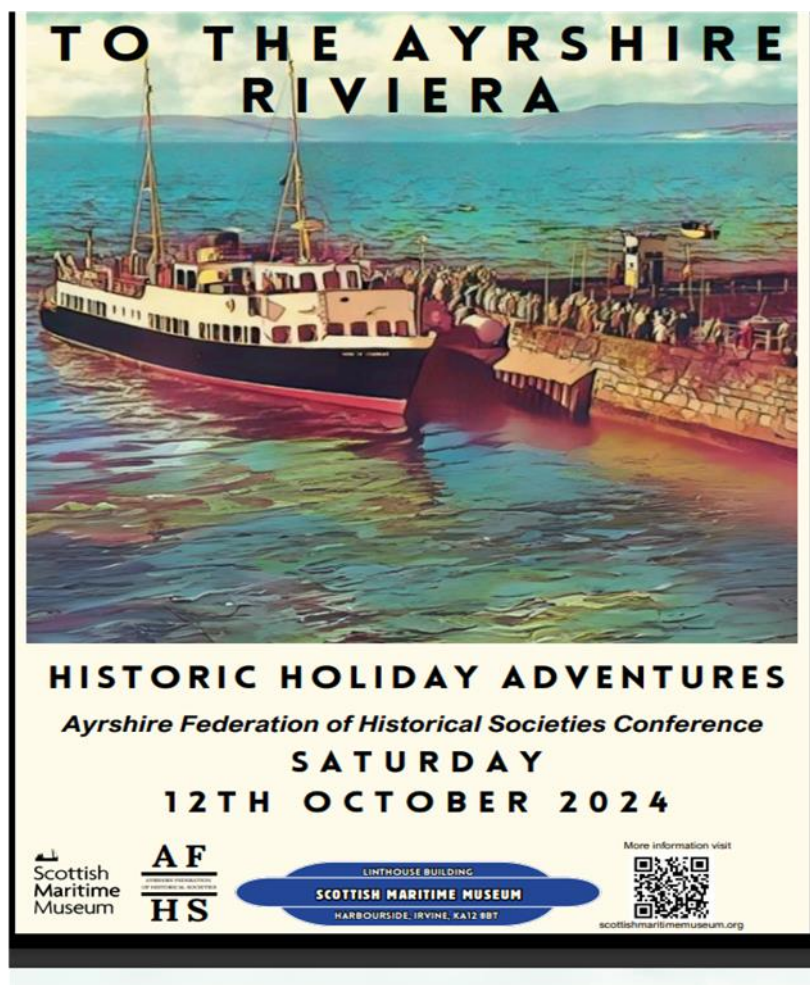


Autumn 2024 Number 2024/2



See inside for booking details and programme of talks

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SOCIETIES

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Contributions for the Spring 2024 edition of Ayrshire Notes to the editor, Jane Jamieson email: jfjamieson31@yahoo.co.uk

postal address: 247 Guardwell Crescent Edinburgh EH17 7SL

Further information about the AANHS and AFHS including their meetings and publications can be found on their websites: www.aanhs.org.uk and <https://www.facebook.com/ayrshirefederationofhistoricalsocieties>

AANHS President: Rob Close FSA (Scot)

AANHS Secretary: Mr Denis Rattenbury, 4 Ewenfield Avenue, Ayr KA7 2QG

Telephone: 01292 280593 email: info@aanhs.org

AFLHS Secretary: Abigayle Brown abigaylecbrown@gmail.com

Details of Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies Conference -To the Ayrshire Riviera -at the Scottish Maritime Museum, Irvine for the Saturday 12th October 2024

10am Registration, tea and coffee

10:30 am Chair's Welcome – Jeremy Wyatt (Gaiety Theatre)

Morning Session

10:40am Forty Years of Maritime History – David Mann
(Director Scottish Maritime Museum)

11:00am Pom Poms and Trick Dogs: How the Pierotts
Captured Ayrshire – Professor Elain McFarland

11:30am Holiday Golf in Scotland, c1890-1945 – Prof Fiona
Skillen and Lauren Beatty (Glasgow Caledonian University)

12:00 LUNCH (own arrangements) and Museum Tours

There are lots of options for lunch close to the Museum, including Puffers, the museum coffee bar- booking advisable! Guided tours of the Shipyard Worker's Flat and the Boat-building Workshop will operate during the lunch break. Access to the Museum for self-guided tours will also be available during the day.

Afternoon Session

2pm Vital Statistics- The Rise and Fall of the Prestwick
Bathing Beauty Contest – Rob Close

2:30pm Clyde Steamers and the Ayrshire Connection, 1954
until 2024 – Ian Quinn

Please note that the venue is an industrial museum and warm clothing is strongly recommended

Tickets £12 (inclusive of museum entrance and tours).

Contact Rob Close: craigbraecottages@gmail.com

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Amoul Den and the British Open Golf at Troon Golf Course in 1923

By Jane Jamieson



Postcard from Amoul Den to the secretary of Troon Golf Club concerning participating in the British Open 1923

The postcard reproduced above comes from the collection of the archives of Royal Troon Golf Club. In particular it comes from the scrapbooks collected by the secretary Harold Ross Coubrough, who was club secretary from 1909 until 1929. It is appropriate to acknowledge the celebration of the Open in 1923 following its return to Royal Troon in 2024.

I have reproduced the postcard because it shows the inclusivity of the Open Golf Championship which was hosted for the first time by the then Troon Golf Club in 1923. The 2024 Open was a vastly different organisation from that of the previous one. British Pathe news website

(reference <https://cutt.ly/eeWQ3a4J>) has black and white footage of the 1923 Open showing large crowds of spectators both male and female dashing to follow the protagonists around the course - no grandstands then and apparently it was free to spectate. Changed days where access to modern championships has not only to be paid for but is also very closely regulated.

The writer of the postcard, Amoul Den states that he is a member of the Upper Euphrates Golf Club in Baghdad. The postcard is transcribed below –

Addressed to - Secretary Hon Championship

Troon Golf Club

Ayr

North Britton

Shirley Alexandra Road

Kingston Hill

Surrey

Mai 1323

I wish to enter for the open

Championship as a Professor, my handicap

is ~~it~~ Scratch, in the
 Upper Euphrates Home Club
 Baghdad, hold the [cha] of Mespo
 2 times, played on the long course
 at Eden garden, the great course and
 hasyard on Humanity

Amoul Den

Written on side – please let me know De fees

To date I have been unable to trace Amoul Den or the Upper Euphrates Golf Club. However, the National Records of Scotland has amongst the Balfour Papers a letter written in 1909 by Frank to his uncle Arthur Balfour (the former Prime Minister) describing playing golf at an oasis. Although this is Sudan rather than Iran, it does show that due to military and civil service attachments by the British in the Middle East, golf was also being exported. The letter runs as follows:

“Just come back from a few days leave at Erkoweit in the hills. It is a sort of oasis in the middle of what is otherwise an almost entirely barren range. I spent almost all my time playing golf..... Some of the holes are as good golf as you’ll find in any land course at home. They have laid out 13 holes very well. Bunkers made of natural sand.” (NRS GD433/2/478/2/1). Erkoweit is in the Sudan and had a bomber squadron based there during World War II. Arthur Balfour was of course British Prime Minister from 1902-1905 and was responsible for the

Balfour Declaration in 1917 which promoted the idea of a permanent Jewish home land in Palestine.

Alexandra Road appears to be in modern Kingston on Thames just along the road from Coombe Hill Golf Club which opened in 1911 with a game played between Arthur Paget and the same Arthur J Balfour. Arthur Havers who won the Open at Troon in 1923 was Coombe Hill's second professional. Perhaps it was Havers who persuaded Amoult to apply for entry to the Open in 1923.

THE EXCAVATIONS AT AULDHILL, PORTENCROSS, 1987

Submitted by Rob Close

The document that follows was found during a deep-clean of Loudoun Hall, Ayr, in 2023. It appears to have been associated with Sheena M Andrew (1941-2021), a long-time trustee of Loudoun Hall. We are not aware that it has been published previously, which is why we now do so. It is unsigned but may be assumed to be the work of Gordon Ewart¹. Ewart, with Kirkdale Archaeology, conducted this excavationⁱ and returned to Auldhill for the 1988² and 1989³ excavation seasons.

Introduction

An exploratory excavation was carried out between 17 July 1987 and 11 August 1987 on this multi-period fortified site on behalf of the National Museums of Scotland with funding from the South of Scotland Electricity Board and the Hunter Archaeological Trust. The team consisted of four experienced professional archaeologists and three local volunteers, although

¹ His abstract report appears in Edwina V W Proudfoot, ed., *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1987*, Edinburgh, Council for British Archaeology in Scotland, 1987, p.48

² See Edwina V W Proudfoot, ed., *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1988*, Edinburgh, Council for Scottish Archaeology, 1988, p.24

³ See Edwina V W Proudfoot and Mary Innes, ed., *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1989*, Edinburgh, Council for Scottish Archaeology, 1989, p.60. It has, unfortunately, been gazetteered under Clydesdale District.

frequent and much appreciated assistance came from the farmers of Ardneil - William and Donald Jack.

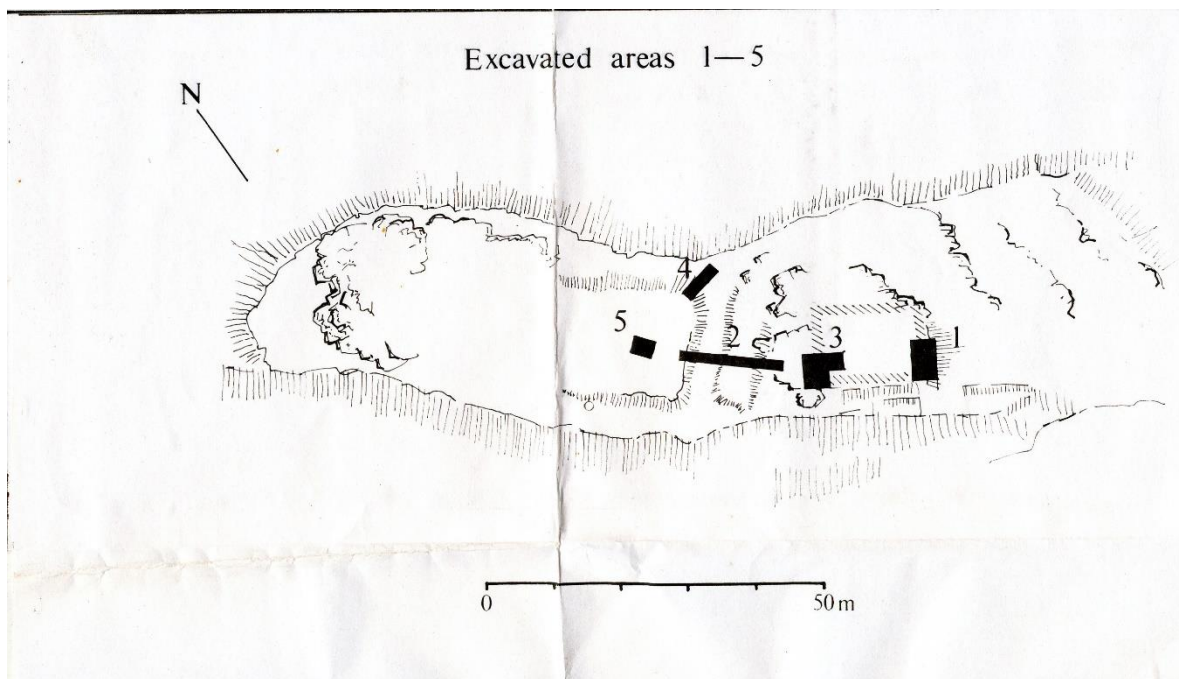
The site occupies a small hilltop behind the village of Portencross which in turn lies some four miles north of Ardrossan. Auldhill overlooks the shoreline with its late 14th century castle and commands spectacular views in all directions, confirming its natural suitability as a defensive site. The hill is formed from Upper Old Red Sandstone and can be described as a series of irregular terraces defined on the south by a slight ridge which in turn leads to the summit, the focus of the recent work. This takes the form of a ridge, some 100 metres long, which in turn consists of two distinct areas – to the north a wide flat area, and to the south, a rocky outcrop, the highest point on the hill about 60 metres above sea level and about 7 metres above the level surface of the adjacent ridge. The whole summit is defined by steep drops on all sides and represents a potential area for occupation of almost 2000 square metres.

Superficial examination of the hill summit showed that there were two obvious structural phases reflected on the one hand by intermittent patches of vitrified stonework towards the edges of the ridge and the distinctive outline of a rectangular building,

apparently of stone construction, on the rocky outcrop to the south. The third obvious element in the sequence of building at Portencross is the present castle which we believe to be the successor to the earlier structures on the hilltop above the shore.

The Excavation

A total of five trenches were dug over the course of the four week period, and all the cuttings were backfilled and returfed at the end.

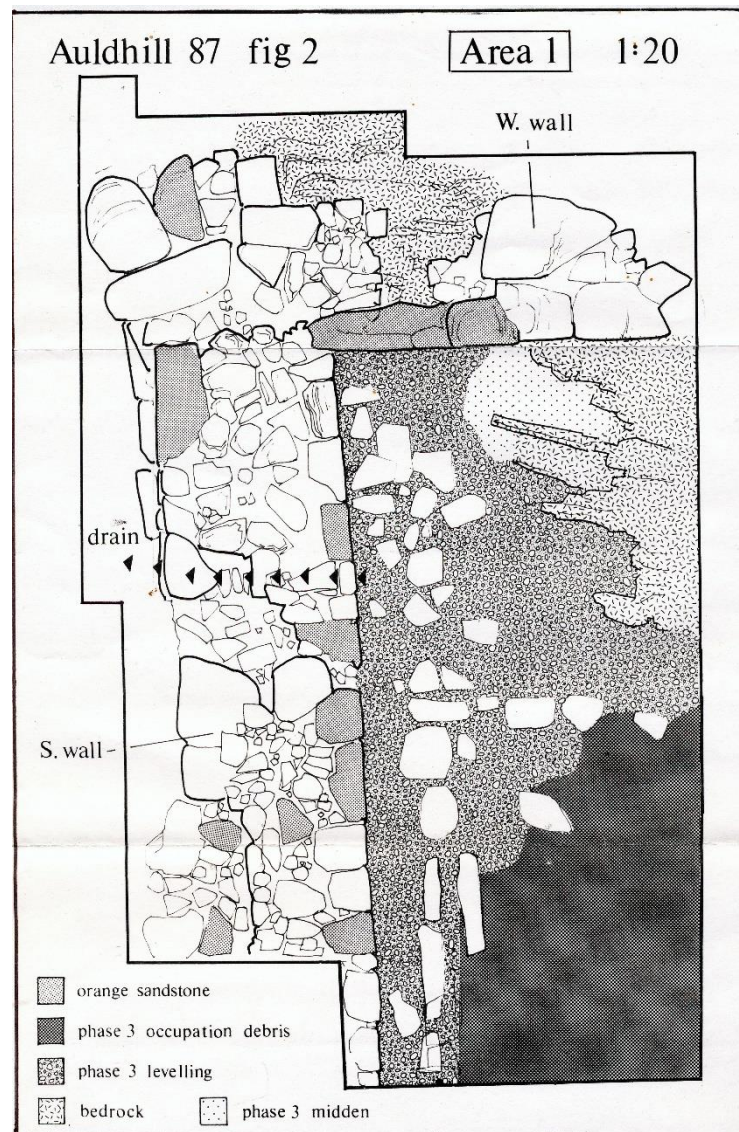


Area 1

After a survey by the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland was completed it was decided to concentrate on the south western corner of the rectangular building situated on the rocky outcrop. This was because the survey confirmed the presence of substantial,

regular wall lines and also the possibility of an entrance at the south west corner.

Ultimately, three structural periods were revealed, all of which date from the Early Medieval Period.

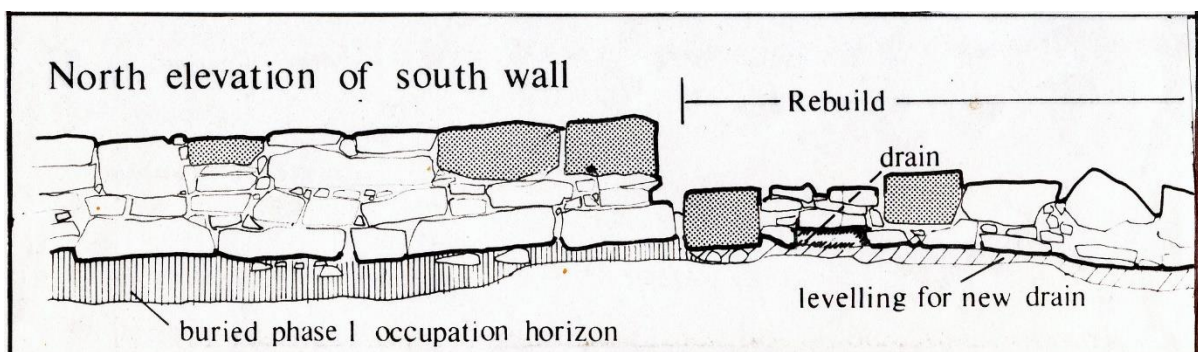


Phase 1: This was characterised by a series of timber features, namely a group of post-holes and stakeholes, the former being large enough to have supported a wall line of timber shuttering or wattle construction. These holes were shown to have been

cut from an occupation surface which was buried by subsequent building work, thus sealing the material remains associated with the active life of the buildings reflected by the posts – material such as pottery, animal bone, some metalwork, &c.

This period of occupation on the hill probably dates from the late 12th Century and represents, along with the large tower or palisade posts of Area 3, early Norman wooden buildings, erected soon after the site was reoccupied during the second half of the 12th century.

Phase 2: The period saw the first construction in lime mortared stone on the site, giving rise to the distinctive rectangular outline noted before digging commenced. Two sections of the south and west walls of a substantial building were revealed. The fabric of the walls was a mixture of local beach stones, whin slabs and dressed, orange sandstone, standing to a maximum of 4 courses high, 650 mm, and 1.4 m wide. These walls were in turn supported by an angled buttress of massive construction at the south west corner itself.

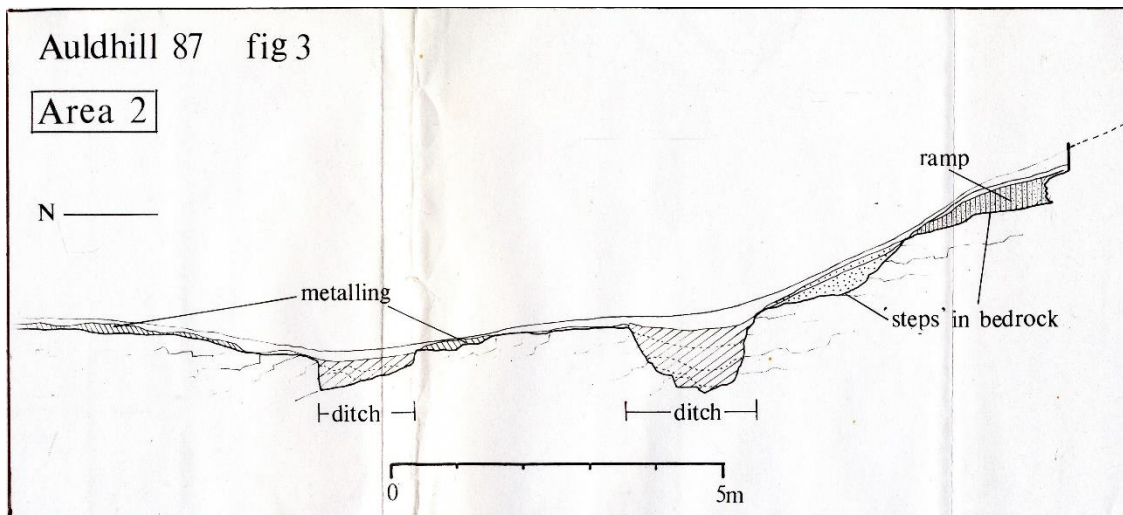


Phase 3: This was the blocking of some, as yet, unidentified element of the south wall – possibly an entrance, and the construction of a drain outlet through the width of the new wall. This drain was fed by a simple stone channel inside the walls, the channel in turn being set in a raised courtyard surface consisting in the main of re-deposited clay with vestigial remains of paving.

All three phases of building in this trench were accompanied by significant amounts of pottery as well as wide ranging midden deposits.

Area 2

The presence of two substantial ditches separating the high outcrop from the rest of the summit was clear from the differential vegetation growth. A trench 2m wide and several metres long was dug in order to link the rock outcrop and the flat area to the north, as well as empty and date the ditches themselves.



Both ditches proved to be medieval in origin and seem to have exploited a natural fault or weak line in the bedrock. Whether one was dug before the other is unknown at this stage although they were certainly open together for some period and were backfilled together.

The division or berm between the two ditches may have formed part of the access on to the high outcrop to the south. The ground surface between the ditches was metalled and led to a ramp which in turn gave access on to the highest point on the site.

This ramp was revetted by crude drystone walling which could well be residual elements from the banks and ramparts of the prehistoric occupation of the site.

Finds from this area included several fragments of worked shale – apparently rejects from the manufacture of bracelets,

toggles or other decorative objects.

Area 3

This trench lay to the north west of the rocky outcrop which dominates the summit, and two phases of building were revealed

Phase 1: A series of large earthfast posts of great size had been sunk into the bedrock towards the limits of the outcrop, but unfortunately due to the limited size of the trench, it is impossible at present to be certain of their function. However, they are medieval in date and they do represent some major timber building, be it a tower, or the rampart surrounding a tower.

Phase 2: This saw the construction in stone of walls associated with Phase 2 of Area 1. The walls, however, were almost completely robbed out, probably because they were so prominent, whereas the walls to the south were tucked in behind the outcrop.

Area 4

This narrow trench was dug in order to expose a section of the vitrified stonework and also something of the rest of the rampart from which it came. The rampart, both vitrified and simply fire-reddened, proved to consist of laid 'rafts' of packed

dry stonework of various geological types, with each raft terraced into a level platform cut into the bedrock.

The trench was laid out towards the assumed end of the north ditch in order to see if the later ditch had cut the line of the prehistoric rampart, but time did not allow us to investigate this as the recoding and sampling of the rampart took priority and we did not have time to locate the end of the ditch. It was evident that the facing blocks of the rampart had all slipped away and the molten mass within had moved some distance downhill before solidifying. Antler, charcoal and bone were found *in situ* beneath the rafted material of the wall.

Area 5

This trench sought to examine a small area within the flat area to the north of the summit ridge and two broad phases of occupation were found.

Phase 1: This was reflected by a series of hearth settings which from their simple form appear to represent prehistoric occupation.

Phase 2: This saw the sealing of the above features by a metallised surface.

Conclusion

Already it is clear that some of the research aims of the

excavation have been attained and that future work will clarify much more about the nature of the site on Auldhill and the phases of its occupation. The pottery recovered from the excavation in association with the rectangular stone building on the rocky outcrop and the underlying timber phase is of 12th-13th Century date. This taken in conjunction with the present configuration of the site shows we were right to interpret it as a variant on a motte-and-bailey type castle.

Initial studies of the vitrified stonework indicates that the vestigial stone rampart around the summit is of Iron Age date. It remains for us to see if occupation of the site was continuous from the Iron Age to the 13th Century and if a clearer understanding can be gained of how and when the 13th Century castle came to an end.

In his abstract report on the 1989 excavation, Ewart wrote that '[t]he previous excavations (1987 and 1988) indicated that the medieval presence on this multiphase fortified site consisted primarily of a hall-like, mainly timber building, within a stone-built rectangular rampart. The 1989 season showed however, that this layout was in fact the last in a possible series of lordly residences dating from the 13th and 14th centuries. It is now apparent that the stone rampart surrounding the hall was

originally a form of hall-house with garderobe tower at its NW corner, generally similar to other West Highland types of the 13th and 14th centuries. There was evidence that the subsequent hall was built on a new, raised platform within the denuded remains of the hall-house, possibly to facilitate post-hole and slot construction⁴.

Editor's note

Further information including aerial images can be found at Historic Environment Scotland Canmore

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/40587> The National Records of Scotland also has the scheduling of the monument reference DD27/4842 dates 1958-1976. Note that it is sometimes spelled as two separate words ie Auld Hill.

⁴ See Proudfoot and Innes, eds., *op cit*, p.60.

Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

Winter Programme 2024-2025

No details available just now please watch the website for details of future meetings <https://aanhs.org/syllabus/>

The new venue for AANHS meetings will be the Robertson Room at the Burns Heritage Museum, Alloway on Thursdays at the usual time of 7.30. Dates and further details to be announced soon. It will also be on Zoom at the same time (assuming we can master the technicalities).

Cumnock History Group

Monthly meetings are now on the 3rd **Monday** of the month at 7:15 pm in the Dumfries Arms Hotel, Cumnock KA18 1BY

All welcome. Non-members are asked for a donation of £2.

Date	Speaker	Topic
16th Sept 2024	Scott Macfie	‘Agricultural Improvement on the Dumfries Estate, 1750-1830’.
21st October 2024	Barbara Graham	Mining Villages
18th Nov 2024	Bobby Guthrie	
December Christmas lunch		
20th January 2025	Nancy Stuart (Owens)	Recollections of a local girl’s life working in underdeveloped countries
17th February 2025	Ailsa McInnes	The Garden landscape of the Auchinleck Estate

Website: <https://cumnockhistorygroup.org/chg-events/>

East Ayrshire Family History Society
Scottish Charity Number SC029609



Talks are held at 1.30 pm on the second Thursday of most months Venue: Belford Mill, 16 Brewery Road, Kilmarnock, KA1 3HZ.

Visitors are welcome (Please give a £3 donation)

Date	Speaker	Subject
12 Sept 2024	John Smillie	to be confirmed
10 Oct 2024	Ian Pollock	Newmilns
14 Nov 2024	Stewart Finlay	Royal British Legion Scotland

Please see the EAFHS website for information about talks in

2025

Website: www.eastayrshirefhs.co.uk

Email: enquiries@eastayrshirefhs.co.uk

Address: c/o Dick Institute, Elmbank Avenue, Kilmarnock,
KA1 3BU

Kilmarnock and District History Group

Syllabus 2024-2025

Meetings start at 7.30pm and will take place at Ayrshire College, Hill Street, Kilmarnock unless otherwise stated.

Please note that the group will meet on a **Thursday** this session. The syllabus may be subject to change. Please consult our news page and social media.

Date	Speaker	Topic
10 Oct 2024	Rose Reilly	Women's Soccer
24 Oct 2024	Garry Ward	Scottish Tramways
7 Nov 2024	Elaine McFarland	Sentinels of Stone; Scottish War Memorials from The Picts to The Present
21 Nov 2024	Barbara Graham	Scottish Anti-Slavery Movement - The Ayrshire Connection
05 Dec 2024	Dauvit Broun	King Robert the Bruce
19 Dec 2024	Roan Rutherford	Homes Fit For Heroes and Beyond

2025

Date	Speaker	Topic
09 Jan 2025	Graham Boyd	Nepal and The Himalayas
23 Jan 2025	Frank Beattie	Kilmarnock Picture House
06 Feb 2025	James Adams	Unknown Kilmarnock
20 Feb 2025	Moir Stephenson	Tales of The Titanic
06 March 2025	Mark Colman	Kilmarnock Cricket Club
20 March 2025	Willy Maley et al	AGM and Our Fathers Fought Franco

Website: <https://www.kilmarnockhistory.co.uk/en/Lecture-Programme/>

Kyle & Carrick Civic Society

Founded 1967 Scottish Charity Number: SCO14718

Public Meetings 2024-2025

Day and Time	Speaker	Topic
Saturday 14 & Sunday 15 Sept 2024	Doors Open Days in Ayrshire	
7 Oct 2024	Kyle MacFarlane, Project Development Officer	The Return of the Broadway
4 Nov 2024	Tom Barclay	The Great Burns Festival of 1844
2 Dec 2024	Dr Mike Harris	Pathology? What is It?
6 Jan 2025	Wendy Sinclair- Gieben	Reflections on Being H.M. Chief Inspector of Prisons Over the Last Six Years
3 Feb 2025	Mike Newall, Chief Executive, South Ayrshire Council	Making a Difference Every Day
3 March 2025	Luke Sargent, National Trust for Scotland	The Design and Development of the Gardens at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum

Meetings are held at The Local, Main Street, Ayr on Monday nights.

Doors open 7.15 p.m.

Visitors are always welcome.

North Ayrshire Family History Society

Diary Dates 2024/5

Mid August **Journal Articles** Please send articles to Ann Tyler (anndtyler@gmail.com) for inclusion in **Autumn Journal Issue 87**

2024

Date and Time	Speaker	Topic
7:30pm Tuesday 10 th Sept 2024	Graeme Smith	'Glasgow's New Town of Blythswood'
2.00 pm Friday 27 th Sept 2024	Workshop	
7.30 pm Tuesday 8 th Oct 2024	Jillian Mcfarlane	'Graveyard Robbers & Witchcraft'
10.00 am Saturday 12 th Oct 2024	Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies Conference 'To the Ayrshire Riviera - Historic Holiday Adventures' (Scottish Maritime Museum, Irvine)	
7.30 pm Thursday 17 th Oct 2024	Chris Paton	'Using DNA in Family History Research' (Portland Church Hall, Troon)
2.00 pm Friday 25 th Oct 2024	Workshop	
10.00 am Saturday 2 nd Nov 2024	Coffee Morning	
7.30 pm Tuesday 12 th Nov 2024	David Dewar	'Henry Bell'

2.00 pm Friday
29th Nov 2024

Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday
10th Dec 2024

June Wiggins

‘Going to the
Pictures’

2025

Date and Time

Speaker

Topic

2.00 pm Tuesday
14th Jan 2025

John Riddell

‘Harbours of North
Ayrshire’

2.00 pm Friday
31st Jan 2025

Workshop

2.00 pm Tuesday
11th Feb 2025

Stuart Nisbet

‘The McDowall
Family, Castle
Semple,
Lochwinnoch’

2.00 pm Friday
28th Feb 2025

Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday
11th March 2025

Marie Shevlin

‘Dalry’

2.00 pm Friday
28th March 2025

Barbara Graham

‘Mary Somerville’

7.30 pm Tuesday
8th April 2025

Show & Tell Evening

2.00 pm Friday
25th April 2025

Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday
13th May 2025

AGM

Stewarton and District Historical Society



Monthly talks are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 2pm in the Lesser Hall Stewarton Area Centre, Avenue Street, Stewarton KA3 5AP.

Members £1 non members £4

Syllabus 2024-2025

Date	Speaker	Topic
3 Sept 2024	Stefan Sagrott MCIfA	Historic Environment Scotland Sites in Ayrshire
1 Oct 2024	Frank Alexander	Nuclear Attack on the UK (New Farm Loch, Kilmarnock
5 Nov 2024	June Wiggins	“A Servant’s Life”
3 Dec 2024	Robert Watt (Past & Present)	“Basic, Better, Best”
7 Jan 2025	Bill Fitzpatrick	The Appeal of the Railways
4 Feb 2025	David Dewar	Andrew Carnegie (Billionaire who gave away his fortune)
4 March 2025	Jerry Branigan	12 Remarkable Scots
1 April 2025	Graeme Smith	Glasgow Harbour
6 May 2025	Roger Griffith	Ayrshire’s Glorious Tombs

Events further afield which may be of interest

Looking Back Moving Forward: Making the Most of Your Golf Clubs Heritage

Golf Club Heritage Conference 11th and 12th March 2025 at Forgan House, The Links St Andrews KY16 9JD. Please watch the website of the world Golf Museum for further details nearer the time – <https://www.worldgolfmuseum.com>

AANHs Publications

Publications of the Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (AANHs) are available from Mr Denis Rattenbury, 4 Ewenfield park, Ayr KA7 2QG

☎01292 280593 email: info@aanhs.org

Further information about the AANHs and its publications will be found on the society's website: www.aanhs.org/publications/uk

Armstrong's Map of Ayrshire 1775 (reprint 6 sheets) £12.00

Antiquities of Ayrshire by Grose (edited by Strawhorn revised 2010) £4.00

11 Robert Adam in Ayrshire (Sanderson) revised 2010 £4.00

13 Toll and Tacksman (McClure) £1.50

20 Historic Ayr: A Guide for Visitors 2nd edition £2.50

30 The Early Transatlantic Trade of Ayr 1640-1730 (Barclay & Graham) 104 pages £4.50

33 Dr John Taylor, Chartist: Ayrshire Revolutionary (Fraser)
112 pages £4.00

35 The Masters of Ballantrae (Hunter) 30 pages £4.00

37 Historic Troon and Its Surroundings 40 pages £3.00

38 Excavations in Ayr 1984-1987 (Perry) 140 pages £9.99

39 The Church Buildings of Ayrshire (Hume) 94 pages £7.50

41 Mining and Quarrying in Stevenston (McLachie) 210 pages £9.50

42 The Battle of Largs (Cowan) 95 pages £8.00

43-45 Ayrshire Collections – 128 pages £7.50

Ayr Jails by Jane Jamieson

Kilwinning Revisited by Margaret H B Sanderson

A Bonnie Lass by Petra Baillie

47 Watermills of Arran by Alastair Weir 71 pages £6.00

48 Oculous: The Musings of a Liberal Victorian in Ayr by
Carolyn O'Hara 140 pages £8.00

49 Ayrshire Castles from Kings to Covenanters 121 pages
£10.00

Ardrossan Castle Revisited by David H Caldwell

Turnberry Castle and Countryside by Piers Dixon and William Wyeth

Seagate Castle with Some Family Resemblances by Aonghas Mackechnie

Ayr as a Garrison Town by Louise Turner

Castle Restoration in Ayrshire by Michael C Davies

50 John McCosh of Kirkmichael: Surgeon, Photographer and Philanthropist

51 The Diary of Thomas McClelland Ayr in the 1790s (Young and Close)

52 The Hog Score in the Great Rink in the Great Rink of Time (McCowan)

53 Witness to War – Arran and the Firth of Clyde in the Second World War
(Turbett)
