

Flora

There are many interesting plants in this woodland, significantly many of them are ancient woodland indicator species. Most of these are not especially rare such as bluebells, wild garlic, and primroses. However the Bird's nest orchid (*Neottia nidus-avis*) is also found here and this is a plant that clearly demonstrates a continuous woodland cover from the earliest of times. This plant is associated with tree roots and soil on fungi and does not contain chlorophyll accounting for its peculiar colour.

Fauna

This woodland is home to populations of red squirrel, pine martens and many species of bats notably the Lesser horseshoe bat. The red squirrel is increasingly under threat from the non-native grey squirrel. Pine martens are rare in Ireland but can frequently be seen in this woodland. The Lesser horseshoe bat is an endangered species in Europe but this locality with its numerous caves provides important winter hibernation habitats.

Natura 2000

The priority woodland at Clonbur forms part of the Natura 2000 network of sites that are protected by EU legislation.



Fly agaric - example of rich biodiversity at Clonbur

Future Looks Bright

Joyce Country surrounds and includes the area between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib. There is a proposal that Joyce Country will seek Geopark (EU designation) status and that the LIFE element of Clonbur Woods will form an integral part of this initiative. It offers a wonderful open air classroom facility and research opportunities for students of all ages.



Rare Bird's nest orchid

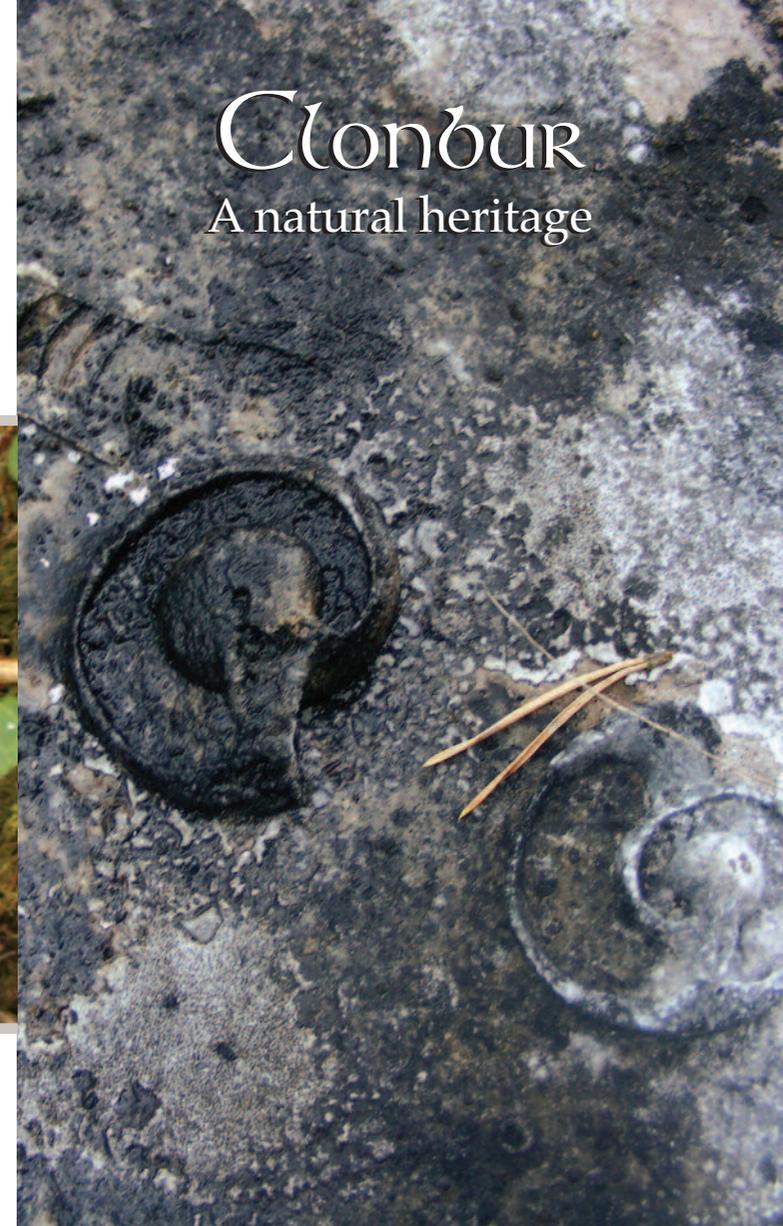


www.petersburg.ie
www.coillteoutdoors.ie
www.woodlandrestoration.ie

Images courtesy of :
Trish Walsh and Pdraig Canny

Clonbur

A natural heritage



Fossilised Limestone

Local people living in and around Clonbur enjoy the natural heritage and proximity to a woodland on their door step. A growing number of people walk in the woods enjoying the trees and natural landscape. The community is proud of this heritage and welcome visitors to the locality.

Coillte Woods Around Clonbur

Around Clonbur there is a long standing tradition of forestry and related industry. There is an ash-hazel woodland associated with limestone pavement on the edge of Lough Mask, that is part of a LIFE nature conservation project, co-funded by Coillte and the EU. This biodiversity rich area is surrounded by forests, agricultural land and lakes. Over recent years commercial conifer trees in this section of woodland have been removed and are being replaced through natural regeneration and some planting. There is a large increase in the species diversity range of broadleaved trees in this part of Coillte's estate.

Recreation

The trails in the Clonbur and Cong woods were officially launched in October 2009. This represents close to 25kms of trails with walks colour coded to suit all levels and ages. These woodlands are unique in that they are linked by viaducts or tunnels under the public roads. These were built by the Guinness family (famous for their brewing skills).

Further detailed information on these trails can be found at www.coillteoutdoors.ie



Abundant Wild Garlic

An outdoor classroom



Learning Outdoors

Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre located just outside the village, promotes and delivers environmental education and field studies. The centre uses the woodland as an outdoor classroom teaching woodland ecology to a wide variety of students. Staff at the centre have been actively involved in aspects of the LIFE project since 2006. It is appreciated by the local community that parts of Clonbur Wood is included in this EU LIFE funded project "Restoring Priority Woodland Habitats in Ireland". Petersburg O.E. Centre will continue to promote the natural landscape and keep an eye on the wonderful legacy left by this project.



Petersburg OEC adjacent to Clonbur Wood

Encouraging Our Youth

Clonbur National School is located beside the woodland. From Autumn 2009 students attending national schools will participate in nature studies based in the woodland organised in conjunction with the Heritage Officers of Counties Galway and Mayo, and staff of Petersburg OEC.



Nature Walk

Geology

The geology underlying the Life project section of Clonbur woods is Carboniferous Limestone. This is an extension of the more famous Burren limestone and was laid down in a warm shallow sea 350 million years ago when a part of Ireland was positioned below the equator. It qualifies as glaciated Karst landscape. The glacial erratics that can be seen on the open limestone pavement is evidence of this. The ice sheets removed all existing soil cover exposing the limestone. Further weathering in the last 10,000 years has created a unique landscape notably the 'holey rocks' and 'boulders in sockets'. The boulder in their sockets phenomenon is unique to Lough Mask and is not found anywhere else in Ireland or, perhaps, in the world.

Lough Mask

This lake is famous for its fishing and is recognised as one of the best trout fisheries in Ireland. Coillte's woodland restoration LIFE site is on the shore of Lough Mask. Many visitors are attracted to Lough Mask when Mayfly hatch in May.

Archaeology

The landscape around Clonbur shows the presence of people from the earliest of times. Court cairns and wedge tombs, typical of Neolithic and Bronze age people have been found. Ballykyne Castle in Clonbur Wood dates from the 13th century and more recent archaeology such as lime kilns and corn stands have also been found.