

Lacken: (An Leacain, meaning hillside or slope in Gaelic), nestles in the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains on the picturesque Lake Drive. The general area has been inhabited for thousands of years, as evidenced by the existence of prehistoric burial sites, bullauns, ringforts and many other archaeological discoveries.

Sitting 242m above sea level, for centuries hill sheep farming was the principal occupation in this part of west Wicklow. At the turn of the last century, tourism made a sizable contribution to Lacken's economy, with day visitors from Dublin taking the Steam Tram to Blessington followed by a pony and trap to see the Poulaphouca Waterfall and to explore the King's River Valley.

"From a slope over the majestic King's River, which gives its name to the glen, and overlooking where it mingles its waters with the Liffey in the beautiful vale of Inchiclar, a valley affording a scene beauty not a whit inferior to the "Meeting of the Waters," Ovoca, immortalised by Moore, and Lacken House Hotel, one of the finest highland hotels in Ireland within a short mile of them."

(Kildare Observer, June 1906).


During the 1798 rebellion, Lacken was a strategic area for the rebels who had two large encampments, one on Blackmore Hill, commanding views of most of Leinster and another on Whelp Rock, providing a quick escape if needed. Behind Whelp Rock on the flanks of Moanbane, the '98' caves can still be found.

Lacken was a townland of an estimated 1543 acres, however approximately 48% of this land was lost upon the formation of the Poulaphouca Reservoir in the period 1937-1941.

Today, the reservoir is commonly known as the Blessington Lakes and the community and visitors enjoy the picturesque setting created by this dramatic change to the landscape.

For further information, please visit www.lackenvillage.ie





The blend of stunning natural landscapes, historic buildings and County Wicklow's thriving film industry, has attracted many international film productions to choose Lacken and it's locality as a film location.

'P.S. I Love You' (2007) – Gerard Butler, Hilary Swank.

'This Is My Father' (1999) – Aidan Quinn.

'Dancing at Lughnasa' (1998) – Meryl Streep.

'Widow's Peak' (1994) – Mia Farrow, Natasha Richardson.

'The Lilac Bus' (1990) – Stephanie Beacham, Con O'Neill.

'Captain Boycott' (1947) – Stewart Granger.



Sorrel Hill

At 599m, the summit provides stunning panoramic views that includes the mountains of Seefin, Seefingan and Seahan, each renowned for the megaliths that sit on their crowns.

Recreational access is gained from the Mass Path beginning in the village or from the Gap Road.

Black Hill

The dominating Black Hill stands at 602m above sea level with a granite stone monument located close to the summit. This is a memorial to J. T. Lamb, S. Wright, F. H. Erdwin and K. Hill, who lost their lives here when their Handley Page Hampden S/N AD730 plane crashed on the 17th of April 1941. They are buried in the graveyard at St. Mary's Church in Blessington.

Recreational access is provided via the Pound Lane Agreed Access Route and from a car park on the Gap Road.

Ridd's Green

This Cillin, is one of approximately 1,400 in Ireland where in less enlightened days, unbaptised babies were buried, usually under the cover of darkness. These Cillins are, in the words of Brendan Graham, author of that haunting song Cruáin na bPáiste, monuments "to centuries of heartbreak."

Pound Lane Access to Black Hill

Lodge Lane

Ballyknocken

Bullauns

A bullaun (from the Latin word *bulia*, meaning a bowl) is a boulder or rock with depressions carved into its surface. Bullaun Stones are thought to have been used as grinding mills to prepare special ritual food in pre-Christian times and were later adapted to the Christian faith.

It has also been suggested that they were used for a ritual connected to fertility, perhaps by grinding healing herbs. The water which accumulated in the bowl-shaped hollows was reputed to cure warts.

Wildlife

Thanks to the mountain and water habitats, there is an abundance of wildlife found in the area. Wicklow Mountains National Park, which covers over 20,000ha of the Wicklow Mountains, stretches to Sorrel Hill.

The reservoir is designated a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the population of Greylag Geese and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Other notable waterfowl species include: Whooper Swan, Great Crested Grebe, Snipe, Lapwing and Curlew to name but a few. The reservoir is stocked with trout, perch and pike.

Poulaphouca Reservoir (Blessington Lakes)


As early as 1919, Poulaphouca was identified as a possible location to construct a dam to provide fresh water and electricity to Dublin's rapidly growing population. Consisting of two separate valleys shaped by both the King's River and the River Liffey, 5,500 acres was required to form the reservoir as part of an ambitious joint project by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and Dublin City Council.

In preparation for the flooding, 55 residential homes and 12 labourer's cottages, farm holdings and turf banks were abandoned and a number of bridges were destroyed. On March the 3rd 1940 at 10am, the sluice gate was dropped at Poulaphouca Dam and it took one and a half years for the reservoir to reach full capacity.

The reservoir completely covered the townland of Ballinahown (often referred to as the 'Hidden Village'), which had been situated on the banks of the King's River. It was here that a sandy road connected the villages of Lacken and Valleymount, making the journey a much shorter one than it is today.


After a delay in construction due to the outbreak of the Second World War, Ireland's second hydroelectric power station began limited operations in 1944. On the 11th of December 1952, the local parish priest Fr. O'Loughlin switched on the electrical power for the parish – over a decade after the valley had been flooded.

In 1978, the water in the reservoir fell to an all-time low level, briefly revealing the remains of a number of the abandoned houses and St. Boden's Well.



Lacken Church

This church was built in 1811, 18 years before Daniel O'Connell secured Catholic Emancipation in the House of Commons. In 1882, Father Edward Rowan dedicated the church to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The Baptismal Font is said to date back to 1441 and came from an earlier church at Templeboden Graveyard.



The gold chalice used during a Mass service, is inscribed 1802 and the large trough-like granite bath that sits beside the church, is believed to have come from St Boden's Well.

St. Boden's Well


This holy well was blessed by Bishop Boden, in Liestal Switzerland in 1847. He led quite an eventful young life in West Africa serving as the Pro Consul in New Calabar and later the V.P. of the governing body of Opobo in modern day Nigeria, before arriving in Lacken in 1891. Capt. Zeller had met and married a Lacken woman, Mary Clarke, in Liverpool and together they bought what is now 'Zeller's Public House'.

He proceeded to build a small hotel on the site of where a shebeen had existed centuries beforehand and applied for his first liquor licence in October 1898. Five generations later, the public house is still run by the Zeller family.

Zeller's Public House

Originally a local primary school, this building was constructed in 1869 by Mrs Smith of Ballyboy's House "as a model for other schoolhouses as that are much required in the neighbourhood".

On the 16th of November 1916, the building was sold to the people of Lacken for the nominal purchase price of £5, by Elizabeth



Lacken Community Centre

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Graydon Stannus, granddaughter of Mrs Smith and mother of Edris Stannus. Edris was destined to become the world-famous Dame Ninette de Valois who established the Royal Ballet School, London.

This is the school in which Meryl Streep's character in the film 'Dancing at Lughnasa', is a teacher.

Recreational Activities

Situated on the Blessington Lakeside Heritage Trail, the area's rich and unique local heritage can be explored on a route that surrounds the lake.

As Ireland's largest man-made lake, it offers a wide choice of outdoor activities to enjoy, such as birdwatching, cycling, fishing, canoeing, rowing and sailing with bicycle and boat hire available locally.


The area is a popular choice for hill walking and boasts a selection of interconnected recreational paths to nearby hills. The renowned Wicklow Way and St. Kevin's Way are within easy reach of Lacken.

Proposed Blessington Greenway

A family-friendly walking and cycling trail encircling the Blessington Lakes is currently in the advanced stages of development. The scenic route will be over 40kms in length and take in the lakeside villages of Lacken, Ballyknocken and Valleymount along with two spurs linking to Russborough House and Parklands and the Tullarris Resort.

Templeboden Graveyard

Originally called Kilboden, this is the site of an ancient church which most likely fell into disuse after the 16th century Reformation. According to local folklore, Boden or Buadan, was the Bishop of Glendalough and a descendant of St. Kevin. It is thought he is buried under a stone slab in the graveyard.



Templeboden Bridge

The Templeboden Single-Arch Bridge was built by a mason named Kearney with the proceeds of local collections in the 1840's, when the country was suffering the ravages of the Great Famine. Although many bridges in the area have been destroyed by floods over the years, the craftsmanship of this Wicklow granite structure has ensured that it still stands strong.

