



NEW CUMNOCK WALKS

GLEN AFTON
2. West Park (Laigh Park)
to The Kennels (Burnfoot)

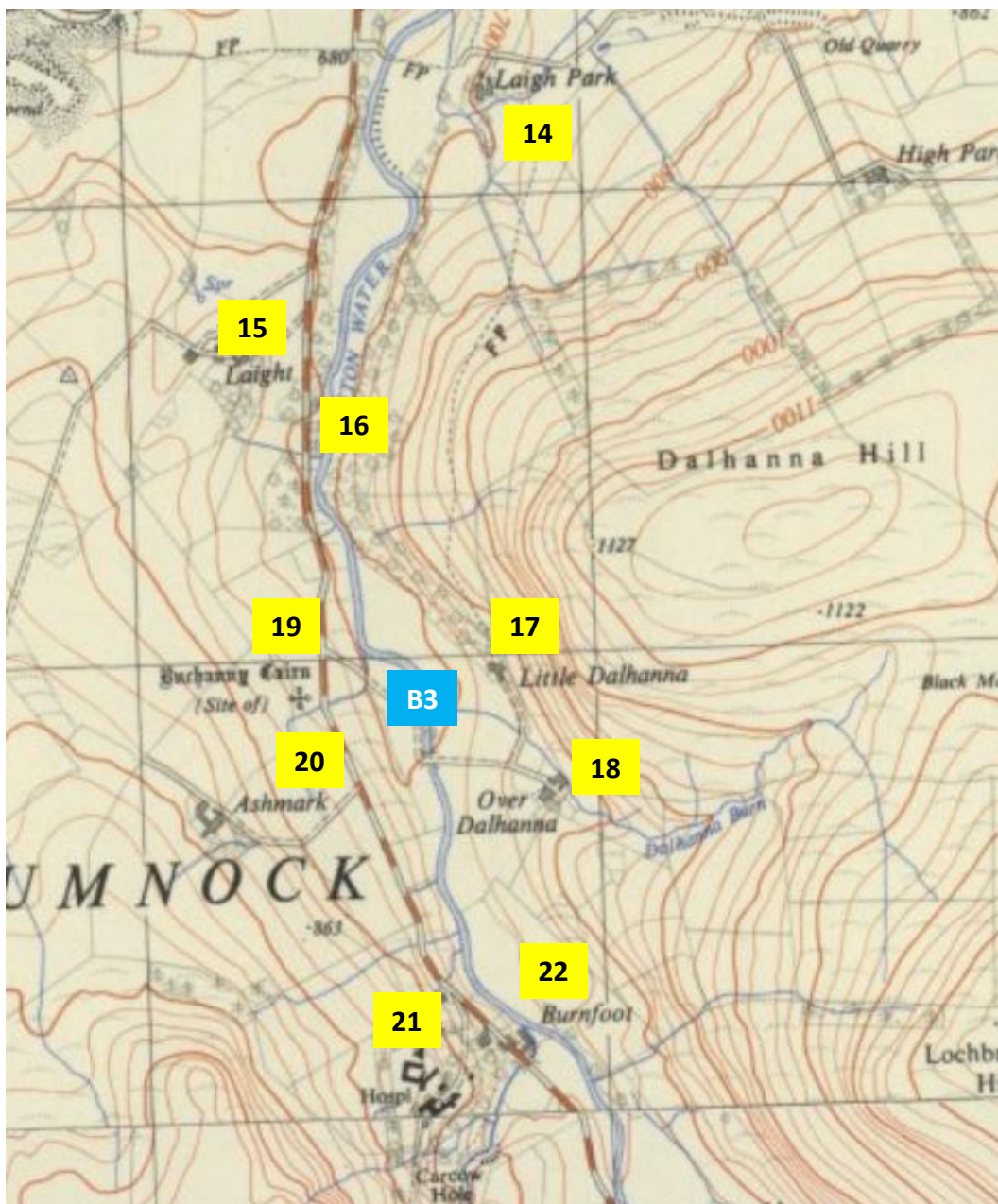


GLEN AFTON

The Afton Water meets the River Nith at the Pier Point in the village of New Cumnock. In its closing stretch the Afton runs parallel with the main thoroughfare in the village known as the Castle, named after Cumnock Castle the seat of the Baron of Cumnock from the 13th – 16th century.

The Afton Water rises some 8 miles due south on Alhang Hill its meeting point with the River Nith. The *Afton Road* runs on the west side of the water providing a much-loved walk for locals and visitors alike, with stunning vistas, wonderful wild-life, a plethora of place-names and tales from our past.

*Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.*
Robert Burns



14	West Park (Laigh Park)
15	Laight
16	Burns' Cairn
B3	Dalhanna Brig
17	Little Dalhanna
18	Over Dalhanna
19	Buchanny Cairn
20	Ashmark
21a	Glenafton Sanatorium & Hospital
21b	Glenafton Leisure Park
22	The Kennels (Burnfoot)

Map B: Reproduced with permission of the National Library Scotland



Robert Guthrie

14: WEST PARK | Return from viewing West Park from Danny's Brig and climb back up the brae to the Afton Road and head south.

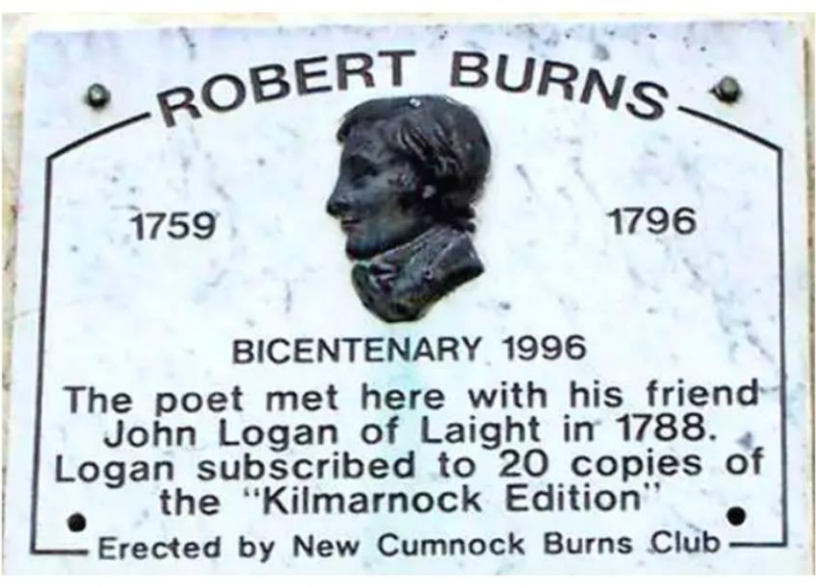
15: LAIGHT | The early form of the name appears as Laicht (Blaeu 1654) which is possibly derived from Gaelic *leachd* 'a grave'. This may be associated with the Buchanny Cairn in the neighbouring lands of Ashmark which sits a half-mile south of Laight farmhouse and only 150 yards between their boundary. Gilbert McAdam of Merkland, Kirkcudbrightshire owned a number of properties in Glen Afton including Laight, Ashmark and Carcow but fell into debt and in 1781 the properties were bought by his son-in-law John Logan of Knockshinnoch. He and his wife Martha McAdam moved from Knockshinnoch to the newly built farmhouse at Laight the following year. John Logan was a friend of Robert Burns and subscribed to 20 copies of his "Kilmarnock Edition" (1786). The Bard visited Laight two years later and the year after that he penned the 'The Kirk's Alarm' at Ellisland, laced with personal attacks on several Ayrshire ministers.

His verse on Rev. James Young, of the parish of New Cumnock had him lampooned as *Jamie Goose*!

*Jamie Goose ! Jamie Goose, ye made but toom roose,
In hunting the wicked Lieutenant;
But the Doctor's your mark for the L__d's holy ark,
He has cooper'd an' ca'd wrang pin in't,
Jamie Goose ! He has cooper'd an ca'd a wrang pin in't.*

Burns sent a copy to John Logan Esq. on 7th August 1789 and to William Johnston of Clackleith, Sanquhar with the attached presentation stanza.

*Afton's Laird ! Afton's Laird when your pen can be spared,
A copy of this I bequeath,
On the same sicker score as I mention'd before,
To that trusty auld worthy, Clackleith,
Afton's Laird! To that trust auld worthy, Clackleith.'*



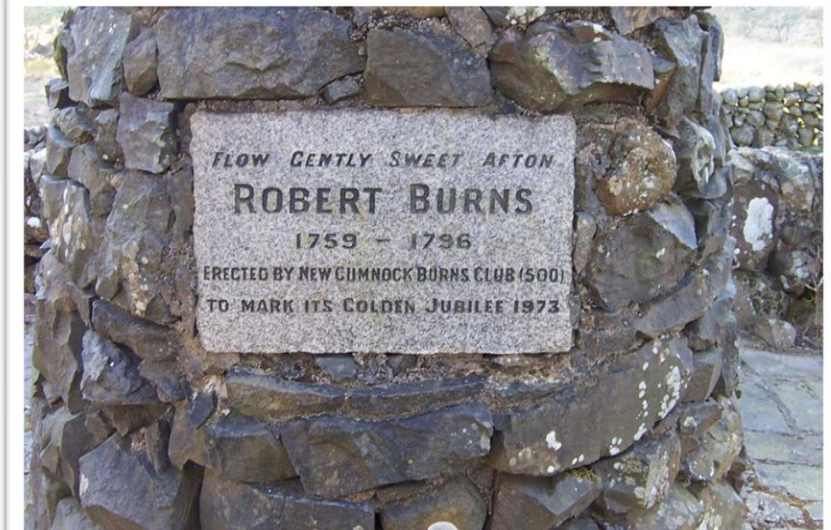
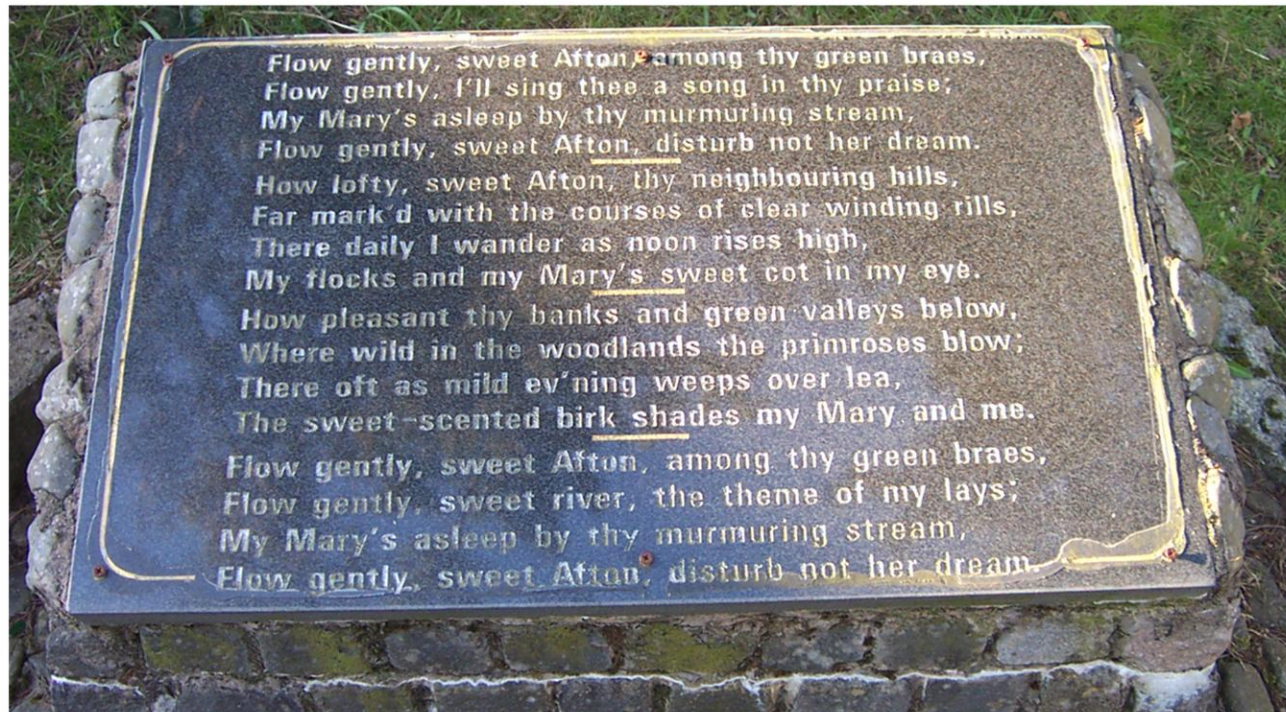


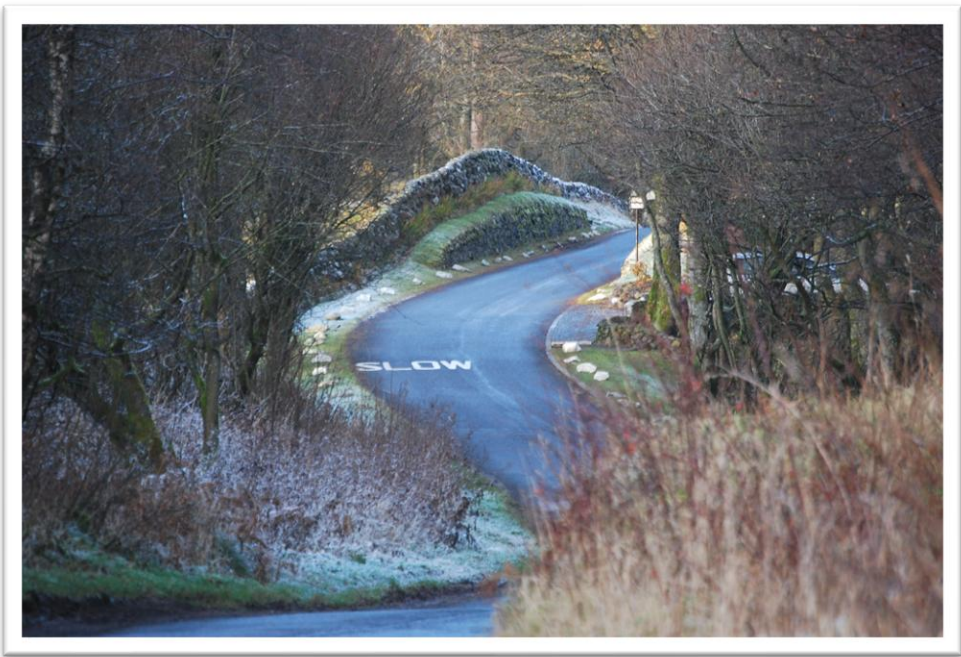
Robert Guthrie



16: BURNS' CAIRN | The Burns' Cairn and its surrounds was built by members of the New Cumnock Burns Club (500) in 1973 to mark the 50th anniversary of the club. It overlooks the Afton Water honoured by Burns in 'Sweet Afton' and there are steps and path down path down to the water's edge with several picnic benches on hand.

The setting is lovingly tendered throughout the year by a handful of dedicated locals, much appreciated by the community. It remains one of the favourite stops on the Afton road.

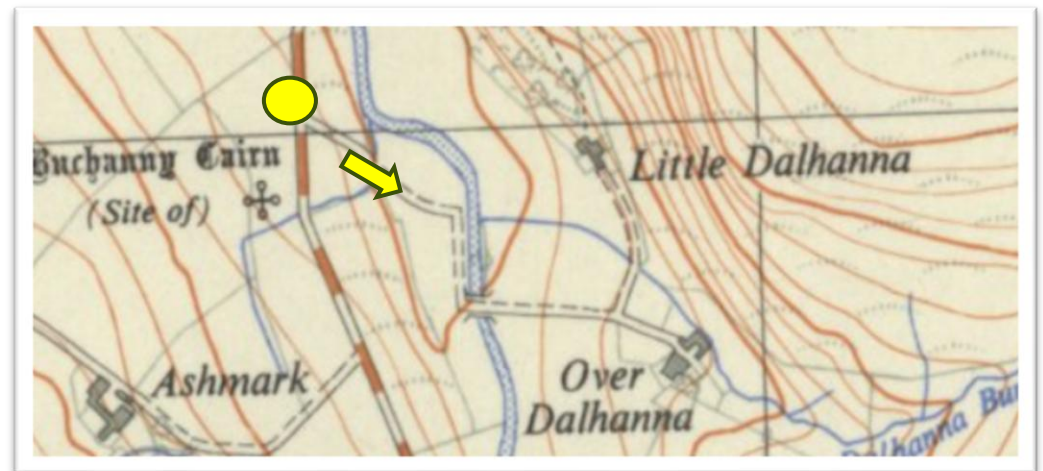




Robert Guthrie



Robert Guthrie

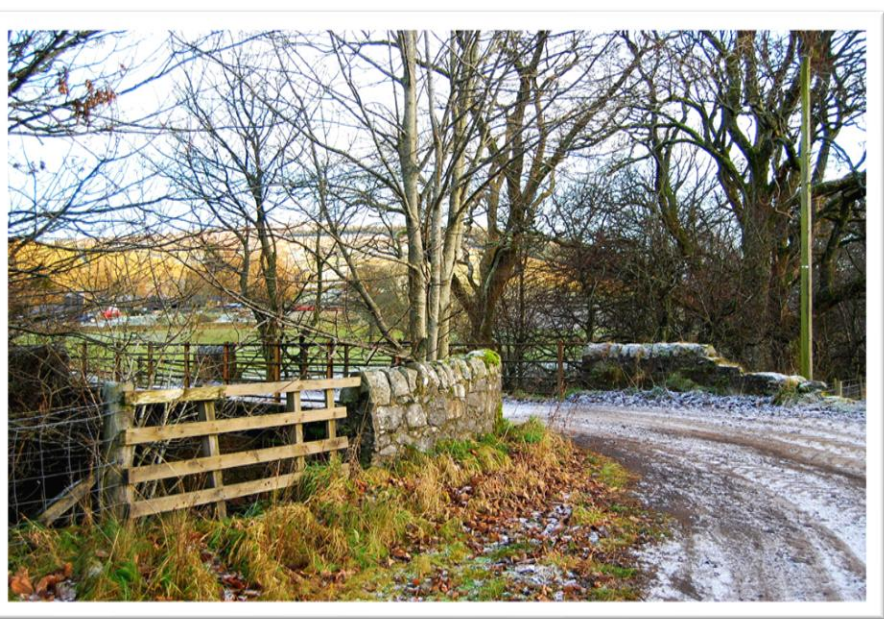
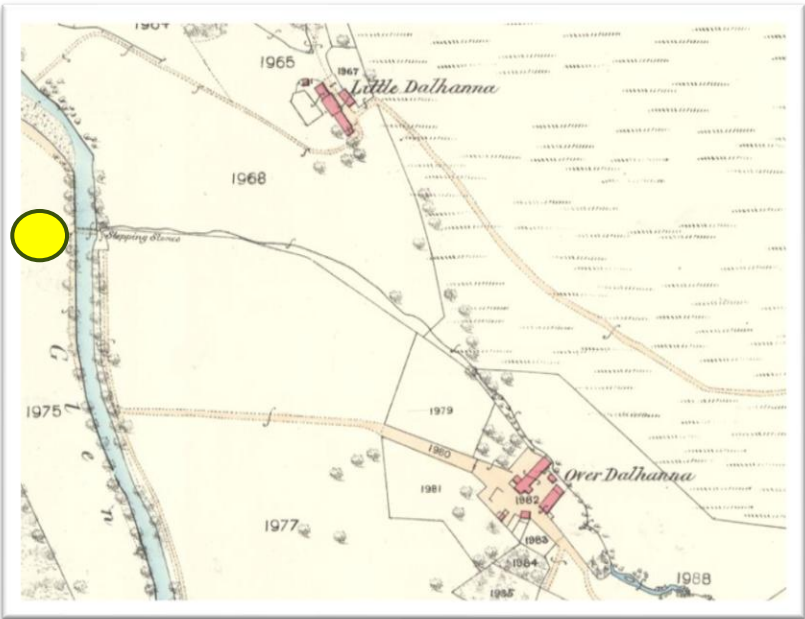


Map 01: Reproduced with permission of the National Library Scotland

After visiting the Burns Cairn, head down the twisting slope before climbing up the twisting slope. Have a wee rest on the shelter if required before progressing to the Dalhanna road-end and down the slope to the Dalhanna Brig.

B3: DALHANNA BRIG

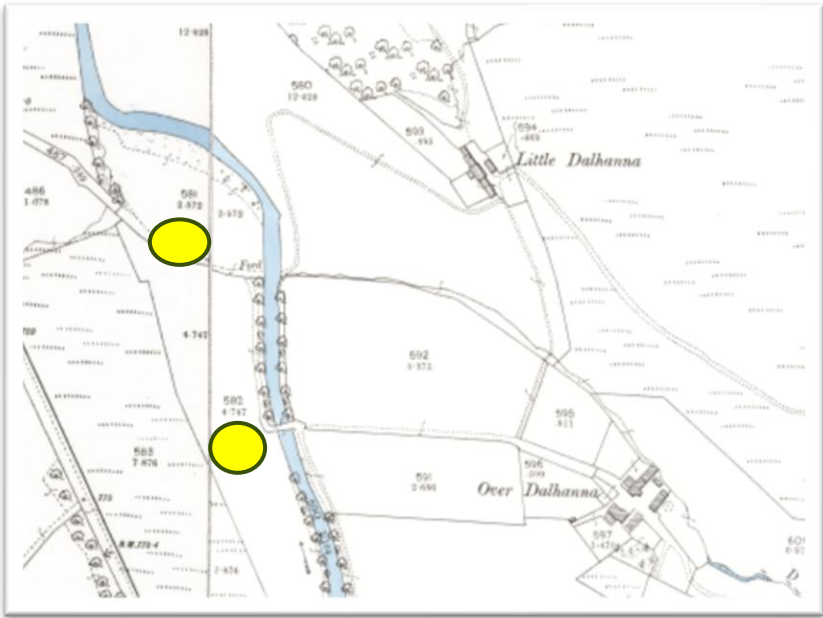
The OS Map (1856) shows a *ford* and *Stepping Stones* at the point where the Dalhanna Burn joins the Afton Water. The path from Little Dalhanna to the banks of the Afton then heads south to the *ford /steppies* while the path from Over Dalhanna to the banks of the Afton then heads north to the *ford / steppies*.



Map 02: Reproduced with permission of the National Library Scotland

Robert Guthrie

The OS Map (1892-1914) still shows the ford on the Afton. However further south where the Over Dalhanna path meets the banks of the Afton Water a bridge has since been built. Today a metal bridge with railings spans the Afton



Map 03: Reproduced with permission of the National Library Scotland

DALHANNA

The place-name element *dal* – common place and appears in Dalgig, Dalleagles and Dalricket as well as Dalhanna in the parish of New Cumnock and is Gaelic *dail* ‘haugh, holm’.

The second element of the name appears in the forms --*hana*, -*hanna*, -*hannay* which compares well with George Black’s entry for Hannay in ‘The Surnames of Scotland’ - HANNA, HANNAH, HANNAY – “The very common name Ahannay, now Hannay, may be for *ap Sheanaigh* ‘son of Senach’.

Campbells of Dalhanna

The Campbell name has a long association with the lands of Dalhanna. The earliest reference found in 1516, ‘*Laurence Campble had the lease of the merk lands of Dalhannay*’.

In later years John Campbell inherited the lands of Dalhanna and in 1647 he divided them into *Nether Dalhannay* for himself and *Over Dalhannay* for his son Thomas. These names appear in Blaeu’s map (1654), as *N. Dalhana* and *O. Dalhanna*; Thomas later acquired both lands.

Later, the Tax Rolls of 1708 and 1709 refer to the property as ‘Campbells Dalhnnay’ before being shortened to Dalhannay and later Dalhanna.

Many thanks to Stuart Clarkson, Guelph, Ontario for information on the Campbells of Dalhanna.



Map 04: Reproduced with permission of the National Library Scotland



Nether Dalhanna / Little Dalhanna

17: NETHER DALHANNA / LITTLE DALHANNA | The 1803 Tax Rolls show that Nether Dalhanna had separated from the lands of Dalhanna and were now part what would emerge as the Castlemains estate of '*Meikle Mains, Middle Park, Little Park and Nether Dalhanna*'. By 1855 this would expand to include '*Castlemains, Rottenyard, Cairnhill, Waterside, Park, Muirfoot, Polquhaise and Little Dalhanna*'.

By 1925, Little Dalhanna returned to the Dalhanna estate, now much expanded, under the ownership of absentee proprietor James Campbell (see below). At that time William Welsh, *farmer* was the tenant of both Dalhanna farm (the prefix Over now dropped) and Little Dalhanna. Only the ruins of Little Dalhanna, known locally as *Wee Dehana*.



Robert Guthrie

18: OVER DALHANNA / DALHANNA | The 1855 Valuations Rolls record William Campbell as the proprietor of Over Dalhanna. William married Margaret Crawford Young and together they had twelve children (1797-1819). Margaret was the daughter of the Rev. James Young, lampooned as Jamie Goose! by Robert Burns. It would be interesting to learn the relationship between William Campbell and John Logan across the Afton at Laight! William passed away in 1857, aged 80 years and his eldest son James Campbell (1791-1871) inherited the lands of Over Dalhanna. Having established himself as a road surveyor residing at Ayr, his brother-in-law Willam Sharp, farmed Over Dalhanna. James was succeeded by his bachelor son Willam Campbell (1813-1914), also a road surveyor, inheriting the family home. His nephew James Campbell fell heir to the Dalhanna Estate which he expanded to include Lochbrowan & Pollosh, Blackcraig & Dunside and Nether & Over Cairn.





Dalhanna Holm - the *holm* that put the *dal* in Dalhanna



Looking down on Dalhanna from Dalhanna Hill

Robert Guthrie

‘The New Cumnock Schoolfellows Association’ at their annual meeting in January 1893 posed the question -

Have we not in Afton Glen, where Queen Mary had her last ride for freedom; and the Chapel Knowe at the foot of Dalhanna Holm, with traditions of covenanting times and earlier times?

The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald, January 6, 1893

Donald McIver in his ‘A Stroll through the Historic Past of New Cumnock (2000) considered -

It is on record that Mary Queen of Scots passed along the old road of Glen Afton into Galloway on her retreat from the Battle of Langside. A cairn marked the spot where the royal party stopped for a rest of Dalhanna Holm. There is no trace of this cairn today.

The Reverend Robert Simpson in ‘Traditions of the Covenanters (1867) records the account in which James Campell, Laird of Dalhanna, ‘a warm friend of the covenanted cause’ having observed the dragoons approaching his abode sought refuge on the hillside. Here he prepared a hiding-place near a ‘broomy knowe’.

When the party arrived at Dalhanna, they inquired for the master of the house, and not finding him, they left the place, and began to ascend the hill close by a “broomy knowe,” and so near his hiding place that he expected every moment they would discover him; and discovered he was, but by one who had too much humanity, to disclose the secret. When the troopers were marching, one of them, who happened to be straggling behind, observed Campbell in the heart of the bush and, passed on in silence. This soldier, it would appear, who was less hardened than his fellows, did not think himself obliged to make a discovery, where the party had made none, and left the honest man safe in his hiding place, where God had been pleased to conceal him from the eyes of those who sought this hurt.

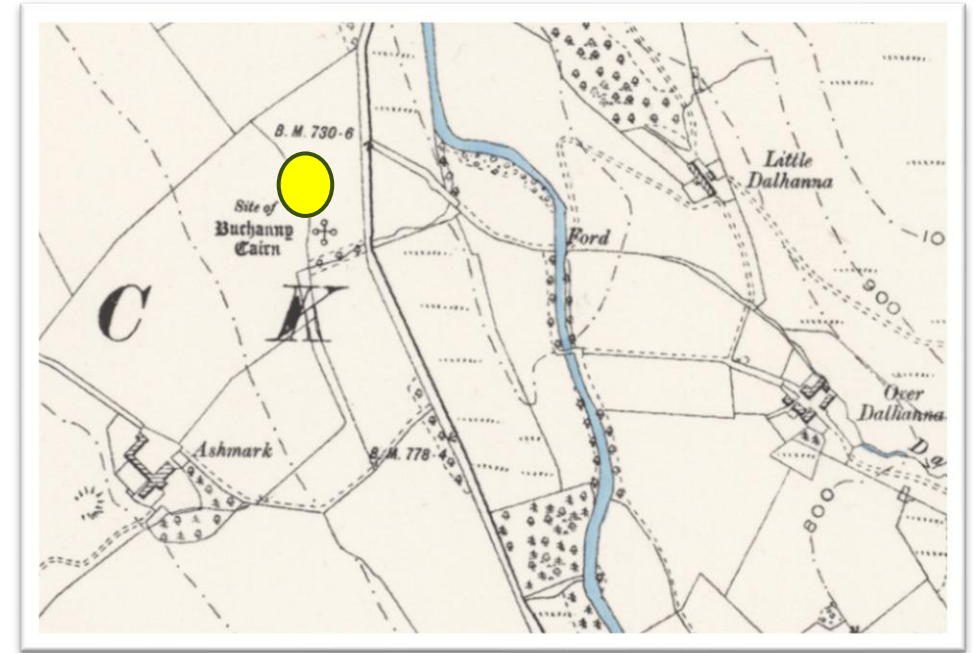
Return back up the slope to the Afton Road with Buchanny Cairn nearby.

19: BUCHANNY CAIRN |The Ordnance Survey Name Book Entry (1855-57) reads -.

*On this spot stood “Buchanny Cairn.” It consisted **of a large heap of Stones**, which were removed some years ago, to build dikes and houses in the neighbourhood. In the Centre was found a Stone Coffin and some fine mould of a blackish appearance. Mr. Miller of Laight (who pointed out the Cairn’s Site) – States that there could have been very little short of 3000 Cartloads of Stones in it. The field is still called ‘**Cairn Park**’. And the name appears on an old Estate Map, dated 1772.*

The cairn and the stone coffin may well give rise to the name of the neighbouring property of Laight, Gaelic *leachd* ‘a grave’. The map shows that the site of the cairn is only a short distance from the Afton Road an about 30 yards north of an unnamed stream and a tree-lined bank. The earliest form of the name appears as Cairn of Buckwhanny in 1707 in the Old Parish Records of Baptism; followed by Cairn Buchanan (1708), Cairn of Buchanan (1714) and Cairn of Buchannan (1733). These presumably refer to a cottage near the cairn located in the Cairn Field. Sadly, nothing remains of a cottage, however perhaps it was located near the stones embedded and scattered on the bank shown. The place-name may comprise the elements Scots *cairn* ‘pile of stones’ and the personal name Buchanan. The Buchanan Society consider the Anglicized name to derive from “Mac a Chanonaich” (The Son of the Canon) and “Buth Chanain” (house or seat of the canon).

By the early 19th century, the place-name Cairn of Knockshinnoch appear in Old Parish Records of Baptisms (1811-1834) reflecting the property now formed part of the Logan’s Knockshinnoch Estate. Coincidentally, the estate later fell into the hands of the Buchanan family.



Map 05: Reproduced with permission of the National Library Scotland



Stone studded bank sloping down to Afton Road

Robert Guthrie

20: ASHMARK | Early forms of the name Eschetpark* (1564), Eschemerk (1575,1618), Eschemerke (1583), Eshmark (1642), Ashmarke (1684).
The place-names elements are Scots *esche* ‘ashtree’ and Scots *merk* ‘mark, unit of measurement value at 13s. 4d.) * a mis-type of Eschemark.

George Sanderson in ‘New Cumnock and Faraway’ write there is a local tradition that *‘really old farms always had six ash-trees around the yard, this was to shape bows and arrows to guard against thieves.*

Another local tradition is that Mary Murdoch may be Burns’ Mary in ‘Sweet Afton’. She was the cousin of John Logan’s wife Martha McAdam, and worked as a dairymaid at Laight, but lived in the neighbouring farm of Ashmark, .

<i>FLOW gently, sweet Afton! among thy green braes, Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise; My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream, Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.</i>	<i>Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides, And winds by the cot where my Mary resides; How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave, As, gathering sweet flowerets, she stems thy clear wave.</i>
--	---

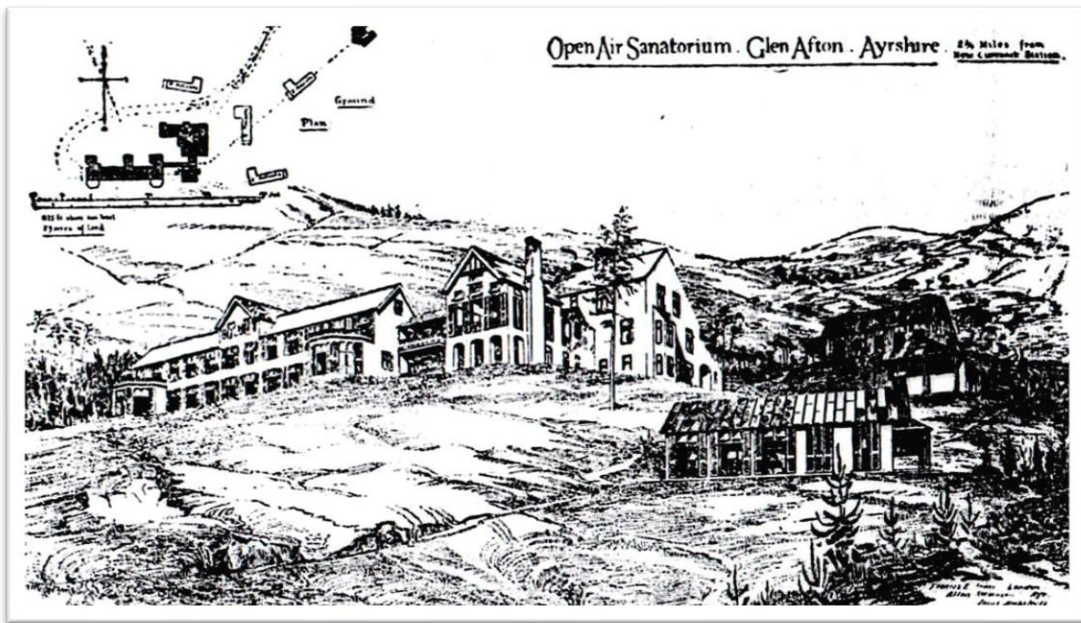
21a: GLENAFTON SANATORIUM & HOSPITAL | In December 1900, in order to address the large number of consumptive or tuberculosis cases in Ayrshire, a circular entitled ‘*CONSUMPTIVE SANATORIA. A SCHEME FOR AYRSHIRE*’ was sent to all the medical men in the County of Ayr’ on behalf of the Directors of Ayr County Hospital, in which one of the considerations was ‘*the want of a suitable establishment in or near the County of Ayr, where the modern treatment can be obtained by both sexes at a moderate cost*’ – with the money to be raised by public subscription. By April 1903, a site on the lands of Ashmark in Glen Agton, some 880 feet above sea level and which als0s included parts of Carcow Glen had been selected for the Ayrshire Sanitorium.



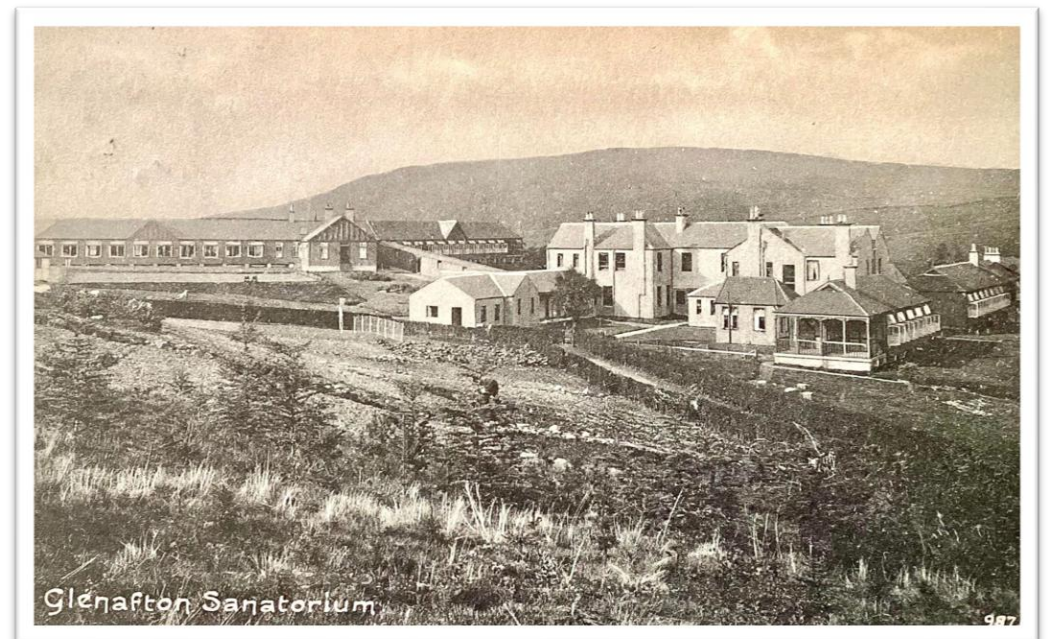
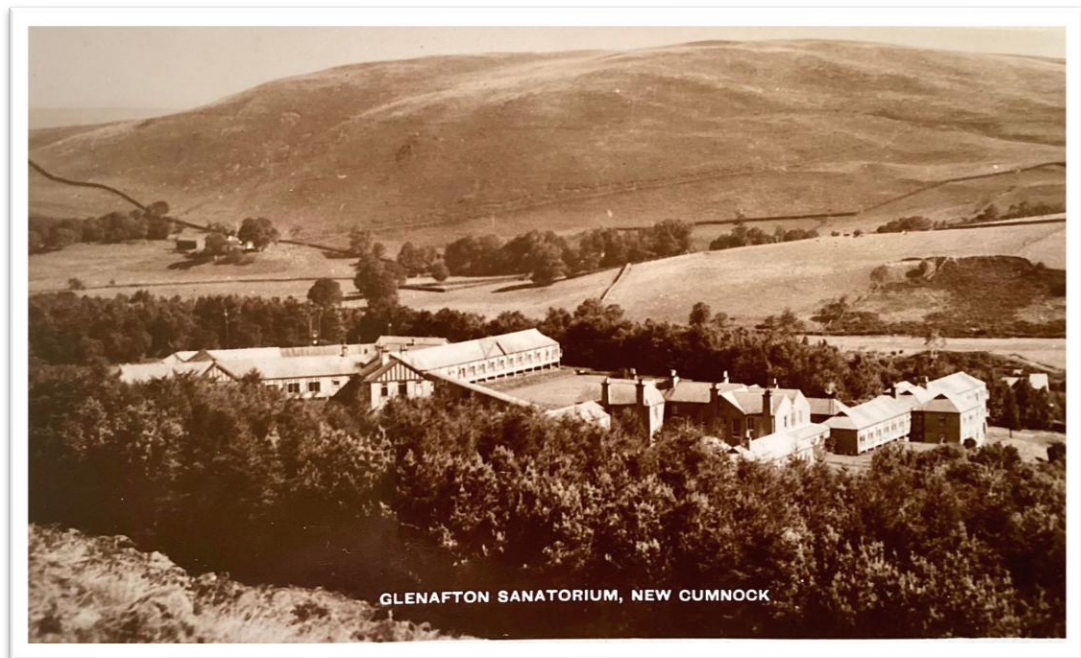
Robert Guthrie



Postcard



Doctor's House



Postcards

Three years later on the 30th June 1906, the Countess of Eglinton and Winton, wife of the Right Hon. the Earl of Eglinton and Winton, Lord Lieutenant of the County, officially opened the Glen Afton Sanatorium. At that the time there were 14 beds in the Sanatorium with scope for a further 40 beds as finances permitted . Dr. John J. Shepherd was appointed resident medical superintendent and Miss Katherine M. Mackenzie as matron[.

In 1908 the sanatorium was transferred to Local Government and was now referred to formally as the Ayrshire Sanatorium but still known locally as Glenafton (Glen Afton) Sanatorium. At that time Dr. Edward Prest succeeded Dr. Shepherd as the medical superintendent.

By the 1950's there was now a decline in the need for TB treatment as new medicines came to the fore and the Glenafton Sanatorium duly transformed to Glenafton Hospital, and the facilities modified, upgraded and expanded in order to provide care for chronically ill and geriatric patients. Ironically, however although this isolated spot in the rarefied air of Glen Afton was an ideal location for a sanatorium, its remoteness proved a burden to family and friends of those visiting patients in the hospital. In 1966 the current quota of patients was transferred to Biggart Hospital, Prestwick. Staff were relocated and Glenafton Sanatorium / Hospital was closed and after a review in March the following it was decided not to re-open the hospital].



Postcard



Courtesy of the late Alex Jess

21b GLENAFTON LEISURE PARK | The former lands of the Glenafton Sanatorium and latterly Glenafton Hospital was transformed into the Glenafton Leisure Park. It comprised 35 acres of woodland and initially housed with 'luxury self-catering chalets'. In 1980, recently new owners converted the former hospital into a nursing home as for the elderly, known as Polly Flora comprising – *'nineteen fully modernised bedrooms, lounge and reading room'*.

By 1985 the property changed hands again by which time it had progressed to a caravan park for both static and touring caravans with a licensed bar and function room. This was later named the *'Hillside Inn'* with bar known as *'The Tinklers'* which was popular with visitors as well as locals, despite the 4 mile round trip from the town.

The early 1990s saw the local Blackhill Country & Western Club establish Hillside Inn as their home venue.

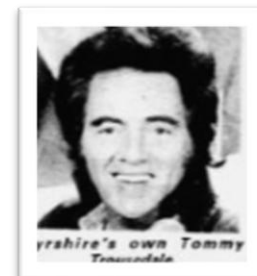
Ayrshire Post Published
Friday, 30 August 1991



Robert Guthrie

The Blackhills C/W Club, Hillside Inn, Glenafton Caravan Park, Afton Road, New Cumnock
Friday, July 5, Cimarron;
Friday, July 12, Maggie and Tennessee Express; Friday, July 19, Country Blues; Friday, July 26, Buzzard Creek;
Friday, August 2, J.C. and Driftwood; Friday, August 9, Shades of Blue; Friday, August 16, Stars and Stripes; Friday, August 23, Carol and Bob Silver; Friday, August 30, Lemon Grass;

Special nights at the Hillside Inn
Sunday, July 14, Manson Grant and The Dynamoses;
Saturday, July 20, Gerry Polland and Country Pride;
Sunday, July 21, Tommy Truesdale and The Sundowners; Hillside Inn, New Cumnock
tel 0290 38350



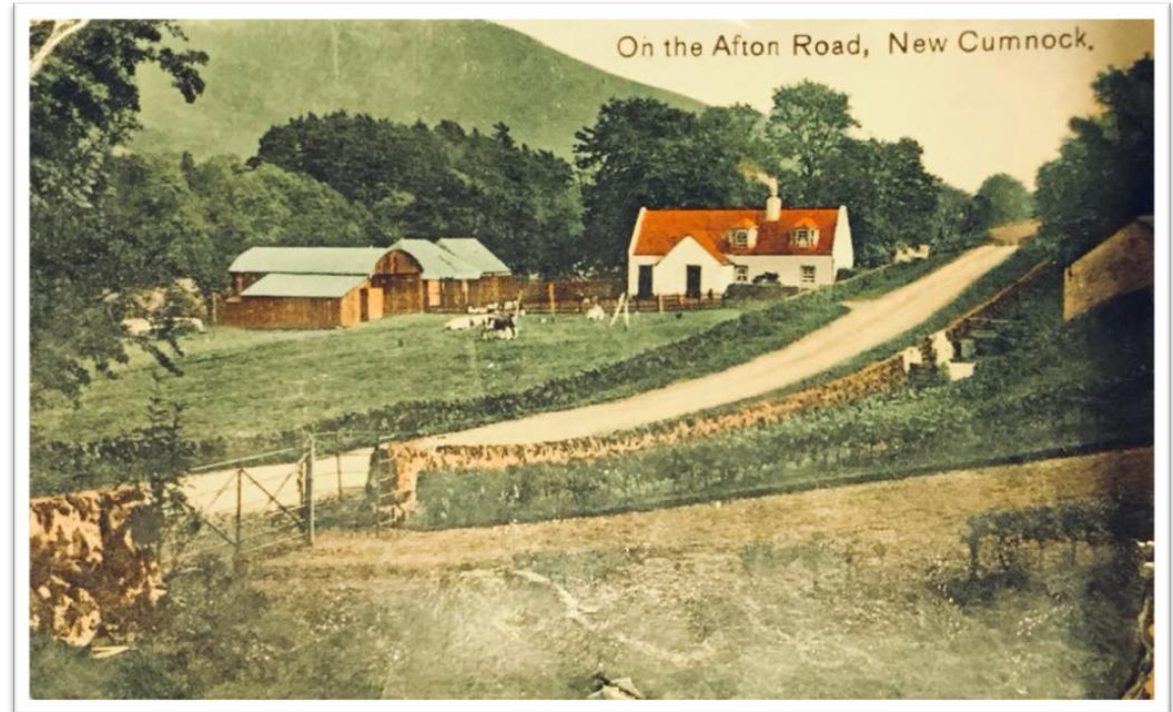
Kilmarnock
Standard
Published
Friday July 5
1991

22. BURNFOOT | The Ordnance Survey Name Book (1855-57) entry for Burnfoot reads –*'A Cottage house – Situated at the foot of Carcow Burn, occupied by a Game Keeper.* The burn flows past the cottage and takes a turn before meeting the Afton Water some 100 yards away.

The gamekeeper in question was James Cameron, who along with his wife Flora and young children had moved from Argyllshire to New Cumnock. James was the gamekeeper band land steward of the Knockshinnoch Estate. Two sons John and Peter were born at the cottage through time was known as Burnfoot , Burnfoot of Laight, Burnfoot Afton, Burnfoot Carcow and Burnfoot Cottage from 1891 onwards. The additions possible added to differentiate it from Burnfoot farm on the Dalmellington Road. Peter would follow in his father's footsteps as 'gamekeeper and land steward'



Map 06: Reproduced with permission of the National Library Scotland



Postcard

22. THE KENNELS | In 1922 Richard Bolton and his wife Agnes McCormick settled at Burnfoot Cottage. While Richard fulfilled the duties of ‘gamekeeper and ground officer’ of the Knockshinnoch estate , Agnes held tenancy of the shootings on the estate. Richard’s passion was gundogs and he became a respected judge while his dogs won many prizes and this prompted the family renaming the cottage and its lands as ‘The Kennels’, although it was also known as ‘Bolton’s Farm’. He also owned a petrol pump at the cottage.

Courtesy of Alison Bolton



 The Kennels with Sanitorium outbuildings in the foreground



Robert Guthrie



14	West Park (Laigh Park)
15	Laight
16	Burns' Cairn
B3	Dalhanna Brig
17	Little Dalhanna
18	Over Dalhanna
19	Buchanny Cairn
20	Ashmark
21a	Glenafton Sanitorium & Hospital
21b	Glenafton Leisure Park
22	The Kennels (Burnfoot)

MAP	Web-Links to Maps of National Library of Scotland
Map A	Open Topo Map : Glen Afton
Map B	Ordnance Survey 1:25,000, Great Britain, 1937-61
Map 01	Ordnance Survey 1:25,000, Great Britain, 1937-61
Map 02	Ordnance Survey – 25 inch, 1st Edition, 1855-1862
Map 03	Ordnance Survey Maps - 25 inch 2nd and later editions, Scotland, 1892-1949
Map 04	John Blaeu, Coila Provincia (1654)
Map 05	Ordnance Survey Maps- Six-Inch 2nd Edition . Scotland. 1892-1960
Map 06	Ordnance Survey – 25 inch, 1st Edition, 1855-1862

KEY SOURCES

[New Cumnock History: Place-Names](#)

[Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities](#)



PLEASE FOLLOW
[NEW CUMNOCK WALKWAYS](#)
On Facebook