

Slieve Croob – Transmitter Road and ‘Pass Loanin’

2 Walk Combinations in Dromara Hills



Introduction

Walks located in the open countryside of the Dromara Hills in the Mourne/Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty:

Walk (1) is a linear walk along a metalled road which leads to the summit of Slieve Croob (534 m/1755 ft). If you are not a hill walker this walk can be a bit of a slog but the views make it worth while. It takes about 30 mins at a moderate pace to walk to the top of the mountain – just over a mile and there are a couple of stiles to negotiate at the top. The summit is marred by ugly communication masts but the access road to these masts provides an easy means of access on foot to the mountain. On a clear day the Galloway coast of Scotland and the Isle of Man can be seen



and there are great views towards the Mournes and across NI. The River Lagan rises on Slieve Croob (as the climb gets steeper, near the top, just before the first big loop in the path). Walk (2) is a longer, more strenuous walk covering some ground which can be boggy.



The ‘Blaeberry Sunday’ walk takes place on the first Sunday in August each year when the local communities on each side of the mountain make an annual trek/pilgrimage to the top. This a Christian continuance of a very old harvest festival celebrating the Celtic God Lugh – the Lughnasa – festival from which the Christian Lammas festival arose.

How to get there

From Banbridge Follow the A50 in the direction of Castlewellan as far as Moneyslane. At Moneyslane take the B7 road on left signposted for Dromara and continue along for approximately 4.5 miles. Take road on R, Finnis Road (signposted for Slieve Croob Inn). Take 2nd road on L, the Dree Hill Road, car park will see seen after a short distance on R.



From North – from Dromara, take B7 to Finnis. At Finnis leave B7 and drive over small bridge (over River Lagan) and pass Massford Close housing development – ignoring road on L. The Dree Hill Road climbs steeply and becomes single track higher up as the land opens up into moorland. Look out for car park on L, near junction of this road with Finnis/Clonvaraghan Road.

FACT FILE

Distances:

Approx. (1) 2.4 miles or (2) 6.5 miles.

Grade: Moderate – Stiles to climb at summit. Walk (1) Gradual climb to the summit but with some steep ascents.

Walk (2) Ditto but takes in open mountain.

Advice:

No dogs. Pedestrian access only. The top of the mountain is exposed and can be very windy. Only attempt Walk (2) in clear weather when the waymark posts are clearly visible. Boggy and wet areas – boots recommended.

Start and Finish:

Walk (1): Dree Hill Car Park.

Walk (2): Finnis/Massford.

Parking:

Walk (1): Dree Hill Car Park.

Walk (2): On road Finnis/Massford.

Grid Ref:

Walk (1) J300453 Walk (2) J286478

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Terrain:

Walk (1) Metalled road up mountain with a short stretch of rough ground to summit. Sheep graze on the mountain and have access to the transmitter road so it can get muddy at times. Walk (2) is a combination of terrain at Walk (1) but with stretch of open hill which can be boggy and also taking in concrete farm lane and road.

Accommodation:

B&B accommodation nearby. Also Slieve Croob Inn & Seeconnell Self-Catering Cottages. For information contact Banbridge Tourist Information Centre on 028 4062 3322.

Refreshments:

Pub at Finnis (advisable to check opening times). Slieve Croob Inn (take L out of car park and another L at road junction – continue along Clonvaraghan Road until you see Slieve Croob Inn on L (2.4 miles). Pubs, restaurant and fast food in Dromara. Ballynahinch is to the NE.

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Points of interest

There was once a massive carin (a manmade mound of stones) on the summit of Slieve Croob. This may have marked a Bronze Age burial. Lewis (1837) described it as follows: "...Among the ANTIGUITIES are two remarkable cairns; one of them on the summit of Slieve Croob, measuring 80 yards around at the base and 50 on the top, and forming the largest monument of the kind in the county: On this platform several smaller cairns are raised, of various heights and dimensions." Unfortunately little remains of this once impressive monument but the local name for the mountain, ‘The Twelve Carins’.

Tourist Information

Legananny Dolmen is located about 3 miles SE of Finnis and is well signed. Finnis souterrain locally known as ‘Binder’s Cove’ an underground passage from around the 9th Century is about 2.5 mile SW. of Finnis. From Finnis take the Carrigagh Road, first L past Chapel. Continue along this road, through x roads until you see lay-by for site on L. Or, from Dree Hill Car Park, turn L out of car park, & R at junction into Finnis Road continue along to x road and take L into Carrigagh Road, continue along, ignoring sign for Dolmen until you see lay-by on L.

Walk (1): To the summit of Slieve Croob via the ‘Transmitter Road’

(1) Walk to the summit of Slieve Croob via the ‘Transmitter Road’.

The walk begins at the Dree Hill Car Park at the foot of the transmitter road. Pass through the gate on foot and follow the road, climbing through open moorland, to the summit of the mountain. Follow the surfaced road right round to where it ends at the buildings at the top of the mountain – passing the interpretative board on the way. To get to the very top of the mountain, marked by a triangulation pillar and the remains of a once spectacular cairn, follow the 3 stiles to the top and enjoy the views. The cairn is accessible through the tolerance of the landowners. Drumkeeragh Forest can be seen below. Retrace steps to the car park.

Walk (2): Pass Loanin and Slieve Croob

If driving, park with care and consideration at Finnis, also known as Massford, safely along the road, please do not block any gates. Walk past the houses at Massford Close and take first road on the L, the Drin Road. Walk, with care, along the narrow road for approximately 1 mile looking out for a concrete lane on R with the name the ‘Pass Loanin’ (marked with a black recycled plastic sign with white writing) at the entrance. There is a traditional style whitewashed house, with slate roof on the L just before this lane. The ‘Pass Loanin’ is a permissive path along which the landowners have kindly agreed with Banbridge District Council that there can be public access – please do nothing to jeopardise this access. This concrete lane gives great views over the surrounding countryside as it climbs gently up the lower slopes of Slieve Croob. Continue to end of lane at a gate and stile giving access to the mountain. Look ahead to see the waymark posts which indicate the route, these may not be visible in mist or fog and it is quite easy to become lost so only use the route in clear weather. There is a steep climb along the remains of an old path but once the 2nd stile has been reached, at the fence line, the land levels off. Keep looking ahead to spot the waymark posts and orientate yourself and follow these to reach the transmitter road. On reaching the transmitter road, turn left to reach the summit of the mountain (directions as at walk (1)). Retrace steps back along the transmitter road and head towards the car park at the foot of the road. At the car park turn R and follow the Dree Hill Road, downhill, back into Finnis/Massford and your starting point.

