



Welcome to Issue 2 of this newsletter. It contains short features on topics that do not easily fit into the main website, highlights interesting points on the website or introduces ideas that may be developed further.

Blantyre Priory

Following on from last month I visited Blantyre Priory. Fortunately there was a convenient layby (on a very busy road) and it was only a short walk across some muddy ground to the ruins.

There is very little to see, just some masonry hidden by vegetation and extensive earthworks but it is in a superb location, very close to cliff tops and with good views over the Clyde to Bothwell Castle.

Interestingly, there are some strange carvings on a cliff face below the Priory that had a lot of publicity in the 1950's. They are all religious and of course led to speculation that they had been done by the monks. They were in fact done by a local man.

Having looked at the site I am not decided about the tunnel. They would have had to scramble down a steep slope to the river which at the time of my visit looked deep and fast flowing, certainly not fordable. One would have thought a boat or a timber bridge would have been easier than a tunnel but the story of the tar covered sacks used by the miners to negotiate the said tunnel still leaves some doubt.

Incidentally the link to the photo of Blantyre Bridge in the last newsletter would not have worked as it was in PDF format. As it is such a good photo you can see it by following the [link](http://www.flickr.com/photos/8899981@N05/sets/72157610660637773/) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/8899981@N05/sets/72157610660637773/> The site also has good photos of the



The above shows two views of Bothwell castle from the Priory. The first is the reality with branches cluttering up the view; the second is the same view but with some alterations made with the artistic effects offered by Photoshop. Not quite as good however as this painting by [Paul Sandby](#), one of the draughtsmen employed on the Military Survey of Scotland

William Roy and the Military Survey



This photo is of the memorial to William Roy which is at the site of Miltonhead near Carlisle where he was born in 1726. It was put up by the Ordnance Survey which was based on his pioneering work on the Military Survey so perhaps the triangulation pillar is appropriate!

The Military Survey had its origins in the 1745 Rebellion when the forces of the Crown had great difficulty in finding their way around the Highlands. Roy was tasked with preparing a map of Scotland which



case of a future rebellion!

The maps are superb and very important because they are the first to show the roads in any detail. They make it quite clear that Scotland had an extensive network of roads in the 1750's whereas if one depended on Moll and others one would think there were hardly any roads at all.

Roy eventually became a Major General and his work laid the foundations of the Ordnance Survey.

The maps can be seen free of charge at the [National Library of Scotland website](#).

Rumbling Bridge

If you've never been there it's well worth the trip. Not only is the bridge itself remarkable but it (or they) span a spectacular gorge.



I must admit when I looked at the lower bridge and saw the square stones I thought Roman, imagining them forging their way north after (some say) carrying out a campaign of genocide in Fife.

It had however a more prosaic origin being built by a local mason in 1713. The higher bridge was built in 1816.

Looking at the lack of parapets, it being near an early drove route, one has to wonder if any cattle, and indeed drovers, fell off the bridge.

While visiting, it is worth calling in at the nearby Milk Bar in Powmill which is one of the few remaining roadhouses that were so popular with ramblers, cyclists and motorists in the forties and fifties.

Rumbling Bridge is on the A823 just after Powmill on the A977 from Kincardine to Kinross.

Recent Additions

The Toll Points of Ayr and Rutherglen. Implications for Routes

This looks at the charters for Ayr and Rutherglen which gave them the right to collect tolls from anyone wishing to trade in their precincts.

The toll-points for Ayr are relatively straightforward allowing us to posit routes from the toll points of Mach, Karnebuth, Loudun, Croseneton and Laicht Alpin to Ayr itself.

Rutherglen is more difficult, particularly as two of the place names - Karun and Prenteineth have proved difficult to identify.

If these could be established with certainty it would allow us to add two major route ways in the west of Scotland.

Recommended sites

The Roads that led to Edinburgh, Harry Inglis

This is a classic paper published in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians in Scotland and deals with some of the early roads in Scotland.

<http://ads.abds.ac.uk/catalogue/ARCHway/toc.cfm?rcn=1340&vol=50>

"Rambles on Old Roads" will be produced six times a year. If any reader wishes to contribute an article or notes on their research these will be very welcome.

Send contributions to geraldcummins2@aol.com