

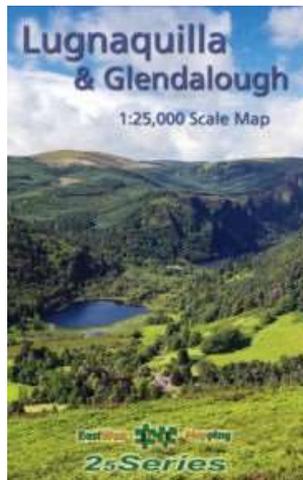
EastWest Mapping

Wicklow South 1:25,000

Lugnaquilla & Glendalough 1:25,000

The product: two sheets from a new series of 1:25,000 topographic maps covering the Wicklow area - the Wicklow 25 Series. The Lugnaquilla & Glendalough sheet is more mountainous and Wicklow South lowland and more populated offering a range of different terrains and land use to compare. Printed on good quality Progeo 90gsm paper with fully encapsulated folded versions also on offer for durability and weatherproofing. The maps are single-sided and measure 1125mm x 820mm, folding down to 125mm x 205mm.

The first impression I have is that there is an awful lot of information on the maps. There are the standard ingredients of topographic mapping – drainage, detailed contours (5 metre intervals), terrain and landforms, forest cover and land use, settlements and communications, plus layer colouring which immediately brings the relief to life. The use of purple for contours may be unusual but it works well over the delicate shades of soft greens through the creams and oranges of the layers and yet is also clear over the various wooded areas. Then we have the fine details of the landscape such as rural buildings, ditches, fences and even individual large boulders all marked.



Every conceivable form of track or path is characterised, whether a cycle lane, gravel or dirt road, large or small path, intermittent path or boardwalk. Walking trails are clearly highlighted and include the long-distance Wicklow Way as well as local loop walks, MTB trails and hillwalk access points. Other outdoor activities from fishing to bird watching and swimming to diving are on there too.

Heritage information and place names play a special part in the research and preparation of these maps. Old maps, historic records, archaeological archives and geological heritage sites are all sources for the information but supplemented by local knowledge. Historic names can crop up that are difficult to locate but perseverance and persistent research mean minor features are noted on the map.

Tourist information is plentiful but, sadly, not clearly visible. The red symbols are quite small and get lost, especially over the darker urban areas – where a lot of them are located. The pink public car park spot is very similar to the red railway station and the toilets symbol is particularly small. The use of a fine white halo to the type is perfect, helping the names become legible over whatever detail there is in the background. Perhaps those little red symbols might benefit if they were given a similar treatment.

I find the black road casings a bit overpowering, especially for the yellow roads – a thinner line would be more pleasing. Having power lines and railways in the same notation is rather odd – solid line with cross ticks. It makes power lines look like narrow-gauge railways or railways look like major power lines. Although common sense sorts me out here, I would prefer the railways to be the traditional diked line – but then the boardwalk symbol would need to be changed.

The different path classifications and signposted walks make this truly an outdoors recreational map. The basic ground information is clear at first glance – roads, trails, terrain, landscape, etc. but with masses of extra information to be discovered on top.

The more I look, the more I see. One entry in the legend aroused my curiosity: 'Gold Stream'? Following an internet search, I find that there was a gold rush in Wicklow in 1795. This surely is the essence of a good map – it whets the appetite to find out more about an area, even if only as an armchair traveller. This work is truly a labour of love. It is clear that a vast amount of research and

fieldwork has gone into making these maps. Tiny details gleaned from local survey have been added – right down to names of individual rocks and sites.

Here is a publisher who is passionate about getting the map right. There's so much information on the map – maybe a little too much in some places – but the attention to detail is apparent everywhere you look. In the latest online news bulletins there is mention of a walking route that has been diverted to a section of old railway line, away from the busy main road. Such care.

I may question why the Co. Wicklow boundary isn't shown, I may prefer a different railways specification and finer road casings but aside from these minor design niggles the rich content stands up for itself. These maps may be marketed as recreational or walking maps but with so much research into local sites and place names they offer a valuable resource for locals too.

Mary Spence