

the **Bigfoot**

HANDBOOK



Armagh-Dungannon

September

Sunday 12th

www.bigfootwalk.com 

Bigfoot n. is a linear walking challenge of 15 miles or more between 2 distinct landmarks.

2

This is Bigfoot

You're never too old too young too big too small too tall too thin too slim too plump too fast too slow too fit too unfit too busy too lazy too heavy too low too high too exhausted too happy too sad...



Use Bigfoot to raise money for your charity/group you can even split the distance with a friend!

3

You're a walker. You love walking. Walking's your thing.

You're not interested in running a marathon. You've tried running but it's not your thing. You like getting out for a few hours a week, stretching your legs & getting your pulse going.

Just because you're a walker, doesn't mean you can't rise to a challenge, take yourself and your fitness to a new level. The "Bigfoot" is an exciting new walking event for anyone who has ever thought, "I can rise to a challenge. I want an event that inspires and rewards. I deserve a t-shirt too!"

For too long the walker has been the poor cousin in the sporting calendar. Your friends may have run a marathon, but they've never walked a Bigfoot!

BIGFOOT IS THE WALKER'S MARATHON!

4

What's Bigfoot?

Bigfoot *n.* is a linear walking challenge of 15 miles or more between 2 distinct landmarks.

Bigfoot is a brand new concept. Every other sport has their high-profile challenges yet the walker always seems to be tagged on to the end of a marathon, always an after thought and always second fiddle to the runners.

Walkers deserve the same level of event in terms of challenge, profile and organisation that runners, cyclists, swimmers and every other sports man and woman expect. Now there is a new walking challenge – Bigfoot.

It's meant to capture the imagination and inspire the tens of thousands of walkers who clock up mile after mile each week to take their fitness to a whole new level. The very first Bigfoot challenge is between Armagh and Dungannon on the 12th September, 2010.

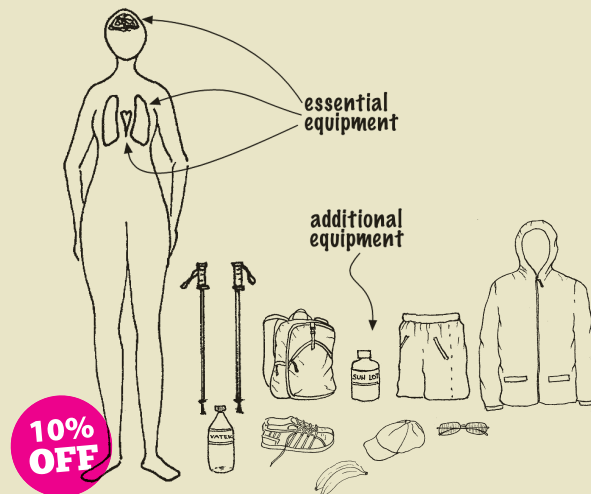
Wheelchair users

If you intend taking part, let us know and we'll help overcome any obstacles the route might throw up.

5

Equipment

Although anyone can walk a Bigfoot in whatever attire they choose it's advisable to have at least a few basics.



Produce this booklet at Jackson Sports, 70 High Street, Belfast before 12th Sept for 10% off all your walking equipment.
 Tel: 028 90.23.85.72
 E-mail: jacksonsports@btconnect.com

**JACKSON
SPORTS**

6

Shoes – Best foot forward

The most important item is shoes. You don't have to rush out and buy the latest hi-tech design but a good pair of walking specific shoes/trainers are advised. There are many specifically designed for walking as support and comfort are the main priority. Get a properly fitted pair at the start of your training program, stick with them and they'll be like carpet slippers by the time you walk the Bigfoot. A well broken in shoe will prevent blisters and foot, leg and back pain.

Layers, Weatherproofing & leg-wear

The ideal walking garb is *several thin layers* and a light rain/windcheater which you can tie around your waist or deposit into your rucksack as you warm up and cool down. It's also advisable to wear *fabrics which 'wick'* (takes moisture away from the body) and provides protection from the inevitable autumnal gusts and breezes. A word of warning for the casual dresser *never wear denim* if it rains and gets wet it will stay wet and weigh a ton. Loose, light walking trousers or shorts will be so much more comfortable.

Sticks

Walking sticks or trekking poles are a good enhancement for any walker as they can provide balance and stability and give a certain rhythm while walking. Poles are great on long distance walks, taking up to 40% of the weight off

7

your knees and transferring it onto the upper body whilst giving you more stability and a defence against curious dogs. They're not a necessity but we recommend them for Bigfoot.

Water & Food

You could have a pair of gold trainers hand-stitched by Santa's elves but if you don't drink enough water they're as good as useless. We'll be supplying you with water but you should always carry enough to get you to the next stop. You should be drinking water little and often, a sip or two every 15 minutes will prevent you from dehydrating, even when it's cool or raining. The same goes for food. Nibble an energy bar every hour to keep your fuel levels right.

Miscellaneous

A hat, sunglasses, sunblock and mobile phone can be carried in your pocket or small rucksack.

Where to buy

We highly recommend **www.jackson-sports.com** for everything you could possibly want. They're a family business, based in the Belfast City centre for over 40 years. They've an unparalleled reputation for service and customer focus. Give them a ring or call in and see them personally for advice regarding equipment and 10% off. *Visit their web site and see their full range of stock, special offers & free postage.*



Training

In this section we want to remove all obstacles that may prevent you from completing the challenge. It's never too late to put your best foot forward, so pull on your walking shoes and get ready to burn 20,000 calories in 10 weeks!

People say "I'm too old to exercise, I've left it too late" but sentiments like these couldn't be further from the truth. Walking has no upper age limit. *There's no "right shape" or "right weight"*, it's something we all do every day without even thinking about it. It's not difficult.

The key to success is in how you approach it. The first thing you should do before you start any exercise regime is to consult your doctor, just in-case you have some underlying problems that might need attention. This done you should take your time, build your self up gradually, and ***set yourself sensible targets.***

As with any large challenge it's easier if you ***break it up into stages.*** We've included a rock-solid, 10-week training plan to guarantee you're in prime fitness for the event.

This is a tough event. ***It's no walk in the park.*** It will sap your energy and ***you'll need to be in peak condition*** to finish. Even someone in good physical condition will find it a huge challenge. Walking uses a different set of muscles. Swimming, running and cycling will only help to a point, the best way to train for this event is to WALK!

Variety is the thing to keep your interest up. Rather than plod around the same route, mix it up, get out and see different parts of the country. We've listed routes you mightn't have tried before and some further afield if you fancy something completely new.

Why eat into your whole day when you can fit most of these distances into your lunch hour. A 3-mile walk can be completed in 1 hour without much trouble. ***Walk to work one day and home the next and that's your training complete for the first few weeks.***

Training is easier in a group, get a few friends and organise yourselves. Occasionally you'll need a bit of coaxing and someone to nag you to keep at it.

We have listed some circular routes so you can park the car, walk a big distance and then return. The more you walk the faster you get. Toward the end of your training you will be easily covering 4 miles per hour. ***Try and walk in all weather.*** It will prepare you for all types of weather conditions. You might be surprised, a rainy day is often easier to walk in than a sunny day!

Training Plan

Here's the 100% sure-fire way to train for the Bigfoot. Follow the weekly chart, chalk up the miles, chuck out the fat and walk your way to success!

WEEK	WEEKDAYS	WEEKEND	TOTAL	NOTES
1	two 1-mile walks *	–	2	
2	three 1-mile walks *	–	3	
3	two 2-mile walks *	–	4	
4	two 3-mile walks *	5-mile walk *	11	
5	two 4-mile walks *	5-mile walk *	13	
6	three 3-mile walks *	6-mile walk *	15	
7	three 4-mile walks *	8-mile walk *	20	
8	two 5-mile walks *	10-mile walk *	20	
9	three 5-mile walks *	12-mile walk *	27	
10	two 6-mile walks *	15-mile walk *	27	
11	two 2-mile walks *	one BIGFOOT	22	
total in 11 weeks			164	

Check off the distance each week. Note down what worked and what didn't. If one week went well then copy what you did. It might be getting to bed early, trying a new diet, taking an energy drink or walking in a group.

Walking Routes

There are tons of signed & mapped walking routes right on your doorstep, each one varying in length and difficulty.

Armagh Area

* 1–2 mile circular walks

- The Mall – Armagh’s walking centre (1-2 miles).
- Address House – Ladies Mile (1 miles).
- Highway to Health Armagh – Route B (2.7 miles).
- Loughgall Country Park - Orchard Walk (2 miles).
- Gosford Forest Park - Castle Walk (2 miles)

* 3–4 mile circular walks

- Highway to Health Armagh – Route A (3.4 miles).
- Loughgall Country Park – Bridle Path (4 miles).
- The Argory – Limetree Walk (3 miles).
- Gosford Forest Park – Crunaght Trail (4 miles).

* 5–7 mile circular walks

- Highway to Health – Route B
- The Argory – Limetree Walk (3 miles).
- Gosford Forest Park – Crunaght Trail (4 miles).

* 8–15 mile circular walks

- Poet’s Trail – Ballykeel Loop , Maghera (8 miles).
- Slieve Gullion (9.5 miles).
- Wetlands Way - Maghera (12 miles).

Dungannon Area

* 1–2 mile circular walks

- Dungannon Park - Dungannon’s walking centre (1–2 miles).
- Highway to Health Dungannon – Route A (2 miles).
- Peatlands Park – short walks (1–2 miles).

* 3–4 mile circular walks

- Peatlands Park – Woodland Walk (3 miles).
- Windmill Wood & Dungannon Park (3 miles).
- Parkanaur Forest Park – mixed routes (3 miles).

* 5–7 mile walks

- Peatlands Park – Peatlands Walk (5.5 miles).
- Coalisland Canal Walk (5 linear miles).
- Carleton Trail, Clogher Valley - black (6 miles).

* 8–15 mile circular walks

- Creggandevsky Archaeological Trail, Carrickmore (9 miles)

Walking events & festivals

For information on all these walks (and more) plus walking festivals in your area visit: WalkNI.com

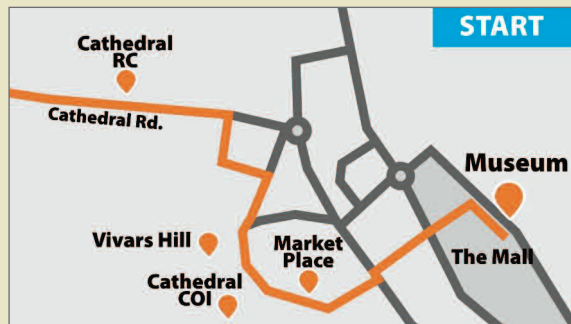


14

Bigfoot route

We're walking from Armagh County Museum on The Mall to the Castlehill, in Dungannon, all 18 miles of it! Not that boring main road but the ancient route used for thousands of years by Saints, settlers, traders, Vikings & Chieftains.

The starting point for the walk is the **Museum**, on the Mall. The building started off as a school built in 1834, designed along the lines of a classical Greek temple to fit in with other grand buildings nearby. The closure of the school provided an opportunity for the local Philosophical Society



15

to start their own Museum and reading room in 1856. Their varied collection was passed on to the County Council when Armagh County Museum opened to the public in 1937 - the first county museum in Northern Ireland.ô

Before setting off look at the painting of Armagh in 1810 by James Black, on the ground floor. The route will take you past many of the buildings shown in the painting as you make your way to St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral on the hill. Cross the oval area opposite the Museum known as the Mall. In the late 1700s it was a 'commons' where cattle grazed and people gathered. It was also used as a racecourse for horses (four furlongs).

The hill towards the **Cathedral** dominates the skyline. Armagh was traditionally founded by St. Patrick in 457AD. He secured the hilltop site after a series of negotiations with a local chieftain. Armagh attracted many Viking raids (there is a hoard of Viking silver on display in the Museum) and the importance of the Cathedral site is reflected in Brian Boru, the high King of Ireland, insisting that he was buried in this hallowed ground in 1013AD.

Building of the cathedral began around 1268, what you see today is mainly the result of the 1834 work with the main body of the church (the nave and aisles) much as it was in 1365. The Cathedral is open to the public. Just beside the entrance gates is *Armagh Public Library, founded in 1771.*

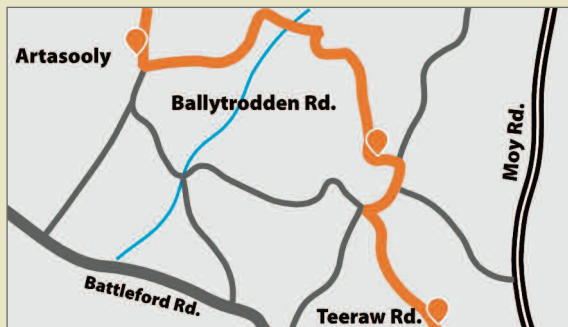
16

This is one of the hidden gems of Armagh and is open to the public. The houses on **Vicars Hill** were built for “the reception of clergymen’s widows” between 1724 & 1780. One of them is said to be haunted by the ghost of the Green Lady.

The foundation stone of the **Catholic Cathedral** was laid on St. Patrick’s Day 1840. There was a long break in the construction work during the famine years and it was eventually completed in 1904.

Tyra road

The site of McKeever’s bridge, on the old Armagh to Monaghan railway line, coincides with the junction with the **Tyra Rd.** The remaining embankment can be seen on the left. Tyra townland (district of the fort) has been spelt in many ways over the years and the road signs at each end of the road reflect this. One reads “Tyra” and the other



17

“Teeraw” sparking much local debate as to the ‘proper’ spelling. From here the route goes between the *fruit leaden hedgerows and rakes out through the rippling landscape toward Ballytrodden where the road rises over the drumlins deposited during the ice age.* From the top, look across the Blackwater Valley and see the distinctive red brick of Benburb Priory glow in the distance. We come down over the rough track and cross the stream into **Artasooley**.

Tullysaran Chapel

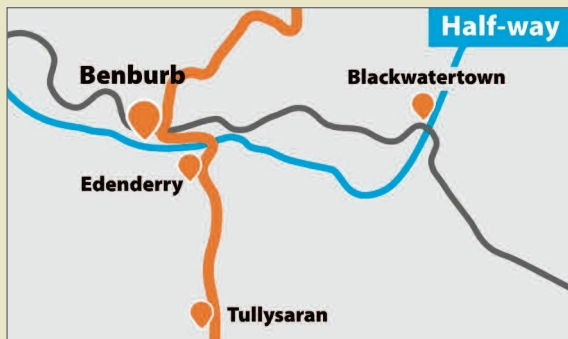
Technically it’s in Artasooley, but because this church replaced an earlier one in **Tullysaran** townland it’s known locally as Tullysaran chapel. The bell tower is a local landmark and the *distinctive dressed stone used to finish the building was bought from the Charlemont estate when Roxborough House at the Moy was being demolished.* The building was officially opened in September 1922. Past the chapel on the left is **Edenderry** House, set in off the road. It was built at a modest cost of £184-12-3 ½ in 1778 as a Glebe house for Rev John Young, perpetual curate of Eglisli (1777–1803). In his book, “The Buildings of County Armagh”, Sir Charles Brett describes it as his “most favourite building in the county”.

The Blackwater, Benburb & Ulster Canal

The half-way point is now almost in sight or more precisely earshot. We go through the car-park just before Maydown Bridge and follow the track along the Blackwater. Dredged

18

extensively in the 1970s and 1990s *it revealed an array of archaeological material including some of the finest early Christian objects recovered in decades.*



Finds include battle axes, a gold ring, scales and weights and shrines for holding the relics of saints. They were plundered by the Vikings from the great Monastery at Armagh and can now be seen on display in the Ulster Museum. One of the earliest references to the river is in 1118 when a cleric lost one hundred ounces of good church silver, the mass vestments belonging to Cellach, a successor of Patrick, all drowned in the Daball (Blackwater).

We also pass what remains of the Ulster Canal. Constructed between 1831–1842 and forty six miles long, it allowed barges to *transport goods all the way from Belleek in County Fermanagh to Belfast.* This $\frac{3}{4}$ mile section through

19

the limestone gorge at Benburb presented a series of engineering problems, eventually overcome by the construction of seven locks. One 350 yard section was cut through the limestone bed to a depth of 41ft at one point. In the late 1850's the Ulster Railway from Armagh to Monaghan lessened its importance. *Between 1874–77 annual toll receipts for traffic averaged £163 while the cost of upholding the infrastructure was about £1250 per annum.* Unsuccessful attempts were made to turn its fortunes around but it suffered a lingering demise. In 1929 it was reported the gates “were swung open and the water... was allowed to pass into the Blackwater.”

Through the woods and *cross the distinctive iron footbridge into County Tyrone and we have reached the halfway stop at Benburb*, meaning “proud or bold cliff”, it refers to the sheer rock-face overlooking the river where Shane O'Neill built his castle in the 16th century. After the plantation of Ulster, Sir Richard Wingfield built a fortified house/bawn on the site, much of which is still prominent in the grounds. The redbrick manor house was built by the Bruce family during the 1880s and 90's and operated as a military hospital during WWII. The Servite order came to Benburb in 1947 and bought it. From the rear of the building you can now trace your footsteps all 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles back to the starting point on the Mall in Armagh. Relax, have a bite of lunch, stretch out and get ready for the second leg.

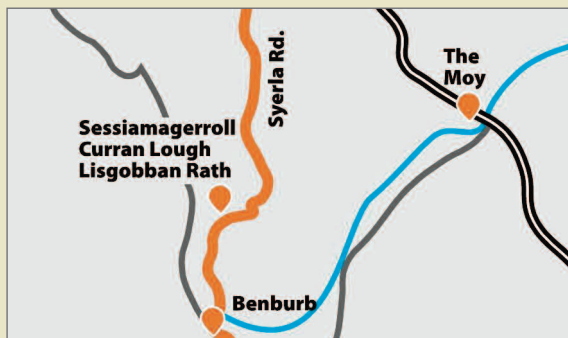
20

Second Leg

We leave Benburb and walk the Sustrans Route all the way into Dungannon.

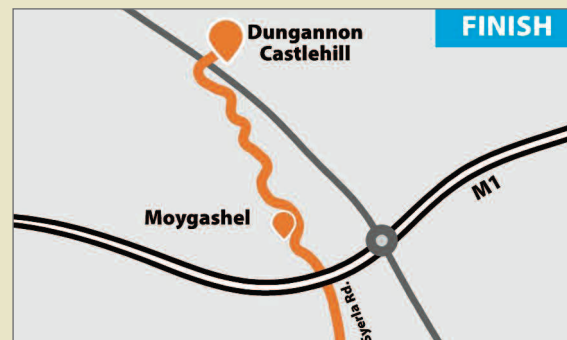
Sessiamagerroll & Curran Lough

Now densely wooded, **Sessiamagerroll Fort** or rath is an important monument. It is surrounded by seven other raths on nearby hilltops (600-900AD). The site was used to 'inaugurate' or crown Irish chieftains. It is a wonderful viewpoint and on a clear day the Mournes, Lough Neagh and Slemish are clearly visible. **Curran Lough Crannog**, is a man made island in the lake to the left, used as a defended settlement and **Lisgobban Rath** is also visible.



On the **Syerla Road**, before Moygashel, The Castlehill with its distinctive turrets is now visible off on the horizon.

21



Walk through the village of **Moygashel**, with a rich history going back to 1781. The linen mills were powered by water channelled from Eskragh Lough, through Black Lough, Dungannon Park lake and into Moygashel.

Go through Dungannon Park, along the traffic-free path to the old railway station in the town, straight up Scotch Street, long and steep to the Market Square where a market has existed since 1587. The final push takes you to the summit where Hugh O'Neill plotted against Queen Elizabeth's forces from his hill top stronghold of Dungannon Castle. You'll understand why armies, over the centuries, have used this as their HQ and why we've used it as our finishing point. The incredible view takes in most of Ulster and lets you trace all 18 miles back to the spires in Armagh.

How to enter

Here's what you get:

Shuttle bus from Dungannon to start. Entry to the event. Water. Hi vis jacket. Route map. Lunch in Benburb. First Aid. Road Marshalls. Marked and mapped route. Back up vehicles on hand at any stage of the event. T-shirt at finish. Snacks. Sports therapists. Shuttle bus back to Armagh from finish.

Cost £20

If you sign up early, we'll knock 25% off!

We need to know numbers in advance, so if you help us out, we'll knock 25% off the price.

Fill in the form opposite or register at:

www.bigfootwalk.com

pay online or download an entry form.

If we receive it by 1st September we'll knock £5 off the price!

Entries after 1st September = £20.00



Event entry form

Registration will start at Armagh County Museum on the Mall at 9am on Sunday 12th September. The walk begins at 10.00am. A shuttle bus will leave Dungannon Square at 08.30am for walkers leaving from Dungannon area. Shuttle buses will leave the finish, taking Armagh walkers back to The Mall, Armagh.

Disclaimer: I understand that I enter the event at my own risk and that no person(s) or organisation(s) will be held responsible for any accident, injury or loss to myself, prior to, during or after the event. I confirm that I have no medical conditions which would endanger myself or others taking part. I understand that the organisers reserve the right to alter arrangements and conditions should circumstances require.

NB: Parental signature required for anyone under 16 years

Name :

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:

t-shirt size: S M L XL Taking shuttle bus? Y N

E-mail address:

Signature (parental):

*Cheques only, made payable to **The Upbeat Agency** (your name & address on reverse) £20 Per Individual Entry, £15 before 1st September.*

The Upbeat Agency would like to thank:

Armagh City & District Council
Armagh County Museum
Dungannon & South Tyrone Council
Jacksons sports
Sainsburys
UnLtd

Visit:

www.bigfootwalk.com
www.twitter.com/bigfootwalk

Contact

info@bigfootwalk.com
tel: 077.17.35.32.68

Design: 10on12.com

Route research: Armagh County Museum - www.nmni.com/acm

Illustrations: Jasmina Blagojevic

Copy editing: KB

Set in: ChunkFive & Myriad Pro

The Bigfoot is organised by **The Upbeat Agency**, a 'hot-for-profit' social-enterprise who organise events and projects with a positive social impact. Visit: www.getupbeat.org for more information.



This brochure is available to download and in alternative formats