

Motte Stone Walk

High on a hill looking across the famous Vale of Avoca is a huge white granite boulder known as the "Motte Stone". This stone seems to have been deposited on the hill by a receding glacier at the end of the last Ice Age. There is evidence of its use as part of the wall of an ancient building, possibly a fortress with a raised ditch, or "motte" which gives this artefact its name.

But the stone is known locally as "Finn MacCumhail's (pronounced "MacCool") Hurling Stone" and seems to have been important and sacred to the people of this region since it was first inhabited, right through Christian times. Various local legends claim it would answer questions put to it, and that it sometimes has a halo around it as though admitting light or energy. Today the Motte Stone has huge metal bars in it to provide a ladder to the top. The views from this stone are incredible in every direction.



Looking north-west to the Motte Stone

The surrounding hills and valleys with their winding roads are extraordinarily beautiful. Every hilltop and roadway provides a superb vantage point across one of the most beautiful and least explored areas of Wicklow. This area is home to the recently reintroduced Red Kites (*Milvus milvus*), and you are almost certainly guaranteed a sighting of one of these enormous soaring birds-of-prey, or a Buzzard. This is a great place to get a photo, as they come down very low to the ground here.

How to get there:

You will need a car for this one:



View South from the Motte Stone

1. Exit the Hotel and head towards Avoca Village. From Here follow the signs for Redcross.
2. This road will lead you to a saddle between two hills and eventually you will come to a complicated 5 way junction involving this route and four very small roads.
3. Two of these roads will be on your left side, and you will need to take the second of these, which points you to the small crossroads at Conary Church. Here you will see a signpost pointing to the Motte Stone, down a very narrow road to your left.
4. Follow this road and you will then come to a fork in the road, a junction with NO signposts! Take the road on the right and you will soon come across an abandoned low-walled carpark, on your left. Stop your car here (pull in carefully so as not to block the road) and you will be able to see the Motte Stone on the hill above. All you have to do now is enter the carpark and follow the path up the hill to the stone.