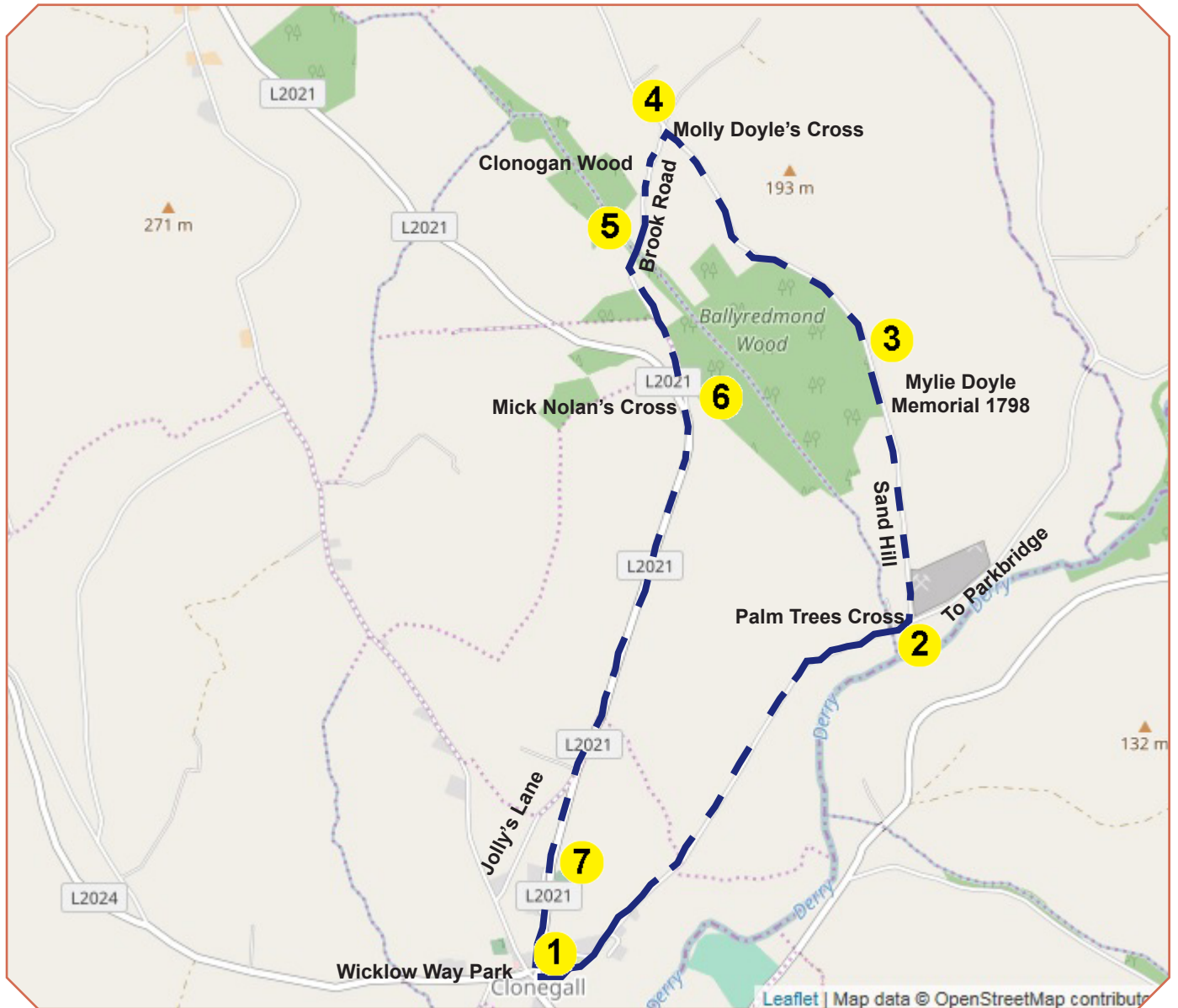


Slí na Sláinte - Clonegal



Wicklow Way Park

Slí na Sláinte or the Walk of Health starts in the Wicklow Way Park at the top of Clonegal Village.



The Palm Trees Cross

It continues along St Brigid's Terrace, through Clonogan and on to "The Palm Trees" cross. This is a famous meeting place of the 1798 rebels. There is a lovely view back towards Clonogal from here and the spires of both churches can be seen.

At this cross we keep left up "Sand Hill" and just before forestry gate there is a lovely view of the local countryside, that takes in counties Wicklow Wexford and Carlow and Mount Leinster.



View of Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow and Mount Leinster



Mylie Doyle Memorial

Further up we come to the Mylie Doyle Memorial on Knock Corrigan Hill. Mylie, an insurgent in 1798 no doubt met at the Palm Trees. Onward from the memorial we have a splendid view of the townlands of Clonogan and Monaghan Upper.



View of the townlands of Clonogan and Monaghan Upper.



Molly Doyle's Cross

The next cross is known as Molly Doyle's Cross and we turn left down The Brook Road. There are great views of valley from here and as we continue our journey we get a lovely view of Clonogan Wood. As we cross the brook, we see a gap on the left hand side that leads into the wood. years gone by there was a dance board in the wood and people came from miles to dance there.



Brook Road



Clonogan Wood

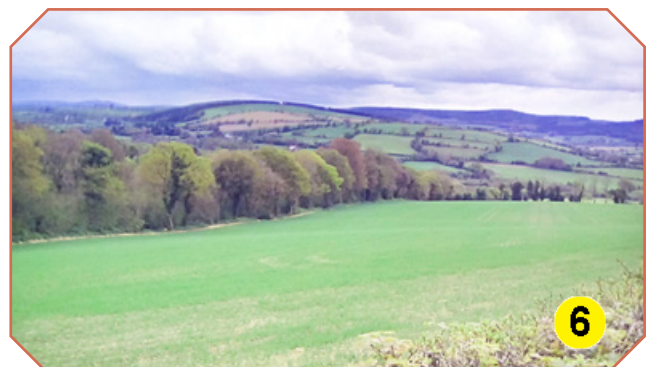
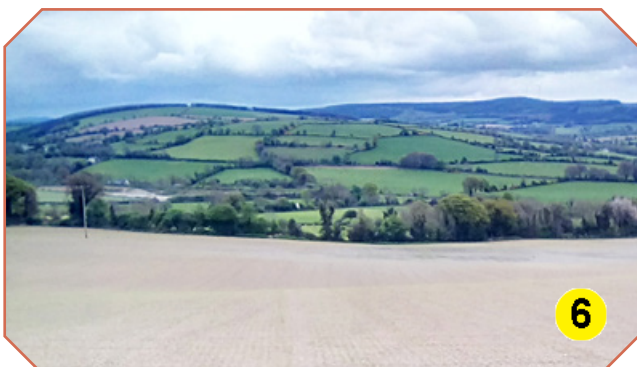
Further back in history the wood was the last place that the clans of Irish Warriors fought each other. The Clans being the McMurrags of Ferns, the O'Rourke of Brefni and the O'Connors of Offaly.

The story goes that McMurragh fell in love with Dearbhala O'Rourke, the wife of the Brefni chieftain and kidnapped her to bring back to Ferns, where he kept her prisoner, but treated her as his lover. O'Rourke on hearing where she had been taken summoned the assistance of his friend O'Connor and travelled to attack Ferns. McMurragh moved to meet him and engaged in one of the earliest examples of Guerrilla War. The final battle of this engagement took place here in Clonogan Wood, then known as Fidh Dorcha. McMurragh was defeated and retreated to Ferns where he travelled to Britain and sought the help of Henry precipitating the Norman invasion of Ireland lead by Richard De Clare otherwise known as Strongbow. A condition of this support was that Strongbow would marry McMurragh's daughter, Aoife, which he did in 1171 in Waterford.



Mick Nolan's Cross

Then we come to Mick Nolan's Cross, here we get a splendid view of Knock Corrigan Hill and the road we just came and of the valley.



Views of the valley

We veer left here and track the main road into Clonegal. Along the straight we get majestic views of Wicklow and Wexford. On the left behind and below the recently built houses is the Castle Field. This was a castle of the aforementioned McMurragh Kavanaghs.

Further along on your right is a lane known as “Jolly’s Lane” and an area known as The Acres; so called because when Cromwell came to Clonegal in circa 1650, he camped at the church which you can see on your left and the men who looked after the horses were granted sixteen acres of land each. One of these men was known as Jolly.



Then we pass St. Fiacac's Church around which is the oldest graveyard in Europe. The roof for this church was being imported from Canada but was seized as “Contraband of War”.

St. Fiacac's Church

On our right before we arrive back in the village and the Wicklow Way Park is the Wesleyan Church, situated at the back of the primary school and now a private residence.



Old sepia toned photo of Clonegal - date unknown.

Distance: 7.08 Kilometers (4.4 Miles)

Type: Moderate

Commentary and Photos by Dan Murphy

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