



Oilthigh
Ghlaschu

PLACE-NAMES OF THE COALFIELD COMMUNITIES

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Celtic & Gaelic, University of Glasgow
SNSBI conference, 11 April 2021



University
of Glasgow



**HERITAGE
FUND**



COALFIELD

Communities Landscape Partnership



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities
Project Team

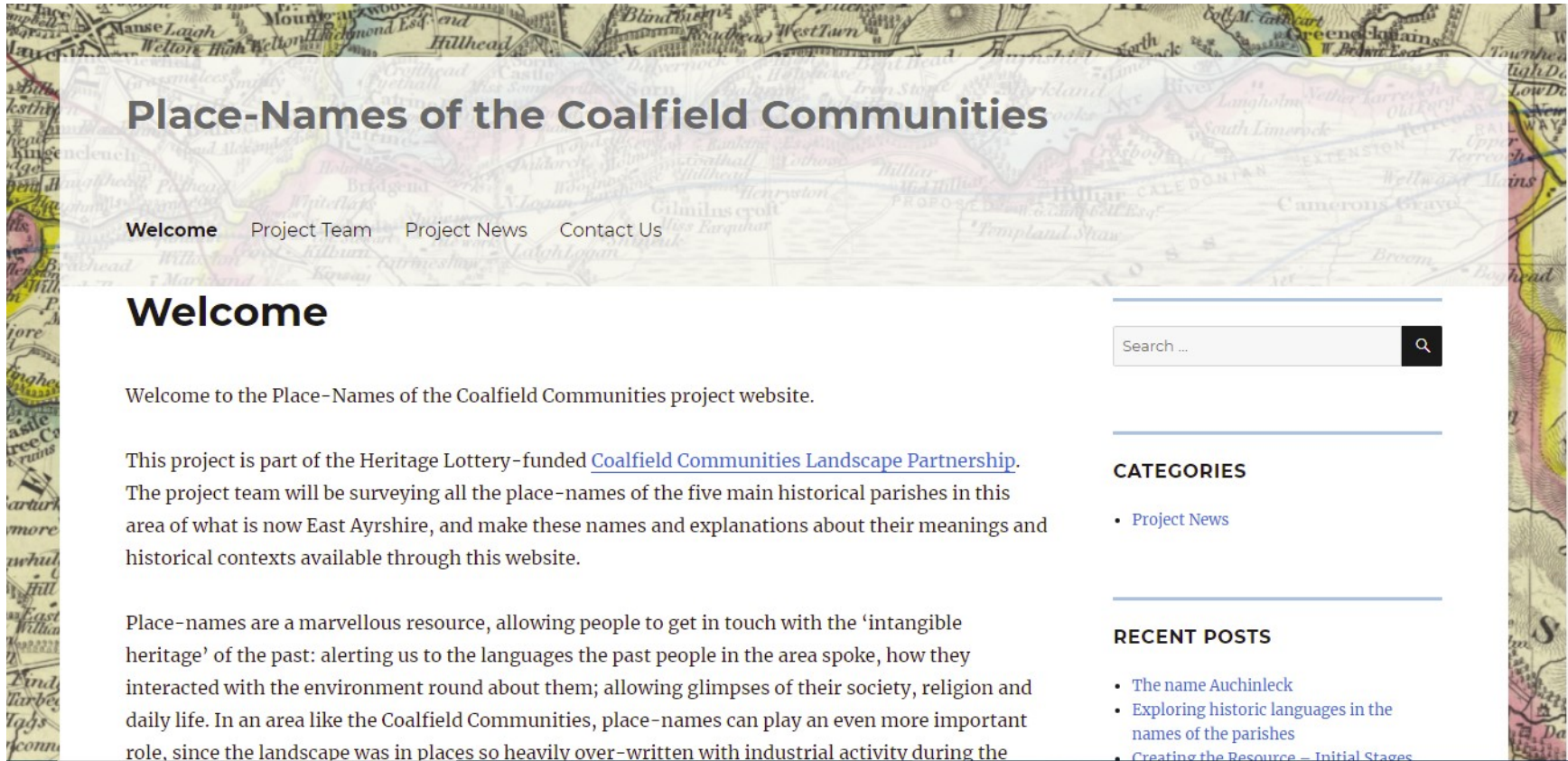
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Dr Eila Williamson (Researcher)

Brian Aitken (Systems Developer)

ayr-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk



Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities

[Welcome](#) [Project Team](#) [Project News](#) [Contact Us](#)

Welcome

Welcome to the Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities project website.

This project is part of the Heritage Lottery-funded [Coalfield Communities Landscape Partnership](#). The project team will be surveying all the place-names of the five main historical parishes in this area of what is now East Ayrshire, and make these names and explanations about their meanings and historical contexts available through this website.

Place-names are a marvellous resource, allowing people to get in touch with the ‘intangible heritage’ of the past: alerting us to the languages the past people in the area spoke, how they interacted with the environment round about them; allowing glimpses of their society, religion and daily life. In an area like the Coalfield Communities, place-names can play an even more important role, since the landscape was in places so heavily over-written with industrial activity during the

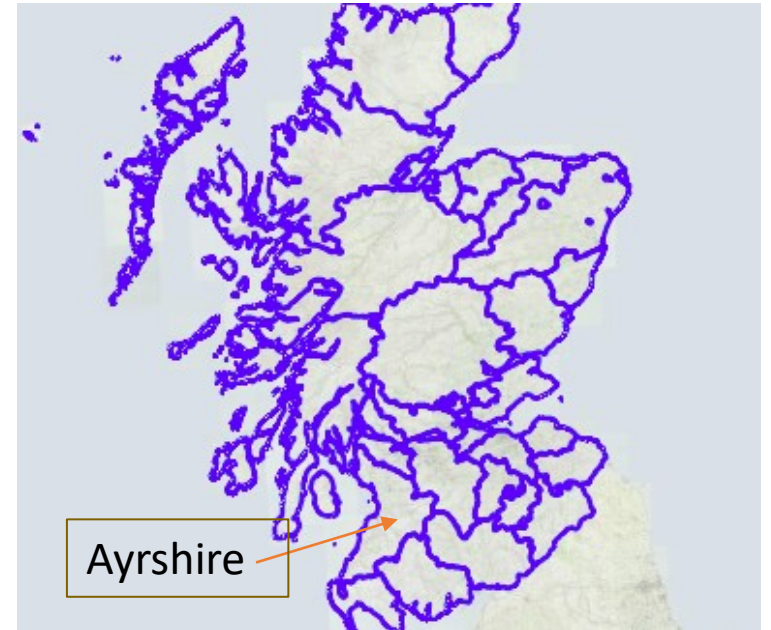
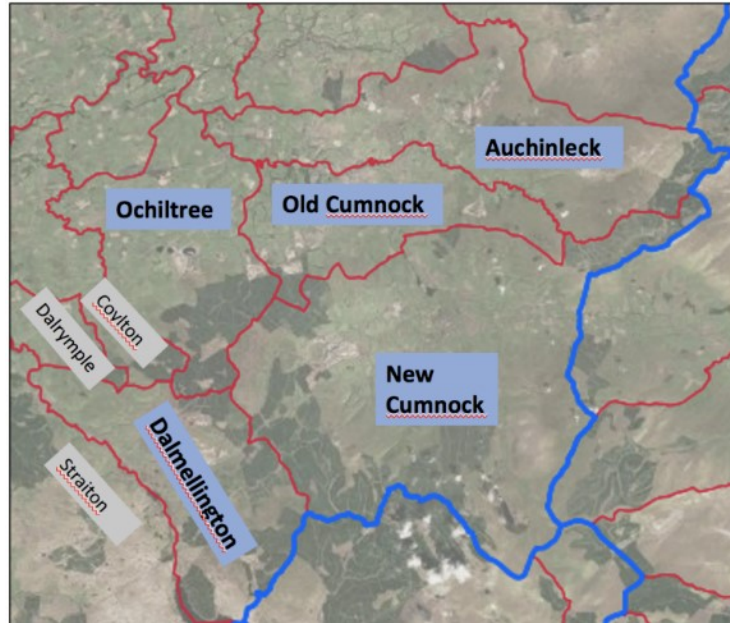
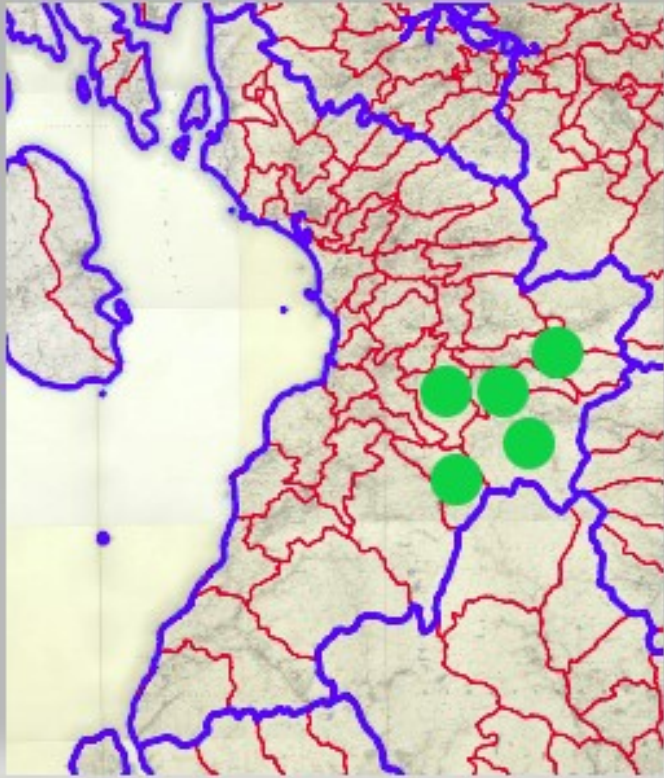
Search ...

CATEGORIES

- [Project News](#)

RECENT POSTS

- [The name Auchinleck](#)
- [Exploring historic languages in the names of the parishes](#)
- [Creating the Resource – Initial Stages](#)



Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities Study Area

<https://coalfieldcommunities.co.uk>



COALFIELD

Communities Landscape Partnership

Understanding

- Understanding the Landscape

Visiting

- Visiting the Landscape

Accessing

- Accessing the Landscape

Animating

- Animating the Landscape

Enhancing

- Enhancing the Landscape

<https://coalfieldcommunities.co.uk>

22 projects over five years



COALFIELD

Communities Landscape Partnership

Understanding

- Attainment through Archaeology
- Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities
- Connecting Coalfield Communities
- Life in the Lost Villages
- Landscape Apprentices

Visiting

- Doon Valley Railway
- Sense of Place
- Doon Valley Mountain Biking
- Lugar Heritage Centre

Accessing

- Lugar Water Walk
- Doon Valley Walk

Animating

- A Musical Celebration of the Coalfields Heritage
- Ploughing up the Past
- Dalmellington Old Kirkyard
- School Green Gym

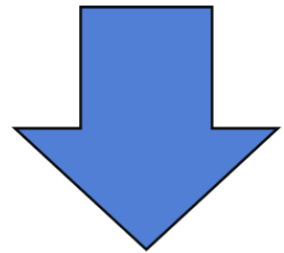
Enhancing

- Perfect Peatlands
- Healthy East Ayrshire Rivers
- Coalfields for Pollinators
- Coalfields to Wildwoods
- Tower Street Pocket Park
- Hedgerow Habitats
- North Kyle Masterplan

Outputs

By March 2022

- Searchable web resource
- General introductory booklet to place-names of area
- Number of events including workshops and place-name walks



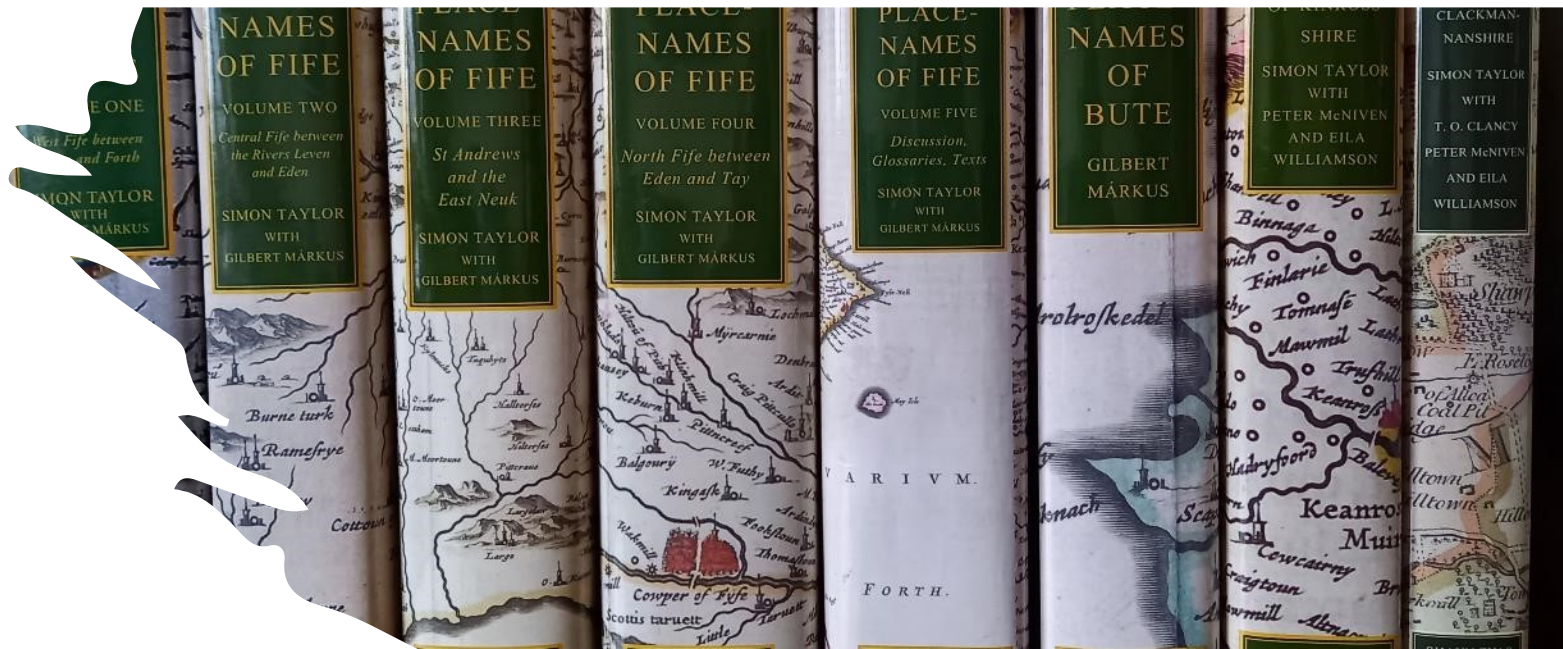
- Full published volume in the Survey of Scottish Place-Names series

Text

Menu button (☰) to change place-name categorisation, base map and label settings.
 Bottom right (⌕) to view the map full screen.

Example from Kirkcudbrightshire Place-Names Database

<input type="checkbox"/>	Unselected
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water
<input type="checkbox"/>	Antiquity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Relief
<input type="checkbox"/>	Settlement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish / Settlement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegetation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Antiquity / Relief
<input type="checkbox"/>	Island
<input type="checkbox"/>	Field
<input type="checkbox"/>	Barony / Settlement



Numbers of names in database...

Parish	Head-names
Auchinleck	402
Dalmellington	271
Ochiltree	242
Old Cumnock	387
New Cumnock	600+

1,902 +



Historical forms entered to date

LANGUAGES OF KYLE

There are three ancient divisions of Ayrshire, all three still recognised. From north to south:

CUNNINGHAME

KYLE

CARRICK

Our study area lies almost entirely within KYLE. Here the place-names testify to **four** main languages:

LANGUAGES OF KYLE

- **Northern Brittonic**: OCHILTREE (village and parish), cf Modern Welsh *uchel tref* ‘high farm’.
- **Old English**: STRAITON (probably); and just outwith the Coalfield Communities area TARBOLTON (village and parish) – a Gaelic name in *tòrr* ‘(conical) hill’ with its specific the OE existing name ***Bolton** (< **boðl-tūn*).
- **Gaelic**: AUCHINLECK (*Achadh nan Leac*) ‘farm of the slabs or flat stones’: one of many names in *G achadh*; CHANGUE (*Teanga*) ‘tongue (of land)’.
- **Scots / Scottish Standard English**: BORLAND ‘table-land, demesne land’; SINCLAIRSTON, one of the many names in Scots *toun* ‘farm’, often with personal name specifics.

For settlements (farms, villages, parishes) the most productive language is Gaelic – note that Gaelic was spoken in neighbouring Carrick until the 17th century.

- Thomas Clancy’s recent BLOG: [Exploring historic languages in the names of the parishes – Place-Names of the Coalfield Communities \(glasgow.ac.uk\)](#)
- Simon Taylor’s article: “Ayrshire Place-Names: a rich seam still to mine”, in [Ayrshire Notes 38 \(2009\)](#).

Barony A Frame,
Auchinleck

© Eila Williamson

*Our project harvests and analyses names
coined in all these languages.
BUT as the name COALFIELD COMMUNITIES
indicates, we pay especial attention to those
of the Industrial Age.*



Industrialisation



All that remains of the village of Comondyke is a cross commemorating Sister Laurienne Cusack, a local nun, who was killed by a train on the branch line serving Comondyke No. 1 Pit on 7 August 1888.



OS 6 inch 2nd edn (1897)



OS 6 inch 1st edn (1860)



Aerial photo pre-2016



The lost village of Comondyke, Auchinleck parish. Images from maps.nls.uk



Waterside, Dalmellington OS Name Book (OS1/3/21/25)

A Village which has been erected within the past few years for the accommodation of the men engaged in the adjacent mines and Iron Works. The Village consists of long parallel lines of regularly built one storey, slated buildings. There is a large victualling store. A school of private adventure class, supported by the contributions of the workmen usual rudimentary branches taught. No church no post office established yet.

The sections of the Village bear the names, Long row Back row Diamond row and Green Hill Terrace respectively, but the Iron Company do not approve of such names. Some few fantastic persons in each row have called them so, and that within the last fourteen Months.

Notes regarding deleted entries, Dalmellington OS Name Book (OS1/3/21/12)

- The Manager of the Iron Works thinks this name of **Burnfoothill** ought not to be used. Waterside Houses is applicable to the whole.
From Examiners Remarks
- The Manager of the Iron Works thinks this name '**Montreal Row**' ought not to appear on the Ordnance Plans. The Iron Company do not recognise such a name. 'Waterside' is the name to all these houses.
From Examiners Remarks

Two dynamics were transforming the landscape – and namescape – in the later 18th and 19th centuries:

- Increasing industrialisation
- The super-rich with their big houses and their planned landscapes

We want to finish with a brief look at the second of these.

Planned
Landscape –
Dumfries
House Estate



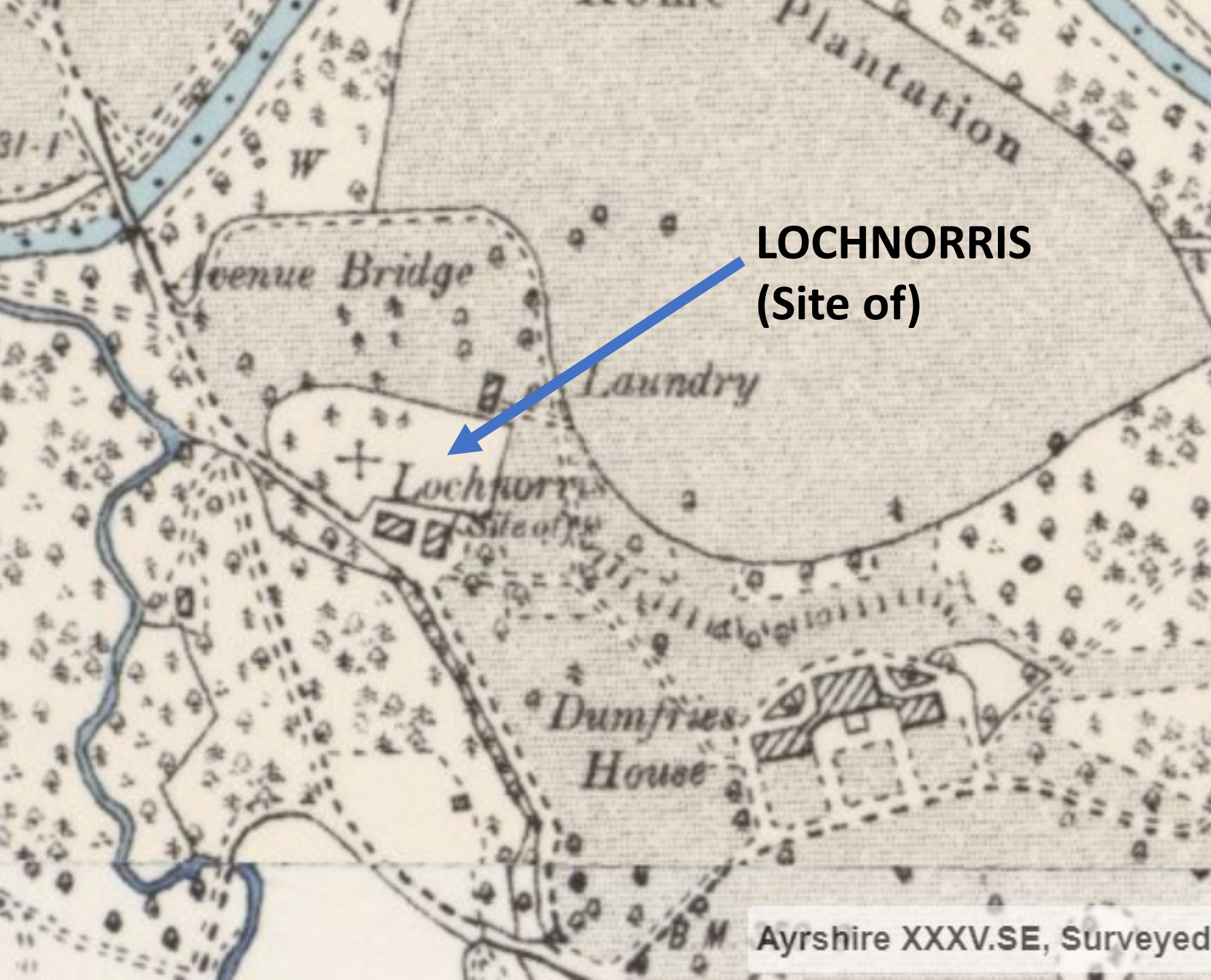
Avenue Bridge © Eila Williamson

DUMFRIES HOUSE, Old Cumnock Parish

- William Crichton-Dalrymple, 5th Earl of Dumfries, wanted a grander house on his estate of **Leifnorris**. He asked the famous Adam brothers, Robert, John and James, to submit a design.
- Their completed drawings were presented in 1754 and a contract was agreed to build a new house to be called **Leifnorris House**.
- 'It was only when the foundation stone was laid on the 18th of July 1754 that his lordship decided the name should be changed to **Dumfries House** in line with his title.'
- [Dumfries House \(dumfries-house.org.uk\)](http://dumfries-house.org.uk)



DUMFRIES HOUSE completed 1759 for the 5th earl of Dumfries image: Dumfries H. website



LOCHNORRIS
(Site of)

LOCHNORRIS

- Leffinnoriis* 1508
- Lefnoreis* 1621
- Leifnorris* 1754
- Lochnorris* 1897

Gaelic
Leth-pheighinn
'halfpenny (land)' + ?
personal name
Norris (on record in
Scotland from 12th
century)

LEIFNORRIS/ LOCHNORRIS

A name pushed out by the title of an earl, it survives not only in the name of Lochnorris Primary School in Cumnock, but also in the name of the house in Cumnock which Keir Hardie, founder of the Labour Party, built for himself and his family: the more modest Lochnorris House.



LOCHNORRIS HOUSE, Cumnock

Image from [THE KEIR HARDIE SOCIETY - Keir Hardie Society home page](#)



Thank you!

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