

Lough Dan

Lough Dan (Irish: Loch Deán) is a boomerang-shaped ribbon lake near Roundwood, County Wicklow, Ireland. It is a popular area for hikers and kayakers and lies very close to the Wicklow Way.

The Inchavore river flows into Lough Dan from the north-west. An outflow from Lough Tay - the Cloghoge river - feeds it via from the north-east. It is drained to the south by the River Avonmore. Most of the lake is surrounded by private lands, though the north-western corner is part of the Wicklow National Park.

“ The Cloghoge River flows out of Lough Tay and into Lough Dan. The Inchavore River flows in another glacial valley from the west to enter Lough Dan. The scenery around here is spectacular. The valley floor at 230m is very fertile. The remains of lazy beds, which were ridges built for growing vegetables, cover the valley. They are evidence of higher population levels in the mountains in the past. Arctic Char *Salvelinus alpinus* was last recorded in the lake in 1988. This fish is one of the oldest inhabitants of Ireland but a recent survey found no trace of them, indicating the species is now extinct in Co. Wicklow. There are Peregrine Falcon sites on the steep cliffs overlooking the lake on the eastern side, and some lovely broad-leaved woodland in the Inchavore Valley. The Cloghoge and Inchavore Rivers are rich in invertebrates and breeding Dippers and Grey Wagtails can be seen around the river. Herons and Cormorants roost near the mouth of the Cloghoge River.[1]



The Pretty Girl of Loch Dan

Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810–1886)

THE SHADES of eve had crossed the glen
That frowns o'er infant Avonmore,
When, nigh Loch Dan, two weary men,
We stopped before a cottage door.
"God save all here," my comrade cries, 5
And rattles on the raised latch-pin;
"God save you kindly," quick replies
A clear sweet voice, and asks us in.

We enter; from the wheel she starts,
A rosy girl with soft black eyes; 10
Her fluttering courtesy takes our hearts,
Her blushing grace and pleased surprise.
Poor Mary, she was quite alone,
For, all the way to Glenmalure,
Her mother had that morning gone 15
And left the house in charge with her.

But neither household cares, nor yet
The shame that startled virgins feel,
Could make the generous girl forget
Her wonted hospitable zeal. 20
She brought us in a beechen bowl
Sweet milk that smacked of mountain thyme,
Oat cake, and such a yellow roll
Of butter,—it gilds all my rhyme!

And while we ate the grateful food 25
(With weary limbs on bench reclined),
Considerate and discreet, she stood
Apart, and listened to the wind.
Kind wishes both our souls engaged,
From breast to breast spontaneous ran 30
The mutual thought,—we stood and pledged,
"The modest rose above Loch Dan."

"The milk we drink is not more pure,

Sweet Mary,—bless those budding charms!—
Than your own generous heart, I 'm sure,
35
Nor whiter than the breast it warms!"
She turned and gazed, unused to hear
Such language in that homely glen;
But, Mary, you have naught to fear,
Though smiled on by two stranger men.
40

Not for a crown would I alarm
Your virgin pride by word or sign;
Nor need a painful blush disarm
My friend of thoughts as pure as mine.
Her simple heart could not but feel 45
The words we spoke were free from guile;
She stooped, she blushed,—she fixed her
wheel,—
'T is all in vain,—she can't but smile!

Just like sweet April's dawn appears
Her modest face,—I see it yet,— 50
And though I lived a hundred years
Methinks I never could forget
The pleasure that, despite her heart,
Fills all her downcast eyes with light,
The lips reluctantly apart, 55
The white teeth struggling into sight;

The dimples eddying o'er her cheek,—
The rosy cheek that won't be still!—
O, who could blame what flatterers speak,
Did smiles like this reward their skill? 60
For such another smile, I vow,
Though loudly beats the midnight rain,
I'd take the mountain-side e'en now,
And walk to Luggelaw again!