

Newcastle Walk No.3

Length:- 17 Kilometres (11 miles)

Time:- 5+ Hours

The Liam Lynch memorial lies on the wooded slopes of Crohan Mountain. This walk is quite long and hilly, so be prepared to set out in the morning and take a packed lunch. The route can be wet underfoot in places.

Places of Interest

A Glenboy/ Gleann Buidhe. This is the steep sided and wooded valley down to your left. The name means 'yellow glen' and refers to the colour of the soil in this area. When the stream is in flood, the water takes on a yellowish appearance.

B Shooting Lodge. This now lies in ruins but was once a residence for shooting parties attached to the Perry family of Newcastle House. Apparently it was once possible to drive a horse and carriage up the track you have just walked and the house was also used for picnics etc. Grouse, snipe and deer would have been the main targets of the hunters. Observe the remains of the rather odd roof which appears to have been constructed of stone. There are several unusual trees surrounding the house, including an evergreen oak.

C Cairn. You will need to make a small detour uphill to reach this cairn. It lies on a low knoll on the side of Crohan but is well worth the visit since it lies above the forest and is a splendid viewpoint over the Mitchelstown valley and across to the Galtee Mountains. Our ancestors must have appreciated this view as well, since the large pile of stones is most likely a burial cairn. Referred to as a 'Cloghercaun' by the Ordnance Survey of 1830, there are two other such features on nearby hilltops - Knockroe, the afforested hill on the far side of the shooting lodge and Knocknagearagh/The hill of the sheep on the far side of Glenboy. The custom of building these Megalithic tombs spread from continental Europe and especially, from Brittany in north west France. Similar cairns in other parts of the country have been dated to c. 5000 years before present. Hilltops or sites with commanding views of the surrounding countryside were often chosen and in many cases the cairn conceals a 'passage type' grave, so called because you crawled or walked through a passage into a chamber where the human remains were stored. Frequently a number of individuals were buried in the same tomb. Crohan or Cruachán - the little hill! is the obvious high point with a peaked top beyond the cairn. It is 524m. high and might well be on the itinerary of any party going for a hillwalk in the Knockmealdown Mountains.

D Liam Lynch monument. This tall and slender monument modelled on the Irish Round tower marks the spot where Liam Lynch, chief of staff of the Irish Republican Army, was shot on April 10th, 1923. The monument was erected in 1935 and recently landscaped by a FAS training scheme.

Until the early days of this century, Ireland had been under British rule for several centuries. One armed rising led to another and the matter came to a conclusion during the War of Independence 1916-21. A treaty was agreed and signed in January 1922 and March 1922 saw the formation of the provisional government of the new Irish Free State. However there were several factions in the Irish camp and not everyone agreed with the terms of the treaty. The Republicans in particular disagreed and sought to overturn the treaty by armed force, thus leading to a Civil War between the Free State forces and the Irish Republican Army. The following year saw a great deal of violence and the new state was being torn apart, with Irishman fighting Irishman. By the spring of 1923, the campaign was going badly for the Republican side. They had lost several commanders and many prisoners had been taken by the Free State forces. Steps needed to be taken to end the Civil War and a meeting was conducted in Walls cottage in the Nire valley to discuss the matter. Liam Lynch was amongst those who argued against ending the struggle and it was decided to continue.

Lieut. Clancy of the Free State forces gave the following account of the events of the 10th April 1923: '... As we moved again in the new direction uphill a burst of firing opened up on us from an eminence on the right and a few hundred yards in front of us splinters flew from the rocks with whizzing bullets.... About four hundred yards in front and higher up I was surprised to see a group of men daringly standing on rocks above, wearing big black overcoats and hats and firing from Peters and Parabellum autos with arms outstretched.... I then knew they were Republicans.... We fired off five rounds and I saw them jumping off the rocks before the bullets ceased to whizz around us. I fired two shots and then used my glasses and saw them all running downhill towards the skyline. I then observed a man fall forward and remain there. All stopped and two of the group turned back to him and began to drag him on his back.... "They are dragging him away; Let them have it, they are richards alright".... At that moment I saw the two men who were dragging the body stand for a few moments and turn and run away'

Clancy's force thought initially that they had captured Eamon de Valera due to a strong resemblance between Liam Lynch and himself. He was carried downhill in great pain, on an improvised stretcher to Goatenbridge and thence by car to Newcastle. As he was dying, Lynch asked Clancy "... Are you one of the old crowd, the I.R.A, I mean" he asked. I replied that I was and said that I had two brothers killed during the Tan war (war of Independence), with smoking guns in their hands.... He raised his right hand and said: "Shake hands for I am one of the old crowd, too" and with that the tears began to stream down his face'. Liam Lynch died later that night in Clonmel hospital.

Liam Lynch Memorial

