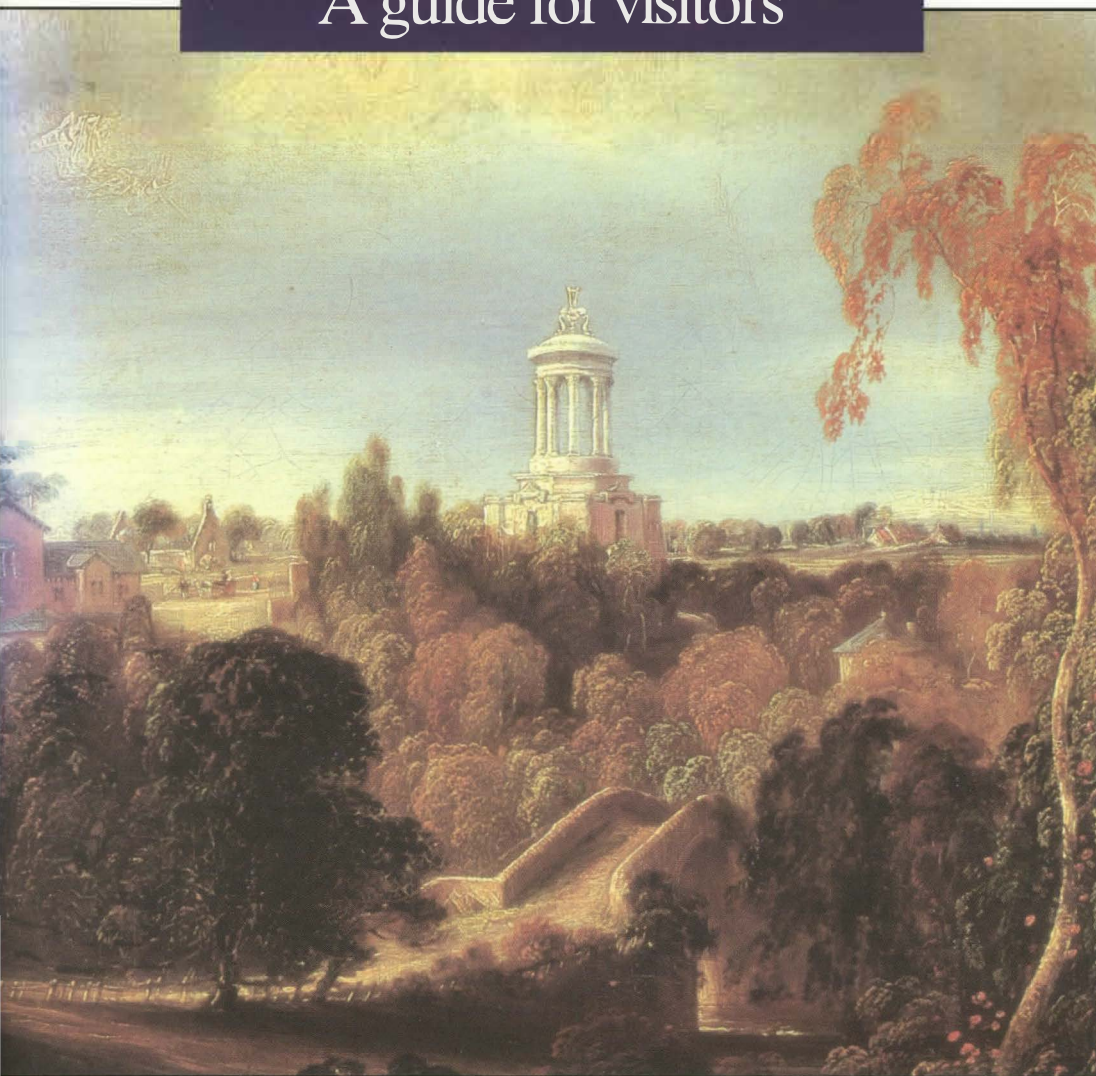


AYRSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

HISTORIC ALLOWAY

Village and Countryside

A guide for visitors



Ayrshire Monographs No.24

Historic Alloway

Village and Countryside

a guide for visitors

Ayrshire Archæological and Natural History Society
in association with
Kyle and Carrick Civic Society

2000

'It is a medley of many things, some that may be useful, and some that, for ought I know, may be very diverting. I am merry that I may decoy people into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it . . . '

William Cowper, in a letter to Rev. John Newton,
18th February 1781

Cover illustration

The Burns' Country (c.1838) by Patrick Campbell Auld
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All the illustrations for this booklet were specially drawn
by John Doig

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INTRODUCTION

In 1998 the Ayrshire Archæological and Natural History Society in association with the Kyle and Carrick Civic Society published a new guide book, *Historic Ayr: A Guide for Visitors*, which has proved to be very popular with both residents and visitors. Recognising that it met an obvious need, the two Societies decided to continue this work, and to produce a similar guide to Alloway and the area round about.

This present book is the result of that decision. We believe that it is a worthy successor to *Historic Ayr*, and trust that it will prove as beneficial to visitors and residents. There is, as this book proves, much more to Alloway than Burns, and though the national bard is not ignored, the authors have produced a comprehensive introduction to Alloway, informative, interesting and well illustrated. We have no hesitation in commending it to you.

We are happy to acknowledge the financial support of Enterprise Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council.

David Reid, President
Ayrshire Archæological and Natural History Society

G. Michael Hitchon, President
Kyle and Carrick Civic Society

March 2000

FOREWORD

Alloway is known throughout the world as the birthplace of Robert Burns (1759-96), Scotland's National Poet, and the humble cottage in which he was born still stands in the centre of the village. Visitors, tourists and lovers of poetry are drawn to the cottage with its museum of Burns relics; by the classical Monument erected in the early 19th century, with its statues and gardens; and by the modern Tam o' Shanter Experience with its displays, gift shop and restaurant. Betwixt and between are the places and buildings associated with Burns' formative years, and also those associated with the topography of his great narrative poem, *Tam o' Shanter*.

But there is more to Alloway than Burns. The village and parish have their own history which is not without interest and which had a decisive effect on the appearance of Alloway and its neighbouring countryside. Most importantly, its development was determined by the roup (auction) in 1754 of the Lands of Alloway. This guide begins with a look at that sale, and its effect on Alloway.

Our aim is to enable residents and visitors to discover more about both 'Burns' Alloway' and the village and surrounding countryside against which that particular story is set. A circular walk, beginning and ending at Rozelle House, takes in the outstanding features of Alloway. A circular route, beginning and ending at Burns Cottage, takes in some of the countryside. This can be undertaken by car or (more pleasantly) by bicycle: it could also be walked by the very fit or very determined.

Of necessity these routes occasionally replicate each other, but we have tried to keep cross-referencing to a minimum. Some of the information is enclosed in boxes so that the reader can defer reading it. The routes are marked on the maps (pp.10 and 30-31).

This booklet was produced by the team of Sheila Allan, Rob Close, Sally Dickie, John Doig, Merry Graham, Rob Graham, Sheila Penny and Stanley Sarsfield, chaired by Trevor Mathews.

We wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of many people who have answered our questions and shared with us their knowledge of Alloway. As ever, the staff at the Carnegie Library, Ayr, have been patient, helpful and supportive of this project.

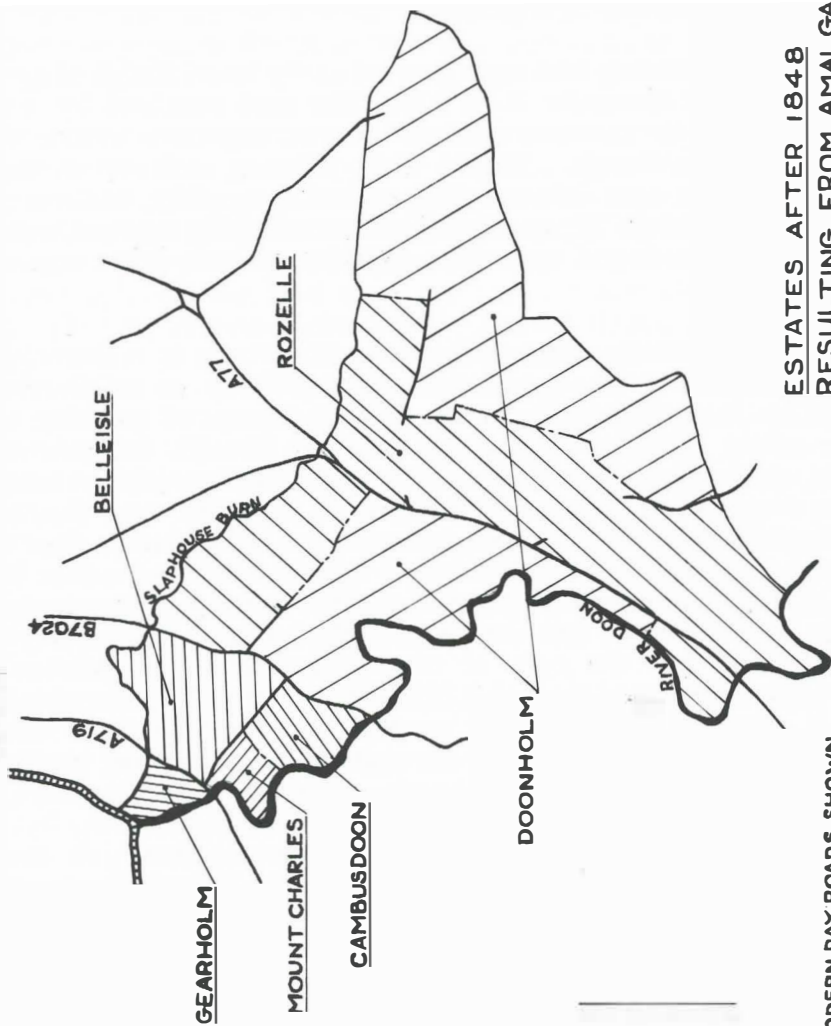
THE ROUP OF 1754

A group of significant but fairly small landed estates surround the village of Alloway and have for over 200 years limited the southern expansion of Ayr. This layout was fixed in a single day in 1754, five years before Burns' birth, when the lands of Alloway were roup (auctioned) by the Royal Burgh of Ayr.

The Barony of Alloway had been granted to the Royal Burgh of Ayr by a charter of Alexander II, in 1236. The land was held by the community for the common good and was an important source of income for the burgh. Rents from Alloway, and from the Burrowfield (the area between Alloway and Ayr, which had been granted to the burgh by the original charter of 1205), together with local taxes on goods and tradesmen, provided the bulk of the town's income.

By the 18th century however, the town of Ayr was in a financial crisis. It had invested, optimistically but unwisely, in the Darien Adventure (an expensive but unsuccessful attempt to establish a Scots colony in Panama), and had suffered through the general inertia which followed the Union of 1707, and the disruption caused by the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745. By 1752 the Tolbooth was derelict, the Bridge was ice-damaged and dangerous, a Poor's House had to be built, and besides all this the town had a debt of £8,200 Scots (equivalent at the time to £683 Sterling). Some ready money was needed and needed quickly and it is perhaps unsurprising that the eyes of the Council fell upon Alloway. Discussions continued through 1753, and by early 1754, everything was in order: the land had been parcelled out, the date of the sale fixed, and the roup advertised throughout Ayrshire and in the newspapers of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

There was however one unlooked-for hurdle to clear. At the Council's meeting on 31st May 1754, Councillor William Campbell offered, for the whole lands, on behalf of a friend, £2,200 Sterling. He ridiculed the idea of a roup, claimed that his offer far exceeded anything that might be obtained in that way. When his offer was rejected, he raised it to £2,500, demanding that his offer be minuted so that all might see how foolish the Council had been in refusing it. Campbell must have been a shrewd operator, for the



ESTATES AFTER 1848
RESULTING FROM AMALGAMATION
OF LOTS IN THE ROUP OF 1754

MODERN DAY ROADS SHOWN

sale made £7,190 Sterling, nearly three times his raised offer. For the Town Council it was a godsend.

The lands had been divided into 28 lots, ranging in size from 8 acres, (modern Alloway Mill) to 120 acres (modern Barrhill Farm). Ten different bidders were successful at the auction, the largest purchaser being Robert Hamilton of Bourtreehill, whose acquisition of Rozelle and Corton cost him nearly £2,000. Four of the ten holdings so created remained substantially unchanged into this century: Gearholm, Mount Charles, Cambusdoon and Belleisle. The other plots were eventually, through purchase and inheritance, combined into the two largest estates, Doonholm and Rozelle. The cumulative effect was to create a group of small estates and to give to this area a particular topography and history of development, one which can still be seen and felt. Five of the estates are discussed in our tours: the sixth, Gearholm, lies to the seaward side of the Doonfoot Road: the house now subdivided into flats can be seen from Cunning Park Drive, while the estate is now largely built over.

The map shows the approximate boundaries of the six estates as they were about 1840, by which time the lands of Carcluie had by inheritance come into the same ownership as Rozelle.

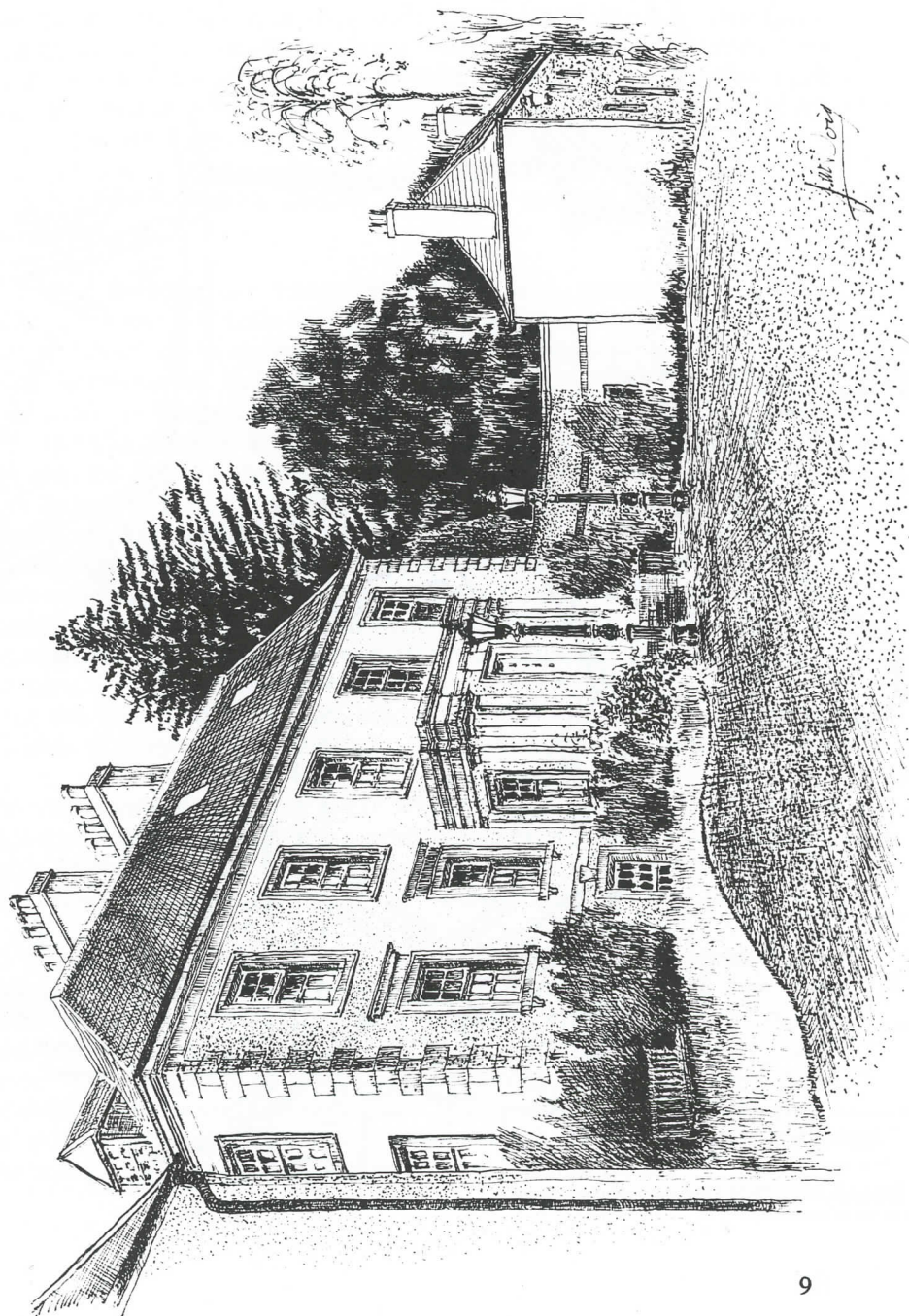
WALKING TOUR OF ALLOWAY

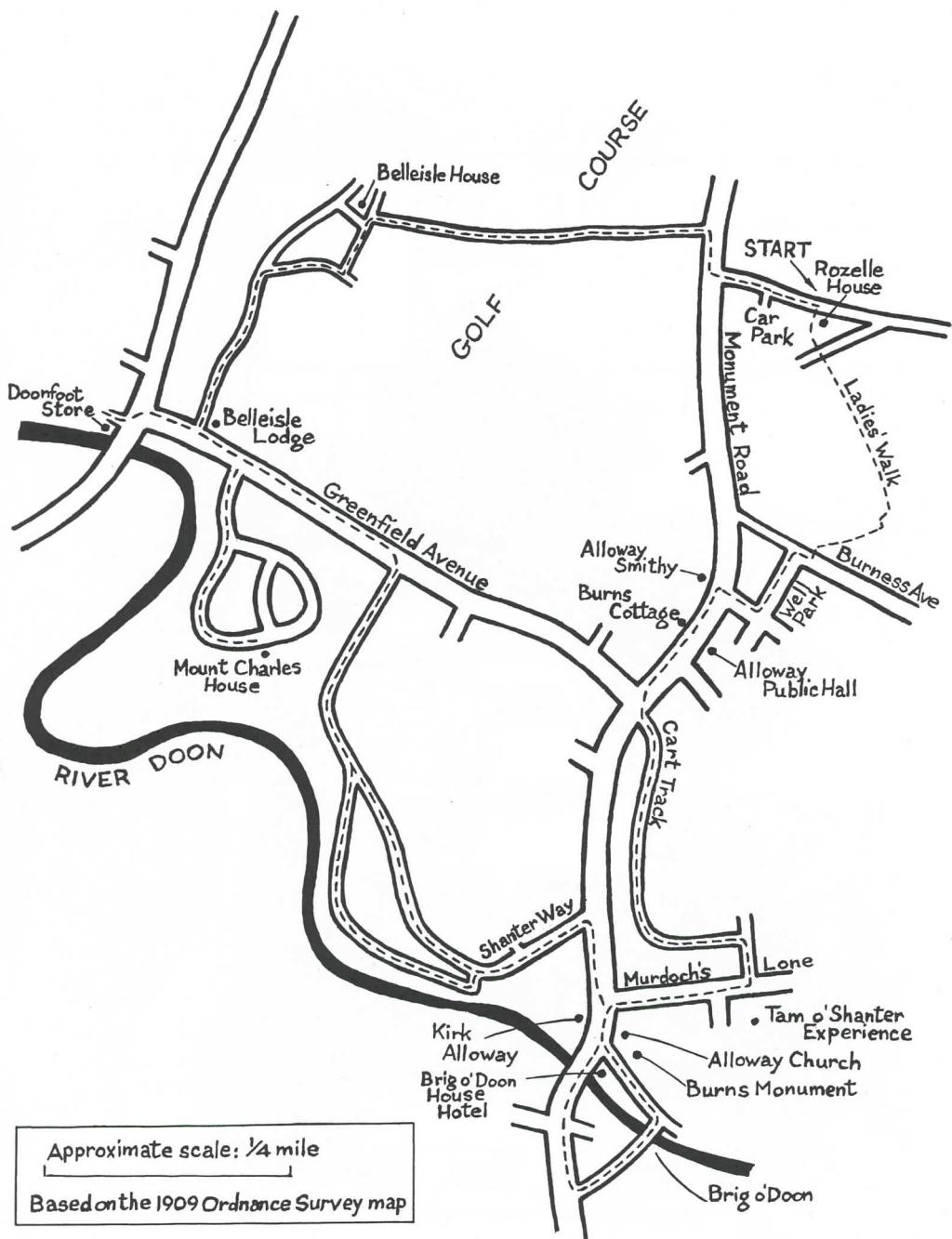
3¼ miles

This walk begins and ends at **Rozelle**, a 101-acre public park on Monument Road (B7024) between Ayr and Alloway. The house and estate (see below) are the property of South Ayrshire Council. There is a car park on the right between the lodge and the house. Rozelle House has a craft shop, a coffee shop and toilets: there are also toilets (with disabled access) just past the adjacent Maclaurin Art Gallery.

Rozelle was one of the estates created following the sale by the Burgh of Ayr of the Barony Lands of Alloway in 1754 (see p.5). Robert Hamilton of Bourtreehill bought it and built a simple five-bayed house before 1770. Hamilton (1698-1773) was the son of an Ayr merchant, and had made his fortune as a plantation-owner in Jamaica. The name Rozelle is probably derived from that of one of his Jamaican properties. By 1831 the estate had passed to Archibald Hamilton of Carcluie (grandson of Robert's brother John) and the house was substantially aggrandised by the prominent Edinburgh architect David Bryce, through the addition of a bold pedimented block at the rear, a projecting front porch and flanking wings. Bryce also enlarged the windows on the front of the main block. The house remained in the Hamilton family until 1968, when Archibald's great-grand-nephew Lieutenant-Commander John Hamilton gifted the estate to the Royal Burgh of Ayr for cultural and recreational use.

The house and grounds were opened to the public in 1971. Rozelle House Galleries is the base for South Ayrshire Council's Museums and Galleries Service. The Galleries run a year-round programme of temporary exhibitions including fine art, craft and museum displays. Exhibitions of works from the Council's own collection are a regular feature. A varied programme of art and craft workshops is run by the Galleries both on-site and elsewhere.





Inside Rozelle House is a ***Draped Reclining Figure*** in cast bronze by Henry Moore. It is from an edition of nine made between 1976 and 1979. Initially, it had been placed in the open courtyard of Rozelle: ‘... bronze naturally in the open air (particularly near the sea) will turn with time and the action of the atmosphere to a beautiful green’ (Henry Moore). Sculptors such as Degas would have 20 casts of a work made, and Rodin 30 or 40, but Moore restricted the number of casts to ten for small and four for large works. The figure was purchased in 1979 by Kyle and Carrick District Council with grant-aid from the Scottish Arts Council, Strathclyde Regional Council, Ayr Arts Guild, and the Local Museum Purchase Fund. Over the years many hands have touched its undulating contours, as Moore would have wished, for he said, ‘Tactile experience is very important as an aesthetic dimension in sculpture. Our sense of sight is always closely associated with our sense of touch’.

Adjacent to Rozelle House, in the former stable block, are the **Maclaurin Art Galleries**, opened in 1976, which are operated by the independent Maclaurin Trust with the day-to-day running in

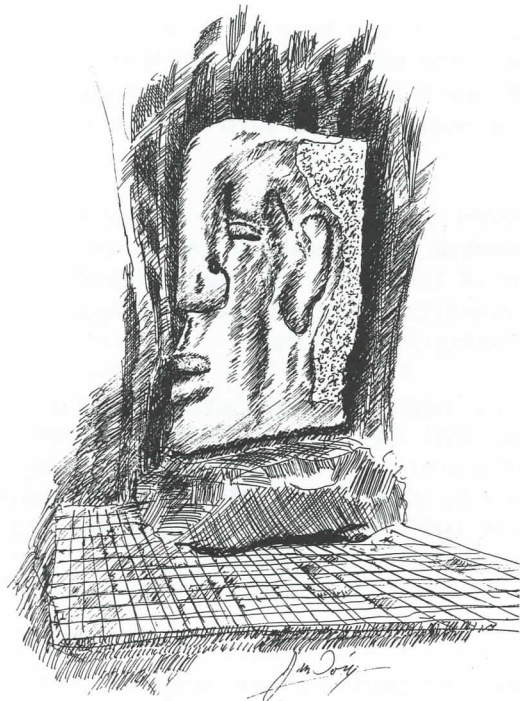


association with South Ayrshire Council. The Maclaurin Art Galleries run a series of temporary exhibitions with the focus on modern art. The Maclaurin Trust also holds a permanent collection of modern art, a selection of which is on display from time to time. The money for the galleries and collections came from a bequest made in 1973 by Mrs Mary Ellen Maclaurin, in memory of her husband.

The grounds are worth exploring. Rozelle was the quintessence of a small late 19th century estate developed from the late 18th century parkland. Sadly, it has lost its walled garden, greenhouses and the small conservatory abutting the east screen wall of the stable block. Two ornamental ponds remain, to the left of the drive, with a few wildfowl such as moorhen and mallard, and there are many specimen trees throughout the grounds. Two of these are on the land between the two lakes, on the eastern (landward) side. One is a pond cypress, a deciduous conifer like the larch, but much rarer. This is probably the most northerly example in Britain. The other is a dawn redwood, a botanical curiosity. It was believed to be extinct, rediscovered in China, and introduced into Britain in 1947.

Birds in the Park. Rozelle is home to more birds than one might expect in a suburban park. During eight half-hour bird walks led by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in Spring 1999 forty-eight different species were seen. They included grey heron, sparrowhawk, garden warbler, blackcap, great spotted woodpecker, treecreeper, buzzard, tawny owl, spotted flycatcher and sedge warbler.

From the front of Rozelle House turn back towards the road. Take the first unmade path to the left, through the trees and into a broad grassed area, presided over by two large cedars of Lebanon. This area was a *cabinet* set aside for displaying choice exotic trees near the house.



Here also are a series of five powerful **sculptures** by Ronald Rae, who was born in Ayr in 1946. Carved in 1978-79, these granite pieces depict the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary: the pieces are individually titled *The Scourging of Christ*, *Edessa Messiah*, *Golgotha Madonna*, *Pietà* and *The Deposition of Christ*. The granite for some of them once formed part of the quay at Ayr Harbour.

Leaving this grassed area through a wide gap in the hedge opposite the house, you will see a metallised drive built

when the park was the setting for Ayr's annual Flower Show. Before you, slightly to the left, a line of trees and bushes runs between two large fields often used for rugby pitches and joins this metallised drive. Take the path which leads between the trees and bushes: it is the **Ladies' Walk**. A little way along, it is interrupted by a large sycamore estimated to date from about 1774, before this path was formed. Further along you will see the stone base of a former summer-house surrounded by elderly limes. These trees often live to a great age.

This path brings you to the edge of the grassland and to a bridle path. Cross this obliquely and, guided by the yellow painted waymarkers, follow the path through the trees until it takes you through the hedge and across a small wooden bridge into Burness Avenue. (Burness is one of several spellings of Burns.)

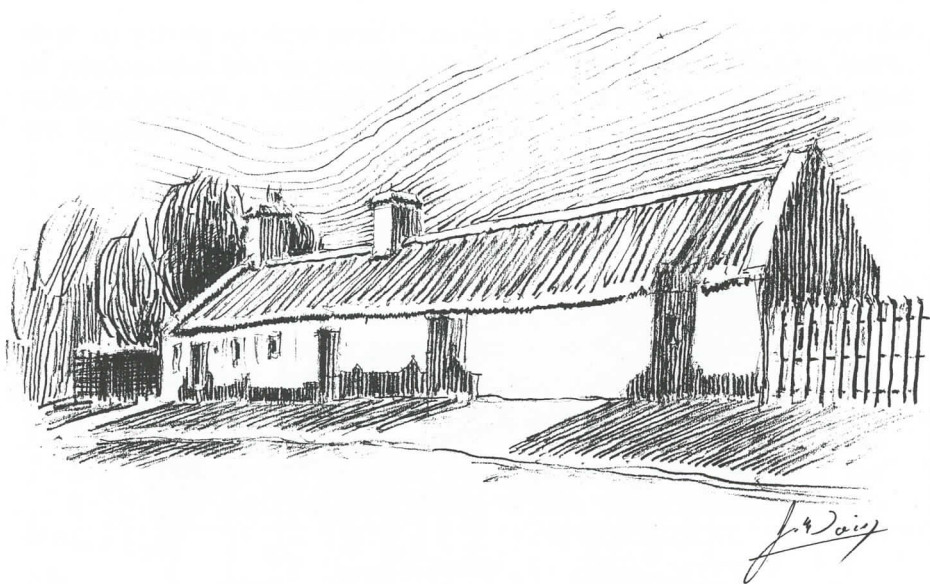
Turn right, then left into Wellpark, then right again and in a few yards you are in Alloway. Opposite you is a two-storey grey stone house which stands on the site of the **Alloway Smithy**. When

Burns was a boy in Alloway the smith was John Tennant, whose wife is supposed to have been the midwife at Burns' birth and the 'gossip' referred to in *There was a Lad*. John Tennant remained as smith until 1806, and was succeeded in turn by his son and grandson.

A little further along, leftward of the smithy, is the unmissable **Burns Cottage and Museum**, a treasure house of Burns memorabilia, including one of the most important collections of Burns' manuscripts in the world, books, artefacts and oil paintings. There is also a tea-room, gift-shop, and toilets.

Burns Cottage, the 'auld clay biggin' built by Burns' father and in which the poet was born on 25th January 1759, is owned by the Trustees of the Burns Monument, and is open to the public. A museum was added in 1900, and the whole was extensively renovated and re-arranged in 1996 to mark the bicentenary of his death. A guide book is available.

In 1756 William Burnes, the poet's father, acquired from Alexander Campbell, physician in Ayr, 7½ acres of land, with the intention of working the ground as a market garden, and aptly named this property New Gardens. Of this land, he later transferred about 2 acres to the Calbraith brothers, local wheelwrights, which may account for the neighbouring place name, 'Wrightfield'. On 15th December 1757 William Burnes married Agnes Broun and started married life in the cottage he had built with his own hands. It was a modern house for the period as it had glass in the windows and separate entrances for people and cattle. When Robert Burns was one day old he was baptised in the cottage by the Reverend William Dalrymple of Ayr Auld Kirk. When he was about ten days old the south gable of the house was blown down, as the poet later recounted in *There was a Lad*. A relative who lodged with the family, Betty Davidson, was credited by the poet with having fired his imagination with tales of the supernatural which may have inspired him in the later writing of *Tam o' Shanter*. The family moved from the cottage to Mount Oliphant farm (p.39) when Burns was seven.



The Cottage became a shrine, and a place of pilgrimage, very soon after Burns' death. It was sold in 1781 for £169 Scots (£14 Sterling) to the Incorporation of Shoemakers, a charitable body which protected the interests of that trade in Ayr, and also provided funds for the care of shoemakers, their widows and their children. The Cottage was run by them as a public house. Many visitors to Alloway did not see this as being a particularly appropriate use. John Keats, visiting in 1818, reported that 'we drank toddy to Burns' memory with an old man who knew Burns - damn him and damn his anecdotes - he was a great bore' and 'he drinks glasses five for the quarter and twelve for the hour - he is a mahogany-faced old jackass who knew Burns. He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him'. By 1874 it was felt by one observer that 'such dishonour must be a source of real pain to every lover of Burns and his undying strains. With memory awakened and feelings stirred to reverence by visiting the scenes of his earliest and brightest poems, to find one's-self in a mere pot-house, surrounded by the most unseemly pushing, and the most unnecessary crowding, by each one more desirous to drink than to think, and to quaff ale than to catch a passing remembrance of the lamented Poet', while in 1877 a visitor reported that 'on entering the little room on the right hand side [we] to our dismay found two rough tykes sitting at a plain deal table, with a half-mutchkin measure of

whisky and two glasses before them. There was no poetry in their looks, and less in their speech, and a speedy retreat was a relief to our sense of respect for the poet's birthplace'. Transformation began when the Trustees of the Burns Monument acquired the property in 1881 from the Shoemakers, paying £4,000.



Opposite Burns' Cottage is **Alloway Public Hall**. This began life in 1849 as the village school, and was enlarged in 1885. In 1896 a new school was opened in Doonholm Road (see p.36), and this old school was acquired by George Coats of Belleisle, and made freely available to the public in 1896. In 1922 it was gifted to Trustees as a public hall. It was substantially reconstructed in 1929-30 as one of the last works of the great Scots architect Sir Robert Lorimer. Particularly noteworthy are the plaster panels in the large main hall, which show scenes from Burns' poems *The De'il's awa' wi' the Exciseman* and *The Jolly Beggars*. They are the work of Charles d'O Pilkington Jackson. It also contains a bust of Burns by Pittendreich McGillivray. The hall is heavily used. When possible, visitors will be admitted by appointment. Telephone (01292) 442546, 443500, or 441000.

Attached to the front wall is the **Alloway War Memorial**, unveiled in 1920, a graceful work by Ayr architect James A Morris.

Continue along the road, passing on the left Doonholm Road, flanked by a number of attractive houses, including the former Alloway Manse. On the right is **Greenfield Avenue**, which was made in 1754-56 by William Burnes, the poet's father, for Ayr Burgh Council. The agreed contract price was £50 Sterling, and this money enabled him to acquire the land on which he built his cottage.

After about 50 yards there is a 'Cart Track' signposted on the left: a paved path parallel to Monument Road. Until the mid-1990s this area was undeveloped, but it has now been used for housing, together with an all-weather sports pitch, and a new ground for Ayr Cricket Club.

Cricket appears to have first been played in Ayr in the 1850s, and **Ayr Cricket Club** was instituted in 1859. The impetus seems to have come from officers and men garrisoned at Ayr Barracks, many of whom would have been English. Matches were played on a succession of sites in Ayr, including the Low Green and the Dam Park, until 1935, when a site at Cambusdoon (on the opposite side of the road, see p.28) was acquired. The club remained there until the mid 1990s, when a complicated series of deals produced this new ground in exchange for residential development of the old Cambusdoon ground.

The path continues, curving round to the left, and bridges a rough track in a cutting through which ran the former **Maidens and Dunure Light Railway**.

This line, part of the Glasgow and South Western Railway, was opened in May 1906, chiefly to serve the luxurious hotel and golf course they were then building at Turnberry. It was built under the 1896 Light Railways Act, which imposed an upper speed limit of 25 mph, after a proposal to build a conventional railway along the coast from Ayr to Girvan was defeated in Parliament. The line - known as the 'Golfer's Line' - was 19½ miles long, a single-track standard gauge line that took four years to build. At its peak there were seven trains daily each way. It never attracted enough business to make it pay, and it closed in December 1930, though it

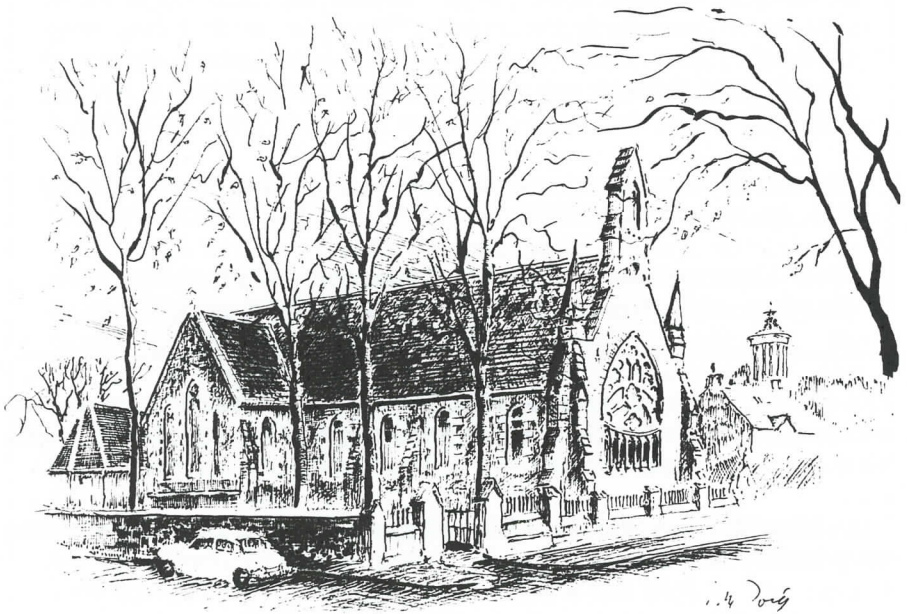
was opened briefly again in 1933. Following the opening of Butlin's Holiday Camp (p.49) the line was re-opened between Alloway and Heads of Ayr, but was finally closed again in September 1968.

The trackbed now provides a rough walk, though access is poor and the paths, especially in the tunnel, are in a very poor state. To the left it passes the site of Alloway Station, which had an island platform and signal box, and continues towards the railway's former junction with the main line from Stranraer. To the right it passes into a tunnel under the main road and Kirk Alloway, before crossing the Doon on an elegant crenellated bridge, which gives unusual views of the Brig o' Doon and the gardens of the neighbouring hotel. The line was engineered in this costly manner to avoid disfiguring the area around the Burns Monument and Kirk Alloway.

When you have crossed the old railway, the **Tam o' Shanter Experience** is immediately ahead, on the far side of Murdoch's Lone. There is a public toilet at the junction of Murdoch's Lone with the main road.

Built on the site of Alloway Station goods yard, opened in 1975, and extended in 1995, the Tam o' Shanter Experience offers several services to the visitor including a restaurant and a well-stocked and attractive gift shop. There are also public toilets. Originally much criticised for its 'modern' look, the building, especially as extended, now fits comfortably into the fabric of Alloway and the Burns National Heritage Park. Behind, and accessible through the restaurant, is an attractive garden with picnic tables.

Between the Tam o' Shanter Experience and the main road is **Alloway Parish Church.**



Alloway Parish Church was built in 1858 and was extended in 1890. It was built at the expense of James Baird of Cambusdoon (p.29), and caused much controversy when it was first mooted, as it was feared it would spoil the views of and from the Burns' Monument. Nonetheless, Baird pushed on, and the result is a individual Gothic church of much character, the tracery of the windows in the gable ends being especially interesting. The octagonal hall at the rear was opened in 1987, and there are a number of pleasing monuments in the churchyard.

'Alloway Church was not then built, but I am tempted to recall the circumstance by the recorded saying of the late Mr James Baird of Cambusdoon. Seated at dinner next to the Duchess de Coigny he remarked: "They're makin' an unca rippit aboot that kirk I'm biggin the noo." The lady said "I beg your pardon". The words were repeated, but history does not record that her Grace was any the wiser for the cryptic saying.'

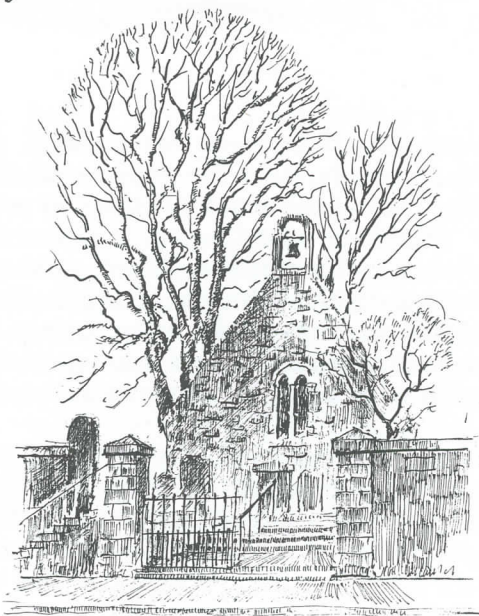
(Sparks From an Old Anvil: Memories of Ayr and Ayr Folks, by E.E. Anderson, Ayr, 1919)

(The Duchess was a Scot: Henrietta Dundas Hamilton, daughter of Sir Hew Dalrymple Hamilton of Bargany.)

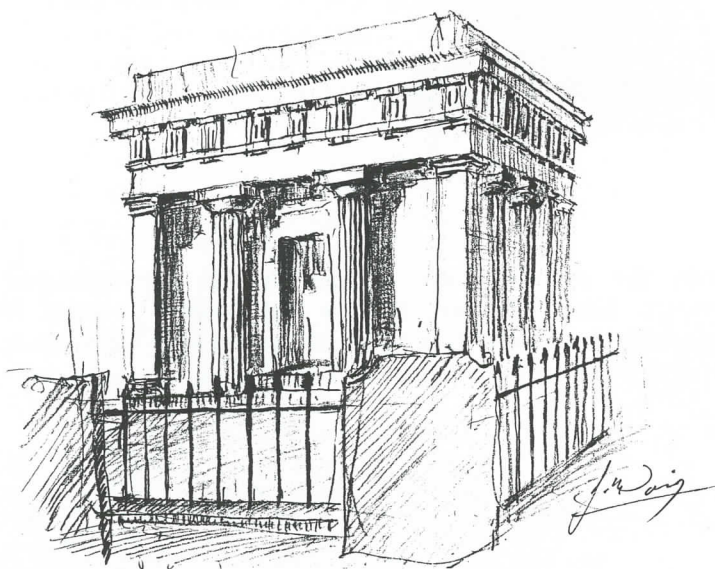
The interior of the church has an impressive series of stained glass windows. The church is open on weekdays in the summer between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Opposite Alloway Church is Kirk Alloway, another of the great sites for pilgrims to Burns' Alloway.

Kirk Alloway is a simple structure: a stone built rectangle, with gabled ends, though now a roofless ruin. The gables are still largely intact, one with a double lancet window and a 17th-century bellcote. 15th-century records mention a church here. It may have been rebuilt in 1516, as this date is carried on one of its lintels. It was certainly rebuilt by 1563.



In the 1690s, the parish was annexed to Ayr, and the church ceased to be used for regular services. By 1694 it was being used for burials, though the occasional service, or baptism, was still held here. David Watt, miller at Doonfoot, who was born about 1756, was said to have been the last person baptised in Kirk Alloway. In the 1740s a school was held in the kirk. In 1789 the Magistrates of Ayr attempted to remove the church bell, but the good people of Alloway 'repelled the attempt by open force'.

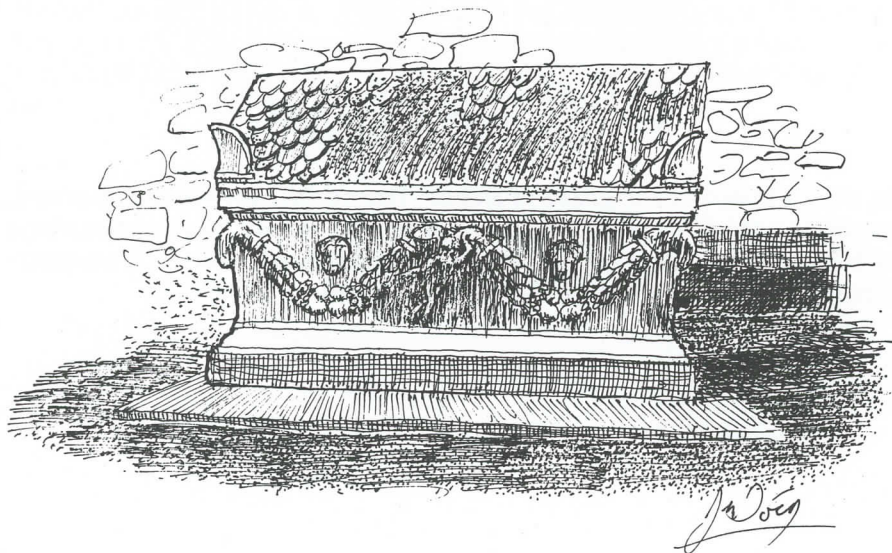


In the kirkyard is the grave of Robert Burns' father, William Burnes, as well as those of other members of Robert family, and companions of his youth. In one corner is the Doric **mausoleum** of Lieutenant-General Hughes of Mount Charles, who died in 1832.



From this corner there is a good view across the grounds of Doonbrae towards the river, the bridges and the Monument. Worth searching out are several exquisitely carved **gravestones**, heavy with symbols of death and resurrection. Perhaps the most ornate is that of the smith, Tennant.

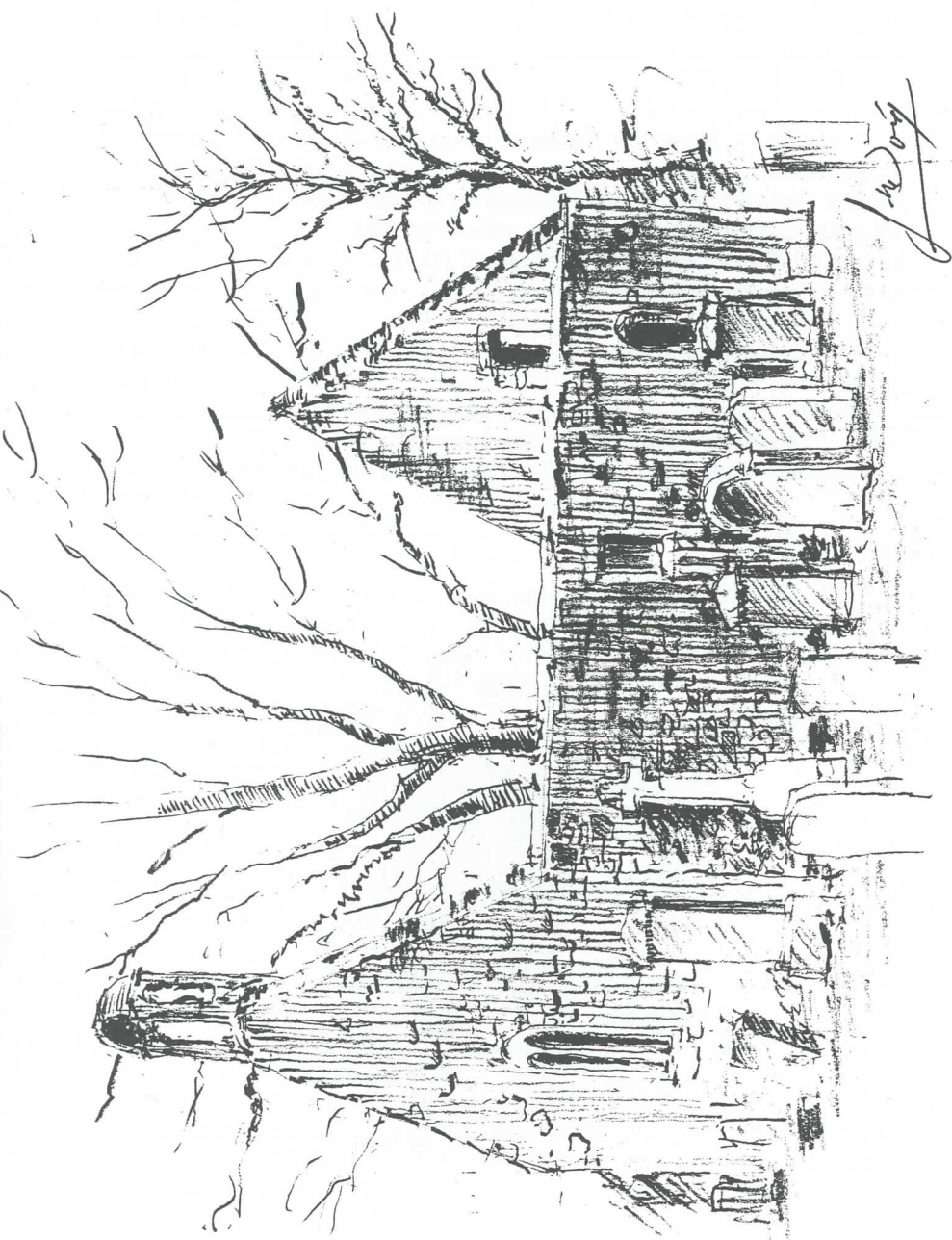
Within the church itself is the elegant **sarcophagus** of David Cathcart, Lord Alloway, and a mortsafe – a cast iron shield temporarily buried with a coffin to discourage body-snatchers, who supplied fresh corpses to anatomists.



David Cathcart, Lord Alloway, was born in 1764, the son of Elias Cathcart, a successful wine merchant in Ayr. Called to the Bar in 1785 and appointed a judge in 1813, David Cathcart became a Lord of Justiciary in 1826, taking the title Lord Alloway from his father's estate of Greenfield (modern Cambusdoon). The ruins of Kirk Alloway were at one corner of his estate. In 1793 he had married Margaret Muir of Blairston, and through her he inherited Blairston House, later called Auchendrane. He died, aged 65, in 1829.

The ruined church was the setting for the witches' dance in *Tam o' Shanter*. Through its windows Tam saw the witches, warlocks and Satan himself engaged in their diabolical deeds and devilish dances.





From the kirk continue along the road until you reach, on the left, the entrance to the Burns Monument. Alongside is a pleasant classically-detailed cottage built in 1868-69 for the keeper of the Monument.

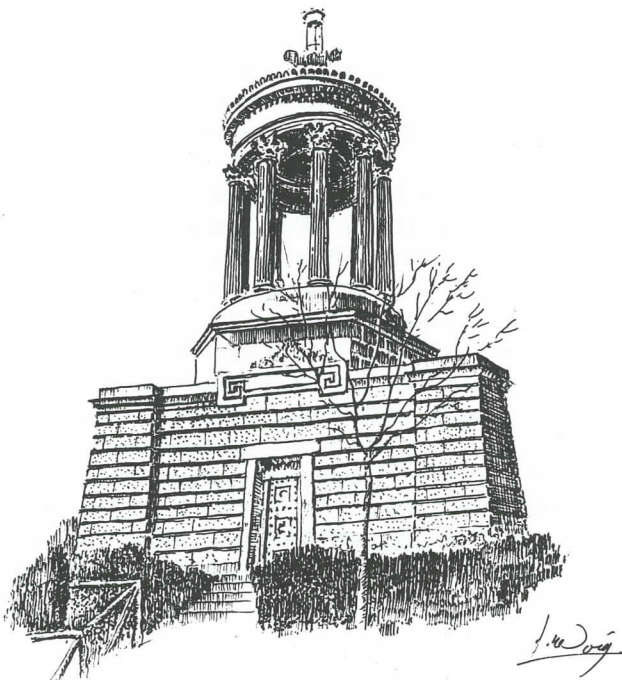
The Burns Monument

was designed in a Greek Revival style by Edinburgh architect Thomas Hamilton in 1818, and built between 1820 and 1823. (Hamilton was also the architect of Ayr Town Buildings.) The Monument is similar to Hamilton's later Burns Monument in Edinburgh, but with less complex details.

Every stage of construction was marked by an elaborate display of masonic ritual. A shadow was cast over

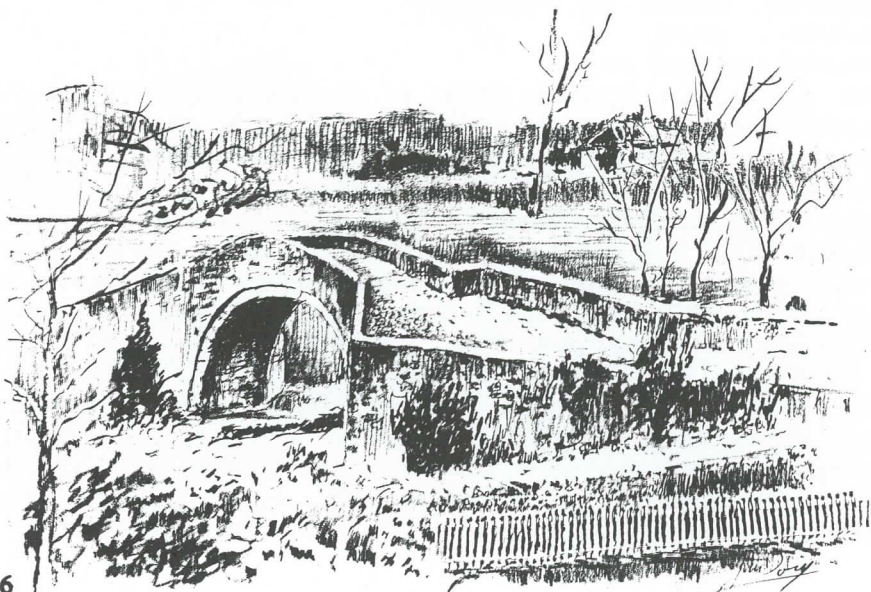
the proceedings by the death of Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, who had acted as convener of the Trustees. He called the first public meeting in 1814 to discuss commemorating Burns and laid the foundation stone on 25th January 1820, but was killed in a duel in 1821 before the project was completed. The Monument stands 70 feet high, and cost nearly £2,000 to build. The triangular base represents Cunninghame, Kyle and Carrick, the three districts of Ayrshire, while the circular temple with nine Corinthian columns represents the nine Muses.

The Monument is open to the public, as are the grounds, in which are James Thom's statues of Tam o' Shanter, his drinking companion Souter Johnnie, and the Landlady. A guide book is available. Tickets cover entry to both the Cottage and the Monument. Admission to the garden is free.



Close to the entrance to the Monument is **Brig o' Doon House**, a hotel, formerly the Burns Monument Hotel, which was opened in 1829 to provide accommodation and refreshments for visitors to the Monument. It was masterminded by David Auld, an Ayr perfumer, who was a Burns enthusiast, and was also a benefactor of the sculptor James Thom. In front of the hotel was the southern terminus of the Ayr Corporation Tramways system, which ran from Prestwick Cross to this point. It opened in 1901 and closed thirty years later. No trace of the system remains within Alloway.

Between the Monument and the hotel, a narrow road leads down to the **Brig o' Doon**. This single-span bridge probably dates from the 15th century. It features strongly in Burns' poem *Tam o' Shanter*. Tam, crossing the bridge on his grey mare Meg, was pursued by the witch Nannie. Witches could not cross running water, so Tam only just escaped, but she pulled off Meg's tail. When the **New Bridge of Doon**, downstream, was built in 1816, plans to demolish the old bridge were abandoned because of its connection with Burns' poem. A centrepiece of the bridge's defence was a spirited poem written by the Reverend Hamilton Paul, who was a minister without charge and a journalist. The views from the Brig are delightful, including as they do the well-wooded valley, the ornate railway bridge which carried the Light Railway southwards from Alloway, and, upstream, the Dutch Mill.



The River Doon had been a prolific salmon river, but rod catches declined drastically on the Doon in the 1960s-70s due to a combination of disease, poaching, mill drainage and, most importantly, commercial over-netting of the tidal estuary, while an old mill dam blocked the upstream passage of salmon returning to spawn. Breaching of this dam in 1978 by the newly-formed River Doon Angling Improvement Association, combined with anti-poaching measures and re-stocking with salmon fry from their own hatchery, brought the annual catch up from 180 to 1800 fish in ten years. The River Doon Fishery Board now manages the restored river, and salmon can often be seen leaping below and above Doonfoot Bridge, and at Cambusdoon, in late summer and autumn.

There were several mills in and around Ayr. The **Dutch Mill** in Alloway was a cloth mill. It is thought to have acquired its name because it was built by men from Holland who were working in Ayrshire during the 16th century. The mill belonged to the Earl of Stair but became part of the Doonside estate in 1775. William Burnes lodged at the Dutch Mill before building his cottage. In the mid 19th century it was owned by Charles Templeton of the Ayr mill-owning family, who employed 30 people here in blanket-making.



You can retrace your steps between hotel and monument, or cross over the bridge, following the path under the drive to Doonside, and so reaching the main road on the south side of the New Bridge of Doon. Walk towards Ayr, and take the first left into Shanter Way.

Seaton, 10 Shanter Way, was the childhood home of **Mike Denness**, one of the few Scots to have played test cricket for England, and the England captain in 1974-75. He was born in 1940, and his prowess was noted as early as June 1953, when he was made Cricketer of the Week at Butlin's, Ayr, the coach there noting that he was 'a really promising young batsman; has all the good shots and a nice clean style. For a 12 year old, he learns very quickly, and should go far in good class cricket'. An opening bat, he scored prolifically for Ayr Academy, Ayr, Scotland and Kent, and represented England on 28 occasions, 19 times as captain.

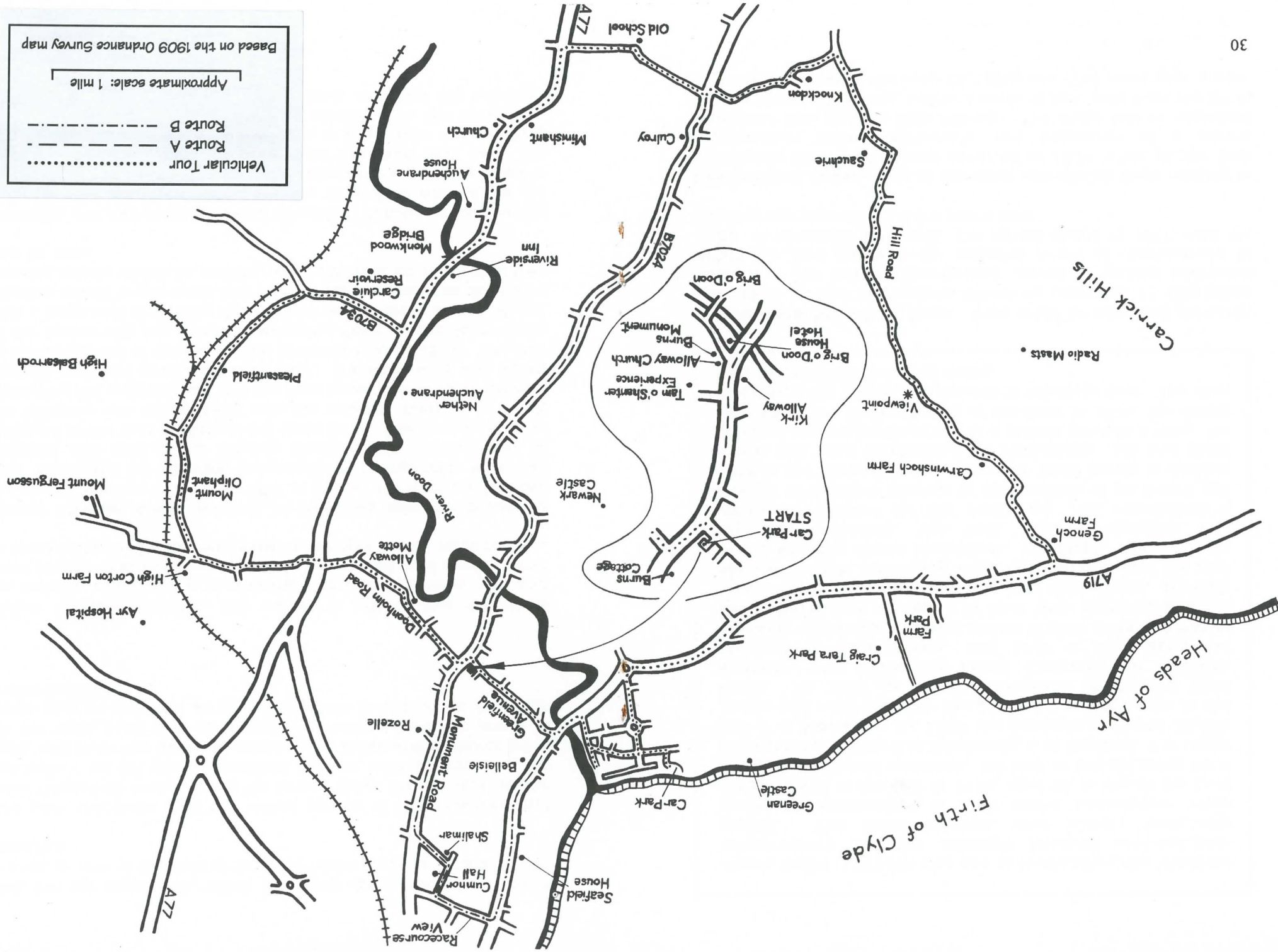
At the end of Shanter Way an unmade drive leads through the core of the **Cambusdoon** estate, passing a ruined archway which is all that remains of Cambusdoon House, built by James Baird. Cambusdoon is a forlorn relic of a 19th-century estate. Its grandeur can only be surmised from the impressive terracing and steps which lead down to the Doon. Our drive is gravel and level throughout this section of the walk, and suitable for wheelchairs, but the adventurous may wish to explore the more rewarding path which leads down to river level, and rejoins the main path on the far side of the remains of Cambusdoon House.

This **Riverside path** leads down steps, about 40 yards beyond the bollards which you passed. After about 200 yards along the river there is a gap in the trees on the right, and the terraced site of the house and the remains of a masonry arch – the entrance to a courtyard – can be seen. A little further along the river there are two fine Wellingtonias about 30m high. This tree was introduced in 1853, the year when Cambusdoon House was built. Shortly, the path leads back up and away from the river and rejoins the main drive.

James Baird (1802-76) was one of Scotland's great Victorian entrepreneurs and the country's foremost coal-and-iron-master. The Baird brothers were already immensely successful ironmasters in their native Lanarkshire when James moved to Ayrshire in 1844, aged 42, to exploit the local coal and blackband ironstone. He built or bought many blast furnaces: 4 at Dalry, 8 at Kilwinning, 6 at Hurlford, 4 at Lugar and 3 at Muirkirk. By 1865 the brothers employed 25,000 people and were probably the greatest iron producers in the world. In 1853 he bought Greenfield (from Lord Nigel Kennedy, who called the estate Craigweil) for £22,000, renamed it Cambusdoon, and built a very handsome mansion. Although he owned almost 20,000 acres in Ayrshire alone, Baird does not seem to have been accepted into the land-owning fraternity. He was a man of contrasts. He built Alloway Church, dismissing objections that it spoiled the view of the adjacent Burns Monument. He fought against trade unionism ruthlessly, but built schools, churches and recreation facilities for his workforce. He contributed a quarter of a million pounds to the creation of an 8-acre wet dock in Ayr harbour, yet continued to build hovels to designs which had been condemned by Parliament. He and three brothers shared profits of about a million pounds a year. He gave £500,000 to the Church of Scotland in 1875; his critics called this the biggest fire insurance premium ever. The next year he put it to the test by dying.

Cambusdoon School for Boys. Boys could be educated privately, from 1915, at Ayr Preparatory School at Langweil, 11 Blackburn Road, Ayr. The school subsequently moved to various addresses within Ayr, and finally to the mansion house of Cambusdoon in 1926. It remained here until the school closed in 1967, and the building was demolished a few years later.

Cambusdoon Cross. One of the most remarkable finds relating to the ancient history of Alloway occurred in 1928, when pupils from Cambusdoon School discovered two fragments of a carved sandstone slab close to Kirk Alloway. The stone has an inscribed cross with rounded ends, within a circle. It may date from the 8th to 12th Century: that is, the early Christian era. The lower part is now



lost, but the upper part, which measures about 3 feet by 1 foot 6 inches, is now in the care of South Ayrshire Council Museums and Galleries.

The path continues past the walled garden of Cambusdoon, and joins Greenfield Avenue, with its former **lodge** on the right at the junction. Turn left along Greenfield Avenue, carefully crossing the road, and enter the **Belleisle** estate at the **lodge** and entrance gates on the right hand side of Greenfield Avenue. Note the group of Scots pine on your left as you turn. This is one of the few truly native conifers.

* * *

Before entering Belleisle, the walker is offered two additional excursions. Firstly, by re-crossing Greenfield Avenue, you can enter Mount Charles Crescent and, following that road round, arrive at Mount Charles House, returning to this spot by the same route.

Mount Charles House involves at least two separate phases of building. Between 1754 and 1757 a typical 18th-century box-like villa was built for Charles Dalrymple of Orangefield, who had acquired this part of the Alloway lands. This building can be glimpsed at the rear of the present main front. The present front of the mansion was simply built onto the original mansion in 1829, obscuring the original front, for the then owner, Lieutenant-General Hughes, who had purchased it in 1827. A further wing was added to the west front of the old house, probably also in 1829. The rear of the house still has grounds sweeping down to the River Doon with a large wall sheltering the gardens on the steep slope. Mount Charles, which is converted into flats, is now approached through a housing estate, where its stables, also converted for residential use, may be seen.

Secondly, you can continue along Greenfield Avenue to its junction with Doonfoot Road. Almost opposite Greenfield Avenue, to the right of Doonfoot Stores, a track leads along the side of the Doon to the sea. On the opposite bank stood Doonfoot Mill, later the Greenan Steam Laundry. The river is a good place for watching birds, and is a known haunt of that elusive bird, the kingfisher. One can either return by the same route, or follow the sea-front path which leads to Ayr.

On the side of the **Doonfoot Stores** there is a plaque, now almost unreadable, which was taken from the first Doonfoot (or Greenan) Bridge. This plaque used to read 'This Bridge of Greenan was built by the Earl of Cassellis, Anno.Dom.1772 - Masons Adam Smith and James Armour'. It is traditionally assumed that this James Armour was the Mauchline mason who later became Robert Burns' father-in-law, and that this Adam Smith was Armour's father-in-law. The bridge of 1772 was replaced by the present bridge in 1861.

* * *

Belleisle was another of the estates created out of the sale and subdivision of the Alloway lands in 1754. The land passed through a number of hands before it was acquired by Hugh Hamilton of Pinmore, a banker in Ayr, in 1787; he built the first mansion house on the estate. Belleisle is now a much enlarged 19th century estate having incorporated farmland in the 20th century. It has belonged to Ayr Burgh Council and its successors since 1926, when it was bought from Lord Glentanar, of the Coats family. The former farmland was most tastefully developed as a golf course following an initial design in 1926 by the famous course designer James Braid of Walton Heath.

The drive passes on its left an enclosure containing deer, sheep, and other animals, a popular rendezvous for families with small children, for whom there is a playground immediately beyond the animals, along the unmade path.

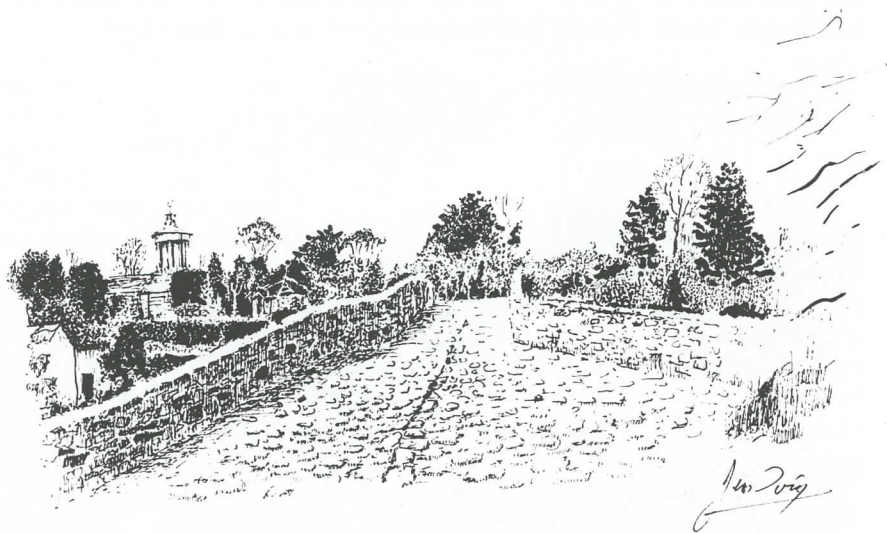
Continuing along the drive, take the first path on the right. Here there are aviaries with a variety of small birds, domestic and game fowl, and small rodents. Continue through the walled garden, with the monogram of the Coats family on the far gate, and past the attractive conservatory, to the rear of the house. Just before the house is reached, a flight of steps leads up the front of the house. Look across the lawn. In this gracious setting is a young specimen of the noble fir, planted in 1987 to mark the bond between Ayr and its twin town, St Germain-en-Laye, near Paris.



Belleisle House. This mansion in Scots Jacobean or Scottish Baronial style architecture has signs of an earlier Georgian origin, most clearly seen on the back elevation. It was built for Hugh Hamilton, who was a nephew of Robert Hamilton of Rozelle. It was substantially reconstructed, to give its present appearance, from 1829 for Alexander West Hamilton, who was brother to Archibald Hamilton of Rozelle. It has contemporary lavish plasterwork in some of the public rooms. In 1876 the estate passed to William Smith Dixon, ironmaster (of 'Dixon's Blazes', Glasgow) and further extensions to the house were made at this time. Dixon died in June 1880, and his widow in 1884. In 1894 the estate passed to George Coats (of Paisley thread fame and wealth), and he commissioned James Davidson to execute the wood carving in the entrance hall, using themes from the poetry of Burns. The house is now a hotel and restaurant, and also serves beverages and snacks. There is also a bar with a separate entry, in a single-storey extension. The lower ground floor of the mansion, entered from the rear, houses the club-rooms of the two golf courses.

Continuing round the house the path passes between the bar and the car park, and immediately in front is the derelict **stable block**, which appears to be late 19th century in date. Public lavatories are built onto the wall nearest to you.

Return to the back of the house (the golf course side). Standing with your back to the house you will see a long unmetalled track crossing the golf course. Follow this path until it reaches the Monument Road: looking back here you will see a vista of apparently limitless park land. In fact, the park and its two golf courses cover 247 acres. Before you is the Belleisle championship golf course. Between you and the house is a broken belt of trees which separated the ornamental gardens of the mansion from the former farmland. Beyond that is the Seafield golf course. Pass through the gate, and almost opposite is the entrance to Rozelle, which is where you left your car some time ago.



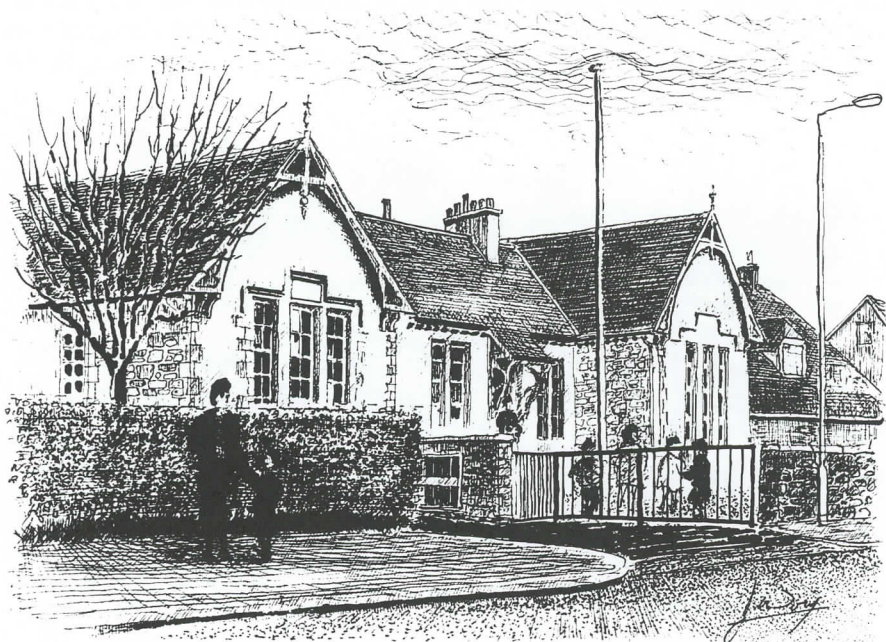
VEHICULAR TOUR OF THE AREA AROUND ALLOWAY

15 miles

This tour can be undertaken by car or, better, by bicycle, which allows more options for stopping and looking. For cars, parking places are indicated.

Because many of the roads are narrow and tortuous, and are much used by farmers and others, special care and consideration is needed. There are few safe parking places and it is unwise even to pause.

The route begins at Burns' Cottage car park. Leaving the car park turn left into Greenfield Avenue, immediately left, and immediately right into Doonholm Road (signed 'By-Pass (A77)'). The former **Alloway Manse** is the second building on the left. The **school** and library are on the right, and immediately after these, you pass a wide road, The Loaning, opening on the left. This was laid out in the 1960s, to give access to the large part of the Rozelle estate, which was being rapidly covered with housing at that time.



Alloway School opened in 1896 to replace the school of 1849, which is now the Public Hall (p.16). The school is a simple red stone symmetrical design, with forward projecting gabled wings at either end. The architect was John Murdoch. There are now many extensions, but the original building retains its frontage intact. The adjacent **Alloway Library**, opened in 1974, is designed in a striking contemporary idiom.

Continue along Doonholm Road, crossing the bridge with cast-iron parapets over the former light railway to Turnberry and Girvan (see p.17). Immediately beyond it, on the right, is the entrance to the estate of Doonholm. The road bends awkwardly here. You have just come along the old route from Doonholm to Alloway, and the road turns sharply to continue along the old route from Doonholm northwards. If you pull up cautiously near the gates, you can make out **Alloway Motte**, the Norman defensive artificial mound, just behind the wall to the right. It is overgrown with trees, but its conical sides and flat top can be seen. You may get a better view from the adjacent field gate. In the 12th century it occupied an important strategic position, on the border between South Kyle and the frequently hostile Carrick and Galloway. However, in 1197 a new castle was built at the mouth of the river Ayr, and with its construction it is thought that Alloway Motte lost its military function and was probably abandoned then. Please do not pass through the gate: these are private grounds.

Doonholm House is a Georgian mansion built circa 1760 for William Fergusson on land overlooking the River Doon. The house was extended in the Regency and Victorian periods, but was reduced in size in the early 1980s to make a more manageable family house. The lodge behind the gates was built early in the 19th century. The grounds are sometimes opened in aid of charity under Scotland's Gardens Scheme.

Leaving here with especial care, continue along Doonholm Road. The next building on the right is Doonholm Farm, the home farm for Doonholm Estate. Doonholm Road now meets the A77(T) road between Ayr and Maybole. Taking care, turn right, then

immediately left. The road is not signposted. In front of you, on the hillside, is the Ayr Hospital; its multiplying roofs give it something of the look of a Tibetan monastery. It opened in 1991.

Ayr Hospital replaced three older hospitals, namely Ayr County (1883, demolished in 1999), Heathfield (1904, also demolished) and Seafeld Children's Hospital (1921). It was built adjacent to the Ailsa Hospital, a former lunatic asylum still in use as a psychiatric hospital, but not visible from this point, on land that had been part of that hospital's 9-hole golf course. The first patients arrived in 1991 at this 300+ bed hospital. Many additions have been made including a Day Surgery Unit, Medical Day Centre and a Chapel, which has a fine stained glass window, of 1908, originally in the Biggart Hospital, Prestwick. 5,000 trees have been planted in a community woodland development and a range of 'Arts in Healthcare' projects have been undertaken.

Climb up the hill for half a mile, and take the first turn right just before High Corton Farm, which is identified by a wrought iron sign. Higher, now on your left, stands **Mount Fergusson**, a farm formerly called South High Muir of Corton, and re-named after William Fergusson of Doonholm. The Carrick Hills are on your right, then the sea and a spectacular view of the Isle of Arran. You are passing through gently sloping west-facing dairy farmland.

William Fergusson (c.1701-69) was probably born in Ayr, but his professional career was spent as a doctor in London. He returned to Ayrshire in 1755, when he acquired those parts of the Lands of Alloway which had been initially roused to James Neill and to John Craufurd of Doonside; he later bought more land, so that ultimately Doonholm became the biggest estate created out of the lands of Alloway. He improved and enclosed the estate and built farmsteads, including Mount Fergusson and Mount Oliphant. He also became involved in the political life of Ayr, and was twice its Provost.

The first farm on the right is **Mount Oliphant**, named after Fergusson's wife, Elizabeth Oliphant, whom he had married in London in 1739. Its former name was South High Corton. The Burns family moved here from Burns Cottage in 1766. In his early days at Alloway, William Burnes had worked at Doonholm as a gardener for William Fergusson, and his old employer offered him the tenancy of Mount Oliphant. Most biographers think it was a poor bargain. With modern field drainage and husbandry the local soil grows good grass, but in Robert Burns' time the poorly-drained land must have been very heavy to work. Yet the need for self-sufficiency obliged the farmers to grow grain and other crops which would now be thought uneconomic. Hard labour and mere subsistence was their reward. William Burnes left Mount Oliphant in 1777 and moved to Lochlea, Tarbolton.



Soil. The soil at Mount Oliphant is typical of that in the more fertile parts of Ayrshire. It is an imperfectly drained brown forest soil, a till derived mainly from sedimentary rocks of Old Red Sandstone age. It is heavy to work, but excellent for grass. It is graded Class 3, having moderate limitations which restrict the choice of crops or require careful management. Drainage and generations of manuring have improved it immensely since Burns' time, and significantly in more recent years.

You may wish to draw in at the side of the road opposite Mount Oliphant. The buildings have been much altered since the time of Burns, but the dwelling-house which faces you probably dates from then, though the dormer windows are recent and the roof would have been thatched. The byres to the right were probably of about the same date, but not the cart-house next to the road. The buildings to the left which now complete a courtyard also appear to be more recent. Enough remains to give an impression of a typical Ayrshire farmhouse of Burns' time.

Continue along the road. After 200 yards there is a gap in the hedge on the left and a field becomes visible, with the railway embankment behind it. This is the boundary of Mount Oliphant's lands, and many believe this to be part of the field in which Burns lay, as he records in his poem, 'amid the rigs o' barley' with an early love.

The Agriculture of Ayrshire. The scenery and the farms encountered during this tour consist mostly of grassland, used for cattle and sheep. The warm and wet climate in the West of Scotland is ideal for grass production. Huge areas of grass are cut in summer for conserving as winter feed; the main form these days is silage (acidic, 'pickled', grass) which is less dependent on good weather than hay, although some hay is still made when the weather is dry and sunny enough.

The present day field pattern, now accepted as the traditional face of farming, with its hedges, shelter beds and roads, was introduced to this area in the late 18th century. Ayrshire in the period 1750-60 was described as having 'few or no enclosures, horses and cattle being either tethered in the summer or trusted to the direction of a herd or cur dog'. By the time of the first *Statistical Account of Ayrshire* in 1793, the look of the countryside had changed, with land having been 'enclosed with hedges and ditch within the last 30 or 40 years and in general the hedges are in thriving condition'.

Small farms (Mount Oliphant was 80 acres: a sizeable holding for its time), run by family labour and operating mixed farming systems of dairy, beef, sheep, a few pigs, a few hens and some cereals, have been amalgamated to form larger holdings specially adapted to those crops and processes for which the conditions are most suitable. Ayrshire gave the world the Ayrshire breed of dairy cow, renowned for its high milk yields and butterfat content, ideally suited for cheese production. As dairying has become less profitable, many smaller farms have sold their milk cows and concentrated on breeding and rearing sheep and beef cattle. Some farm houses and buildings have been sold with a few acres of land to horse lovers, with the rest of the farm land annexed to neighbouring farms.

Occasionally, grassland is ploughed and sown to barley, a cereal crop usually dried and stored on the farm for winter feeding for the livestock. After one or two years in barley, the land is often re-seeded again to grass.

As you drive on, the railway line from Ayr to Maybole and Stranraer is close on the left, and can be seen at intervals.

The first **railway** south of Ayr was the line to Dalmellington, opened in August 1856, while the line to Maybole, branching off from the Dalmellington line at Dalrymple Junction near here, was opened in October 1857. The extension to Girvan was opened in May 1860 and the line reached Stranraer in October 1877. The Maybole and Stranraer line, which parallels the road here, is still open, though the intermediate stations between Ayr and Maybole were closed in 1964. Passenger services on the Dalmellington branch also ceased in 1964, but it continues to carry a large amount of opencast coal to Ayr Harbour, mainly for export to Ireland.

Pause at High Balsarroch Road End and look right. From this point there is another good view of the Heads of Ayr (composed of volcanic rock) and the Isle of Arran.

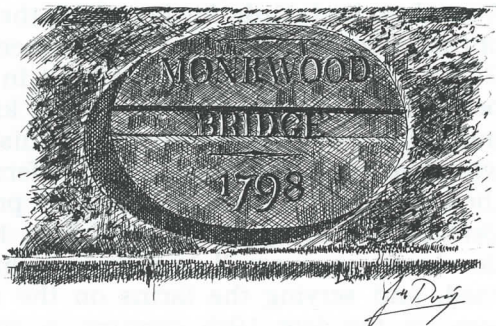
The next farm on the right, and neighbour to Mount Oliphant, is **Pleasantfield**. This farm used to be known as Lonehouse. At a lay-by on the left-hand side there is a close view of the Stranraer railway line. Further on, we meet the B7034 from Dalrymple. Very close to this junction was the former Dalrymple Station, which was 2½ miles from the village it was designed to serve. Turn right onto the B7034.

To the left of the B7034, behind the roadside plantation, lie **Carcluie Reservoirs**. They can also be seen from the A77, and appear as obviously man-made grass mounds rising above the natural ground level. The need for a mains water supply for Ayr was made plain by an outbreak of cholera in 1832. Springs in the Carrick Hills (near here) were the first source to be used, in 1840. Reservoirs, such as those at Carcluie, the first of which was built in 1855, were used to store the water. The business was taken over by Ayr Corporation in 1873. Today Ayr's water comes largely from Loch Bradan, near Loch Doon.

At the T-junction ahead, turn left into the A77, in the direction of Stranraer. As this is a busy road, cyclists may prefer to cross the road and use the footpath. The **Riverside Inn** on your right is a conversion of the former Blackhill Farm. It serves bar lunches and bar suppers. It may be possible to park here if you

wish to examine Monkwood Bridge (below) more closely. You now cross the River Doon by a modern bridge, with the disused Monkwood Bridge of 1798 close by on the left.

Monkwood Bridge. This stone single-arched bridge spans the River Doon beside the modern bridge, (opened 1971) on the A77 between Ayr and Maybole. There is an inscription on the outer upstream face of the bridge to the builders John and James Rutherford. The bridge was built in 1798 as part of a new turnpike road, begun in 1796, connecting Ayr and Maybole, and replacing the old road, now the B7024 through Culroy.



Immediately beyond there is a tall brick wall pierced by the entrance to **Auchendrane House**. This house (not visible from the road) was built c.1858, and considerably enlarged in 1880-81 for Sir Peter Coats, the renowned Paisley thread manufacturer.

The house replaced the original Auchendrane castle which was for centuries the seat of the Mures. John Mure was Provost of Ayr from 1687 to 1697 and 'did much to preserve the liberties of his fellow citizens'. Earlier, the Mures had been deadly rivals of the Kennedys of Culzean, and in 1601 John Mure, nicknamed The Grey Man, with several henchmen, ambushed and murdered the (Kennedy) Earl of Cassillis. Later he also murdered the only reliable witness to the killing, but he was eventually hanged for his crime. These events were the basis of Sir Walter Scott's play, *Auchindrane: An Ayrshire Tragedy*.

Continue along the A77 southwards. You can park outside the **Lady Coats Memorial Church**. It was given by Sir Peter Coats in memory of his wife who died in 1877. It was intended to be non-sectarian. It is built in red freestone in the early French Gothic style, and seated about 200. Behind the church were a reading-room and library which Sir Peter undertook to supply with the 'leading newspapers, magazines and standard works', while the

basement contained a house for the caretaker. After the church ceased to be used for ecclesiastical purposes, it was converted into a house in 1986.

A few hundred yards further along the A77 brings you to the centre of the village of **Minishant**, where there is parking on the road side. Before the turnpike road was built in 1796, there appears to have been only a small settlement here, known as Culroy. Only in the mid 19th century did the name Minishant begin to come into use, while the name of Culroy was transferred to the small settlement on the old Maybole road which had previously been called Culroy Bridge or Culroy Smithy (p.54). Minishant appears to have developed as a small trading settlement, well sited on the main road, and serving the farms on the neighbouring estates. There was, in the late 19th century, a small mill which made tweed blankets and travelling rugs, while the village also had a shop, a pub, a blacksmith's forge and a joiner's shop. The pub and shop still survive, along with a listed **telephone box** of the classical and timeless type, known as K6, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, which is recognised throughout the world as a symbol of Britain, but which has been all but eliminated in its native land.

On the southern side of the village is an estate of **timber houses**, built by Ayr County Council in 1938. These well-tended gardens and obviously well-cared-for houses form an attractive group. Their visibility leads many to suppose that they are the only timber houses in Ayrshire, but Ayr County Council built others throughout the county in villages such as Ochiltree and Dunlop.

James Smith. Close to Minishant was Monkwood Grove, the home for many years of James Smith, c.1760 - 1848, who is described on his tomb in the kirkyard of Ayr Auld Kirk as 'The Father of Scottish Botany'. A native of Ayrshire, Smith worked as a gardener at notable English houses such as Stowe and Syon, before becoming superintendent of the London Botanic Gardens, under the celebrated William Curtis, one of the pioneers of botany. Smith returned to Ayr in 1784 to commence business as a nurseryman: from Curtis he received 700 hardy plant species, enabling him to establish the first public collection of any note in Scotland. He lived at Monkwood Grove until age and infirmity overtook him in 1840. 'The sight of a new plant had the power of enchantment over him, and so completely engrossed every feeling of his heart, that pecuniary matters never entered his thoughts'.

After leaving the village, turn right onto the first minor road. This leads up towards the former Minishant School, and an isolated group of local authority houses - St Helen's Crescent - built for agricultural labourers.

The Old School, Minishant, was built on the hill about a mile from the village in 1872. It was situated between the low road from Ayr to Maybole and the high road through Culroy and convenient to neighbouring farms. The stone built school consisted of two rooms with an adjoining schoolmaster's house. One 'maister' retired after 55 years of service and was thought to have been the oldest in the country. In 1957 it was replaced by a new school in the village.

Once past the school, the road bends to the right and shortly joins the B7024. It is possible, with care, to park your car or bike near here and walk to the right down the hill into Culroy. This hamlet is described on p.54. Returning to the car or bike, the trail continues along the minor road almost directly opposite that which has led you up from Minishant.

* * *

At this point it is also possible to follow a more direct, shorter, route back to Alloway. Turn right and pass through Culroy. The description of this route, **Route A**, begins on p.54.

* * *

This new minor road bends to the left, and on the right is **Knockdon**, a farm of considerable size. At the T-junction turn right (no sign). Immediately ahead can be seen the mansion house of **Sauchrie**. This is private property.

Sauchrie House was built before 1775, and probably incorporates part of Sauchrie Castle. The front elevation is late Georgian in style with one wing of earlier construction and another wing built at a later date. Ayrshire-born John Loudoun McAdam bought Sauchrie in 1783 on his return from America, where he had been a successful merchant. As an industrialist, and as a land-owner, McAdam engaged actively in county affairs, and in association with the Earl of Dundonald operated the British Coal Tar Company at Muirkirk. Following a reversal of fortunes he had to sell Sauchrie and move his family to Falmouth in 1798. Later he observed, recorded and published best practice in the existing technology of building roads with broken stones of uniform size. He became surveyor to turnpike trusts all over Great Britain, and gave his name to the road construction he had championed. Local tradition insists that he first experimented with roads at Sauchrie, building the road thence from Alloway in 1787, but no evidence exists to support this story. It is also worth stressing that McAdam neither invented nor used tarmacadam, which was a much later improvement.

After a quarter of a mile, the road forks. Take the right fork marked 'Hill Road' on an informal signpost. Also here are the main gates to Sauchrie. The winding road, much of it too narrow for passing, requires especial care. It passes over **Brown Carrick Hill**. The upper reaches, after the first cattle grid, are unfenced grazing.

Shortly after the second cattle grid, the road reaches its summit, and a panorama of Ayr Bay and beyond opens out. There are several places here where you can draw off the road to enjoy the view, picnic or stroll.

A short distance to the right is a small stone pillar, which once held a viewing table. You can take the viewfinder on page 48 to the pillar to help you to identify some of the main features which can be seen in clear weather.

Below you to the left are the Heads of Ayr. Beyond, in the Firth of Clyde, is the unmistakable Isle of Arran, with Kintyre peninsula behind. To the right, the Isles of Bute and Little Cumbrae follow, then the sweeping bay from Ardrossan to Ayr. Troon is distinguished by the large white shed of the Ailsa shipyard. Far behind there is often a splendid view of Ben Lomond, with the peaks of the Crianlarich Hills spread out to its right.

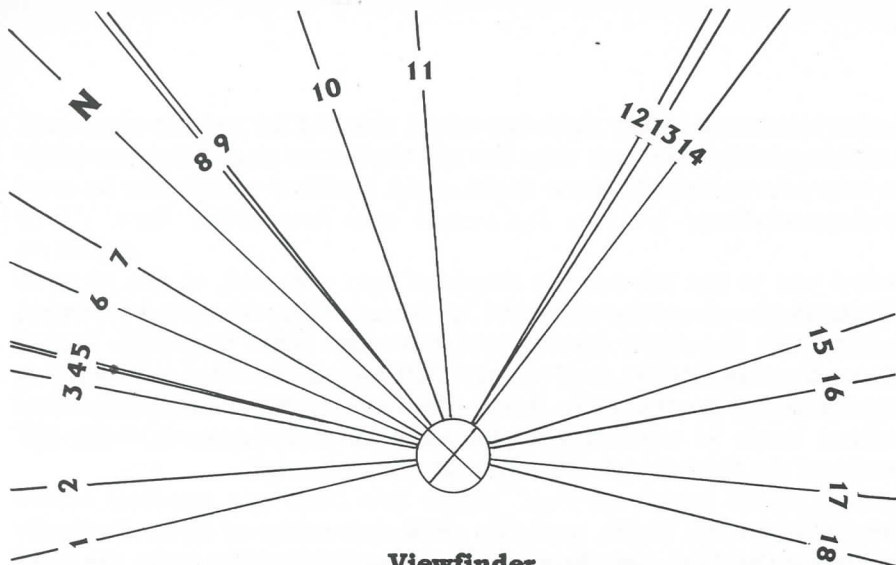
Returning to the coast, you can pick out many of Ayr's features, including the high-rise flats and the Town Spire. Towards the east you can see the red roofs of Ayr Hospital and, beyond it, a plume of steam from the chipboard factory at Auchinleck. In line with that, in the distance, you may see Hagshaw Hill, near the M74. With binoculars you can recognise it by its windfarm.

Another windfarm tops Windy Standard to the south-east. To its right follow the peaks of the Rhinns of Carsphairn and Kells.

From here, then, you can see the whole width of the Central Valley of Scotland from the north edge where the mountains of the Highlands abruptly give way to lowland, to the south edge where the Southern Uplands begin.

Your view southward is cut off by the Brown Carrick Hill. If you care to walk back to the highest point of the road, the view to the right is extended. A longer stroll up the access road to the communications masts (used by several public authorities) and across rough ground beyond them, will allow you to view the southern parts of Arran, the Mull of Kintyre, Ailsa Craig (the core of an extinct volcano, and nicknamed 'Paddy's Milestone') and possibly the coast of Ireland.

All of these features are seen against a backdrop of vast and ever-changing skies, which produce on occasions dazzling light and unforgettable sunsets.



Viewfinder

Put the guidebook with this page uppermost on the stone pillar. Rotate it to align a place that you can identify with the corresponding line on the viewfinder. All of the other lines will then be pointing in the right directions. If you prefer to use a compass, rotate the book so that the 'N' line points towards magnetic north.

		Distance		Height	
		km	miles	m	ft
1	Holy Island, Arran	27	17	314	1030
2	Goat Fell, Arran	40	25	874	2867
3	Loch Fyne	59	37		
4	Ben More, Mull	140	87	967	3173
5	Heads of Ayr	3	2	77	253
6	Little Cumbrae island	39	24		
7	Ardrossan Harbour (mouth)	27	17		
8	Troon Harbour (shipyard)	15	9		
9	Ben Lomond	87	54	974	3196
10	Ayr Harbour (mouth)	7	4		
11	Seafield (mansion with tower)	5	3		
12	Hagshaw Hill (windfarm)	51	32	470	1542
13	Tinto Hill	67	42	711	2333
14	Cairn Table	43	27	593	1946
15	Windy Standard (windfarm)	35	22	696	2283
16	Cairnsmore of Carsphairn	35	22	796	2612
17	Coran of Portmark	31	19	623	2042
18	Corserine	43	27	814	2668

The road continues downwards, still requiring caution, over the cattle grid at Carwinshoch (a much extended farmhouse), and past Genoch Farm, at the foot of the hill. Reaching the A719, turn right (signposted 'Ayr 5'). On the left is the **Heads of Ayr Farm Park**, one of Ayr's newest tourist attractions, opened in May 1993. This working farm is home to a wide range of pets and farm animals, ranging from a Jersey cow, a Clydesdale horse and a peacock, to such exotica as two pot-bellied pigs from Vietnam, buffaloes, and a family of South American guanacos. There is also a mouse farmyard, and a reptile house. The Farm Park has a snack bar, a cafe and toilets.

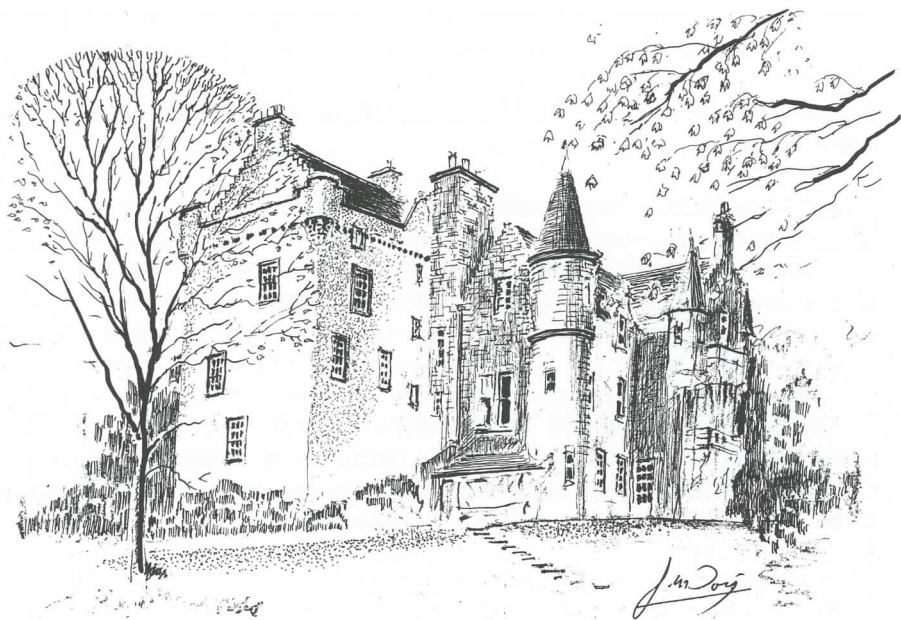
A little further along the A719, **Craig Tara Park** dominates the left hand (seaward) side of the road.

Craig Tara Park. Billy Butlin built a holiday camp here just before the 1939-45 war, but before it could open it was requisitioned by the Admiralty and became HMS Scotia, a training establishment. When it did open to the public in 1947 there were 500 holiday makers, but their number increased to 2,000 by the end of the first season. As well as the ubiquitous chalets, the original accommodation also included a hotel. After more than 40 years, Butlin's was re-launched as Wonderwest World in 1988 with new facilities. In 1998 the original camp was demolished and a £10,000,000 refurbishment was undertaken, re-opening in Spring 1999 as Craig Tara Park, with an emphasis on family holidays.

Day visitors are no longer admitted: most of the entertainment facilities which attracted them are gone. It is however possible to drive in and park in the car-park on the left, from which a recently restored footpath with two stiles leads down to the beach, permitting a close look at the Heads of Ayr. Once at the shore it is possible to walk along the beach northwards to Greenan and Ayr, or southwards, when the tide is out, round the Heads of Ayr towards Dunure. Sometimes a stream crossing the foreshore makes bare feet - or Wellington boots - necessary.

Continuing along the A719, note how the farms on the right are all set well back from the road, probably marking a spring line where water would be available. The road crosses the former Light Railway (see p.17), before entering Ayr's suburbs.

Greenan Castle (see below) can be seen to the left, while **Newark Castle** is also visible on the landward side.



This privately owned castle stands on a rocky outcrop on the slope of the Carrick Hills, with commanding views over the surrounding countryside to the sea. The castle originated from a tall nearly square 16th century tower-house. It was extended circa 1687 for James Craufurd, doubling the size of the original tower-house. About 1850 the castle was again extended with turrets, balconies and dormers, making it an imposing Scottish Baronial mansion. In 1907 the castle was further extended by Archibald Walker, whose family still live there.

At the roundabout take the left exit, signposted 'Greenan Shore', and go straight ahead at the next roundabout in this prestigious residential area, developed from the late 1950s onwards. Just before you reach the shore a road to the left is signposted Car Park. You can walk in a few yards to the shore and enjoy the views of Ayr Bay and Arran and, if you have a little time, walk along the shore, or on an easy path through the sand dunes with their rich bird life, to or beyond **Greenan Castle**, a popular subject for painters and photographers.

A simple rectangular tower house perched precariously on the clifftop, Greenan Castle is a prominent element in views from Ayr. It is of 1603, as a datestone records, and was probably built for John Kennedy of Baltersan, near Maybole. 'The old Castle of Greenand' is recorded in 1691 as having 2 hearths, probably corresponding to the fireplaces visible on the first and second floors. The ground floor is vaulted, and there is a wheel stair in the north east angle. In 1900 some consolidation work was carried out by J Blackburn Fergusson of Balgarth, adopting modern conservation techniques: 'As the use of brick in work such as this is often commented upon, I may point out that it is not only the most suitable material to work with, but is in accordance with the most approved method where preservation as opposed to restoration is the aim. The brick soon weathers very near the colour of the stone, while the distinction between old and new is always preserved'. It is possible to climb up to the castle, but it should not be entered.

The man-made ditches up there indicate that this site has been an important defensive one since prehistoric times. The rough ground north of the castle is frequented by birds such as yellowhammer, whitethroat and the rarer lesser whitethroat.

On leaving the car park, turn left, then drive straight across the wide road which you left earlier. Continue ahead until the road turns to the right, and here take a sharp left turn into a narrow road which leads to a small car park at the mouth of the River Doon. This is one of the best bird-watching sites on Ayr Bay, with plentiful gulls, waders and ducks - including teal in winter. There are public lavatories here. The stone shed on the opposite bank was used until recently by commercial salmon-netters.

Returning, go ahead and rejoin the A719. To your right is the **Balgarth Hotel**, formerly the home, built in the 1890s, of J. Blackburn Ferguson, a local philanthropist who funded the restoration of Greenan Castle, and now a popular local hostelry.

Rejoin the A719 (Dunure Road) by turning left, and crossing Doonfoot Bridge.

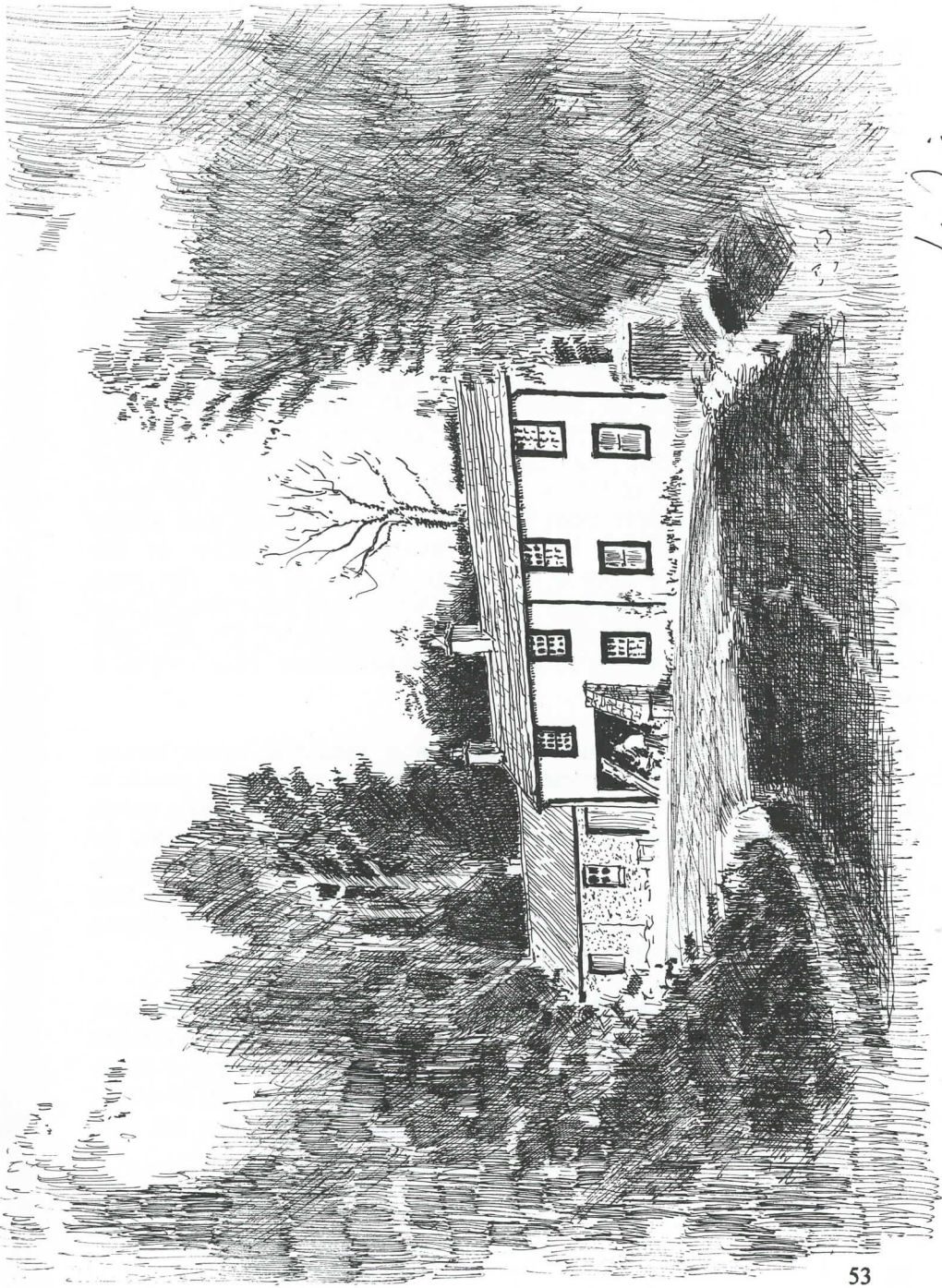
* * *

[At this point it is possible to take a longer loop back to Burns Cottage. This route [Route B] is described from p.55]

* * *

Take the right turn here, Greenfield Avenue, which is the southern edge of the Belleisle estate (see p.33). Further along on the right is the former lodge of Cambusdoon (see p.28). At the end of Greenfield Avenue is the entrance to the Burns Cottage Car Park, and the end of this circular tour.





L. H. Long

Culroy see next page

ROUTE A

A short cut reducing the main route from 15 to 9 miles

Where the minor road from Minishant joins the B7024 turn right. The road drops down, with coppiced woodland on the left, into the small hamlet of **Culroy**, formerly called Culroy Bridge or Culroy Smithy. On the right hand side, just after the bridge, is the old smithy, with one of the few remaining old-style AA/RSAC yellow signs, announcing 'Ayr 5; Maybole 3'; and (an unvarying feature on these signs) 'London 398'. It also bears the admonitions 'Gang warily' and 'Safety first'. Downstream from Culroy there was an old mill which was used for making oatmeal, flour and cattle feed. Those visitors with an interest in traditional folk music may find it of interest that Johnnie Faa, the 'Gypsy Rover', is said to have lived near here. Continue to follow the B7024. On the right are some glasshouses, moved here from Rozelle, and still growing and selling nursery crops, such as tomatoes, as a last reminder of the nurseries which were once a prominent feature of Ayr. The road gives views across the country through which you have driven, and the Ayr Hospital is a prominent element in this view. On the right you pass the road leading to **Nether Auchendrane**, now run as a private nursing home.

At the core of Nether Auchendrane is a medieval tower-house, originally known as Blairstone. The house was owned for much of the 19th century by the Cathcart family, who turned it into a much grander house, one which looked back to the 17th Century for its stylistic inspiration. It became a nursing home in 1955, originally run by Ayr County Council, but closed in 1982. After standing empty and decaying, it was bought and converted into a private nursing home which opened in 1987.

The road continues to drop down into the valley of the Doon, offering further panoramic views across Ayr. The road crosses the New Bridge of Doon, built in 1816. It then passes the Brig o' Doon House Hotel, Burns Monument, and Alloway Churches (all of which are described on the walking tour, p.8), before you turn left into Greenfield Avenue to complete this tour.

ROUTE B

an additional loop to take in Belleisle and the Old Racecourse. Adds 1½ miles to main route.

Instead of turning right after Doonfoot Bridge, continue straight ahead (the road is now Doonfoot Road). After ¼ mile the entrance to Belleisle is well-marked on the right - signed 'Belleisle and Seafield Golf Courses'. Drive or ride in and park. The house is now a hotel, but there are also a restaurant, a bar, a snack bar, and public conveniences. The many delights of **Belleisle** and its policies, as well as something of its history, are described on p.32, as part of the walking tour of Alloway.

Return to the main road, and turn right. The road is paralleled on the right by the estate wall of Belleisle. Shortly before the traffic lights, the old **Viewhouse** is prominent on the right, while opposite is the entrance to **Seafield House**.

Old Racecourse. Horse-racing in Ayr originally took place along the shore. The old racecourse here to the south of the Town was given to the Burgh by Royal Charter in the 14th century as a common. In 1770 it was laid out as a racecourse. In 1808 the first race for the Ayr Gold Cup was run, and in 1824 the first Western Meeting. In 1907 it was closed when the new race course was opened at Whitletts; these grounds which extends to 64 acres were converted into playing fields and part of the Seafield Golf Course.

The **Viewhouse**, although altered, is a rare survival from the 1860s of an early grandstand, designed to allow wealthier patrons of the meetings a better, and perhaps less jostled, view of the racing and the other proceedings.

Seafield was built about 1888 (reputedly to his own design) as a retirement home by the engineer Sir William Arrol on the site of an earlier house. Among its features was a system by which sea water was pumped into the house so he could have saline baths. In the First World War Seafield was used by the Red Cross as a hospital.

It was later purchased by Ayr County Council for use as a maternity and child welfare hospital and re-opened as such in 1921. In 1947 a nurses' training school was established here. In 1982 part of its paediatric care was transferred to the new hospital at Crosshouse, near Kilmarnock, and the remainder to Ayr Hospital a few years later. In 1984 Seafield became the headquarters of the Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, a move that was then seen as guaranteeing the future of this fine house, but in 1998 it was put up for sale.

Sir William Arrol (1839-1913) founded the engineering company which bears his name. He was a self-made man. At the age of 12 he was working in Coats' mill in Paisley. He was apprenticed to a blacksmith, gained experience in metal bridge building, and soon set up in business on his own account. A good salesman as well as a technical innovator, he became a world-class bridge-builder: the Forth Bridge (completed in 1890) is his most impressive achievement. In later life he searched for the ideal home, within easy reach of Glasgow but with a climate kind to the lungs and, settling on Ayr, built Seafield. His 'retirement' was an active one: he played a full part in local affairs and continued to have many business interests. He assisted the Scottish motor industry by providing financial support for the Arrol Johnston company in 1895. He served as Unionist M.P. for South Ayrshire from 1895 until 1906. He died at Seafield on 20th February 1913.

At the traffic lights, turn right into Racecourse View, and note the substantial late Victorian villas on the lefthand side. Follow the Belleisle boundary wall when it turns right, taking care when crossing on-coming traffic. On the left are more prosperous villas, among which is one striking 1960s house, and also **Cumnor Hall**, which became a Church of Scotland Retirement Home in 1954. The road turns round to the left, becoming Chapelpark Road. Ahead as it turns is **Shalimar**, one of the biggest and most elaborate of the villas in this part of Ayr. It was built in 1868 for John McGavin, who had been a merchant in Calcutta: one of many wealthy Scots 'nabobs' who settled in Ayr when they returned from the east. Chapelpark Road recalls that in this part of Ayr there used to stand

a chapel or hospice dedicated to St Leonard, which was a general-purpose institution providing for the poor, the sick, the aged and infirm, and for travellers. It was in existence before 1425, when it was described as 'ruinous' and so ill-endowed 'that the poor cannot be received and maintained there as was customary'; it was repaired that year, and probably fell out of use during the reformation of the Church in the 16th Century. No trace of this hospice can now be found.

At the end of Chapelpark Road we meet Monument Road. At this junction a **roundel** with the arms of the Royal Burgh, taken from the first New Bridge of Ayr, is set into a recess in the park wall. Now turn right into Monument Road. After a quarter mile or so, this road runs between the policies (ornamental grounds) of Belleisle on the right and Rozelle on the left. The entrance to Rozelle is on the left. Parking is available there, as are toilets, a cafe, and the permanent and temporary exhibitions in the House and Maclaurin Gallery. These are described on the walking route (p.8).

Return from Rozelle to Monument Road, and turn left. On the right is **The Ivy House** hotel, formerly Northpark House hotel. It was built as a farmhouse shortly after the 1754 Alloway roup (p.5), and substantially extended in an Arts-and-Crafts style as a house about 1900. It is now a hotel.



The route continues through Alloway, passing on the right Burns' Cottage: immediately beyond the cottage turn right into Greenfield Avenue, completing this loop.

FURTHER READING

1. ROBERT BURNS

Analysis of the life and work of Scotland's national poet has spawned a substantial industry. The first biography, by James Currie, appeared in 1800, and has been joined by many others over the years, many of them looking at a specific aspect of Burns' life, or seeking to claim the man as a supporter of some particular political or religious standpoint. The Burns Federation publishes an annual Burns Chronicle, reporting new research on aspects of Burns, from the biographies of his friends to in-depth study of his poetical style. The following is a brief selection which may be of interest to someone coming to Burns for the first time, and wishing to know more.

John STRAWHORN (ed.)
Ayrshire at the Time of Burns (1959)

Andrew BOYLE
The Ayrshire Book of Burns Lore (1985)

Catherine CARSWELL,
The Life of Robert Burns (1930, reprinted 1990)

Ian McINTYRE
Dirt and Deity: A Life of Robert Burns (1995)

James MACKAY
A Biography of Robert Burns (1992)

Kenneth SIMPSON (ed.)
Love and Liberty: Robert Burns - A Bicentenary Celebration (1997)

Gavin SPROTT
Robert Burns Farmer (1990)

The poems themselves are available in many editions, from a facsimile of the Kilmarnock Edition to standard paperback selections. Burns' life is the subject of a series of five novels by James Barke, beginning with *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* (1946).

2. ALLOWAY

Many of the standard texts on Ayr give some account of the history of Alloway: it was part of the Royal Burgh's patrimony, and Burns draws them further together. *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns*, above, has the best account of the 1754 sale of the lands.

Ken ANDREW and John STRAWHORN
Discovering Ayrshire, (1988)

AANHHS
Historic Ayr: a guide for visitors (1998)

Henrietta and Hugh DOUGLAS,
Minishant is a Bonnie Wee Place (1982)

Annie I. DUNLOP (ed.)
The Royal Burgh of Ayr (1953)

Alastair HENDRY
The Barony of Alloway, 1324-1754 (1992)

Alastair HENDRY
'Archibald Hamilton of Rozelle, 1778-1848: The Improving Hand'
Scottish Archives, vol. 1 (1995)

J. Walter McGINTY,
Through a Glass Brightly (1999)

John STRAWHORN
The History of Ayr: Royal Burgh and County Town (1989)
[Contains a comprehensive bibliography for those who wish to explore even further]

Ayrshire Archæological and Natural History Society

Publications in print

An Ayrshire Family, 1526-1900 (Waterson)	£1.50
Ayrshire Honestones (Tucker)	£1.50
Ayrshire Mining Enterprises, 1600-1840 (Whatley)	£1.50
Digging Up Old Ayr (Lindsay)	£1.00
George Lokert of Ayr (Broadie)	£1.25
A Scottish Renaissance Household (MacKenzie)	£3.00
The Shipping Trade of Ayrshire, 1689-1791 (Graham)	£3.60
Plant Life in Ayrshire (Kirkwood & Faulds)	£4.20
The Barony of Alloway, 1324-1754 (Hendry)	£3.60
Robert Adam in Ayrshire (Sanderson)	£3.60
The Cumnock Pottery (Quail)	£5.00
Tolls and Tacksman (McClure)	£3.60
Smuggling and the Ayrshire Economic Boom (Cullen)	£4.00
The Port of Ayr, 1727-1780 (Graham)	£4.20
John Smith of Dalry; part 1, Geology (ed. Reid)	£6.00
John Smith of Dalry; part 2, Archæology & Natural History (ed. Reid)	£7.20
Mauchline Memories of Robert Burns (ed. Strawhorn)	£3.50
The Antiquities of Ayrshire (Grose, ed. Strawhorn)	£4.20
Cessnock: An Ayrshire Estate in the Age of Improvement (Mair)	£4.50
Historic Ayr: a guide for visitors	£2.00
'A Community Rent Asunder' (Mair)	£3.50
Robert Reid Cunninghame of Seabank House (Graham)	£3.60
The Rise and Fall of Mining Communities in Central Ayrshire (Wark)	£3.00
Armstrong's Map of Ayrshire, 1775 (reprint, 6 sheets)	£12.00

Available from Ronald Brash MA
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