



Derry~Londonderry

Other Useful Maps

Irish Cruising Club "East and North Coasts of Ireland Sailing Directions" ISBN 978 0 9558 199 1 9 (excellent information on tides, tidal streams and navigation points)

OSNI Discoverer Series: sheet 4, 7, 12
Ordnance Survey Ireland: sheet 3

East Inishowen Sea Kayak Trail Guide (contains charts of the lough)

Tidal Information

- Lough Foyle and the entire River Foyle are tidal!
- Tidal range: up to 3.08m (at Lisahally) and approximately 1.1-1.5m at Lifford
- Average flood time: 6 hours 7 minutes
- Average ebb time: 6 hours 17 minutes
- Tide tables are available for Lisahally (near mouth of River Foyle) from Foyle Port londonerryport.com
- Approximate time differences
- Moville
- Derry~Londonderry city + 35 mins
- Northern tip of Islandmore + 2.5 hrs
- Lifford/Strabane + 3.0 hrs

- Tidal stream:
- streams in the entrance to Lough Foyle run at 3.5 knots at springs
- streams between Moville and Culmore reach 2.5 knots
- the river runs on average at 4.5 knots – bear in mind the river is tidal and flow can be 'upriver'! On an ebbing tide the current will be strongest... and even stronger if the wind is from the southwest.
- Take care in southwesterly winds on a flooding tide when the effect of wind against tide can produce short, steep waves all along the river and in the lough.

Winds

Remember that the River Foyle can become choppy,

can harness favourable winds by rigging a sail to help them on their way.

Treat Lough Foyle as the sea – it is, after all, a large enclosed bay on the Atlantic coast, reaching 15km width in places. Tides, winds, and sea conditions generally must be considered in planning a trip. Watch out for winds from south through east to northeast licking the water up into steep waves.

Emergency Numbers

In the event of an emergency use the following numbers: 999 (from all phones), police, ambulance and coastguard

Shipping Information

BBC Radio 4 (198 KHz AM in Irish waters) broadcasts a shipping forecast four times a day – 00:48hrs, 05:20hrs, 12:00hrs and 17:55hrs. Sea area Malin covers the Foyle.



Derry~Londonderry

Access Point 6 - Redcastle Hotel

The nice pebble beach below the Redcastle Hotel is a good place to pull ashore – whether for a rest or to avail of some hotel comforts. The hotel welcomes paddlers coming ashore and up to the hotel.

It is 6.7km to the next official access point at Moville. The paddling along this section of the lough is past low cliffs with wooded coves and small beaches. The hills to the south and east are the Sperrin Mountains. These form part of the watershed of the Foyle. The hill with a distinctive stepped profile is Binevenagh, formed from lava eruptions millions of years ago.

Access Point 7 - Moville



Monaghaney Terrace, Moville

Moville is a quaint Victorian seaside resort with the usual array of shops, cafes, pubs, hotels, B&Bs etc. In addition to the 2 public slipways in the town (one in the main harbour and another beside the old pier with a monument on it), the Irish Adventures slipway offers direct access to a host of facilities including lean-to camping shelter, camping, showers, toilets, fresh water and secure boat storage. Prior arrangement is recommended. Contact Inishadventures.com T: + 353 (0) 87 2202 577 or +44 (0) 7752 194 414

From here, canoeists can paddle across the lough to Magilligan Point. The preferred route is to go north via pleasant landscapes of woods with rocky offshore reefs to Greencastle (a busy fishing port and ferry terminal). Slightly north of here is a jumping-off point for the run across the Narrows to Magilligan Point. Paddlers should be aware that this can be a ferry glide rather than a straight paddle, dependent upon the state of the tide. This is the start of the North Coast Sea Kayak Trail, which runs approximately 90km to Waterfoot.

For an interactive trail guide visit www.CanoeNI.com

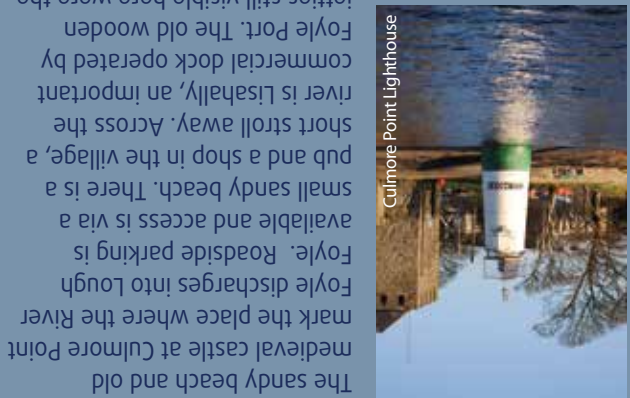


Red Bridge

Access Point 5 - Culmore Point

It is 6.2km to the next official access point at Culmore Point, with the landscape being fairly built up and industr- al at the start and then progressing to beautiful woodland and some palatial houses on the west bank! The river is deep here and narrows between rocky shores to produce a strong current, especially midstream. Watch out for eddies and choose landing spots with care – some soft mud in places!

The sandy beach and old medieval castle at Culmore Point mark the place where the River Foyle discharges into Lough Foyle. Roadside parking is available and access is via a small sandy beach. There is a pub and a shop in the village, a short stroll away. Across the river is Lisahally, an important commercial dock operated by Foyle Port. The old wooden jetties still visible here were the location for a mass surrender of the German U-boat fleet in 1945 – chosen because of the importance of Derry in the Battle of the Atlantic.



Culmore Point Lighthouse

There is a boatyard at the castle which is tenanted by Lough Foyle Yacht Club. Paddlers may be permitted secure boat storage here during operating hours. (Please visit ifyc.co.uk or just ask a member on site. Unfortunately pre-booking is not available). Please do not park on the grassy area above the beach as this will block access frequently used by the emergency services, RNLI, Search & Rescue etc.

It is 14.6km to the next official access point at Redcastle. Paddlers should stay outside and to the west of the shipping channel. Be aware of fishing boats (including tighty manoeuvring mussels dredgers) that may not notice a canoe or kayak in the sea. Depending on wind direction, a paddler can enjoy a lee shore along this side of Inishowen or may be challenged by waves fetching across from the other side of the lough! Some small streams spill on to the shore off the hills and there are stretches of shingle, interspersed with sand and grading to silt. Watch out for oyster cages along the shore that may be hidden at high water. Some are unmarked.



Canjans

Access Point 3 - Prehen

At Prehen there is a car park, concrete slipway and wooden steps (the latter used by the local rowing club). There is a small pontoon nearby which is operated by Foyle Search and Rescue – private access unless in an emergency! Nearby is Prehen wood, a remnant of the ancient woodland that once flanked the Foyle valley. Learn about the natural life of river and sea at the Loughs Agency's Riverwatch Visitor Centre and Aquarium just a 5 minute walk southwards along the cycle path (opening times: T: +44 (0)28 7134 2100 or loughs-agency.org). There is also a slipway at the back of the Loughs Agency premises.

It is 3.7km to the next official access point at the Foyle Marina pontoon. As you paddle through the city you will see the Guildhall, church spires, four hundred year old city walls, the 32m air draught Foyle Bridge, the low Craigeon Bridge, the impressive Peace Bridge and the riverside trains on one of the BBC's Great Railway Journeys of the World.

Access Point 4 - Foyle Marina

The marina is made up of a visitor pontoon, cruise ship quay and a larger pontoon designed as a maritime event platform which has hosted the Clipper Round the World Yacht race. It is operated by Foyle Port. The marina is busy, attracting many sail cruisers from other parts of Ireland and from Scotland. The pontoons are secured by gated gangway with intercom connecting to the harbour office. Access is only by prior arrangement. For further information, please contact: Harbour Radio T: +44 (0)28 7186 0313 or email harbourradio@londonerryport.com

From here you will have access to the bustling city of Derry~Londonderry. There are many tourist attractions, 400 year old intact city walls, accommodation options and great places to eat and drink. The your boat up and have peace of mind that it is behind locked gates!

There are concrete canoe steps at Fort George (once a World War Two naval base), downstream of the marina on the western bank of the river. Access is via a gate with a combination code lock. Call +353 872 202 577 for access code.



Foyle Marina Pontoon



Red Bridge

Access Point 1 - Lifford



Lifford is a small town in County Donegal (connected with Strabane in County Tyrone by road bridge). It has the usual array of cafes, shops, pubs etc and an interesting old court house which is open to visitors.

Access to the River Foyle is via a concrete path and set of wooden steps just downstream of the bridge.



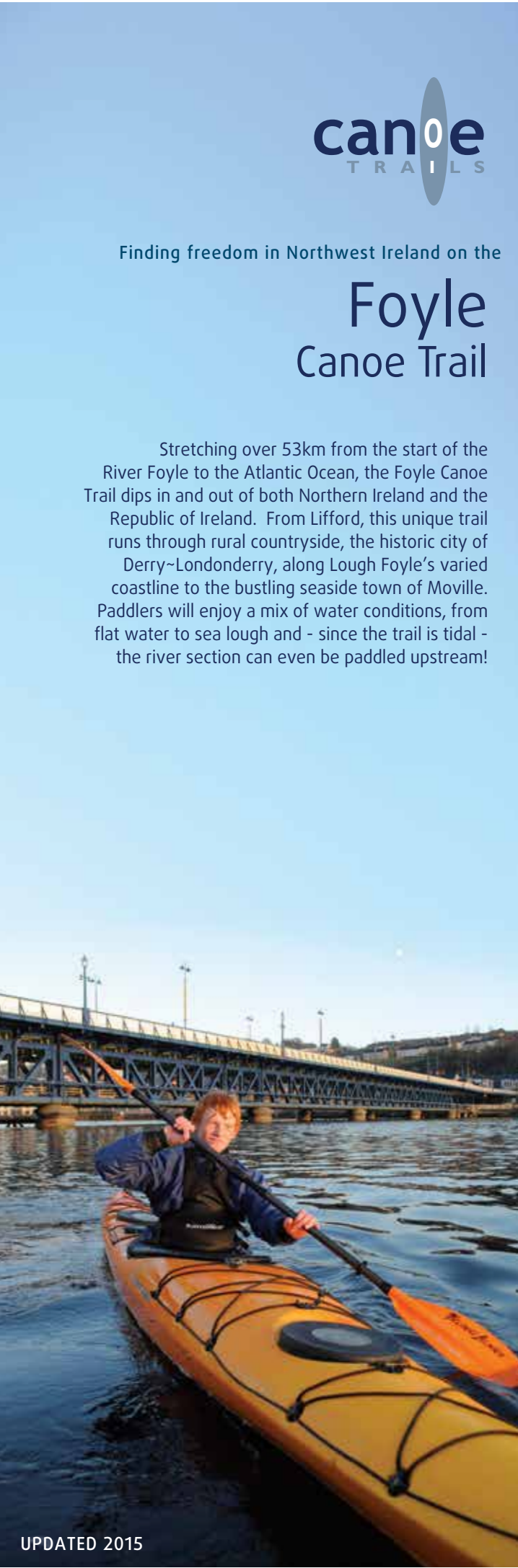
Canoeists should be aware that the steps are not at a perfect height above the level of water in the river – a problem compounded at low tide! However, paddlers should set off downriver at or close to high water to take advantage of the ebbing tide. Remember that since the river is tidal, there is a tidal time difference of approximately three hours at Lifford (compared to Lisahally, just south of Culmore Point) and there is a tidal range of approximately one metre. Car parking is available nearby (30m or so) and there is convenient access from the street.

It is 11km to the next official access point at Gribben Quay. The section between these points is picturesque and home to a wealth of biodiversity. In summer, watch the sand martins flitting after winged insects and hurtling into their nests tunnelled into the sand banks that edge much of the river. The river splits into two channels: the Backwater (to the east) and the Frontwater (to the west) running either side of a 106 hectare island called Islandmore. After the island the river quickly widens. At low water, watch out for sandbanks on the right side, just before Gribben Quay.

Access Point 2 - Gribben Quay

Mid-way between Lifford/Strabane and Derry~Londonderry is the Gribben Quay, an old fishing station which once operated a fish smoking chimney. The site access has a vehicle barrier (arrange entry in advance with site manager at the Loughs Agency +44 (0)28 7134 2100) and offers car parking, a stone jetty, slipway, a lean-to canoeist camping shelter and wild camping.

It is 11km to the next official access point at Prehen. This is the widest section of the river, with a number of scenic stopping points. Look out for the two art installations near New Buildings (one on each side of the river) which reference the community's historic involvement with the salmon industry.



UPDATED 2015

Finding freedom in Northwest Ireland on the

Foyle Canoe Trail



Stretching over 53km from the start of the River Foyle to the Atlantic Ocean, the Foyle Canoe Trail dips in and out of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. From Lifford, this unique trail runs through rural countryside, the historic city of Derry~Londonderry, along Lough Foyle's varied coastline to the bustling seaside town of Moville. Paddlers will enjoy a mix of water conditions, from flat water to sea lough and - since the trail is tidal - the river section can even be paddled upstream!

Safety

Canoeing is an adventure sport and, as such, should be treated with respect. If you are new to the sport, it is advisable to contact a Canoe Association of Northern Ireland (CANI) approved provider or club where expert coaching can be provided. Details can be found at cani.org.uk

When canoeing on the Foyle Canoe Trail consider the following safety advice:

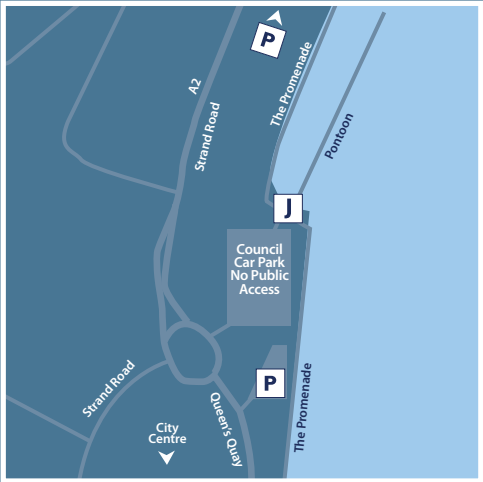
- There are extensive mud flats in Lough Foyle and sand banks on the river – please be aware that some access points are best used at high water only.
- The river is a large spate river which comes from a wide catchment – watch out for rapid rises in water level and flood debris such as trees.
- The Foyle Port shipping channel (maintained depth 8 metres) is a short distance offshore on the Donegal side. It is marked by port and starboard pile beacons flashing red and green. Depth reduces rapidly either side of this often busy channel. Small vessels (including canoes/ kayaks) should be aware of the limitations and needs of larger craft that are restricted to this channel.
- The lough and lower reaches of the river are sailing and boating recreational areas and you should be aware of other users, especially sailing boats competing in races.
- Wear an approved buoyancy aid at all times. Canoes and kayaks should have sufficient buoyancy to remain afloat if you capsize.
- Wear adequate clothing. Prolonged immersion in cold water leads to hypothermia – hypothermia can kill.
- It is not recommended to canoe alone. A group of three paddlers is the minimum recommended number to be safe.
- You do not need to be a strong swimmer but you will need the water confidence to deal with a capsized boat and get ashore safely.
- Consider attending a Foundation Safety and Rescue training course which covers safety and awareness of all types of canoe and kayak and environmental issues.
- Carry and know how to use a map and compass.
- It is recommended that paddlers obtain an up-to-date weather forecast as the Foyle can become rough in strong winds. Carrying rafting poles for open canoes is also a sensible precaution (rafted canoes are more stable in rough conditions).
- CANI recommends that paddlers leave details of their journey with the coastguard and another responsible adult.
Belfast Coastguard T. +44 (0) 28 9146 3933
Malin Head Coastguard T. +353 (0)74 9370103
- Carry adequate basic safety equipment – spare clothes, extra food, warm drink, bivvi bag, compass and means of communication (waterproofed VHF radio or mobile phone, flares etc), first aid kit. Remember – a canoe may be difficult to see from a larger craft so carry a whistle.

Key to Symbols

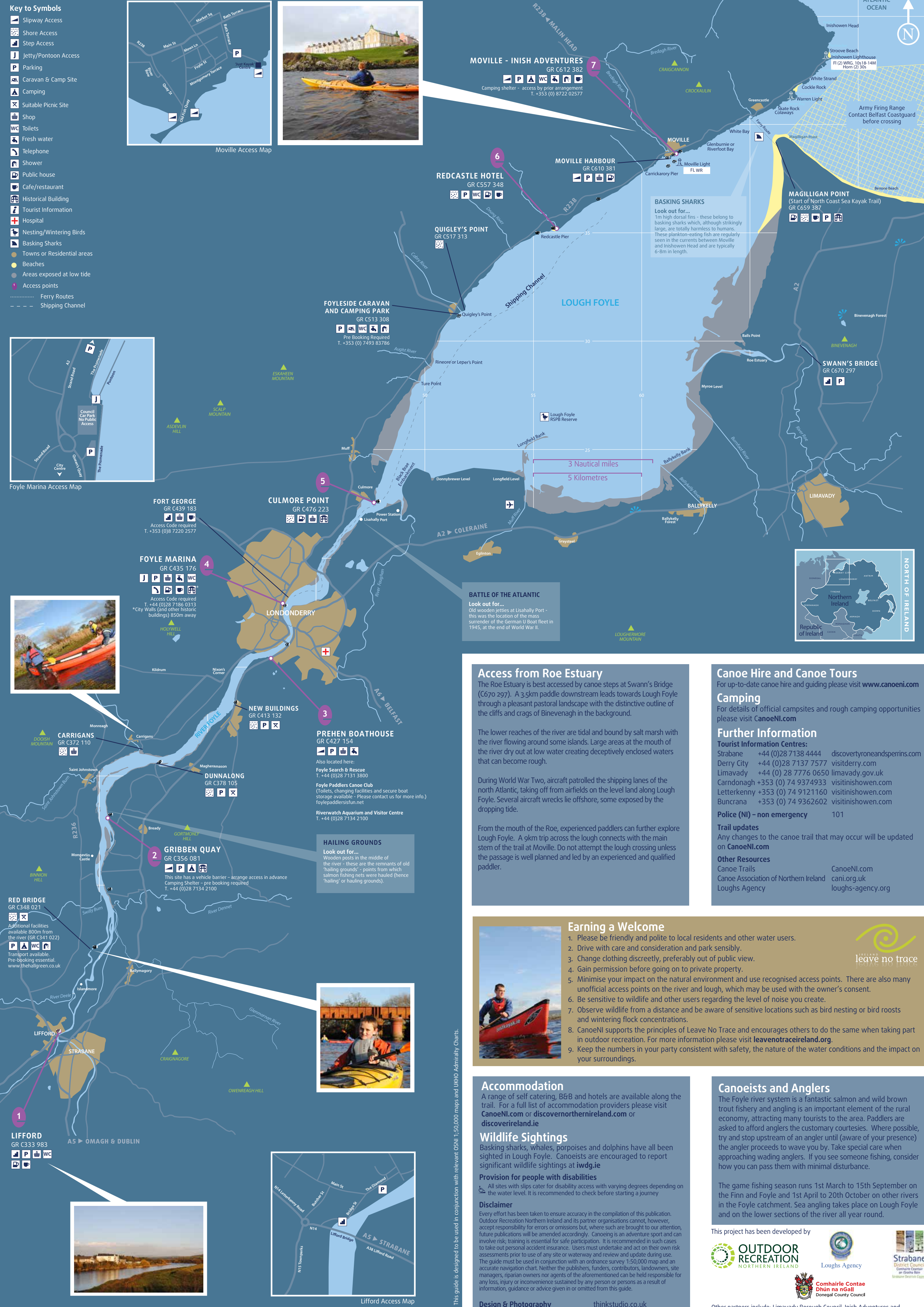
- Slipway Access
- Shore Access
- Step Access
- Jetty/Pontoon Access
- Parking
- Caravan & Camp Site
- Camping
- Suitable Picnic Site
- Shop
- Toilets
- Fresh water
- Telephone
- Shower
- Public house
- Cafe/restaurant
- Historical Building
- Tourist Information
- Hospital
- Nesting/Wintering Birds
- Basking Sharks
- Towns or Residential areas
- Beaches
- Areas exposed at low tide
- Access points
- Ferry Routes
- Shipping Channel



Merville Access Map



Foyle Marina Access Map



Access from Roe Estuary

The Roe Estuary is best accessed by canoe steps at Swann's Bridge (C670 297). A 3.5km paddle downstream leads towards Lough Foyle through a pleasant pastoral landscape with the distinctive outline of the cliffs and crags of Binevenagh in the background.

The lower reaches of the river are tidal and bound by salt marsh with the river flowing around some islands. Large areas at the mouth of the river dry out at low water creating deceptively enclosed waters that can become rough.

During World War Two, aircraft patrolled the shipping lanes of the north Atlantic, taking off from airfields on the level land along Lough Foyle. Several aircraft wrecks lie offshore, some exposed by the dropping tide.

From the mouth of the Roe, experienced paddlers can further explore Lough Foyle. A 9km trip across the lough connects with the main stem of the trail at Merville. Do not attempt the lough crossing unless the passage is well planned and led by an experienced and qualified paddler.

Canoe Hire and Canoe Tours

For up-to-date canoe hire and guiding please visit www.canoeni.com

Camping

For details of official campsites and rough camping opportunities please visit CanoeNI.com

Further Information

Tourist Information Centres:			
Strabane	+44 (0)28 7138 4444	discoveryroneandsperrins.com	
Derry City	+44 (0)28 7137 7577	visitderry.com	
Limavady	+44 (0) 28 7776 0650	limavady.gov.uk	
Carndonagh	+353 (0) 74 9374933	visitinishowen.com	
Letterkenny	+353 (0) 74 9121160	visitinishowen.com	
Buncrana	+353 (0) 74 9362602	visitinishowen.com	

Police (NI) – non emergency 101

Trail updates

Any changes to the canoe trail that may occur will be updated on CanoeNI.com

Other Resources

Canoe Trails	CanoeNI.com
Canoe Association of Northern Ireland	cani.org.uk
Loughs Agency	loughs-agency.org

Earning a Welcome

- Please be friendly and polite to local residents and other water users.
- Drive with care and consideration and park sensibly.
- Change clothing discreetly, preferably out of public view.
- Gain permission before going on to private property.
- Minimise your impact on the natural environment and use recognised access points. There are also many unofficial access points on the river and lough, which may be used with the owner's consent.
- Be sensitive to wildlife and other users regarding the level of noise you create.
- Observe wildlife from a distance and be aware of sensitive locations such as bird nesting or bird roosts and wintering flock concentrations.
- CanoeNI supports the principles of Leave No Trace and encourages others to do the same when taking part in outdoor recreation. For more information please visit leavenotraceireland.org.
- Keep the numbers in your party consistent with safety, the nature of the water conditions and the impact on your surroundings.

Accommodation

A range of self catering, B&B and hotels are available along the trail. For a full list of accommodation providers please visit CanoeNI.com or discovernorthernireland.com or discoverireland.ie

Wildlife Sightings

Basking sharks, whales, porpoises and dolphins have all been sighted in Lough Foyle. Canoeists are encouraged to report significant wildlife sightings at wdg.ie

Provision for people with disabilities

All sites with slips cater for disability access with varying degrees depending on the water level. It is recommended to check before starting a journey

Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication. Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland and its partner organisations cannot, however, accept responsibility for errors or omissions but, where such are brought to our attention, future publications will be amended accordingly. Canoeing is an adventure sport and can involve risk; training is essential for safe participation. It is recommended in such cases to take out personal accident insurance. Users must undertake and act on their own risk assessments prior to use of any site or waterway and review and update during use. The guide must be used in conjunction with an Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map and an accurate navigation chart. Neither the publishers, funders, contributors, landowners, site managers, riparian owners nor agents of the aforementioned can be held responsible for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any person or persons as a result of information, guidance or advice given in or omitted from this guide.

Design & Photography thinkstudio.co.uk

Canoeists and Anglers

The Foyle river system is a fantastic salmon and wild brown trout fishery and angling is an important element of the rural economy, attracting many tourists to the area. Paddlers are asked to afford anglers the customary courtesies. Where possible, try and stop upstream of an angler until (aware of your presence) the angler proceeds to wave you by. Take special care when approaching wading anglers. If you see someone fishing, consider how you can pass them with minimal disturbance.

The game fishing season runs 1st March to 15th September on the Finn and Foyle and 1st April to 20th October on other rivers in the Foyle catchment. Sea angling takes place on Lough Foyle and on the lower sections of the river all year round.

This project has been developed by



Other partners include: Limavady Borough Council, Inish Adventures and Canoe Association of Northern Ireland

This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with relevant OSNI 1:50,000 maps and UKHO Admiralty Charts.