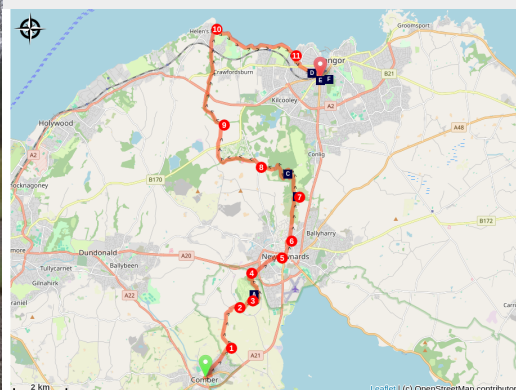


# Comber to Bangor

Northern Ireland - Ards



(Amis saint Colomban)



*Quando ci si avvicina a Bangor, la destinazione finale, il percorso è parzialmente segnalato con i cartelli della Columban's Way.*

The route alternates between woodland and lowland paths, avoiding the major urban areas, apart from the section through Newtownards. Passing over hilltops offers panoramic views of Strangford. Finally, the turn-off at Helen's Bay opens up views of the Irish Sea, and following the rocky coastline leads pleasantly to the abbey.

## Useful information

Practice : Pedestrian

Duration : 8 h

Length : 27.0 km

Trek ascent : 503 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Multi-day trek

Themes : 590, St Colomban

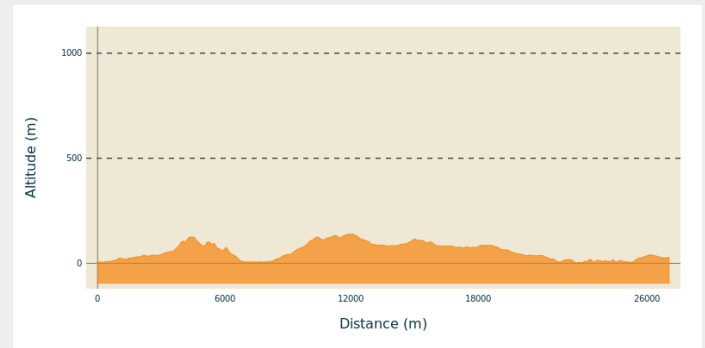
# Trek

**Departure** : Square

**Arrival** : Bangor Abbey

**Cities** : 1. Ards  
2. North Down

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 3 m    Max elevation 140 m

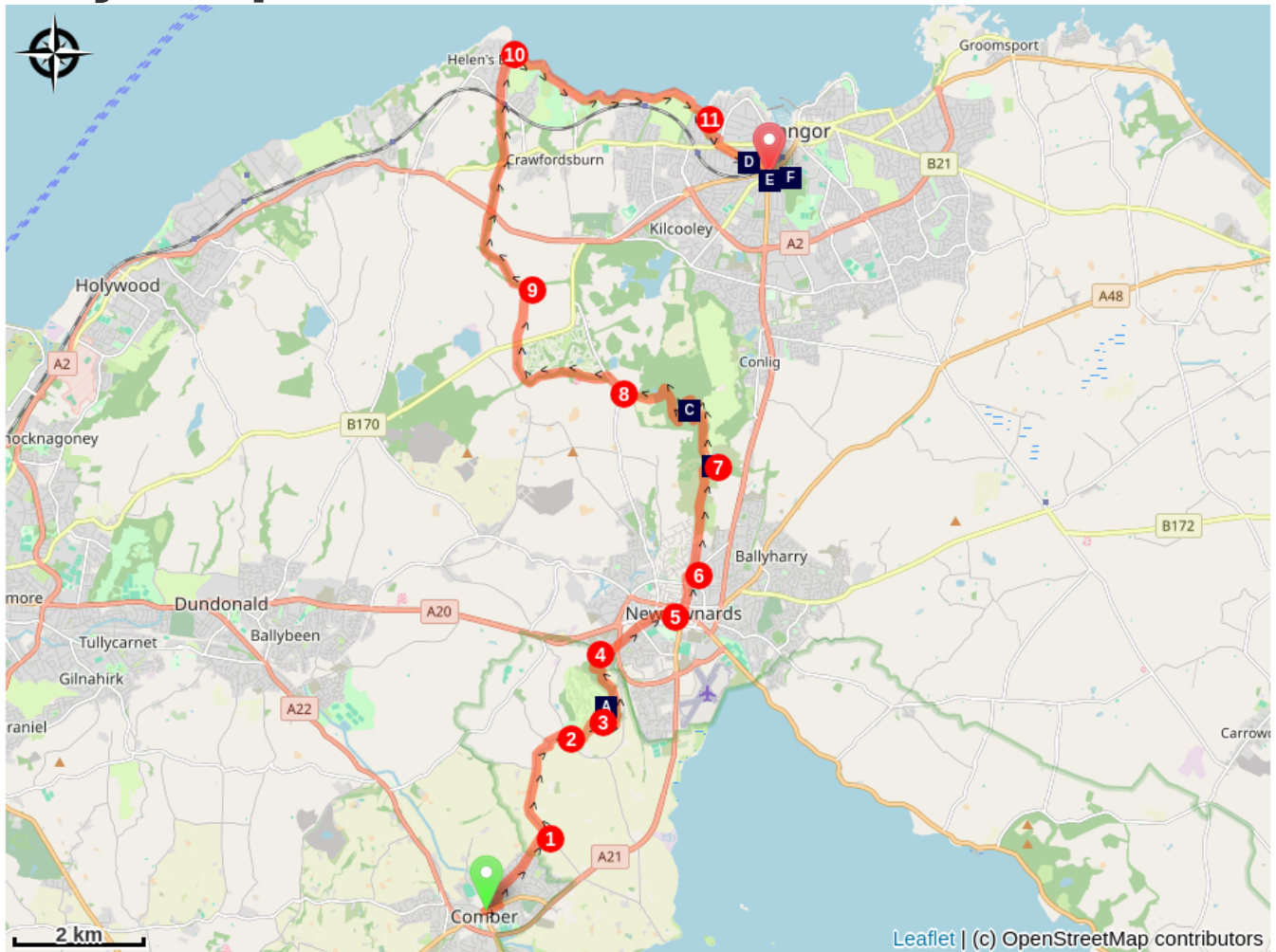
From Comber's central square, follow Bridge Street east to the bridge over the Comber River. Turn left immediately after the bridge and follow the main road for 1km through the suburbs of Comber and out of town:




1. Turn left onto Ballyhenry Road and follow this road through the countryside for 1.5km to the junction with Scrabo Road. Take this road to the right to reach the foot of the wooded Scrabo hill 300m away.
2. Turn right and after 50m take the track up the hill. Climb up to the upper car parks with several sharp bends. At the top of the car parks, where there are toilets before you enter, turn right onto the tarmac track to a picnic area.
3. Descend to the right and skirt the old quarry to the south before heading due north up the hillside and down towards Newtownards until you cross Old Belfast Road.
4. Turn right onto this road and follow it to the end. Join the roundabout on the left and the first street on the right. Follow this road in a north-easterly direction for 300m until you reach the next roundabout. Take the second street (Mill Street) and follow it for 200m until you reach Gibsons Lane after the Presbyterian Church.
5. Turn left and then right into Regent Street. In front of the Town Hall with its bell tower, turn left into North Street, heading north. Continue in this direction for 600m despite two major junctions.
6. Turn left onto the small road marked Works Depot and continue north towards Quarry Heights. The tarmac road becomes a track which leaves the town and climbs the wooded hill. At the top, go down to the right.
7. At the crossroads, turn left towards a small pond. Head north towards Helen's Tower at the top of the hill, reached by three sharp bends. Descend the hill on the opposite west side via three sharp bends. Cross Tower Lake and continue west for 500m to a major road.
8. Turn right for 200m before turning left onto a path heading west for 1km and then north for 1km, each time skirting a golf course. Cross the busy road safely and take the track opposite, heading north for 700m until you reach a characteristic wooded strip.
9. Turn left and follow the track through the wooded strip, which leads after 1.5km to a busy 4-lane road with a central reservation. Cross this motorway carefully and turn slightly left onto the track that continues northwards through the




wooded strip. After 600m, the track passes through a tunnel under a busy road before continuing through the wooded strip as far as a railway line at the entrance to Helen's Bay. Continue along this track to the seafront.

10. Turn right down the track that joins the seafront and follow the coastal path eastwards for 3km.
11. At Smelthill Bay, a larger bay at the mouth of a wooded glen, leave the coastal path and head south up the glen on the right. At the end of the glen, continue along Glen Road to the roundabout. Take Brunswick Road south-eastwards for 1km. Pass over the railway line and reach the clearly visible abbey.

# On your path...



-  Scrabo Tower (A)
-  Helen Tower (C)
-  Bangor Abbey (E)

-  Mines Lead (B)
-  St Comgall's Church (D)
-  Bangor Castle (F)

# All useful information

# On your path...

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## Scrabo Tower (A)

Scrabo Tower (41 m) dates back to the 19th century. A landmark visible from a great distance, the tower offers wide views. Built as a memorial to Charles Vane, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry, it was originally known as the Londonderry Monument. Its architectural style is Scottish Baronial Revival.

[Find out more here.](#)

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## Mines Lead (B)

The former lead mines of Whitespots - Conlig are a vast site with piles of tailings and shafts topped by towers of different architectural styles. Today the galleries are flooded, but in the 19th century the site produced up to 15,000 tonnes of refined lead and slightly less copper and silver.

[Find out more here.](#)

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## Helen Tower (C)

Helen's Tower is a three-storey stone tower nestling deep in the woods of the Clondeboy estate. Built in 1848 by Frederick Lord Dufferin in honour of his mother, Helen's Tower has since been immortalised by Tennyson in the poem of the same name.

[Find out more about Helen's Tower.](#)

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## St Comgall's Church (D)

The Catholic church of St Comgall commemorates St Comgall, patron saint of the current parish, as well as St Coloman, St Gall and St Malachy. It houses relics of St. Columban from Bobbio, where St. Columban's tomb is located. A St. Columban primary school adjoins the church.

[Find out more here.](#)



## Bangor Abbey (E)

Bangor Abbey was founded by Comgall in 558 or 559. The abbey was known in the Middle Ages as an important training centre for missionaries. It was also known for its austere monastic rule, its life of prayer and fasting that attracted the faithful. It earned the nickname 'Light of the World'. When Comgall died in 601, 3,000 monks were trained at the abbey.

Colomban de Luxeuil became a monk at the abbey around 560 before leaving around 590 to evangelise Europe.

[Find out more about the abbey.](#)

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## Bangor Castle (F)

The site was first occupied by Bangor Abbey, founded by St Comgall in 558, until the monastery's demise in 1542. A manor house was then built for Sire James Hamilton around 1611. It was converted into a manor house in 1852. It now houses the Town Hall.

[Find out more here.](#)