

## Cregagh Glen/Lisnabreeny



Photograph courtesy of The National Trust

### Route description

This route follows an attractive glen into the Castlereagh hills on surfaced and unsurfaced paths, with superb views from the top.

### Distance

1.5 miles 2.5 km (one way).

### Average Time

45 – 50 mins (one way).

### Access

**By car** - Entrance on Upper Knockbreda Road, just north of the Cregagh Road junction. No parking at entrance.

**By bus** - Metro Services 6, 30, 30A, 31 (Ormeau).

### Trail Route

This is a linear route, which returns by way of the same path.

Beginning at the entrance on the Upper Knockbreda Road, follow the path uphill through Cregagh Glen **(1)**.

The first part of this walk is through a picturesque wooded glen. At the top of the glen, cross under the Manse Road via a wooden walkway and into the grounds of Lisnabreeny House **(2)**.

Follow the lane past the house and school, crossing the stile into the open field. Continue along the grass tracks climbing up to the left.

Climb over a stile amongst the gorse, into another field.

From here you will see a stand of mature trees marking the site of a former rath. Cross the field to explore the rath **(3)**.

Retrace your steps to the Manse Road, and down through the glen to the starting point.

## Trail 10



## Things of Interest

### Cregagh Glen (1)

This wooded glen is part owned by Castlereagh Borough Council and the National Trust. There are several waterfalls on the river, and the glen itself contains some mature mixed woodland that includes sycamore, beech, Scots pine and ash trees. Field woodrush is the dominant ground plant but here and there are other species such as dog violet and bluebell.

### Lisnabreeny House (2)

A graceful, unpretentious building of the early nineteenth century,

with an attractive entrance. You can read more about its chequered history below.

### Rath (3)

This well preserved rath gives the townland its name: 'Lis' means fort and 'breeny' means Fairy in old Irish. Rath, or hillforts, are very common throughout the Irish countryside. They served as homesteads, providing protection for family and livestock from wild animals and warring neighbours. This fort would probably have had a simple clay dwelling within the protected area.

## History

In 1937 Lisnabreeny House and 164 acres of land including part of the Cregagh Glen were donated to the National Trust by Nesca Robb, of the well known Robb family who had a large department store at Castle Junction in Belfast.

The house became the first youth hostel in an Irish city when it was loaned to the Youth Hostel Association of Northern Ireland in 1938, but its hostelling days were short-lived.

When the US Army arrived in Northern Ireland Lisnabreeny House became an army headquarters until 1946. The US Army had a military graveyard in a field beside the Rocky Road: the bodies were later exhumed for burial elsewhere.

After the war, the house, like many of the great houses, fell into disrepair. It was reconstructed by Lagan College from 1986 and opened in 1991 as Belfast's first religiously integrated school.

## Look out for

- woodland wildflowers in the glen in spring.
- farmland birds such as linnets on the Lisnabreeny section of the trail.