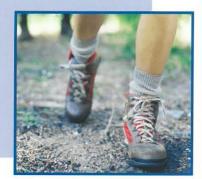
We hope this leaflet helps you to enjoy the many activities that take place on Gillies Hill.

- walking with or without dogs!
- horse riding
- orienteering
- rock climbing
- cycling
- geo-caching
- bird watching



Further information

This is one of a series of leaflets published on Gillies Hill. If you are interested in the fascinating history of the Hill, you can get a taste of both ancient and more recent history in our 'History' leaflet. There is also a leaflet titled "Flora and Fauna', showing you the rich variety of plants and animals.

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions respect the interests of other people care for the environment.



How to find us



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Some of the walks go very close to the edge of steep cliffs. PLEASE TAKE CARE. Strong boots are recommended for all of the routes as the paths can be muddy and slippery in places.

Cover: Family walk in the woods



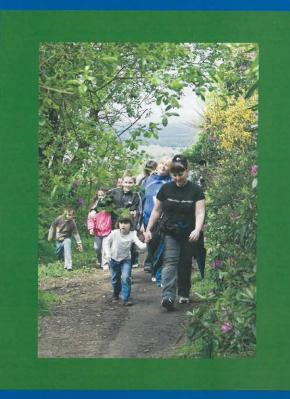
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Gillies Hill

Cambusbarron

Things to do



Part one of a guide to Gillies Hill: Past, Present & Future

Gillies Hill

lies just on the outskirts of Stirling. The grounds are an idyllic haven for joggers, cyclists or horse riders. The multitude of paths through the woodland allows the casual walker to travel through archways of rhododendrons, cathedrals of towering larch trees or dark mysterious conifer forest.

The woodland is the home to roe deer.

foxes, red and grey squirrels and the secretive badger. The observant walker may well be fortunate to spot some of these elusive natives.

The bird life abounds, but often will only reveal itself to the quiet visitor, with time to listen and observe. Not perhaps best suited to the joggers and cyclists.

If venturing to the tiny pond nicknamed Loch Kruse (after the Texan naturalist who studied its sedges and rushes) in the spring or summer, you may spot Britain's smallest amphibian, the palmate

newt, which earns its name from the strongly webbed hind feet that males develop during the breeding season. Although this species is not threatened at present, there has been a dramatic and worrying global decline in amphibians.

For more information on the plants and animlas on the hill, see our Flora and Fauna leaflet.

The paths are not all strenuous, and some are readily accessible by prams and wheelchairs, particularly those a starting from the Quarry Road gate. Most of the other paths can easily be followed by a reasonably fit adult, although in the winter it is probably best to wear stout boots.

Everyone has the right to be on most land in Scotland, providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

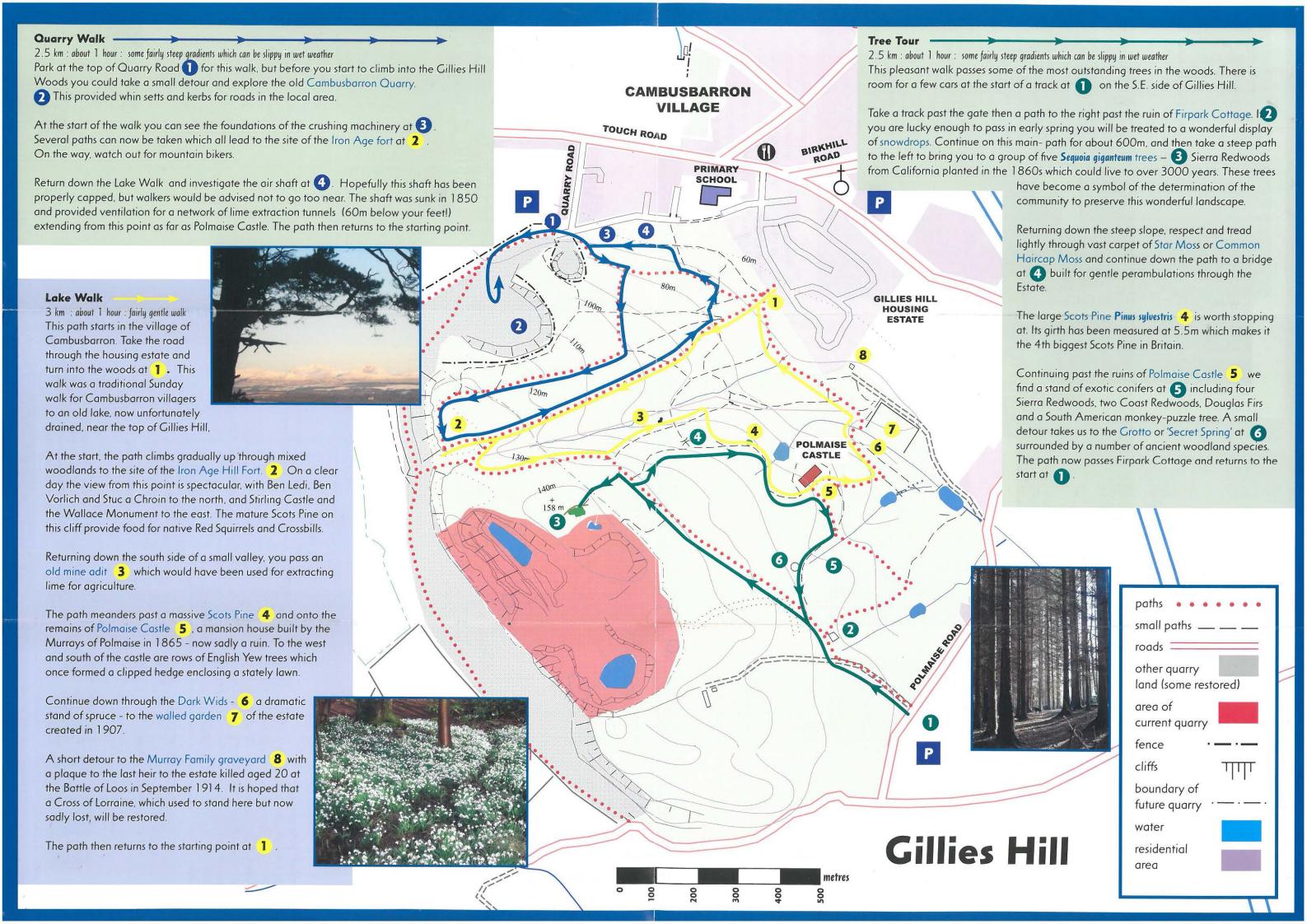


There are fantastic opportunities for walkers, joggers, cyclists, horse riders, mountain bikers and climbers to explore the secrets of Gillies Hill. More hazardous activities, participants take part in at their own risk.

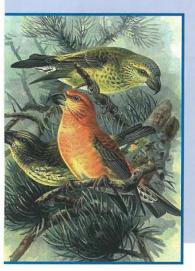


The hill is also home to two sites that hark back to the Iron Age. Gillies Hill Fort and Wallstale Dun. This latter was known to villagers as 'The Temple'. and much favoured as a picnic area in Victorian times. Both commanded excellent views and thus could maintain visual contact with similar structures, such as Castlehill Wood Dun. The area also has the ruins of Polmaise Castle built in 1865 and the Limekilns which have been used from the 1700s.

For more information see our History leaflet.



The **common crossbill** is a thick-set finch, larger than a greenfinch, but not to be confused with the Scottish crossbill, which is confined to the Scots Pine forests of the Highlands. In harsh cold winters, the common crossbill is most often encountered at Gillies Hill in noisy flocks feeding acrobatically and



fluttering from
cone to cone.
The crossbill uses
its unique beak,
which crosses at
the tip to feed
on conifer seeds,
particularly larch,
pine and spruce.
Adult males are a
distinctive brick-red
and females are
greenish-brown.

Further information

This is one of a series of leaflets published on Gillies Hill. If you are interested in the fascinating history of the Hill, you can get a taste of both ancient and more recent history in our 'History' leaflet. There is also a leaflet on the many activities you can enjoy in the area, entitled 'Things to Do'

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions
 respect the interests of other people
- respect the interests of or
 care for the environment.



KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO

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Cover: Spear Thistle with bee



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Gillies Hill Cambusbarron Flora and Fauna



Part two of a guide to
Gillies Hill: 'Past, Present & Future'

Gillies Hill

is populated by a range of interesting animals and birds that can be seen throughout the year. Many animals are at their most active at dusk and dawn.

Roe deer may be glimpsed singly or in small groups, particularly in the north-western area that is bounded by wooded wildlife corridors up into the Touch Hills. The roe buck is readily identified by short antlers and markings on his head, while the roe doe is smaller in size with no antlers.

If you are really lucky you may spot

our native red squirrel bounding among the treetops. These are shy and elusive creatures but tell-tale signs to look for include large dreys in trees, scratch marks on bark, and their favourite chewed pine cones. The future of red squirrels is increasingly uncertain as grey squirrels outcompete reds for food and habitat as well as carrying squirrelpox virus - lethal to reds, harmless to the greys.

The **badger** is one of the most widespread and iconic animals in Britain. Most people recognise badgers by their black and white striped head, but because they are nocturnal mammals, they are rarely seen. They do.

however, roam onto Gillies Hill and signs of badger activity may be seen, such as heavily worn badger paths with distinctive 5-toed footprints, claw marks on trees, dung pits and coarse, wiry badger hair

caught on the barbs of wire fences. Badgers are omnivorous, and they are able to choose from a wide range of food.

If venturing to the tiny pond nicknamed Loch Kruse (after the Texan naturalist who studied its sedges and rushes) in the spring or summer, you may spot Britain's smallest amphibian, the **palmate newt**, which earns its name from the strongly webbed hind

feet that males develop during the breeding season.

Although this species is not threatened at present, there has been a dramatic and worrying global decline in amphibians.

Many species of small birds reside in the woodlands of Gillies Hill. Robins, dunnocks, green finches, siskin, blue, great and coal tits can be spotted at any time of year using a basic bird identification book and by getting to know their distinctive calls.

However, there are some bird species of particular interest to watch for when visiting the site. One such is the **red kite**, a magnificently graceful bird of prey which is unmistakable with its reddish-brown body, angled wings and deeply forked tail. After an absence of 130 years, red kites have recently been re-introduced to Scotland, at Argaty, near Doune. There the population is slowly increasing and now individuals are colonising areas around Stirling.

Ravens are resident in the quarry area, identified easily by their distinctive calls, large size (bigger than a buzzard), black plumage and large, heavy bill. Ravens are well known for their intelligence, but they are also very playful birds.

A top predator that may also be spotted on Gillies Hill is the peregrine falcon. This is a large and

powerful bird which has long, broad, pointed wings and a relatively short tail. It is the fastest animal in the world achieving speeds

approaching 200kmph (124mph) when plunging from the sky after prey. Peregrine falcons eat mainly small birds that they stun or kill during a dive before turning, catching it in midair, then either bringing it down to earth or letting it drop if it's too heavy.



Photographs from top: roe deer, red squirrel (by JC), palmate newt and badger.

Gillies Hill has been cloaked in woodland for centuries. The earliest mapped confirmation of trees on the site dates back to the 1580s. It is, then, an ideal place to see a number of ancient plants species.

Spring is the season to seek out some of these exquisite native plants, before the tree leaves are fully unfurled and the flowers can therefore benefit from the sunshine making its way to the forest floor. Some of these species are:

- **Dog's mercury:** a herb with inconspicuous green flowers growing on separate male and female
- Wood anemone: readily identified by its unbranched, upright stem bearing a single star-shaped white flower with a centre of yellow anthers.
- **Wood sorrel:** a delicate-looking flower which has five white petals with fine purple veins. The leaves are bright green and look very similar to shamrock.
- Bluebells: have shiny narrow leaves delicate bell-shaped flowers hanging from a straight central stem and a delicious scent on a warm spring day.

All year round the dark green leaves of rhododendron shrubs mark out its tenacious territory within the woods. Growing to many times the height of a person, it forms tunnels in certain areas, effectively blocking the light and excluding native plants from growing in its shade.

The flora of Gillies Hill is intricately entwined with its history. The Murray family, created landscaped gardens incorporating many of the exotic coniferous trees that

still grace the woodland.

Sierra Redwoods (or Giant Sequoia), growing at the apex of Gillies Hill and the many non-native trees that grow around the former castle grounds.

woodland has been replaced with commercial species such as Sitka and Norway Spruce, which form dense canopies limiting undergrowth, and Larch, a native deciduous conifer, which allows sunlight to penetrate to

In addition there are three 'veteran trees' listed by the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hunt Project (www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk) on Gillies Hill.

Above: Wood sorrel

Left: Bluebells

• a Scots Pine, nicknamed the Big Pine, which is the fourth largest pine of its type in Britain.

a coppiced **Rowan** of immense lower girth.

and an English Yew

Other native trees inhabiting the site include silver birch, rowan, oak, ash, hazel and the gnarled Scots Pine clinging to the cliff edges. Non-native, but naturalised trees include sycamore and beech.

CAMBUSBARRON VILLAGE TOUCH ROAD

Q

P

Below: Harebells

As the season progresses, fabulous ferns uncoil and a diverse range of grasses develop their delicate inflorescences. Iconic Scottish plants such as common and bell heather bloom on the heath outcrops.

> Bell heather: a compact, evergreen shrub which produces bell-shaped flowers, which are normally wine-red, or occasionally white. It is attractive to insects, particularly honey and bumble bees.

> Harebells: known as the Scottish bluebell, these hang their pale blue cups on impossibly fine stems among the palette of summer colours that include:

- Germander speedwell: a low-growing, patch-forming plant whose pretty blue flowers have a distinct white 'pupil' in the centre, giving it the country name of Cat's Eye.
- Yellow pimpernel: a neat, low-growing plant, often found in spreading patches on open ground.
- Herb Robert: a member of the geranium family, it has small pink flowers and deeply cut fern-like leaves, which may be green, through to bright red, in colour.

Right: Scots Pine

The grassland area near the old quarry supports two types of orchid:

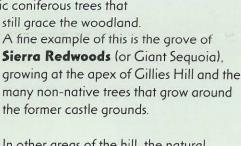
- The Common spotted-orchid (Dactylorhiza fuchsii): flowers June to August, has narrow leaves with spots, often broader across the leaf than along it and flowers which vary from white to pale purple with purple spots.
- Northern marsh orchid (Dactylorhiza purpurella): leaves usually unspotted, flower spike dense and square, topped with 10 - 40 magenta-coloured flowers heavily lined with dark lines and dots.

In addition to the more noticeable flowering plants and tall trees that cover Gillies Hill, are many organisms often overlooked. Mosses and liverworts (also known as bryophytes) grow throughout the area. In the late summer and early autumn, dozens of species of fungi may be found throughout the hill, with such wonderful names as Oyster Mushroom, Yellow Antler Fungus, Razorstrop Fungus, and Deadly Amanita. Some fungi are poisonous so be very sure you can accurately identify them.

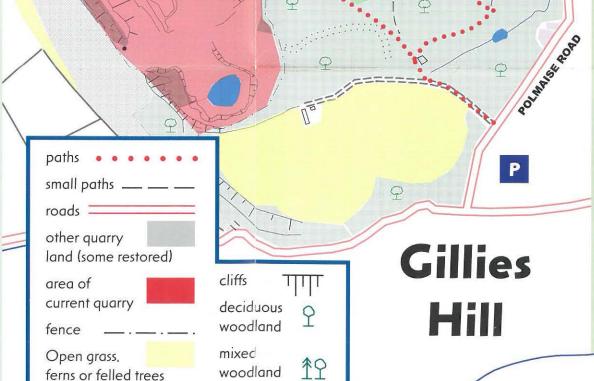
Please note that it is illegal to uproot any wild plant without permission from the landowner.



Above: Loch Kruse Left: Larch Cones



In other greas of the hill, the natural the ground flora.



The Bannockburn Connection

History lies everywhere on the ancient Gillies Hill. The very name proclaims its most enduring link with the past: the gillies - the Gaelic word gille refers to a servant, or young boy - were the camp-followers of Bruce's army in 1314. These he ordered, for safety, onto the long sloping hill above where he raised his standard at the Borestone. Legend has it that these sma folk, as they were termed by the poet Barbour, made a dramatic and decisive intervention at a crucial stage in the battle. Banging their pots and pans, waving bits of cloth like flags, they descended onto the field of Bannockburn - to English eyes, fresh, unwearied Scottish troops. Or maybe they simply saw the carnage was nearly over, and wanted their share of the spoils.

Chapelwell 8

Bruce is said to have come to Cambusbarron Chapel the day before the battle, a Sunday, to there take the sacrament, and to drink from its renowned Holy Well – its site is still commemorated in the name of that part of the village, the Chapel Well. The event itself is remembered in both the name of our present church, the Bruce Memorial, and that given to the grassy expanse at the Burnside: Brucefield.



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Cover: Polmaise castle (now ruin)

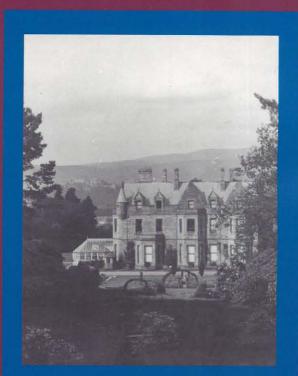


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Gillies Hill

Cambusbarron The History



Part three of a guide to Gillies Hill: Past. Present & Future

Gillies Hill

Lime works 2 25



Lime-mining has taken place in the Gillies Hill area since the late 18th century, producing lime to be used in building mortars, iron production and agriculture. The remains of the kilns can be found at three locations around Gillies Hill: at Murrayshall Limeworks on the south west of Gillies Hill beside the entrance to the current quarry; at Hollandbush Limeworks off Kersebonny Road and at Craigend

Limeworks on the south bank of the Bannock Burn near Castlehill Dun.

A lime-miner remembers a typical day in 1906, when, at the age of 16 he worked in the tunnels under Gillies Hill along with his father and 30 others.

"We started work at 6a.m. and collected our tools from the smithy at the mine entrance, where they had been resharpened. We had to buy our own dynamite, from the store halfway between the mine and the kilns. Then we made our way into the mine along the main level. Near the far end we turned into our heading and then into our branch. The working face was 12 to 14 foot wide and about 6 foot high. We drilled 4 holes across the face taking turns to hold the chisel or swing the hammer. When the holes were between 2 and 3 foot deep, we cleaned them out, put in some dynamite and a fuse, and plugged the hole with clay. At 11 am we stopped for a lunch-break. Then we blew the charge and started to fill the hutches with lumps of limestone. A full hutch was about 15 cwt. They were run downhill to a lay-by using a 'snibble' pushed through one of the 'biscuit-wheels' to slow the hutch down. We marked the hutches with our tally, and the pony-man took a 'rake' of them down to the entrance By 3pm we had cleared the face ready for the next day and it would

The above is reproduced courtesy of Dr Ken Mackay, included in his paper to Forth Naturalist and Historian Vol 2 1977

be time to go home."

Gillies Hill Fort 16



The Gillies Hill is also home to two sites that hark back to even earlier martial times than Bannockburn Gillies Hill Fort and Wallstale Dun (a dun was a smaller hill-fort) both date from the early Iron Age, approximately 2000 years ago. They commanded excellent views across

> the surrounding countryside, and thus could

maintain visual contact with similar structures, such as Castlehill Wood Dun, (high on Touch Muir) or two now-vanished duns at Castlehill, or even the Touch Muir and Baston Burn duns.

Wester Craigend Dun just across the Bannockburn on the rocky mound near the entrance to Murrayshall Farm that was the

site of Touchadam Fort, and known to locals as 'The Camp', would also have been eminently visible.

View over surrounding countryside from Gillies Hill Fort



Polmaise Castle 18

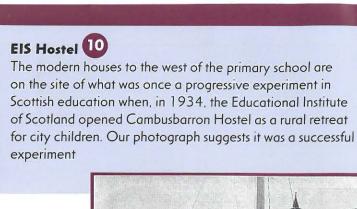


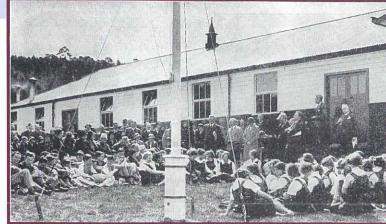
However, Gillies Hill has more modern ruins, none, perhaps, sadder than those of Polmaise Castle (see front cover). This grandiose building in the Scots baronial style by David Burn was built in 1865 by Col. John Murray, 23rd Laird of Touchadam and Polmaise, following his return from the Crimean War, and cost over £30,000 – a colossal figure in those days. Long before it had reached its first, and only, century - a comparatively brief time for a family that had ruled here since Bruce's time - the building was a ruin, finally demolished in 1966, and the Murrays were no more.

'Touchadam', incidentally, is the old name for the Cambusbarron/Gillies Hill area, and the Murrays were 'of Touchadam,' long before they built Polmaise on the Forth in 1697 following a territorially advantageous marriage. 'Polmaise' was therefore an imposition by the Colonel. The foundations of their first home, Touchadam Castle, in Murrays Wood, behind Cartur, can now be discerned only with great difficulty. From here, the family base moved briefly, pre-Polmaise, around the Gillies Hill when the modest Murrays Hall was built in 1673.

One of the reasons for the demise of the Murrays was the tragic death of the heir. Alistar Murray, aged 20, in the first weeks of the Great War. Although buried in France, his memorial, a Cross of Lorraine, was later placed beside the grave of his parents.







Free Green 2

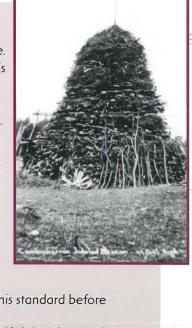
Old Drove Road, has The Commondry as its old name. Both point to other aspects of the Hill's history. It leads to Cambusbarron's Free Green, near the gate to the quarry, now decked with trees. Here, villagers, as well as drovers from the west and north, could tether cattle. (It was also, even up to 1953, the site of bonfires to celebrate coronations and the like.)

Curling on the Hill 20

Curling was very popular in the past. The original pond can still be seen just up from Bearside, with next to it, the ruins of the old Clubhouse, where members of Borestone Curling Club, kept their stones. It is appropriately named (since we are still on Gillies Hill) after the rock into which Bruce is said to have placed his standard before Bannockburn.

A second pond lies to the west. A third 'pond' is the artificial and water-less one, the tarred rectangle nearer the Polmaise Road, laid down in 1914 to allow curling when the ice on the other ponds was too thin for play: the tar would be sprayed with water several times during cold winter mornings: by the afternoon, a glaze of ice allowed play to commence





above Murrayshall until it succumbed to quarrying. was known by locals as the Bonnety Tree, on whose branches the gillies were said to have left their headgear before their descent.

Football has long been played on various parts

of the Gillies Hill. This photograph shows Cambusbarron Rovers' captain Kenny Robertson at Hampden in 1968, with the Scottish Amateur Cup that the village team had just won. Celebrating their half-centenary in 2010, the Mill Road Park club - still on the Hill: check out the slope that has confounded many opponents - has won the trophy on a further two occasions.



Hollandbush Limeworks to join Forth and Clyde Junction railway Hollandbush Limeworks

Ste of Engine house

Site of Cable railway

Access tunnel to mineworkings

Site of rail way line from

under Gillies Hill Site of Smithy

Hayford Mill

Sites of Interest

Site of Bruce's Well at Chapelcroft

Free Green

Site of 1930's EIS home

11 Site of Dambends Cottage

12 Site of Clayhill's Farm latterly

Polmaise Home Farm

Existing network of underground limeworking tunnels 1890 to 1910

14 Clayhills Cottage

15 Site of Touchadam Castle

Site of Iron Age Fort

17

18 Polmaise Castle (ruin)

19 Site of old lake

20 Curling Ponds

21 Site of Murray's Hall

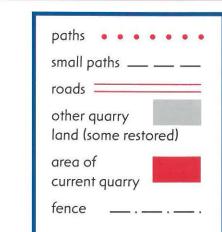
22 Site of Bonnety Tree

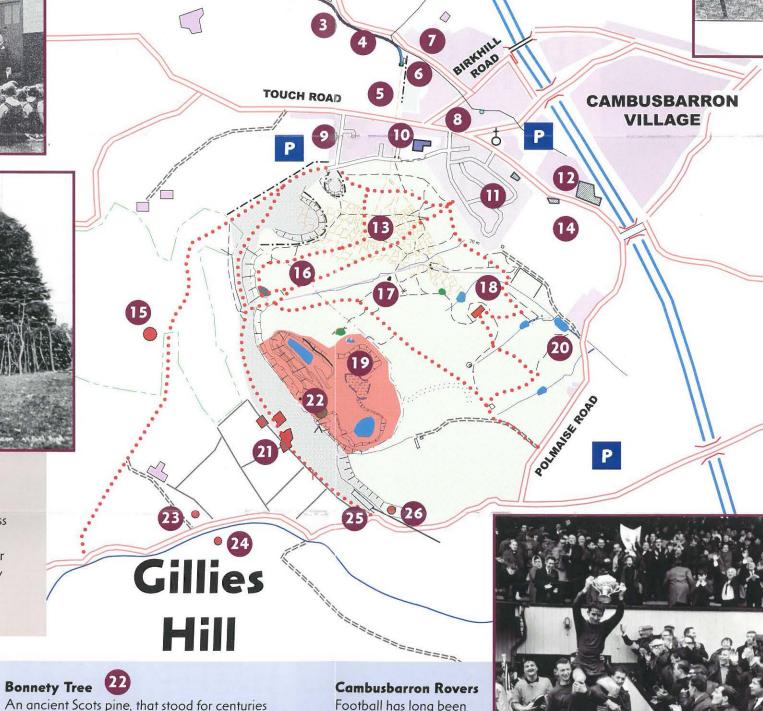
23 Castlehill Dun

24

25 Murrayshall Lime Kiln

Wallstale Dun





Forth & Clyde Junction Railway