

The Glencree Story

(and four scenic walks)



From Rebellion to Reconciliation



The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation was founded in 1974 as a response to violent conflict in Ireland, with a conviction that non-violent solutions must be pursued in order to encourage reconciliation within and between communities. A spirit of commitment to these ideals inspired the foundation of the organisation and continues to motivate its work programmes.

The Glencree Centre is a civil society organisation committed to non-violent, sustainable solutions to conflict. The Centre conducts peace and reconciliation work in Ireland, North and South, and in other countries experiencing conflict. From the backdrop of experience gained in the resolution of the protracted conflict in Northern Ireland, the Glencree Centre works towards understanding complex relationships, as well as cultivating new ones, between people from all social, cultural and political backgrounds.

Glencree is a valley of stunning natural beauty nestled in the Wicklow Mountains just 12 miles southwest of Dublin city centre. The area has a long history that reflects the turbulence of Irish history. We hope that this information booklet will enable visitors to the Centre to learn more of the history of Glencree and also to enjoy some of the scenic walks that are available in the local area.

The Glencree Centre is grateful to those friends of Glencree whose support made publication of this booklet possible.

Published by Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

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Ballymount, Dublin 12*

Glencree – pre 1800

Glencree (Glenn Criothaigh – the Quaking Glen) possibly derives its name from the fact that it is located in a valley surrounded by mountain boglands. In past times the local name for the glen was Lackandarragh (the Slope of the Oaks). This name undoubtedly arises from the fact that before the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland in 1171, the glen was covered in oak woods. After the conquest, Glencree was designated as a Royal Deer Park and a herd of fallow deer, the first of this breed in Ireland, was brought to Glencree from the Royal Forest at Chester.



Glencree River

Following the Anglo-Norman conquest, the land in and around Glencree was initially owned by the Norman, De la Poer (Power) family. Over the following centuries, the great oak woods of Glencree were systematically felled to provide wood for the construction of great houses and naval ships. By 1600 only a fraction of the original oak woodlands remained.

In 1618, vast tracts of land in North Wicklow, including Glencree, were granted by King James I to one of his generals, Sir Richard Wingfield, who was also awarded the title, 1st Viscount Powerscourt. Much of the Glencree valley remained in the ownership of the Powerscourt Estate well into the 20th century.

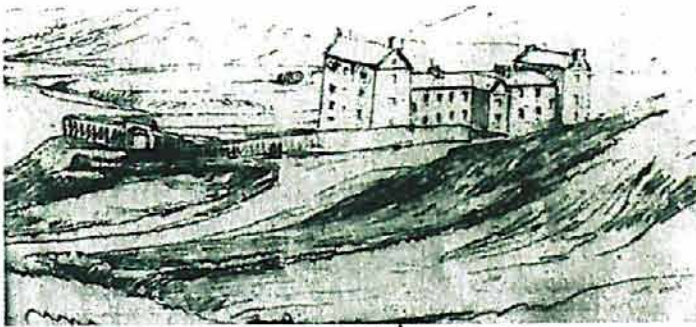


Glencree

The Military Road & Glencree Barracks

In May 1798, thousands of Irishmen rose up in revolt against British rule. Fighting was particularly fierce in Counties Wexford and Wicklow. The rebellion was ruthlessly crushed and some 30,000 rebels were killed. Joseph Holt, the Wicklow rebel leader, surrendered at Powerscourt on 10 Nov. 1798. Some survivors of the rebellion sought refuge in the Wicklow Mountains under the leadership of Michael Dwyer, from where they continued sporadic attacks on British forces and their supporters.

In August 1800, work began on the construction of a Military Road through the Wicklow Mountains. The road commenced at Rathfarnham and proceeded over the Featherbeds (so called because of the abundance of white bog cotton that grows on the bogland during summer months) to Glencree and onwards through Laragh to Aghavannagh in South Wicklow. Military barracks were built at strategic points along the road. The objective was to strengthen the military presence in the Wicklow Mountains. However, by the time the road was finished in 1809, the rebels no longer posed a threat.



Glencree Barracks c. 1840 (G. V Du Noyer)
Courtesy of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland

The first barracks to be built on the military road was at Glencree and it was designed to house a garrison of 100 soldiers. The two-storey, granite-faced house on the roadway outside of the barracks was the commanding officer's house. The opening of the barracks in 1806 was attended by Lord Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington. Glencree Barracks became militarily unnecessary and ceased around 1820.

St Kevin's Reformatory School

In the late 1850's, following the Great Famine, poverty and deprivation were widespread in Ireland leading to an increase in petty crime by deprived and orphaned children. In 1858 the Irish Reformatory Schools Act was enacted and the first Irish Reformatory School for boys was established in the disused military barracks at Glencree. Lord Powerscourt gave the barracks and adjoining lands to the Dublin Catholic Reformatory Committee who appointed a religious order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), to run the reformatory.

St Kevin's Reformatory housed over 250 boys who, over the years, reclaimed about 100 acres of the surrounding countryside under the supervision of the Oblates. Many of the children sent to Glencree, however, were guilty of no crime other than that they were orphaned or came from poor families. Daily life for the boys at Glencree was strict. In addition to working the land they were given basic education, craft training, food and clothing. During the 1930's growing public concern was expressed regarding conditions at Glencree and a decision was taken by the Irish Government in 1940 to close the reformatory. The boys were transferred to another Oblate reformatory school at Daingean, Co. Offaly. The Glencree complex then passed into the ownership of the Ministry of Supply.



Glencree Reformatory c. 1900 (Courtesy of National Library of Ireland)

St Kevin's Church

One of the first tasks that the Oblates set themselves upon taking over the old military barracks at Glencree in 1859 was the construction of a church. Work began immediately and around 1870 the Church of St Kevin was completed. For the next 70 years the church was used each day for religious services by the Oblates and the children who were consigned to the reformatory.



St. Kevin's Church, Glencree

In 1941, following the departure of the Oblates, the church was handed over to the Diocese of Dublin and has been in use as a chapel-of-ease for the parish of Enniskerry since then. In addition to mass each Sunday, the church is occasionally used for special religious ceremonies.

At the top left hand corner of the small cemetery adjacent to the church are the graves of Oblate clergy and boys who died in the Glencree reformatory.

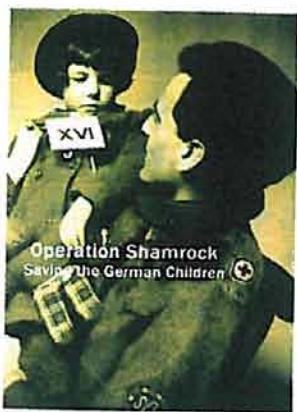
At the foot of a nearby pathway leading down to the river is a delightful riverside Lourdes Grotto.



Lourdes Grotto, Glencree

Operation Shamrock

At the end of the Second World War living conditions for the civilian population in Germany were grim. Food was in very short supply and millions of people were homeless and traumatised. Many people, including children, were also seriously malnourished.



Operation Shamrock Poster

In 1946, hundreds of needy German children were brought to Ireland by the Irish Red Cross to be fostered by Irish families for up to three years. The project was called Operation Shamrock and the former reformatory at Glencree was re-opened as a reception and settling-in centre for the children. The reception centre was run by the French Sisters of Charity in association with the Irish Red Cross.

The children arrived in Ireland by mail boat at Dun Laoghaire having travelled overland from Germany and they were then transported to Glencree. After a period of orientation, rest and recuperation at Glencree, they were placed in the care of foster families throughout Ireland. While most of the children were ultimately reunited with their families in Germany, some remained in Ireland with their foster families and lived their lives here. In 1997, a reunion was organised in Glencree of the adult "German children" and the families of their Irish foster parents. A remembrance ceremony in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin was attended by the Presidents of Ireland and Germany.

German Children Happy at Glencree



Irish Press Nov. 23rd 1946

Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation

Objectives

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation was founded in 1974 as a response to violent conflict in Irish society, and in light of a conviction that there must be a better way than violence, intolerance and sectarianism. Following the horrifying outbreak of sectarian violence and bombings in Belfast in 1972, a number of individual people and groups met in Dublin to give voice to the grave concerns of the public at large regarding the escalating violence. Recognising that concern was not enough, a group of dedicated people set out to establish a base from which tangible initiatives in peace-building and reconciliation could be developed. The result was the establishment of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

Since its foundation, the Glencree Centre has been the scene of significant events and projects in the fields of education, workshops, seminars and inter-community gatherings. The Centre is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation devoted to peace-building and reconciliation in Ireland, North and South, and overseas. A spirit of commitment to these ideals inspired the foundation of the Centre and continues to motivate its varied activities of peace training, peace making and conflict resolution. The Centre's programme of work builds peace and fosters reconciliation by facilitating dialogue, creating peace education resources and a space where reconciliation can begin.



Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation

Current Programme

- With devolved government now in place in Northern Ireland, the need to foster reconciliation in the wake of conflict in and between the people of these islands is greater than ever. Glencree organises workshops and dialogues with former combatants, survivors, politicians, youth leaders, women, people of faith and other community leaders. The Glencree Centre works in partnership with others and is part of a consortium called the Irish Peace Centres, a project funded by the European Union, Peace III Programme.



Afghan Parliamentarians on a Glencree study visit meet Northern Ireland Government Leaders

- Glencree remains a safe place for groups in conflict to discuss their differences and resolve disagreement. To that end it stands as a beacon of peace in Ireland and abroad.



Course participants at Glencree

- In the global context, there has been a wide recognition of the lessons learnt and the relevance of the Irish experience of peace-building and conflict resolution. Glencree is also involved by invitation in several international peace-building projects where it brings its experience to bear.

German Military Cemetery

During the First and Second World Wars the bodies of 134 German military servicemen and civilians ended up in Ireland. Six were prisoners of war who died while interned in Ireland during the First World War. Others were the victims of air and naval disasters of the Second World War. Their remains were initially buried in local graveyards throughout Ireland close to where their bodies were found.

It was for me to die
Under an Irish sky
There finding berth
In good Irish earth.
What I dreamed and
planned bound me
to my Fatherland.
But War sent me
To sleep in Glenree.+
Passion and pain
Were my loss-my gain:
Pray, as you pass
To make Good my loss.

Stan O'Brien.

In 1959 work began on the development of a German Military Cemetery in an old stone quarry at Glenree and in 1961 the remains of the German war dead buried throughout the country were exhumed and re-interred at Glenree. In 1974 the final re-interment took place when the remains of Major Herman Goertz, a German spy who took his own life, were transferred from Deansgrange Cemetery in Dublin to Glenree.

Of the 134 people buried at Glenree, 46 are German civilians who were being transported from England to Canada in July 1940. Their ship 'The Arandora Star' was sunk by a German submarine, U47, off the coast of County Donegal. The remainder of the burials are those of sailors, airmen and soldiers.

A memorial service is held at the cemetery each November and in recent years the floral tributes have included poppy wreaths from the Royal British Legion, a sign of reconciliation.



Short Rambles at and near Glencree

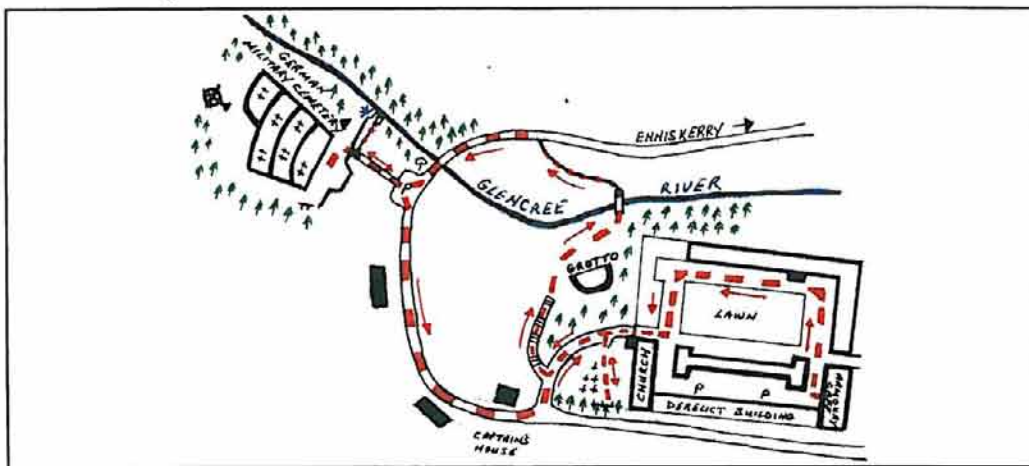
Glencree is located in an area of great natural beauty. The glen and surrounding mountains provide many opportunities for walking. The following four walks have been selected because they are relatively short and suitable for people of average fitness. Each can be walked at a rambling pace with many opportunities to pause and absorb the beauty of the surrounding countryside. Before setting off, carefully read the directions and sketch map for each walk and bring the booklet with you for reference.

- **Walk No 1** is a short walk around the Glencree Centre, St. Kevin's Church, Lourdes Grotto, Glencree River and the German Military Cemetery.
- **Walk No 2** is a road walk from the Glencree Centre along the upper end of the Glencree valley, with spectacular views of the entire valley, to the beautiful mountain lake of Lower Lough Bray.
- **Walk No 3** is a walk from the Glencree Centre along the Military Road to an area called Old Boleys. Along the way there are magnificent views of the glen and surrounding mountains. The walk culminates at an old quarry from which much of the stone for the Glencree Barracks and the Military Road was sourced.
- **Walk No 4** descends from a car park on the Glencree to Enniskerry road into Cloon Oak Glen. The walk is way-marked and the surface comprises untarred forest roads and a short off-road track of 350mtrs. The descent into the glen provides a panoramic view of both the glen and the surrounding mountains. The return from the Oak Glen to the car park is a steady but gradual ascent which is well within the capacity of persons of average fitness.

When parking cars in the Wicklow Mountains please ensure that they are locked and that no valuables are left inside the car.

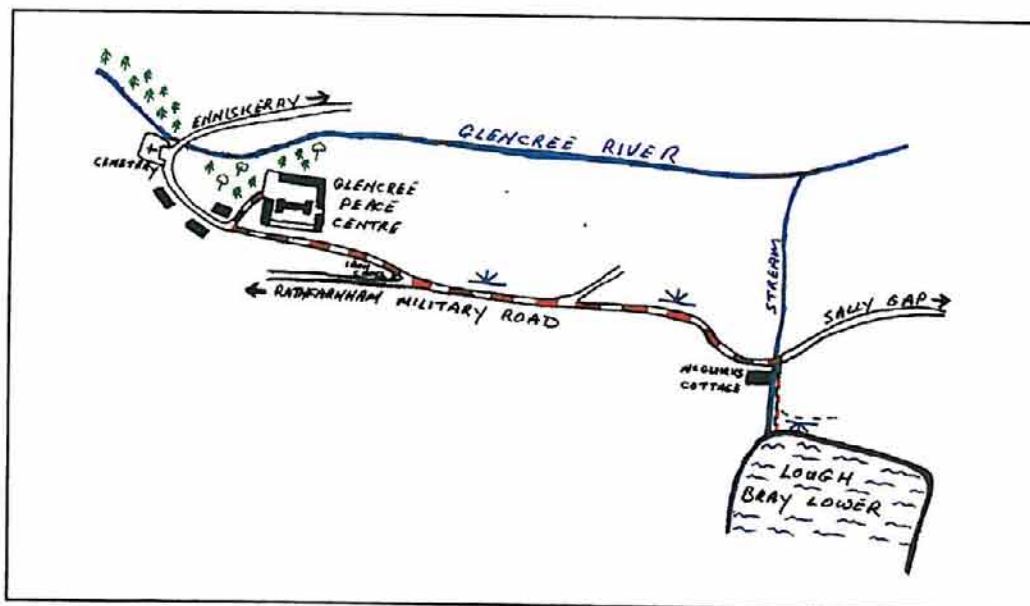
1. Glencree (1km. - 25mins)

The walk starts at the Armoury Café at the Glencree Centre. From the door of the Armoury Café, turn right and walk down to the front lawn. On the front lawn are a number of commemorative seats and trees including one planted by Prince Charles. Standing above the lawn is the original, fully restored, Military Barracks building. Proceed to the main gate beside which is St Kevin's Church. This church (1870) is a fine example of a 19th century Wicklow granite stone church. The church has been tastefully restored and inside there is a distinct aura of peace and tranquillity. On leaving the church enter the small graveyard through a gate in the railings immediately on the left. In the centre of the graveyard are a number of modern graves with some nicely designed headstones. In the top left-hand corner are the graves of Oblate clergy and boys who died at Glencree. Exit the graveyard by the gate, turn left up the Main Avenue and then right through a gate in the railing. A flight of steps leads down to the Glencree River and a nice Lourdes Grotto built by the Oblates beside the river. From the Grotto cross the Glencree River via the footbridge and ascend to the roadway by a narrow track. At the roadway, turn left and **for your own safety walk on the right hand side of the road facing oncoming traffic** to the nearby German Military Cemetery. On exiting the cemetery, turn right and then, after 150mtrs, turn left back into the Glencree Centre. The granite fronted two storey house on the right hand side of the road was originally the Commanding Officer's House, later a Youth Hostel and now a private residence.



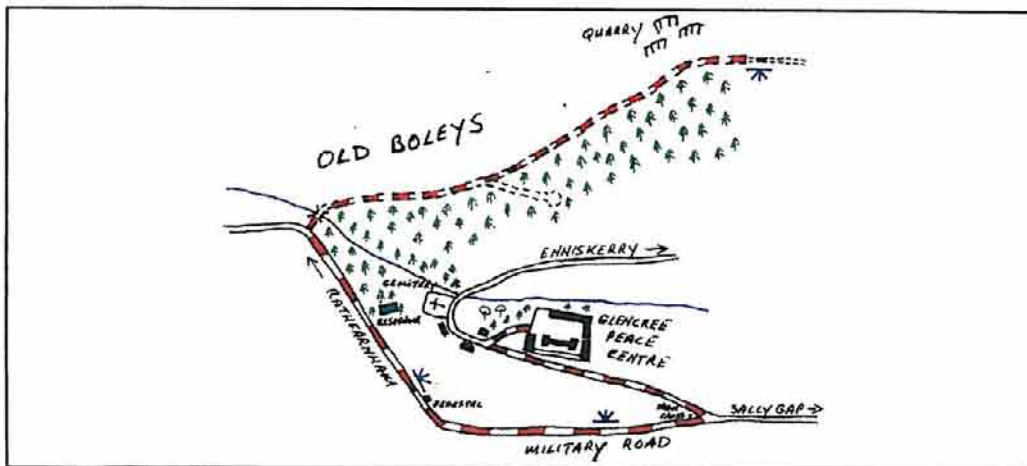
2. Glencree – Lough Bray (3.5 km. - 50 mins)

The walk starts at the Glencree Peace Centre. On exiting the Centre, walk up the Main Avenue to the roadway and turn left. **For your own safety, walk on the right hand side of the road facing oncoming traffic.** Proceed forward along the roadway which rises gently to the junction with the Military Road. A small iron cross mounted on a rock at this junction was erected by the Oblates in 1939. **Continue straight forward** at this junction. From here to Lough Bray the road is generally level. Walk straight forward past the next junction on the left. This stretch of road provides a magnificent view of the Glencree valley. On the left, in the distance, at the far end of the glen, the Sugarloaf Mountain can be clearly seen with its distinctive peaked summit. On a clear day the Irish Sea can also be seen beyond the Sugarloaf Mountain. Soon the road bends to the right and a picturesque stone cottage comes into view. For many generations, until its closure in 1998, this cottage was a tea rooms run by the McGuirk family for travellers on the military road. Immediately after the cottage a dirt track leads off to the right beside a stream. **Follow this track for 200mtrs** to arrive at the shore of Lower Lough Bray (Loch Bréagh - Lake of the Hill) which sits high up above the glen at the base of magnificent cliffs. Return to the Peace Centre by the same route.



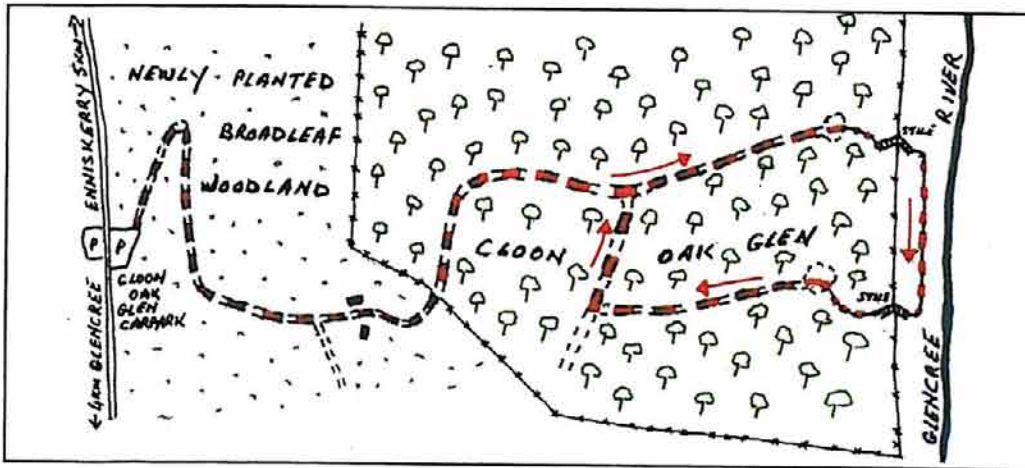
3. Glencree - Old Boleys (6km - 1 hour 30mins)

The walk starts at the Glencree Peace Centre. On exiting the Centre, walk up the Main Avenue to the roadway and turn left. **For your own safety, walk on the right hand side of the road facing oncoming traffic.** Proceed forward along the roadway which rises gently to the junction with the Military Road. A small iron cross mounted on a rock at this junction was erected by the Oblates in 1939. **Turn sharp right** at this junction. The road gradually rises with magnificent views of the Glencree valley. In the distance the peaked summit of the Sugarloaf Mountain can be seen. Shortly, the road bends to the right. Watch out for the remnant of a stone pedestal on the right side of the road. This was originally the pedestal for a statue of the Good Shepherd, erected by the Oblates, and on which an inscription in old Gaelic script can still be seen. Continue forward past a plantation of trees within which can be seen an old water reservoir. A short distance further on the road bends sharply to the left and an untarred forestry road leads off to the right. **Turn right** onto the forestry road. You are now in an area called Old Boleys. (A boley was a mountain pasture to which livestock were moved in the summer months). The forestry road passes over the Glencree River as it cascades sharply down into the glen. Continue forward to a point where the road splits. **Bear left** along the narrower track. **Walk** along this track until an old quarry is reached on the left. At this point the treeline on the right ends. Walk forward 50mtrs and a panoramic view of the glen unfolds. Having taken in the view, turn around and return by the same route to the Peace Centre.



4. Cloon Oak Glen (3.5 km. - 1 Hour)

The walk starts at Cloon Oak Glen car park about 4 km from Glencree on the right hand side of the Glencree to Enniskerry road. Coillte (the State Forestry Service) in conjunction with Crann, a voluntary organisation that promotes the development of broadleaf woodlands, have planted 65 acres of broadleaf trees at Cloon ("meadow in a clearing in the forest"). While the predominant species is oak, other trees include Japanese larch and birch. From the car park take the forest road downhill into the glen (the walk is way-marked). This stretch of the walk is through newly planted broadleaf trees and provides a magnificent, panoramic, view of the glen and of the surrounding mountains. Ignore a forest road bearing off to the right. Continue downwards past some old farm outbuildings until a gateway and a sign for the Oak Glen are reached. Continue down through the oak plantation, taking note of the various inscribed commemorative stones. Soon, the road branches to the left and ends at a turning circle. At the turning circle, a narrow way-marked track leads straight ahead into the woods, to a nearby stile over a deer fence. Cross this stile, and following the way-marks, turn right and walk some 150mtrs along a track, between the deer fence and the Glencree River, to another stile back into the woods. Cross this stile and walk forward along a way-marked track through the woods to reach another turning circle after about 200mtrs. Walk upwards along the forest road. Turn right at the first junction and left at the next. Then make the return journey to the car park along the outward route in reverse.



The Armoury Café at the Glencree Reconciliation Centre

Whether you're driving, strolling, hiking or cycling, The Armoury Café is the ideal break venue. Enjoy a wide range of home produced food products in a relaxed setting in the Wicklow Mountains.

We serve Tea, real Coffee, scones, cakes, sandwiches, snacks and lunches. We are also licensed to serve wine and beer. The Armoury stocks a range of gifts and souvenir items.

Why not give us a call to discuss your group, party or event requirements



Armoury Café

Open 7 days 9.30am – 5.30pm

Groups Welcome

Tel: (01) 282 9711

Fax: (01) 276 6085

Email: info@glencree.ie

Website: www.glencree.ie

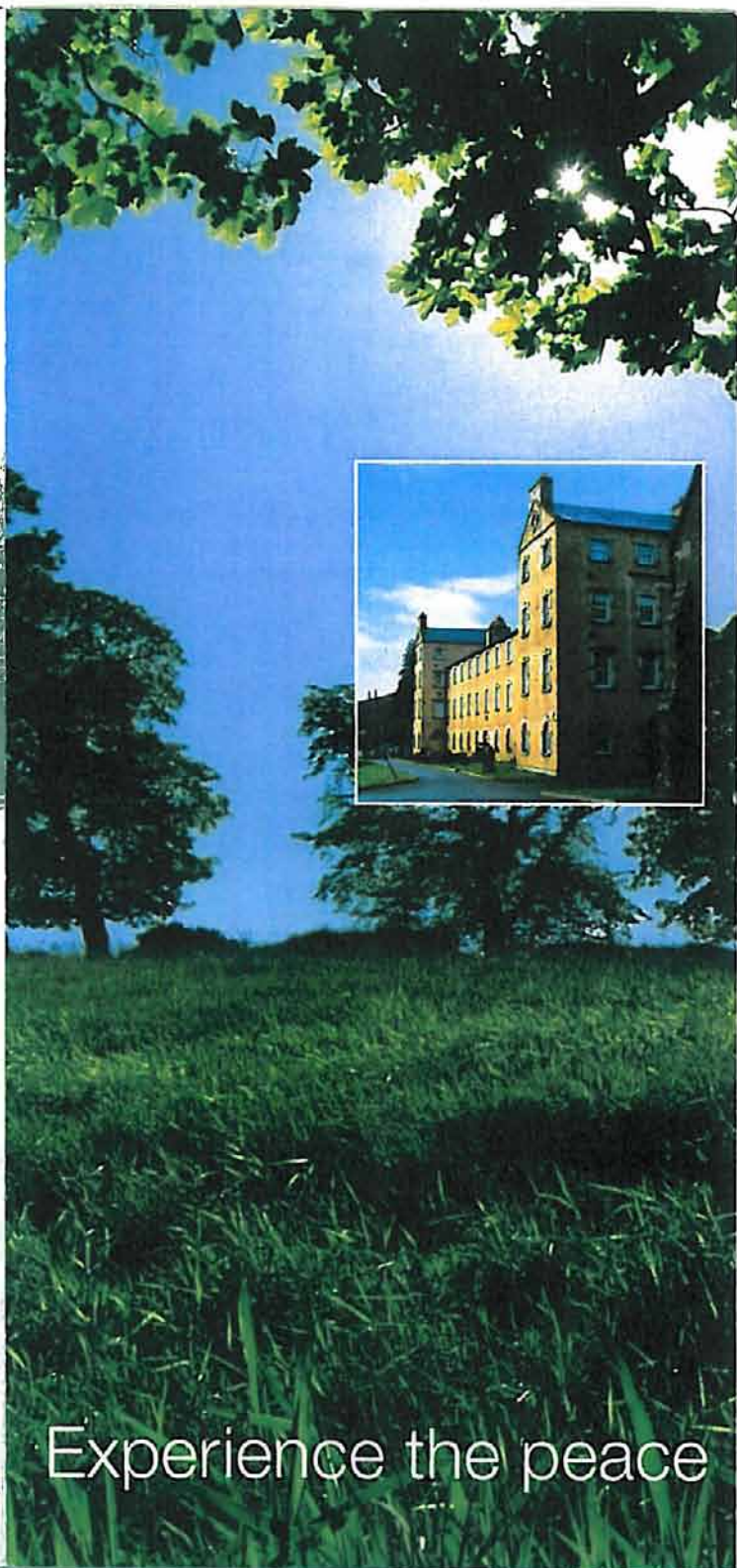


Glencree Visitor Centre



glencree
centre for peace & reconciliation

ionad síochána agus
athmhuintearais gleann crí



Experience the peace

Welcome to Glencree Valley

The Visitor Centre stands at the head of the spectacular and unspoiled Glencree Valley, on the edge of the Wicklow National Park.

This beautiful location is an ideal setting for groups or individuals looking for space, privacy and tranquillity.

The buildings have a long and interesting history, from a 19th century barracks to a 21st century Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

Glencree Yesterday

The construction of a military road began in 1800 through parts of Wicklow. Glencree Barracks was built in 1806 to protect this road and the soldiers who travelled it. The barracks housed a captain and 100 soldiers. By the 1850s the barracks was long abandoned. Ireland was just recovering from the Great Famine and a high increase in juvenile "crime" led to a public outcry. As a consequence the Glencree buildings were turned into a reformatory school for upwards of 300 boys. The reformatory eventually closed its doors in 1940, when the building briefly became a temporary Refugee Centre for thousands of German and Polish war orphans who were fed by the Irish Red Cross.



Glencree Today

Today the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is committed to peacebuilding and reconciliation in Ireland, North and South, and beyond. We organise programmes with a wide variety of groups including: schools and youth, survivors and former combatants, women, politicians, people of faith and international groups.

Since 1974 Glencree's historical buildings have played an important role in the Northern Ireland peace process, first as place of respite for families, and then as a civil society organisation.

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation brings people together from different backgrounds in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance.

The challenging journey from conflict to cooperation that programme participants choose to take is mirrored in the story of the buildings – from military barracks to peace centre.

Experience the peace

Conference Facilities

The Visitor Centre has a variety of fully equipped conference rooms with capacities from 30 to 90 people.

Glenree offers conference and meeting facilities to organisations and groups in the private, corporate, public and community sectors.



Accommodation

UNAVAILABLE DURING 2012



Exhibitions

Operation Shamrock is a permanent exhibition at the Visitor Centre and illustrates the period in time when children and orphans from Germany and other countries were housed, fed and taught at Glenree.

Armoury Café Restaurant and Craft Shop

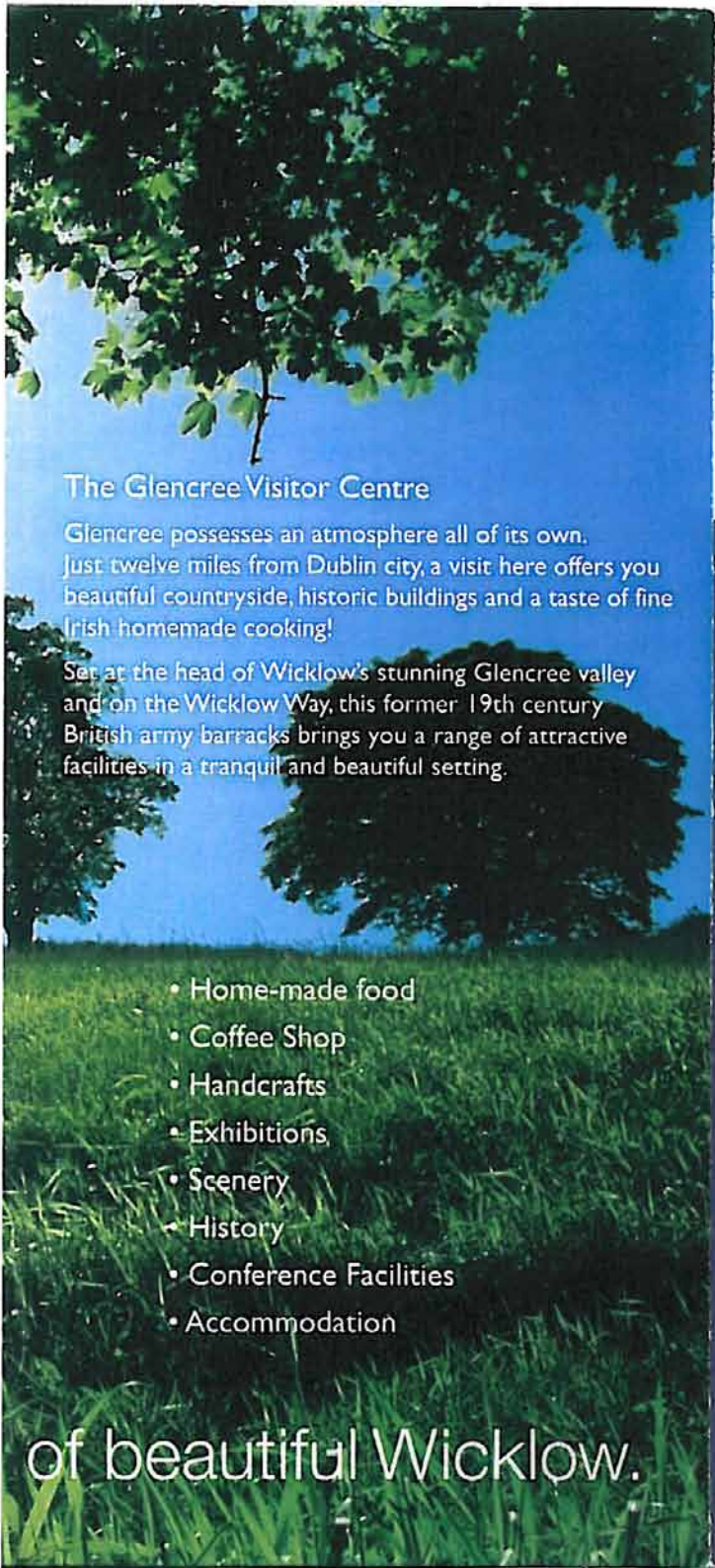
The old armoury building houses the Armoury Café, modern restaurant and craft shop. Experience the charm of the past with the comforts of today. Here you can enjoy the very best of County Wicklow's wholesome food in a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Enjoy a hot meal after a long walk in the mountains, stop in for coffee and cake while enjoying the magnificent views.

We also stock a wide range of the finest local handcrafts, hand-made Irish produce and traditional knitwear. Unique paintings and photographs from local artists can be viewed and purchased at the shop.



of beautiful Wicklow



The Glenree Visitor Centre

Glenree possesses an atmosphere all of its own. Just twelve miles from Dublin city, a visit here offers you beautiful countryside, historic buildings and a taste of fine Irish homemade cooking!

Set at the head of Wicklow's stunning Glenree valley and on the Wicklow Way, this former 19th century British army barracks brings you a range of attractive facilities in a tranquil and beautiful setting.

- Home-made food
- Coffee Shop
- Handcrafts
- Exhibitions
- Scenery
- History
- Conference Facilities
- Accommodation

of beautiful Wicklow.



The Glenree Visitor Centre is open:
Seven days a week, 9.30am – 5.00pm

Coach parties and walkers welcome
This is a wheelchair friendly facility

For further details contact:
The Visitor Centre Manager

Email address: visitorcentremanager@glenree.ie

Ample Free Parking Available

The Glenree Visitor Centre is supported by the National Development Plan, Pobal, the European Union's Leader+ programme and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

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