

## Places to eat and stay in Ballincollig

## Location

Ballincollig is situated 9 kilometres west of Cork City, to the north of the N22. It is served with a frequent bus service from the city on route 232. There is ample parking in the multi-storey car park on the Old Fort Road. The Regional Park lies to the west of the town at the Inniscarra Bridge.

Use the Sat Nav Ref: N 51°53'22" W 8°37'16" or just follow the fingerpost signs in the town.

### Opening Times of the Regional Park

January, February 9am-5pm  
 March, October 9am-6pm  
 April, May, September 9am-8pm  
 June, July, August 9am-9pm  
 November, December 9am-5pm

Car parking and disabled access available.

### Leave No Trace

- Please park considerately
- Please dispose of waste properly
- Keep dogs on lead and remove any fouling
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors
- Please leave protected structures alone



Ballincollig  
 County Cork  
 Ireland

Ballincollig Trails Group is grateful for the generous support of EMC<sup>2</sup> and the above sponsors.

Ballincollig Trails Group's development of the walking trails in Ballincollig and the Regional Park was supported by South and East Cork Area Development Ltd (SECAD) through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the National Development Plan in conjunction with Cork County Council.

## Welcome to Ballincollig Gunpowder Trails

The trails consist of four looped walks, colour-coded according to length, which take place within and around the Regional Park, Ballincollig which was once home to a major gunpowder works. The Military Trail begins at the Shopping Centre Square and continues to the Regional Park by a westerly route. Three other trails of varying lengths begin and end at the western end of the park at the Inniscarra Bridge. All walks are multi-access and dogs on leads are permitted on the trails.

### Ballincollig's Military Heritage

Ballincollig has always had military connections. The village grew up following the establishment of a gunpowder works on the banks of the River Lee in 1794 by Cork entrepreneur Charles Henry Leslie.

When the British acquired the gunpowder mills site in 1804 during the Napoleonic wars, artillery barracks were built as part of the expansion of the mills, and the whole complex was enclosed behind a high limestone wall. When the mills closed in 1903, the military remained until 1922 when the Irish Free State was founded.

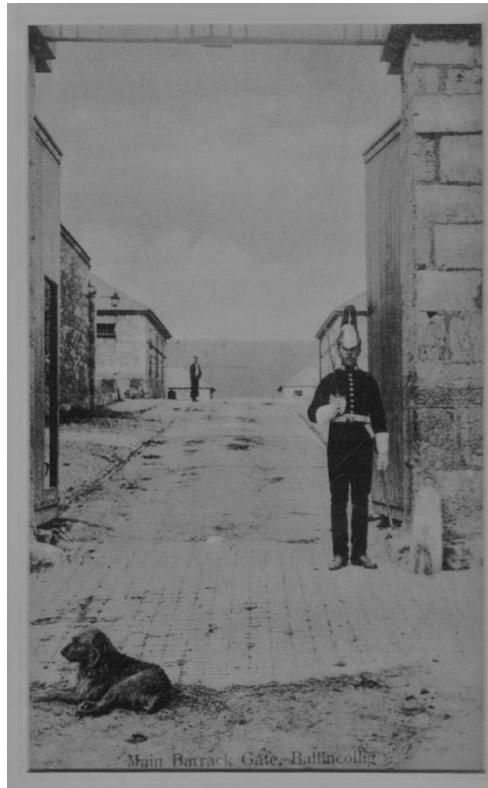
The barracks were re-opened in the 1940s under the new name Murphy's Barracks. These finally closed in 1998 when the army unit was relocated to Collins' Barracks in the city.

### Ballincollig Gunpowder Mills

Ballincollig Royal Gunpowder Mills is a unique 19th century gunpowder works and Ireland's largest industrial archaeological site. It was the second biggest gunpowder mills in the whole of Britain and Ireland after Waltham Abbey in Essex.

It now lies within the 130 acres of the Regional Park, Ballincollig, an area of outstanding natural beauty, extending 2.4 km along the south bank of the River Lee.

The site enjoys National Monument status with over 90% of the original buildings associated with gunpowder production still in existence.



*Main Gate guarded by Lancer and dog (from the Lawrence collection).*

1. **West Gate:** There were three entrances into the old barracks: the East Gate, the Main Gate and the West Gate. The trail begins by the original western entrance. When the Irish army took over the barracks, they made this their Main Gate.
2. **Coach House:** Built in around 1890, this single storey building was once an old coach or carriage store. It was later used by the Irish Army as a transport maintenance and repair shed.
3. **Main Gate:** This realigned gateway was the main entrance into the old barracks. At this time the turf store stood on the left of the gate. It now leads into Heritage Walk.
4. **Turf Store:** This handsome limestone building has been sympathetically restored. Its barn-like

appearance indicates its original purpose as a store for hay and fodder

5. **Barrack Square:** This is the oldest part of the barracks complex and was laid out in 1811. It comprises four sets of buildings. The original Officers' Mess lies on the eastern side of the square and is distinguished by a classical portico or porch. The gun displayed on the central green is a 4.5-inch Howitzer.
6. **Stables:** Built after 1875, the former stables are made up of two parallel rows with a central courtyard. Look out for the metal rings on the western end, used for tethering horses. Renovated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they became a gun store known as The Long Valley. A glass roof has now been added.
7. **Officers' Mess:** Constructed around 1890 as a recreation block for the military, it later became the Officers' Mess when the Irish Army occupied the barracks. It is now a medical centre.
8. **Oriel House:** The left wing of the hotel is an early 19th century Georgian building, originally built as three houses for the administrating officers at the gunpowder mills. Later the home of Sir Thomas Tobin who bought the mills in 1834, it became known as Oriel Court because of the round tower he had attached to the east wing of the house to add brightness and light into the upper room where his wife painted.



*Barrack Square today*



### 9. Western Watch House:

This circular military-looking white tower was one of four security buildings for the gunpowder mills where workers would be searched on entry to ensure they were not carrying flammable materials or alcohol. It also guarded Inniscarra Bridge and the main route to Macroom. A series of gun loops can be seen circling the tower at mid height.

### 10. Canal system and sluice gates



Before the invention of the steam engine, water power provided the earliest means of generating energy. Water from the Lee was taken into the canals via sluice gates and powered over 30 mill houses which stood on its banks. It also allowed powder punts and barges to carry the gunpowder from one processing house to the other.

### 11. Weir:



Built in 1795, it acted like a dam and backed up the

water to the start of the canal. This artificial head of water provided more power for the waterwheels.

**12. Expense Magazine:** This is one of the temporary on-site magazines which stored barrels of unfinished gunpowder overnight.

### 13. Steam Stove



This solid oval-shaped building housed a boiler which produced steam to dry the gunpowder in adjoining drying houses.

### 14. Magazines



Finished gunpowder was stored in magazines before being exported or sold locally. One stands on the north side of the trail and is a large roofless building resembling a church. An earlier magazine can be found in the woods to the west of the coal store. This resembles a crypt and has four

pillars holding up a groin-vaulted roof.

**15. Coal Store:** This impressive circular building with 5m high wall was a depot for coal used in the steam stove and the charcoal-burning house.

**16. Refineries area:** This extensive area at the eastern end of the park has the greatest concentration of buildings. It is here that the gunpowder ingredients – saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal – were refined and mixed together before being incorporated in the gunpowder mills. You will also see here the ruins of the saw mill and the charcoal mill, both powered by water, workshops, the cooperage where oak barrels were made, and other ancillary buildings.

### 17. Gunpowder Mills



This area, now closed to the public, once housed 24 incorporating mills, more commonly known as powdermills. The three gunpowder ingredients were ground together under heavy mill stones set on edge. The wooden mills were set in pairs and one waterwheel powered two mills. Free-standing blast walls separated each pair of mills.



**18. Long and Short Ranges:** These two terraces of cottages were built as rent-free homes for the workers at the mills.

### 19. British Military Graveyard



This cemetery was built in 1810 and was used throughout the period that the British army was stationed in Ballincollig. It has 352 recorded burials of military personnel and their families. It is now owned by the OPW.

### 20. East Gate



The East Gate led into the barracks and also directly to the powder mills, the military graveyard and a soldiers' home. There is an Ordnance stone to the right of the gate used for surveying purposes.

## WILDLIFE GUIDE



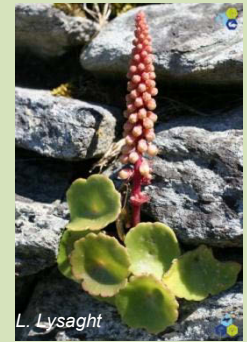
**Wild flowers:** Although much of the woodland on the site was planted on purpose to act as blast screening, the presence of ancient woodland species such as bluebell, wood anemone and wild garlic suggest much older woodland. These three flowers form a colourful carpet in spring.



**The Heron:** The heron is a frequent visitor to the Lee and can often be seen at the foot of the weir on the opposite bank.



**Meadowland:** The meadows are a wonderful habitat for a variety of butterflies including the small copper. Look out for swallows swooping low over the fields in the summer, catching flies.



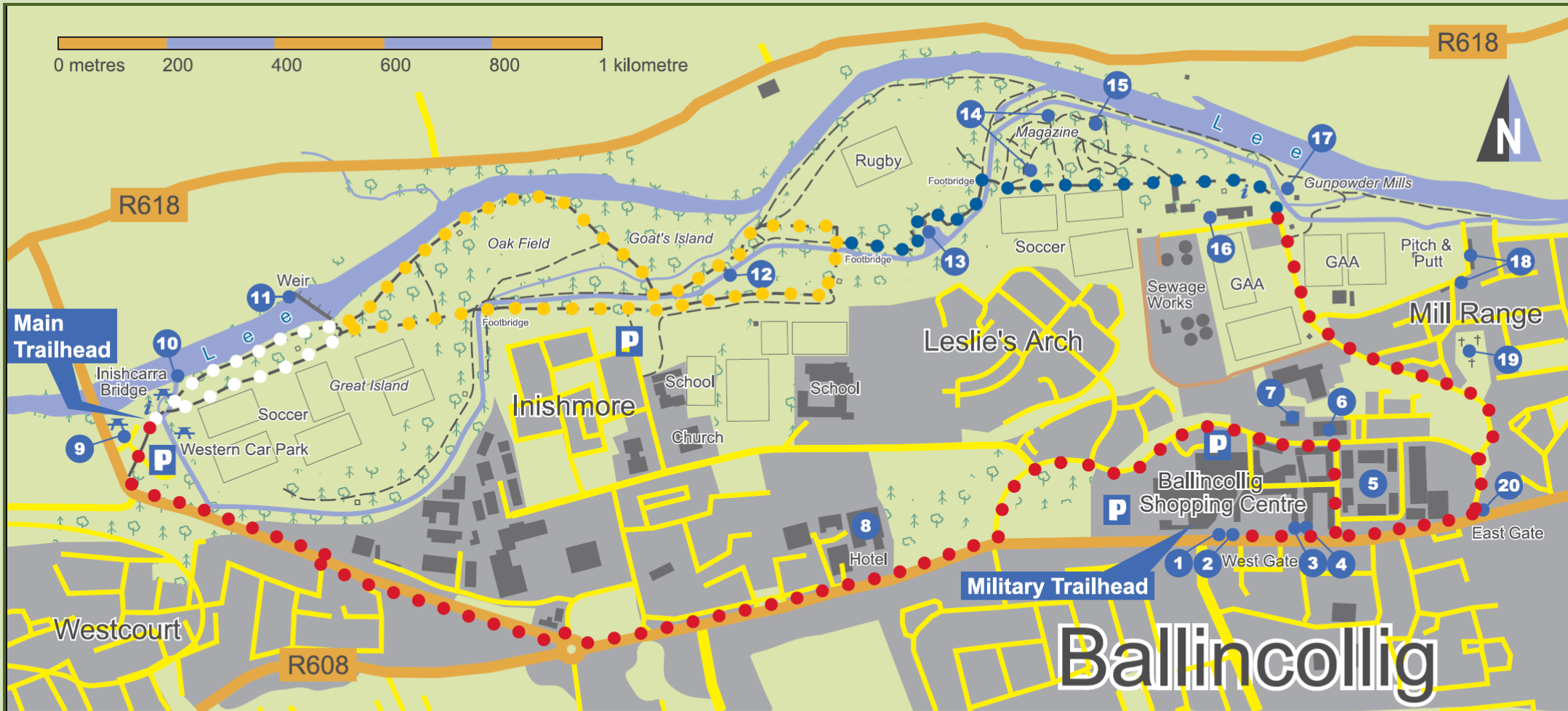
**Stone walls:** The traditional lime filling in the surviving boundary walls allows many small plants and ferns such as the navelwort and heart's tongue fern to flourish.



**Bats:** The trees in Beech Walk provide ideal roosting habitats for bats such as the pipistrelle.



**Alder:** Coppiced woodland provided a regular supply of charcoal for gunpowder making. Alder, willow and hazel were preferred. About two tons of wood produced enough charcoal for one ton of gunpowder.



The Heron Trail 1km - 20min     
 The Ash Trail 3km - 1 hour     
 The Powdermills Trail 5km - 1½ hours     
 The Military Trail 7km - 2 hours

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 West Gate</li> <li>2 Coach House</li> <li>3 Main Gate</li> <li>4 Turf Store</li> <li>5 Barrack Square</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Stables</li> <li>7 Officers' Mess</li> <li>8 Oriel House</li> <li>9 Western Watch House</li> <li>10 Canal system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 Weir</li> <li>12 Expense Magazine</li> <li>13 Steam Stove</li> <li>14 Magazines</li> <li>15 Coal Store</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 Refineries area</li> <li>17 Gunpowder Mills</li> <li>18 Long and Short Ranges</li> <li>19 British Military Graveyard</li> <li>20 East Gate</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|---|

The Gunpowder Trails are multi-access walking trails, making them accessible to all, including people with reduced mobility, wheelchair users, buggies etc. Dogs on leashes are permitted on the trail.