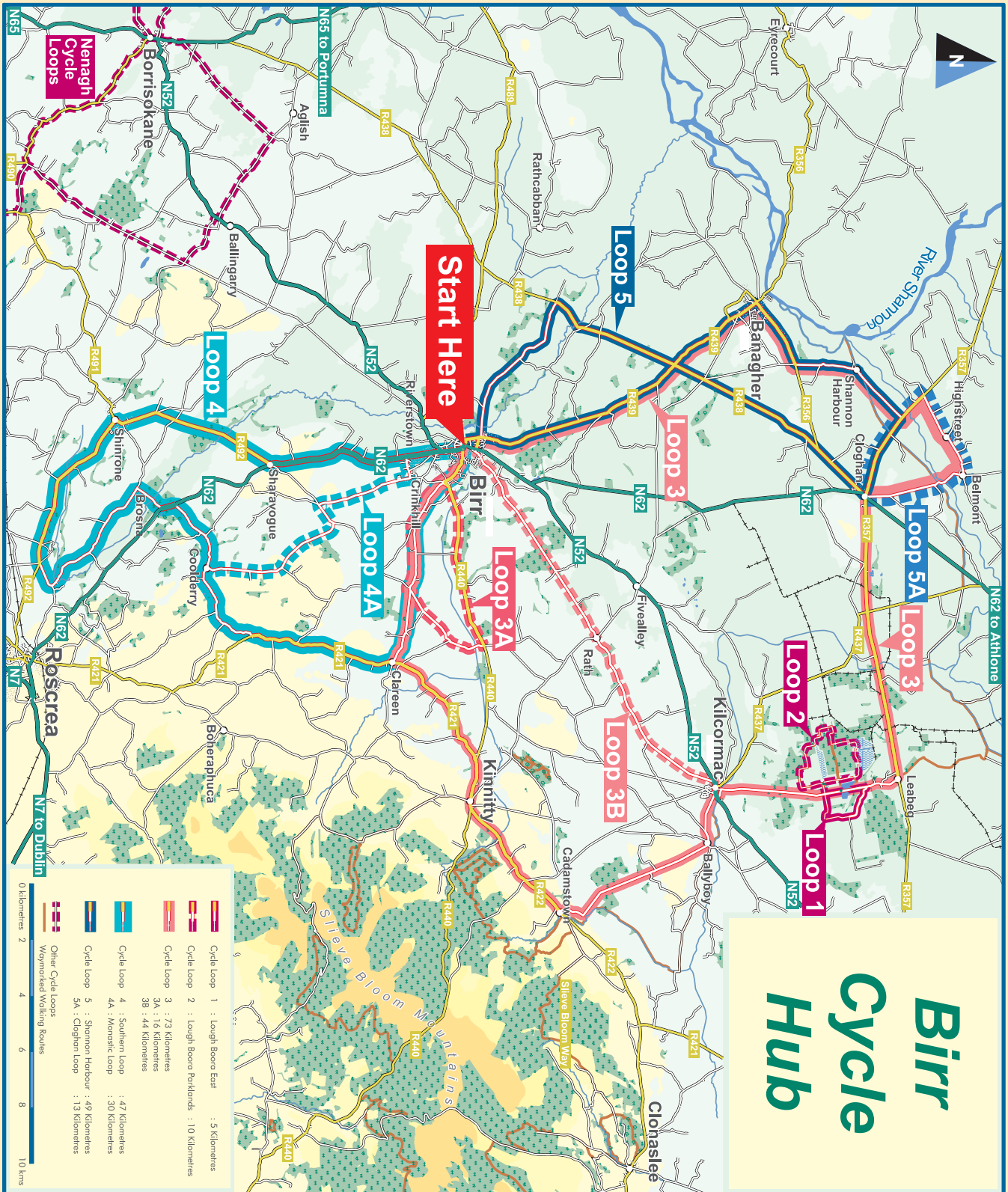


Offaly Cycle Routes





The National Cycle Network is being developed throughout Ireland. A number of Cycle Hub towns are located across the country. Each hub town has a number of looped cycle routes consisting of half day & day cycles.

These cycle routes will guide you out to some of the scenery and sights surrounding the town of Birr and its neighbouring towns and villages. They explore much of west and south Offaly taking in the Slieve Bloom mountains, the river Shannon and the extensive peatland landscape which shows the many different aspects through harvesting and afteruse. The routes are best cycled anticlockwise to avoid right turns across the vehicular lane at junctions.

Start: Birr

Loop 1:

Lough Boora East: 5 km

Loop 2:

Lough Boora Parklands: 10 km

Start: Birr

Loop 3: 73 km

Loop 3A: 16 km

Loop 3B: 44 km

Start: Birr

Loop 4:

Southern Loop: 47 km

Loop 4A:

Monastic Loop: 30 km

Start: Birr

Loop 5:

Shannon Harbour: 49 km

Loop 5A:

Cloghan Loop: 13 km

Two short loops on a traffic free route which can be combined with a picnic to make an ideal family day out. There is much to be seen in this area of lakes, canals forest and bogland.

Travelling east towards the foothills of the scenic Slieve Bloom Mountains, the full loop is a challenging enough spin, but with 3a and 3b offering a shorter way back there is something here for everyone. Climbing steadily out of the town, the route levels off before the EARLY CHRISTIAN monastic site of Seir Kieran. Kinnitty and Cadamstown are two interesting and scenic villages ideal for a snack stop. At Kilcormac you can choose to opt for a straight run back to Birr along the bog road (3b). Alternatively continue through the scenic Lough Boora Parklands, and then into Cloghan.

Start off down the main road to Roscrea. For Route 4a turn left up a short and steep hill onto a plateau of high ground called Crinkhill; For Route 4 stay on the main road until the right turn at the little pub called The Black Bull, which marks Sharavogue and then on to Shinrone Village. MOUNT ST JOSEPH Cistercian Abbey & College signals the start of the return leg. The route remains quite hilly until you reach a junction with a view of Leap Castle. Continue on then to the Seir Kieran monastic site, before an easy descent back to Birr.

This is a figure of eight loop to the north of Birr. Start off along the outside of the castle walls and turn left through the demesne farmland. Continue on through the crossroads to Cloghan for refreshments. You can take the short route across to Clononey Castle. The return leg of this cycle route will bring you through Shannon Harbour and Banagher Town, before a fast downhill road returns you to Birr.