

VARTRY RESERVOIRS

HERITAGE TRAIL

Co. Wicklow is renowned for the many wonderful walking trails which traverse its **spectacular landscape**. These trails showcase the county's wealth of beautiful scenery, its abundant wildlife and echo its fascinating history through its **diverse geological formations** and the built structures remaining from its **past inhabitants**.

The Vartry Reservoir trails comprise of **four loop trails** around the scenic Vartry Reservoirs. The trails, which are mostly flat and easily accessible include; the **Lower Vartry trail** (7.2km) the recently opened **Upper Vartry Trail** (6.4km), the **Woodland Trail** (3km) and the **Woodpecker Trail** (2.5km). Formed through the construction of two dams across the **River Vartry**, the wooded banks of the Vartry Reservoirs provide a rich habitat for a variety of plant and animal life.

The picturesque village of **Roundwood** and the **ancient ecclesiastical sites** surrounding it can be accessed a short distance west of the trail.



This leaflet is produced by **Wicklow Uplands Council (WUC)**. The mission of WUC is to support the sustainable use of the Wicklow Uplands through consensus and partnership with those who live, work and recreate there. Other heritage trails to explore in this area include those at **Bray Head to the Great Sugar Loaf** and the **Avonmore Way**. For more information visit www.wicklowuplands.ie

To learn more about the wonderful and diverse built, natural and cultural heritage of Co. Wicklow please visit the county community heritage archive at www.countywicklowheritage.org



LEGEND

- Upper Reservoir Trail
- Woodpecker Trail
- Woodland Trail
- Lower Reservoir Trail
- # Place of interest
- Town / Village
- 🕒 Bird Watching



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Roundwood

At 240m above sea level, Roundwood is the **highest village in Ireland**. It developed during the 19th century around the **Catholic Church of St Laurence O'Toole** and contains a number of fine examples of **Tudor Revival architecture**.

There is evidence of an earlier settlement in the area in the form of three ecclesiastical sites at **Ballinafunshoge**, **Knockatemple** and **Derrylossary**, all within a mile of the village. A **bullau stone** complete with rock art, dating from the prehistoric period can also be found in the village. The old name for Roundwood was **'Togher'**, which denoted a timber or stone causeway built across boggy land in ancient Ireland.

Lough Dan



3

Derrylossary Church

Built on the site of an earlier ecclesiastical foundation, Derrylossary is a ruined **Church of Ireland dating from 1820**. There is no trace of the early church remaining but the oval enclosure over 100 meters in diameter and the **three bullau stones** within the site indicate its ancient origins. The church ceased use as a place of worship in the 1960s and the roof was removed in the 1980s.

Derrylossary is the burial place of two significant early-20th century politicians, **Robert Barton (1881-1975)**, who played a significant role during the Irish Revolutionary period and **Erskine Childers (1905-1974)**, who served as President of Ireland for just over one year.



1

Varry Reservoirs

Varry Reservoirs are surrounded by over **20kms of beautiful walking trails** which provide spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. The lower reservoir was formed in the mid-19th century through the construction of a **dam across the River Varry**, the upper reservoir was completed in 1923. Both dams are earthen embankments faced with stone to prevent erosion.

The Varry Reservoirs host a good variety of habitats including wetlands, heathland and woodland all of which support a diversity of wild flora and fauna. The reservoirs are especially important for **Greylag Geese**, **Whooper Swan**, **Teal** and other wildfowl species.

One of the reservoirs' most interesting features is the **Draw Off Tower**. Having the appearance of a small castle, this building provided access to pipes which were used to convey water from the reservoir into the water treatment plant.

