



Kestrel



Damsel Fly



Speckled Wood



Common Carder Bee



Four spotted Darter



Lichen



Common Spotted Orchid



Geology/Rock Formation

# Old QUARRY Way

5K LOOP WALK

This 5k loop walk has been developed for your enjoyment. We hope this sign can provide an understanding of the tremendous biodiversity of the Old Quarry you pass along the route, which is largely not visible from the path.

Enjoy your walk!

## The Old Cement Quarry

Located on the north-western edge of Drogheda Town, the old cement quarry is a large limestone quarry used by Irish Cement from 1937 to 1978. Between 1978 and 1999 it was used as the Drogheda Corporation landfill site. Following its abandonment, due to the lack of human interference, nature has taken a foothold and it is now a haven for urban wildlife.



## Nature at its finest

Known as Brown Field Sites (abandoned industrial sites), these areas are often home to far more species of plants and animals than designated Nature Reserves, and play a vital role in protecting biodiversity in a time of species decline and habitat loss. The Old Quarry covering an area of around c.240 acres is now a sanctuary for a large variety of wildlife in an increasing urbanised landscape and a natural gem on our doorstep.



## Biodiversity

Habitat loss is one of the main causes of the decline in biodiversity. From the smallest mosses and lichens growing on bare rock to the seemingly effortless hovering of a hunting kestrel over the wildflower meadow, the old quarry provides an ideal environment for many species to thrive. The mosses and lichens have provided a foothold for the seeds of larger plants to germinate and grow, transforming the landscape over decades. A vast range of birds and insects have inhabited the newly-formed habitats.

## Geology

The rock quarried at Mell is Carboniferous limestone, from about 340 million years ago. It is classified as the Tullyallen Formation on the Geological Survey of Ireland's 1:100,000 bedrock map. Some glaciomarine sediments were also described from the site. It also shows a high degree of karstification throughout the different parts of the quarry. Virtually all accessible faces show cavities in a range of sizes. Most are small tubes and expanded joints, but there are larger infilled tubes and some open voids. Much of the solution that produced the cavities was probably post-glacial, occurring over the course of the last 10,000 years.

## Habitats

All three quarries but in particular quarry 3 with its large meadow and water side vegetation provide excellent nesting habitats for a large variety of bird and insect species. In a time of habitat destruction, this is a welcome discovery.

- Wild Flower Meadows
- Trees & Hedgerows
- Water & Ponds
- Rocky Areas

**Be Safe!**

The old Quarry is a restricted area, with no public access allowed for safety reasons.

The walk is along a busy main road so caution and wearing of high visibility colours is recommended.



Photography and text have been sourced from the work carried out by Tony Conaghy and his report 'Other Nations: Biodiversity at the Old Cement Quarry, Drogheda, Co. Louth'. Commissioned by Drogheda Tidy Towns.

## A Safe Haven

The quarry is a remarkable environment for nesting birds with 23 species recorded as nesting. Overall, 30 species with chicks are known to be using the quarry to date. It is also an important resting ground for others, such as Tufted Duck, Herring Gulls, Mute Swans, Cormorants and Grey Herons. These birds use the quarry on a regular basis all year round.

Many species are using the quarry as an important feeding ground, the vast majority of which are breeding:

- |                 |               |              |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 28 birds        | 7 bees        | 2 amphibians |
| 31 wild flowers | 4 dragonflies | 3 mammals    |
| 15 butterflies  | 2 damselflies |              |

This list is only the tip of the biodiversity iceberg.

Birdwatch Ireland have identified a number of species on the protected, endangered threatened or near-threatened list. Population trends are noted as decreasing and of conservation concern.

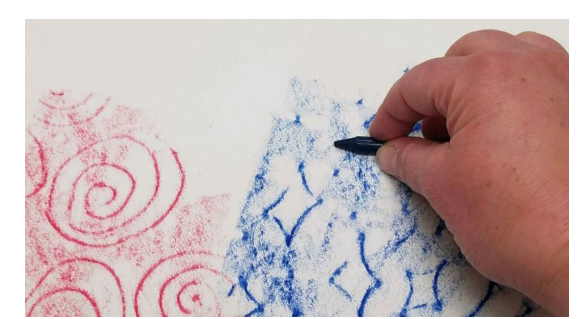
Endangered species resident in the quarry:

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Kestrel          | Little Grebe        |
| Peregrine Falcon | Skylark             |
| Meadow Pit       | Stock Pigeon        |
| Common Coot      | Great Crested Grebe |
| Tufted Duck      | Shel Duck           |
| Willow Warbler   | Small Heath         |
| Linnet           |                     |

## Fun Along the Way!

Waymarkers are positioned along the route at 1k intervals.

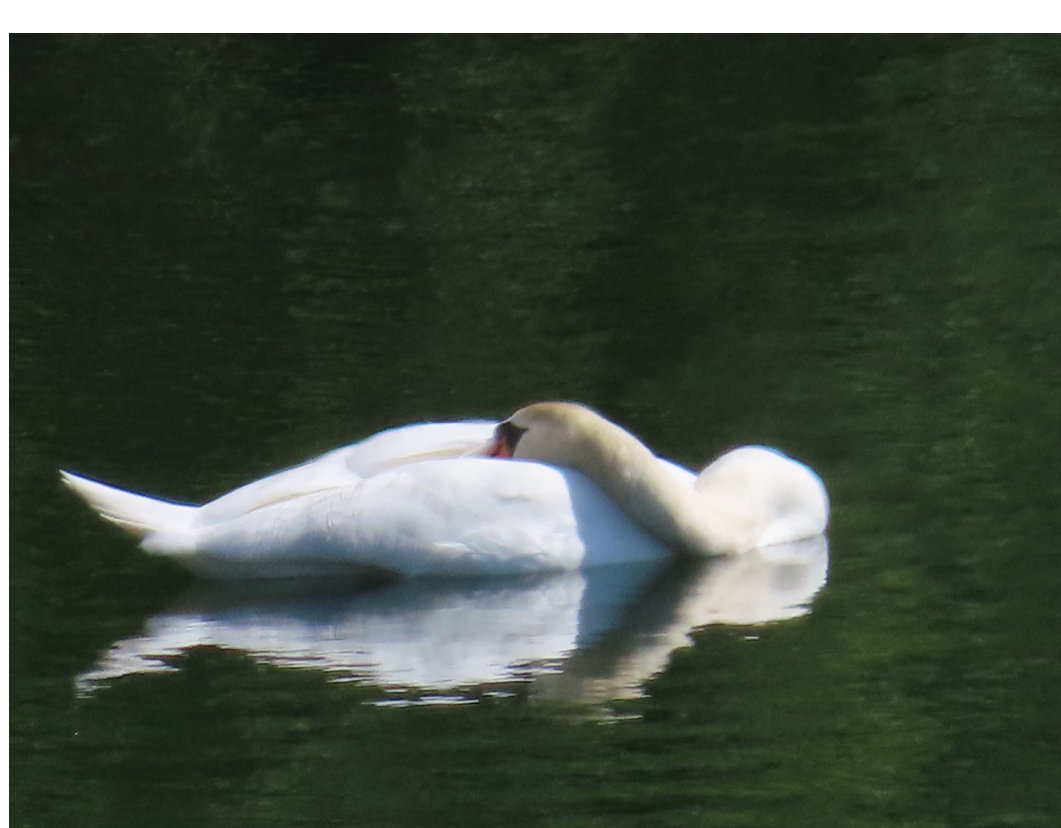
Tracing plates on each post can be used to take impressions using some paper and crayons or pencils. See how many you can collect.



QR codes can be scanned for further information about points of interest along the walk.



SCAN QR CODE TO ENJOY AUDIO, VIDEO, REPORTS AND SURVEYS



Mute Swan Resting



Common Blue (female)



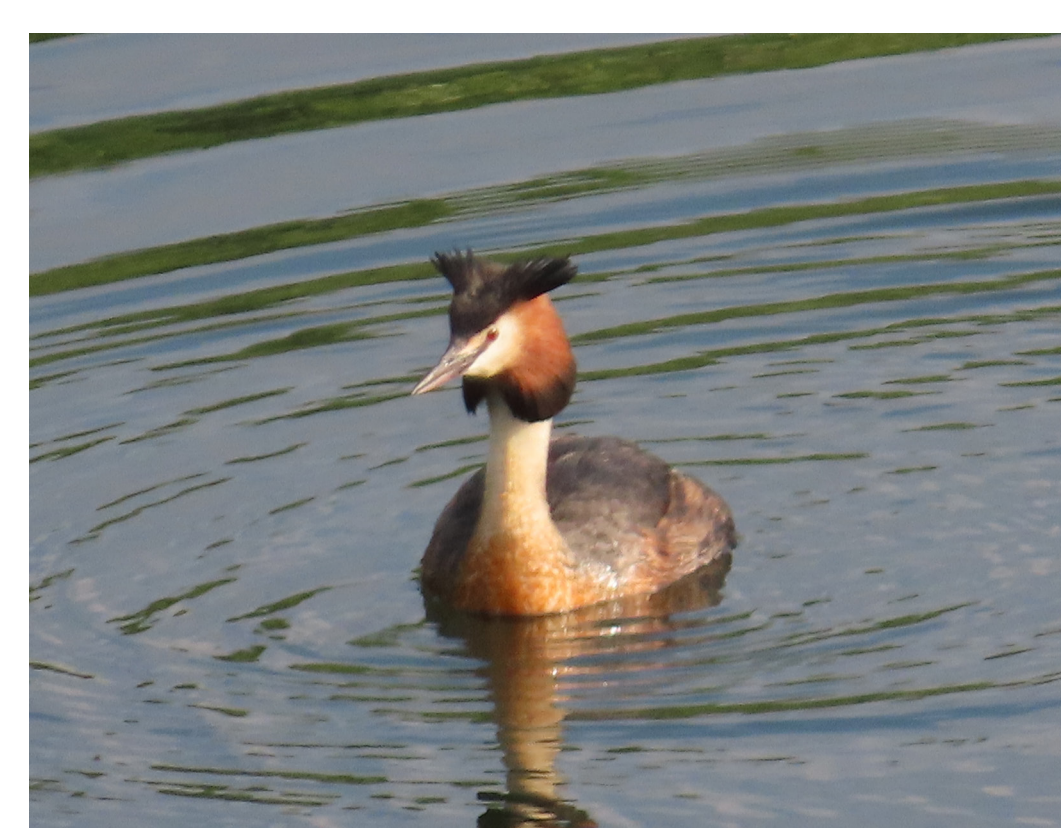
Damsel Fly



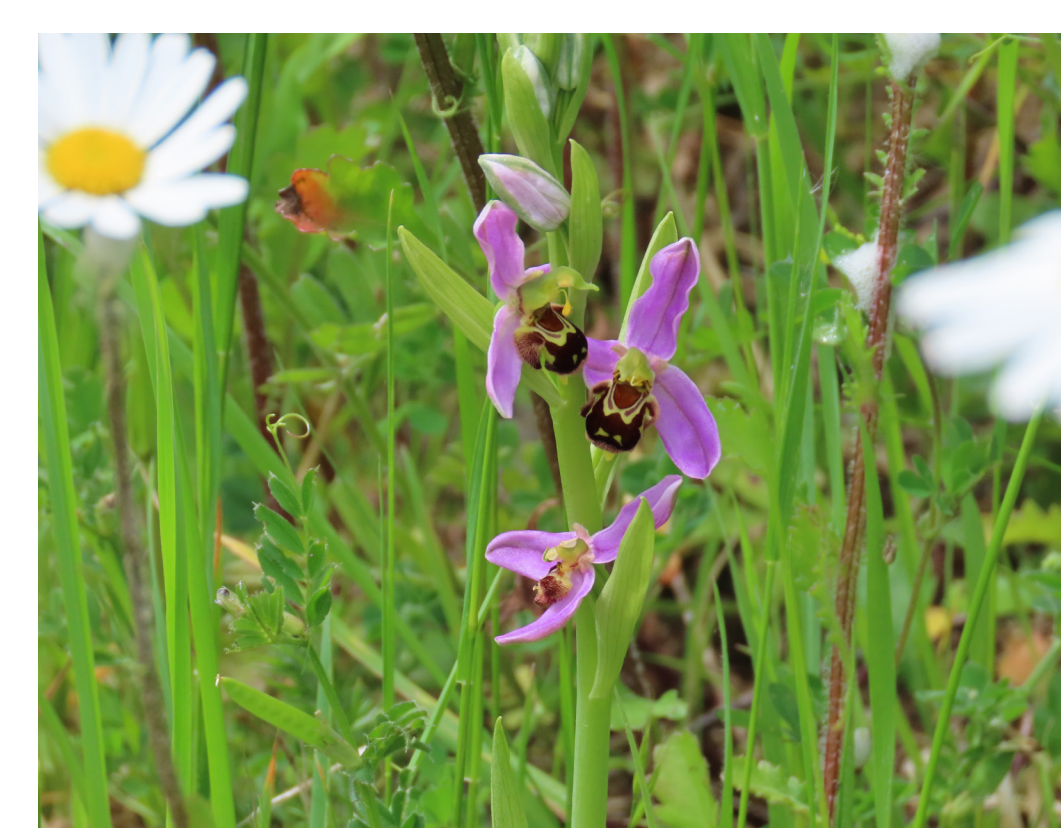
Reed Bunting



Orchids and Wildflowers



Great Crested Grebe



Bee Orchids



Peregrine Falcon