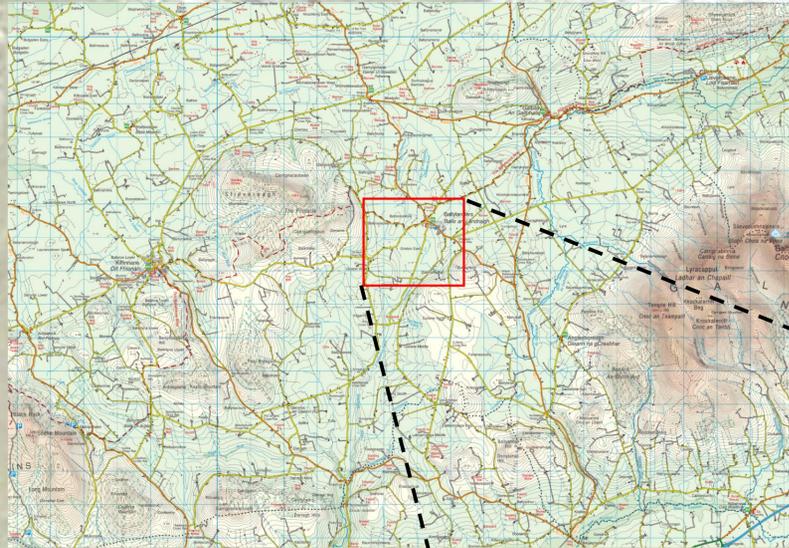


Ballylanders Golden Mile 2015

Slí an Dúlra Baile an Londraigh



Ballylanders Golden Mile

Ballylanders mile is located on the L8639 which is known as the Bog Road. It starts at the 80km speed limit (approximate grid reference 576198, 624165 – this point is taken as the natural boundary at the town at this time), and ends at Griston Bog Outdoor Educational Classroom (approximate grid reference 575936, 623211)¹. However, do take the time to perhaps park at the Ballylanders community park developed by the Ballylanders Community Development Association and take in this lovely amenity provided by the local community. The mile is a short walk (approximately 500m) from the community park.

The mile is a tarmac road with a 5m wide carriage way with a straight alignment which provides good visibility in terms of pedestrian safety, and indeed contributes to the feeling of walking along a leafy avenue associated with a demense or a country house. The road is flat for the duration of the walk. The road side boundary consists of hedgerow, open ditches, grass verge and a very diverse mix of trees which are generally well managed. This walk will take you over the Morning Star river.

Taking this pleasant rural walk you find yourself walking through the townlands of Ballylanders and Griston East. Take a look at the historic six inch map (1829-1841) and you will see that part of the present day road was non-existent with the road ending in the bog. In the 25inch historical maps (1897-1913) you see that the road as it is today is indicated². One notes on both maps the absence of houses which is a reflection of the topography of the area which is raised bogland.

This walk takes you along lovely, diverse, native hedgerows, with mature tree canopies with many native species such as hawthorn, willow, birch, beech, laurel and elm. Trees and hedgerows are essential 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 to the local community and this is reflected in the development by the local community of the Griston Bog Outdoor Classroom which make a natural habitat and its diverse wildlife available to all in a sensitive and sustainable manner³. The community is commended for its long term vision and commitment to the sensitive development of the raised bog and its unique ecosystem.

Useful links:

- www.hedgelayers.ie
- www.invasivespecies.ie
- www.biodiversityireland.ie
- www.nativewoodlandtrust.ie
- www.wildflowersofireland.ie
- www.heritagecouncil.ie
- www.limerick.ie
- www.maps.osi.ie

¹ www.maps.osi.ie

² [Maps.osi.ie/historical maps](http://maps.osi.ie/historical%20maps)

³ <http://www.ballyhouraoutdoorclassroom.com/griston-bog/>

