Ballybay

Béal Átha Beithe

The mouth of the ford of the Birch Trees

R162 St Patrick's St

Monaghan **15km**

R183

Ballybay Wetlands Centre **2km**

Clones **24.5km**

Hall St

Meeting House Lane

Main St

START & FINISH

Ballybay Pearse Brothers GAA Club **2km**

Monaghan GAA Centre Of Excellence **8.5km**

Castleblayney **12km**

Armagh **35km**

Dundalk **41km**

R183

Castleblayney Rd

P

P

Town Park

Lough Major

Cootehill **16km**

Shercock **18km**

R162

R180

Carrickmacross **23km**

Monaghan County Crest

The Monaghan county crest is inspired by its early history. The four quadrants of the shield symbolise the four ancient kingdoms that made up the region – Úi Meith, Dartraige, Mugdorn and Fermag.

What do you think the motto "Dúthracht agus Dícheall" means?

Diligence and Best Endeavour.

Follow the route and Tick the box

Purple Route: 1.9km

Follow 1 - 14

FEELING COMPETITIVE?

Start time

Finish time

MAP LEGEND

- Purple Route
- 1 Trail number
- Playground
- Picnic Area
- P Parking
- Library

N W E S

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
There is no planet B

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The Story of Ballybay

Ballybay's rich natural heritage can be seen in abundance at the Ballybay Wetlands Centre, located on the Clones Road. Follow the scenic walking trails through the natural habitat of waterfowl and wildlife, set on 65 acres of wetlands.

Ballybay's location at a ford on the Dromore River played a significant role in the town's early development. As a natural crossing point over the river and as a meeting point where many roads converged, the region's earliest inhabitants were tradesmen who settled here hoping to take advantage of the passing traffic. However, it was not until the 1700s that the town of Ballybay was founded. A linen merchant named Hugh Jackson recognised the suitability of the area for the production of flax, and the emerging linen industry drew many settlers to the area.

With investment from the Leslie family, Ballybay grew into a thriving centre for markets and fairs. Even after the decline of the linen industry, the town remained a major centre of activity, and during World War One, it gained fame as a major horse-trading centre. It also played a significant role during the War of Independence as the site of the Ballybay Ambush in January 1921, while in the 1930s, the Blue Shirt movement enjoyed great local support.

Today, Ballybay remains an important market town as well as a centre of local trade and commerce.

Don't forget to Tick the box ☑

1 Ballybay Civic Centre

This building houses Ballybay's local library. Try to imagine Ballybay over one hundred years ago, when this street led up towards the bustling markets at Market Square. All sorts of animals would have passed by, and so railings on the windows were needed to prevent damage from passing livestock. Ballybay was once famous for its horse fairs and in the 1890s, a horse-trading family called the Robinsons came to town. Ralph Robinson bought a hotel in the Square, where he built stables, feed stores, and a show paddock. At one stage during the First World War, he sold 300 horses a week! Horse trading in Ballybay continued up until the 1940s. Why do you think horse trading might have declined at that point?

As you walk through the town, keep an eye out for the white heritage plaques which recall some of Ballybay's famous sons and daughters. Can you find the plaque remembering William Clarke? Clarke was a well-known piper and the founder of the Ballybay Pipe Band in 1919.

2 Masonic Hall

Do you know who the Freemasons are? The Freemasons are an ancient organisation established by stonemasons and cathedral builders during medieval times. This building now serves as an office space but it was designed and built as a Masonic Hall. Can you find any symbols on the building that prove this?

3 Former Bank of Ireland Building

Sandham Symes who designed this bank in 1880 was a popular bank builder and was appointed architect for Bank of Ireland from this same year. Many of his building designs can be found in towns and cities throughout Ireland.

Italian influence can be seen in this building with its elongated doorway and arched windows.

4 Smith & Sons Public House

Built in the late 1800s, one of the most striking features of this public house is its oriel window. A projecting window like this offered a 180-degree view of the street below. Why might this be an advantage?

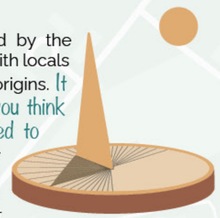
5 Bank of Ireland Building

Built on the former site of the Leslie Arms Hotel, this bank building dates from the 1920s. Take note of the original clock with its Roman numerals display.

6 Former Bank Building & Grocery Store

This building with its unusual roofline was once a bank. It was converted into a shop in the 1950s. During market days, animals were tied to the railings found next to this building. What animals do you think might have been tied here?

7 Journey of Equals Sculpture



This eye-catching sundial was created by the blacksmith Peter Cassidy, who worked with locals to design a sculpture representing Ballybay's origins. It features flax flowers and birch trees, but can you think of any other symbols that could have been used to symbolise Ballybay's heritage? If you turn your back to the sundial, you will see the entrance to the now defunct Dundalk to Enniskillen Railway. The arrival of the railway service was important for the development of the town as it promoted local industry and allowed for more extensive trade up until its closure in the 1950s. Can you explain why the building beside the sundial is such an unusual shape?

8 Water Tower

This unique structure is an old water tower that was used to fill storage vehicles called coal-cars or tenders when steam trains passed through the town. It would have housed offices beneath the water tank on top.

9 St. Patricks Roman Catholic Church

This building was designed by William Hague, who also designed St. Macartan's Cathedral in Monaghan. The church spire is 163 feet tall and stands as a prominent feature in the Ballybay skyline. Take a look at the carved heads at the doorway. Who do you think these might represent?

10 Vent Pipe

This decorative piece of iron street furniture looks like a street lamp but was actually built in the early 1900s to serve another very important function. It is a vent (or stink) pipe that provided ventilation for the pipes handling sewage in the town.

11 Stationmaster's House

This building was the stationmaster's house, but is better known to locals as the only two-storey building in town that does not have a back door.

12 Manhole Cover

This decorative manhole cover was part of a commemorative commission recognising the role of Argentinian born Irish republican Eamon Bulfin in the 1916 Rising.

13 Ballybay Town Park Entrance & Gatehouse

This gatehouse is one of the only features of the old Estate still standing today. It is a toilet block now, but when the Leslies resided on these grounds, the gatekeeper and his family would have lived in this building. Can you imagine what life was like for those living and working on the Estate?

14 Peace Bridge

Local blacksmith Michael Leonard created the Peace Bridge. Standing on this bridge offers a pleasant view of the lake and the lakeshore, which are very popular with bird watchers and anglers. Why not take some time to enjoy the beauty of the park around you if the weather is nice?

15 Two Shilling Brae

The Two Shilling Brae was a bridge that took its name from the toll anyone bringing animals through the the gate had to pay. It is believed that Ballybay grew up around this bridge as it was an important crossing point over the river. Can you think of a famous bridge in Dublin that was also named after a toll like this?

The entranceway that you just walked through was a second entrance to the Leslie Estate.

16 Riverdale Hotel

This former hotel was built around 1870 at the southern entrance to Ballybay. Can you identify what type of nut is used as a decorative topper on the roof?

The acorn is a symbol of hope and prosperity.

As you walk back into town, keep an eye out for the Former Clinic. This is a building constructed in the rare 'Art Deco' Style. What architectural features do you think make this style so unique and allow it to stand out?

Take a self-guided tour & explore Ballybay

Be the local, the historian, the artist, and become the EZxplorer...

Easy Peezy Leisurely Stroll...

- **Keep it simple,** find the picture clue locations and enjoy learning about Ballybay.

Ready Steady Go!

- **Feeling competitive?**
- Note your start and finish times and see can you beat families and friends in completing a route against the clock.
- Share your time on social media with #ezxploring and challenge like-minded ezxplorers to compete!

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17 Market House

Have you ever seen crow's feet markings before? They can be found on buildings throughout Ireland and there is one hiding on this building. These were used by Ordnance Surveyors when mapping the terrain to determine height above sea-level.

Hugh Jackson was responsible for the construction of the first Market House in the town square. The Leslie family built this replacement, which was designed to serve multiple functions. The market was on the ground floor, while the first floor housed a temporary school, courthouse, library, and dance hall in the past. The redbrick extension to the side of the building is believed to have been where the goods were weighed.

Have you found the plaque commemorating the famine? Like many towns in Ireland, Ballybay suffered greatly during this time.

If you look closely at the plaque, you will see a set of Roman numerals marking when the Market House was built. Can anyone in your group decipher the year?

18 Christ Church

Ballybay's Christ Church is a Church of Ireland building commissioned by the Leslie family in the 1790s. Also located on the church grounds is a former school from the 1830s, which was later used as a community centre serving the local Orange Lodge. Christ Church sits on one of the two highest points in Ballybay, while St. Patrick's occupies the other. How many of the sites you have visited can you see from here?

Several Presbyterian meeting houses were built around Ballybay in the 1700s and 1800s due to the large Presbyterian population of the town. The First Ballybay Meeting House was constructed at Derryvally in 1768. This site was chosen because, under the law, new churches that were not Church of Ireland had to be built at least an "Irish mile" away from a town. In 1800 a disagreement in the congregation resulted in a second church only 200 metres away from the first one, but the two were reunited in 1909, and the latter building became a community hall.

In 1834, another dispute led to a third Presbyterian church in Ballybay. This was known - somewhat confusingly - as the Second Ballybay Meeting Hall.

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EXPLORE MONAGHAN

The Leslie Estate and Ballybay Town Park

The Leslie family played a major role in fostering Ballybay's growth as a market town. Ballybay Estate was purchased by Henry Leslie in 1712. Although the Leslies were predominantly absentee landlords in the town's early years, they took up permanent residence in the 1820s when a Greek-Revival mansion was constructed by J.B. Keane.

The final Leslie to reside here was Henry Edward John Leslie, a member of the British diplomatic corps. The house was sold in March 1921, but in June of the same year, it was destroyed in a fire by the IRA. It is believed that the fire was intended to serve as a warning to potential purchasers or was in retaliation for the burning of public buildings by the British during the War of Independence. Although the house no longer stands, the Leslies' influence can still be seen throughout the town, and the grounds of the former estate provide many beautiful walkways with plenty of activities to do.

If you choose to follow the lakeside nature trail, look out for the embossed signs along the way! Bring some paper and crayons and try taking rubbings of them.

There are a number of looped walks to enjoy within Ballybay town, including The Corbrack Lane Walk, The Lough Major Walk, and The Town Park Walk.