castletimon (Brittas Bay) Dolmen; Drummin ogham stone; multiple bullaun stones throughout county.

## Viking and Maritime Heritage

**Weighting:** 3 - connections to Wales and other Celtic nations; connections with Skuldelev 2 and Viking Kingdom of Cuala. Currently proposals in development cover this theme comprehensively and therefore this may not need further development in this case. Other parts of Ireland also cover the history of Viking settlement in Ireland in great detail and have more obvious connections to this theme, therefore we do not feel it is a key narrative to develop at this time.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** Arklow Maritime Museum; Part Two Watersports; Bray Adventures; Canal Tours; Kingdom of Cuala - Great Sugarloaf; Battle of Delgany in 1022; trees from Glendalough used to build Skuldelev 2 longship around 1042; Delgany Viking Hoard; Glen of the Downs Toll Road; Coolnaskeagh Ringfort; Celtic Routes proposal.

## Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

**Weighting:** 3 - well shared and developed through the sites below, although certainly has relevance to wider development of narratives around respect for the natural world and human connection to landscape and journeys. We also note that much of the coastline in Wicklow is seriously over-subscribed with day trippers and locals, and therefore we do not intend to add pressure to these locations.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** SeaLife Bray Aquarium; Bray Adventures; Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk; Birdwatch Ireland East Coast Reserve; Wicklow Head/Lighthouse; Broad Lough; North and South Beach Greystones SAC.

**Potential Sites and Activities:** Powerscourt House and Gardens; Charleville House; Kilruddery House and Gardens; Belmont Demense; Mt Ussher Gardens; Black Castle; Kilmacurragh Botanic Gardens; Avondale House; Glenart Castle; Dunganstown Castle; Kippure Estate; Threecastles Castle; Hunting Brook Gardens; June Blake's Garden; Russborough House and Gardens; Coolattin Estate; Huntington Castle and Gardens.