



roe deer

A STRATEGIC POSITION

The Glen lies within the 'Stirling Gap' between the Highlands, the marshy Forth valley, Sheriffmuir above and the old Pictish kingdom to the East. Before bridges were built, early travellers used the Darn Road side of the Allan Water, crossing at Dunblane, a prime spot for an ecclesiastical City. Invading Romans built their impressive Ardoch fort at Braco. William Wallace battled with the English on Sheriffmuir, where later Jacobite rebels fiercely challenged government forces. Hardy drovers from the north and western isles converged on Sheriffmuir and Allanwater to cross the Forth for the Falkirk Tryst.

In Victorian times tourists flocked to Bridge of Allan Spa, walking the Glen and supporting the new railway which also provided early commuters with a welcome escape from city life. Today, with traffic diverted to the busy A9 and M9, the Glen is now a peaceful haven attracting 6 heritage and conservation designations. It offers secluded walks and a wonderful alternative cycle route for NCN 765 Stirling to Dunblane.

Geology and Glen Road

Here you can see the gorge of Devonian old red sandstone overlain by boulder clay 15 meters thick. Glacial action and the Wharry Burn created the steep sided, tree lined gorge. The Glen is prone to landslip so it's best avoided following heavy rain and wind. Glen Road was completed from Dunblane to Bridge of Allan in the 1840's including this fine romantic bridge* built by local stone mason Steven McVicar. Closed to traffic in 1987, it is now popular with cyclists, walkers and runners. Local volunteers with help from IKM, Sustrans, Stirling Council and SNH, rescued the route and endeavour to maintain it from encroaching vegetation and poor drainage, within strict conservation restrictions on moving and stabilising material.

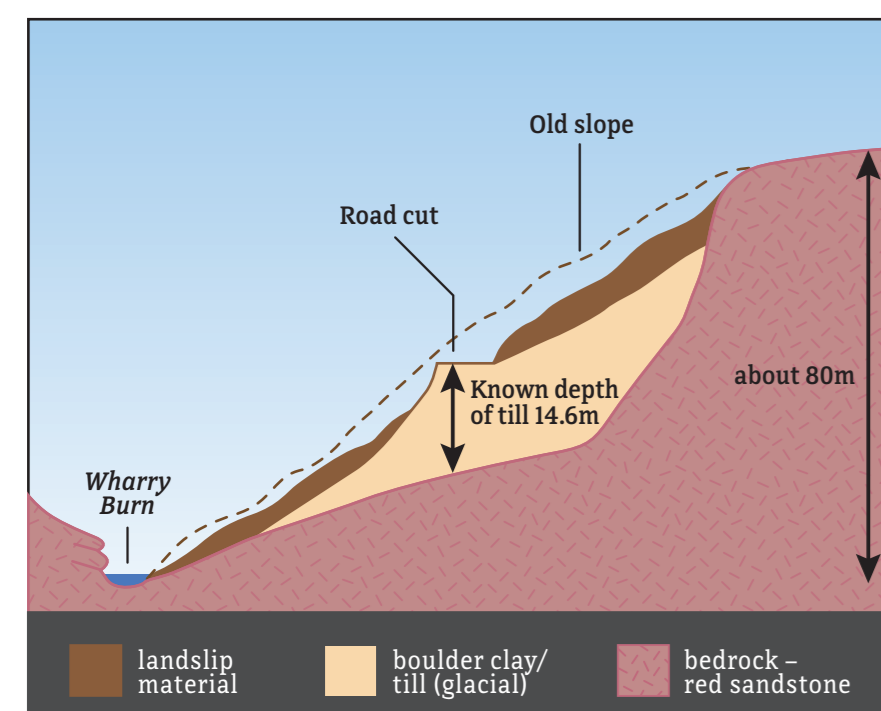


Diagram from Michael F Thomas, *Landslides of Kippenrait Glen* in FNI.

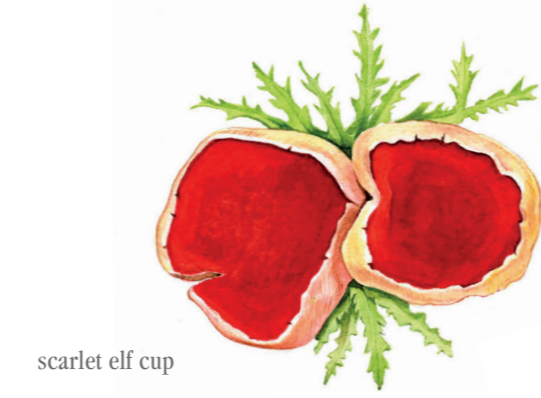
Kippenrait Glen and Glen Road



ash leaf



red squirrel



scarlet elf cup



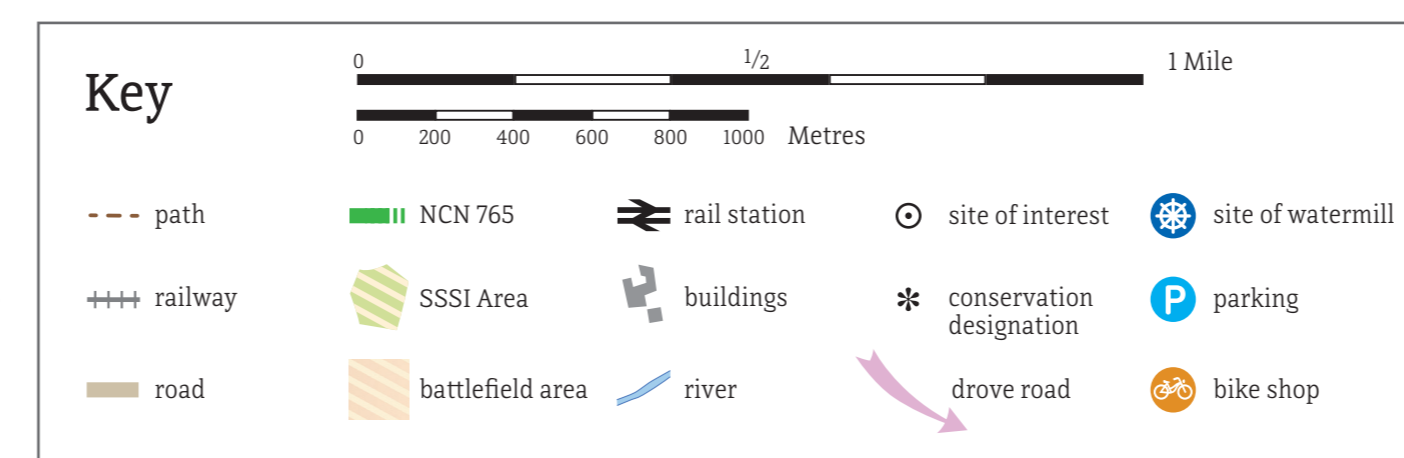
blue bells



bird's nest orchid



dipper



Droving

From 13th century reiving to their licensed heyday in 18th and 19th centuries, drovers led cattle and sheep the length of Scotland to the great Falkirk Tryst (130,000 cattle, 200,000 sheep autumn 1827). This mobile economy created the banking system and credit notes, and fed growing English towns and a navy busy fighting the French and protecting new colonies. A dispute at Stirling toll bridge caused a livestock traffic jam back to Bridge of Allan! Sheriffmuir Inn and Cauldhame gave welcome shelter after nights on the hills, and fed the border collies on their return journey home alone. The enriched ground provided crops, grazing and fine turves for Dunblane New Golf Club! Dunblane fairs were prized for oxen, hunting horses for the Stuart kings and artisan gloves.

Allanwater – food, power, mine and spa

The Allan Water is a salmon river, though past industry and current sewage have taken their toll. The Wharry Burn has excellent quality water and used to supply Dunblane. The rivers powered many mills, including 10 between Dunblane and Bridge of Allan; for corn/meal, flax, wool, cotton, silk, tartan, Pullars dye works, saw mills and paper. Copper was mined in the Glen near Bridge of Allan, and bawbees were struck at Stirling Mint for Queen Mary's coronation in 1543. The mineral waters which closed the mines were developed by Lord Abercrombie from 1820s into the "Queen of Scottish Spas" with popular pleasure walks along the river.



Many thanks to local volunteers maintaining Glen Road.

Battle on Sheriffmuir (13 Nov. 1715)

Many Scots felt humiliated by the terms of union with England in 1707 and the rejected Stuart monarchy which also had English supporters. But rebellion was now treason and punished by hanging, drawing and quartering or forfeiture of lands. Yet local landowner John Stirling joined the 7000 Jacobites camping by Kinbuck the frosty night before the fierce battle against 3000 government troops. The marshy ground forced heavy hand to hand fighting and both left wings were routed. Fleeing government troops leapt across stepping stones above the Wharry gorge back to Stirling castle. Here locals report ghostly sightings of a man in a long riding coat... The area continued to garrison many soldiers into the 20th century and hold army manoeuvres on Sheriffmuir. Soldiers practised for D-Day landings using Sheriffmuir Road as the beach and with live ammunition fired over their heads. Scots field skills helped to develop special forces such as the SAS.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850 – 1894)

Ill as a child, he spent many holidays in Bridge of Allan Spa. We believe that 'his cave' by the Allan Water inspired Ben Gunn's cave in *Treasure Island*. His visits to T S Smith and Old Glassingall near Dunblane provided models for David Balfour and the House of Shaws in *Kidnapped*.



KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

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

Further information is available at www.dunblane.info/ gathered from published material and local experts by volunteers from Glen Road Rescue Project.



The board was funded by Paths for All, CSET, and A4A. Design and artwork by Haas Design

