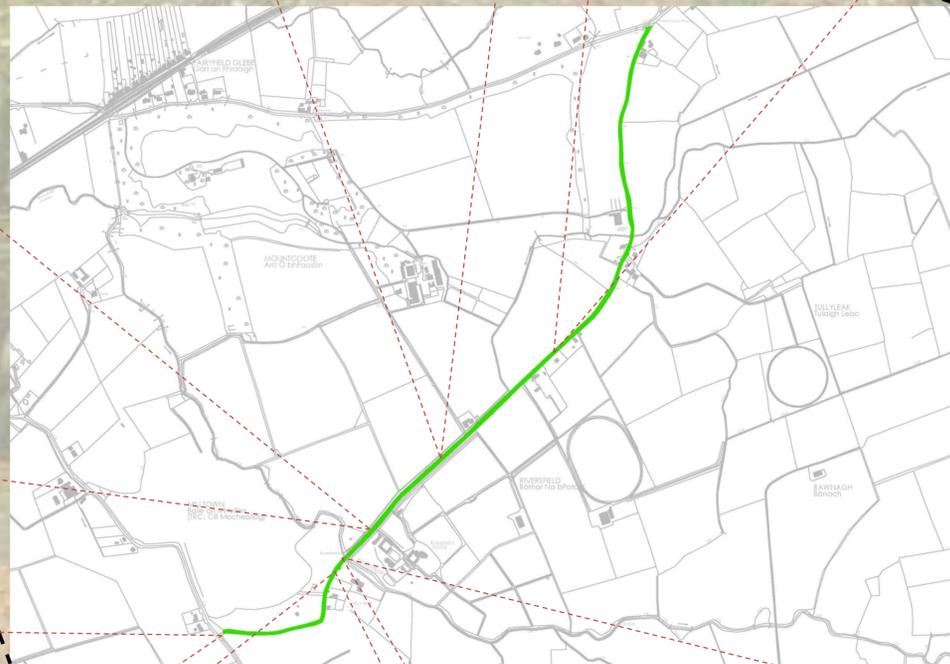
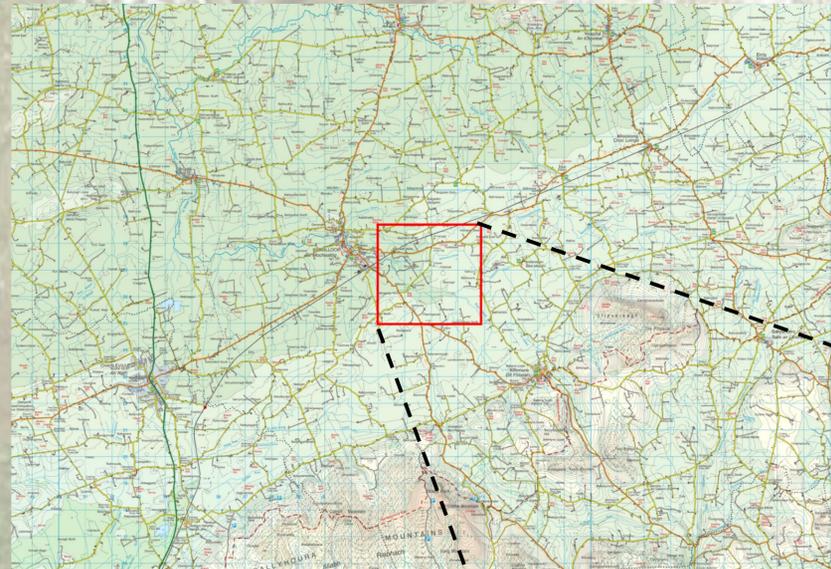


Ballingaddy's Golden Mile 2015

Slí an Dúlra Baile an Ghadaí



Ballingaddy's Golden Mile

Ballingaddy's mile is located on the L1571 approximately 1.5km south east of Kilmallock. It begins at the junction of the R512 and the L1571 (approximate grid reference 562776, 626206) and ends at the junction of the L1571 and the R515 at Foley's Cross (approximate grid reference 563976, 627913). This walk takes you along a 4m wide road, generally flat. Traffic is local and considered intermittent generally good visibility and the walk is considered safe. It is diverse with enclosed roadside boundaries of high stone walls and mature trees and hedgerow, and grass verges.

Taking this pleasant quiet rural walk you find yourself passing the townlands of Milltown, Ballingaddy North, Mountcoote, Riversfield, Fantstown and Tullyleak. You pass over the River Loobagh at Riversfield Bridge, and Ballinacurra stream at Tullyleak Bridge. Note the fine, well-maintained demesne stone wall associated with Mountcoote House which is a Protected Structure (RPS 607)¹. Its formal planned garden considered to be of regional cultural and social importance according the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage². This road has a very rich built heritage with the presence of a georgian manor estate, the well maintained, impressive, demesne wall, the stone bridge in Riversfield, and the lovely labourer's cottage (known as Rose Cottage) tastefully extended, respecting the simple vernacular design of these rural houses³.

Take a look at the OSI historic 6" maps first edition (1829 -1841) and you will see Mountcoote House, its landscape garden, and other associated manorial features indicated on the map. Similarly, Riversfield House is indicated on this road and also has a gate lodge, green houses and a formal landscaped garden. The 6" maps also contains a reference to Lady's Well in the fields to the south of Riversfield Bridge. By the publication of the 25" historical maps (1897-1913) one finds a sand pit indicated in this location⁴.

In terms of biodiversity this walk takes you along open ditches, hedgerow, and fine mature tree canopies. One finds the native ash, blackthorn, whitethorn, oak, sycamore, beech, birch, beech, willow, holly and alder. There is evidence of new planting with native trees and good examples of hedgerow management which balances road safety and wildlife needs. This diversity is essential to support wildlife corridors for mammals, invertebrates and birds alike. From ground level to the canopy of the hedgerows you will find, beetles, woodlice, invertebrates, spiders and other insects, field mice, shrews, and birds such as blackbirds, thrushes, tits, robins, and finches. Butterflies, and bees seek the nectar of flowers by the roadside. At night bats seek the insects along the hedgerow and indeed use the hedgerow for navigation as sonar detection is best guided by the hedgerow and they avoid the open fields. The kestrel and the occasional barn owl hunt along the grass verge of the hedgerow. Thus, hedgerows are the necessary links between burrows and feeding sites.

Wildlife is very important and appreciated by the local community. There are many ideas for natural wildlife along this mile including habitat surveys to look at floral diversity and wildlife at the Riversfield Bridge. The community have already identified and treated the problem of Giant Hogweed at the River Loobagh. Unfortunately, the Giant Hogweed is an invasive species that requires on going treatment to remove and moves through river catchments and roadside⁵. It requires the vigilance and co-operation of the wider community to contain the Hogweed.

Useful links:

www.hedgelayers.ie
www.invasivespecies.ie
www.biodiversityireland.ie
www.nativewoodlandtrust.ie
www.wildflowersofireland.ie
www.heritagecouncil.ie
www.limerick.ie – Limerick's heritage
www.maps.osi.ie

¹ Limerick County Development Plan 2010 – 2016 as amended, Volume 3 Record of Protected Structures

² National Inventory of Architectural Heritage ref:21903212, refer to buildingsofireland.ie, Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, Ref LI-73-R-627274

³ The Labourer's Cottage house type was constructed under the provisions of the Congested Districts Acts and other specific legislation in the 1880's. This initiative resulted in the construction of c.15,000 dwellings.

⁴ www.maps.osi.ie – historic maps 6" and 25" maps

⁵ www.invasivespecies.ie

