

# WORDS & PLACES

Understanding names on Scotland's Southern Coast





Corbies Cove

This guide is an introduction to coastal place names on the long and varied coast of Dumfries and Galloway. It has been produced as part of the Solway Coastwise project managed by Solway Firth Partnership and is the culmination of an innovative three-year project to share the meaning of place names and the stories behind them.

Solway Firth Partnership has produced several guides relating to place names on Scotland's Southern Coast:

#### A BEACH GUIDE

About beaches popular for a family outing as well as locations suitable for adventurous explorers and includes information about place names.



#### WILDLIFE GUIDE

About the creatures and plants that have inspired place names.



#### CAVES AND GRAVES GUIDE

About places and names connected to caves and burial sites.



#### TIDE ISLANDS & SHIFTING SANDS GUIDE

Tells the tales connected to islands, rocks and sands.



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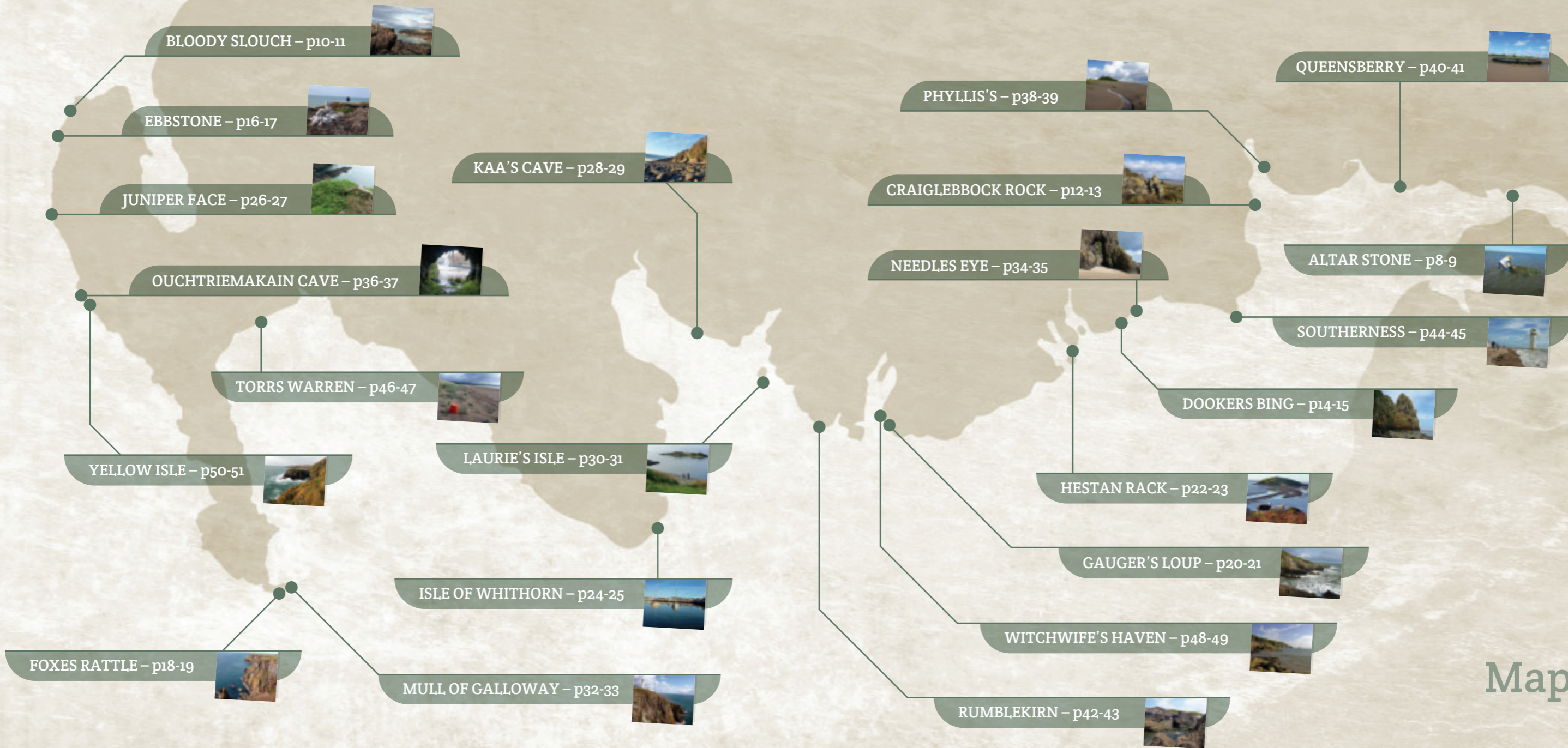
# Names set in stone

Evidence of the ebb and flow of people who lived on the Dumfries and Galloway coast can be seen in the place names we use to describe landmarks today. Like the Solway sands which shift with every tide so the spoken place name changes over time as it is re-told and reinterpreted. The publication of the first Ordnance Survey maps standardised place names so that the printed word became set in stone.

The early Ordnance Survey maps surveyed in the mid-1800s are the most comprehensive record we possess of coastal place names with over 1,000 names recorded along 200 miles of coastline. Place names were being gathered by surveyors long after Gaelic was spoken in the area so that the names we see on modern maps were spoken by people who had lost the original language of the place and recorded by surveyors who were unfamiliar with Scots words. Mistakes and misinterpretation was common at a time when place names were often a Scots phonological adaptation of earlier words or a translation of the original meaning. Through this process the derivation of place names has been blurred and sometimes new meanings created.

The complexity of how the sea meets with the land means there is a great diversity in the vocabulary used to identify landmarks. The following glossary explains some of the general descriptive words for landform and the more evocative words that help identify specific places.





Map



GRID REF: NY216639

# ALTAR STONE

## BOUNDARY MARKER

On the stony reef known as Whan Scar is an enigmatic boulder which often lies hidden below shifting sands. The extremely dynamic environment below the surface of the sea means huge quantities of sand and mud can be moved in a single tidal cycle to cover the stone for many years and then suddenly reveal the stone as the channels change position.

This large stone marks the parish and burgh boundary of Annan as well as defining the limit of fishing rights. Although it is a name that is noted from medieval times there is no evidence that the stone is the remains of an ancient altar. The name Altar Stone, or Otterstain, is more likely to have derived from it being the furthest boundary marker or Outer Stone.

Every July the traditional event of Annan Riding of the Marches celebrates the creation of the Royal Burgh by riding horses along the boundaries of the town. When the tides allow the horses ride out to the Altar Stone. If the stone is covered by sand the correct location is established by using landmarks.

- RELATED PLACE NAMES: BOUNDARY MARKERS**
- BROAD STONE - NX047627
  - ROCK MCGIBBON - NX081635

# BLOODY SLOUCH

## RED GULLY

Some locations are named after notable colours that make places distinct from the predominantly grey rocks on the coast. Bloody Slouch and Ship Slouch (usually pronounced slock), are rocky inlets west of Corsewall Lighthouse shown on old Ordnance Survey maps that suggest gory stories of shipwrecks. However, when Ordnance Survey surveyors quizzed locals in the 1840s about the meaning they noted “the name is said to arise from the circumstance the farmers bleeding their cattle [in] this place”. When the place is visited it becomes obvious that the name “Bloody” is a descriptive word inspired by the red coloured rocks exposed on the shore.

Slock and Slunk are words derived from the Gaelic *sloc* meaning pit or cavity and used to describe a gully scooped out by the hand of nature. A sea gully is formed by erosion of softer rocks through a combination of water force and abrasion from stones. Slowly the cavity is enlarged along lines of weakness sometimes breaking out onto the clifftop and forming blow holes. As the roof of the cave continues to collapse a slit appears and eventually a steep-sided narrow gully is created.

GRID REF: NW973716

### RELATED PLACE-NAMES: RED COLOUR

BLOODY NEUK - NX420360

BLOODY ROCK - NW973716

BUTCHER'S CAVE - NX367394

PORTENCORKRIE - NX089352



RELATED PLACE NAMES: FLOUNDER

FLEUK HOLE - NX332447



GRID REF: NX990638

## CRAIGLEBBOCK ROCK

### ROCK OF THE FLOUNDER ROCK

The flounder is a common flatfish found on the seabed where they lie concealed in the sand in order to prey on passing worms and small crustaceans. It often ventures inshore, where it can get trapped in pools left by the receding tide. The flounder in Scotland has never reached the top of the fine-dining flatfish hierarchy, like sole or plaice, but they can still make good eating. They are known as a Fleuk or Fluke in Scots or *leabag* in Gaelic. It is believed that the rocks named Craiglebbock on the west shore of the Nith Estuary is derived from the Gaelic *creag lèabag* meaning rock of the flounder. When the Gaelic meaning of the place name had been forgotten an additional Rock was added to the end of the name for good measure.

The place name probably identifies a good fishing spot and other examples include Lythe Mead where Lythe is Scots for young pollack or coalfish, Blockan Hole where blockan is Scots for pollack or coalfish, Partan Craig where partan is both Gaelic and Scots for edible crab and Lochanscaddan derived from *sgadan*, the Gaelic for herring.

# DOOKERS BING

## CORMORANT ROCK

Dookers Bing is a local name, held in the oral tradition, for a rock projection near Ducker Bay. The Scots words Ducker and Dooker, meaning diver, are used to describe any diving bird but here refer to the cormorant because of its habit of diving for fish by taking a leap from the sea's surface. These birds are known by several different names in south west Scotland. In Galloway cormorants have many nicknames, including Black Dookers and Dooky Divers, as well as Mochrum Lairds, Mochrum Elders and Elders of Colvend after the church elders who dressed in black.

Scart, a Scots word for cormorant is used on place names on the Rhins. It originated from the Old Norse word for cormorant, *skarfr*, which was borrowed into Gaelic, *sgarbh*, for cormorant.

Cormorants are striking birds with glossy black plumage and are often seen roosting and drying their feathers with a distinctive wing spreading posture on their favourite rocks. The word Bing is used for a large rock and is derived from an Old Norse word *bingr* meaning heap or pile.

GRID REF: NX873531

### RELATED PLACE NAMES: CORMORANT

DUCKER BAY - NX875532

DUCKER CRAIG - NX437348

DUCKER ROCK - NX450340

SCART CRAIG - NX101328 / NW961617

SCART CAVE - NX152303

SCARTY HEAD - NX044484





RELATED PLACE NAMES: TIDE ROCK

CARRICKAMURLAN - NX125312 / NX143319

EBBSEA CRAIG - NX088342

HALF EBB STONE - NX010525 / NX124313

HALFTIDE ROCK - NX672450 / NX824516

SPRING STANE - NX986547

SPRING STONES - NX844528



GRID REF: NW959692

# EBBSTONE

## AID TO NAVIGATION

Rocks named after the state of the tide are valuable aids to navigation allowing sailors to judge sailing conditions in the constantly changing waters of the Solway. Many ships have come to grief on the Laggan or Ebbstone Rocks - a sunken reef which is only exposed on the low (ebb) tide. In the 1850s a beacon was erected to warn ships of the danger and today only the concrete footings of the beacon can be seen off shore.

In the early hours of the morning of the 28th May 1856 the steam ship Princess Royal was running at full speed between Liverpool and Greenock when suddenly out of the fog loomed the beacon. The lookout shouted a warning but it was too late and the ship ploughed into the rocks. All 200 passengers and crew were saved but despite work to re-float the Princess Royal a storm blew up and the ship was sunk.

On the rocky foreshore is a curious cairn of chalk boulders. The most likely explanation seems to be that the chalk was surplus material imported from Northern Ireland to be processed in nearby limekilns for agricultural use.

# FOXES RATTLE

## FOX DEN

Foxes are common in the unmanaged margins along the Dumfries and Galloway coast. Although they are secretive creatures, they can be seen in early mornings or evenings searching for food in scrubby areas or scavenging along the strandline. Foxes are sometimes spotted at the base of the cliffs of the Mull of Galloway where Foxes Rattle is marked on older maps. Rattle is a term that is unique to the Rhins, and describes a heap of loose stones used by foxes for a den.

Adjacent to Foxes Rattle a place name Inchshalloch is shown on old maps to identify a small promontory on the cliffs at the Mull of Galloway. This name might be derived from Gaelic *innis* meaning Isle, where the word isle is often used to describe small rocks close to the shore rather than the more traditional meaning of an island, and *sionnach* meaning fox. An example of different names at the same location with similar meanings.

The Scots word brock, meaning badger, appears at Brock's Cove and Brock's Holes. The name appears to be a reference to caves resembling a badger sett rather than a place where badgers are found.

GRID REF: NX154302



### RELATED PLACE NAMES: FOX AND BADGER

BROCK'S COVE - NX092394

BROCK'S HOLES - NX800475

FOX RATTLE - NX045488



GRID REF: NX673448

# GAUGER'S LOUP

## CUSTOMS OFFICER CLIFF

Smuggling was a way of life for many on the Dumfries and Galloway coast during the 1700s. In the early 1800s the novelist Sir Walter Scott wrote tales of ruthless smugglers in a lawless Galloway. The popularity of his book quickly led to local people naming landmarks after fictional events and Scott noted in his book 'Guy Mannering'; *'strangers who visit this place, the scenery which is highly romantic, are also shown, under the name of Gauger's Loup, a tremendous precipice, being the same, it is asserted, from which Kennedy is precipitated'*. The story involves smugglers kidnaping a boy after he witnesses them murdering a customs officer or gauger named Kennedy by making him leap or loup off a cliff. Loup is used in other place names to describe any legendary leap.

A cave near to the cliff was also renamed as Dirk Hatteraick's Cove, after the fictional character who Scott based on a notorious real smuggler called Jack Yawkins. Although the name of Dirk Haterraick's Cove has reverted to Torrs Cave, the cliff is still marked on maps as Gauger's Loup.

**RELATED PLACE NAMES: SMUGGLERS**

BRANDY COVE - NX884541

BRANDY CRAIG - NX688436

DIRK HATTERAICK'S COVE - NX677445

MEG MERRILEES OR DIRK HATTERAICK'S CAVE - NX518526

# HESTAN RACK

## CAUSEWAY TO HESTAN ISLAND

Hestan Island in the mouth of Auchencairn Bay lies in one of the three National Scenic Areas on the Dumfries and Galloway coast. The island can only be reached on foot when the Rack or causeway is exposed at very low tides.

The proximity of the Horses Isle nearby suggests the island is named after the horses that once grazed on the island or may simply follow a Scandinavian habit which is common in the north of Scotland of using the word for stallion or horse, *hestr* to identify rocks or islands.

The causeway to the tidal island is known as Hestan Rack where rack is a Scots word used to describe a ford, or ridge of gravel or shallow place in a stream or tidal water. It may be derived from Scandinavian *rák* meaning direct or straight and in this case a tidal causeway leading directly to the island. Beware! The tidal island of Hestan should only be visited with a thorough knowledge of the Solway tides.

GRID REF: NX837509



### RELATED PLACE NAMES: HORSE

HESTAN ISLAND - NX838501

HORSE ISLES - NX839522

MARE ROCK - NW959648

HORSE MARK - NX560504

YELLOW HORSE - NX084364



GRID REF: NX479362

# ISLE OF WHITHORN

## ISLAND AT THE PORT FOR WHITHORN

Today it is not immediately obvious where the isle of Isle of Whithorn is located. The place name refers to the island that once sheltered the bay and created a safe haven for shipping. It was only in the late 1700s that the tidal causeway that connected the island to the mainland was raised and a row of houses built upon it. A tale is told of smugglers who sailed into the harbour while being chased by the customs and excise. The customs men thought the smugglers had been trapped but when they tied up their revenue cutter there was no sign of the vessel they were pursuing. It was high tide and the smugglers had made a daring escape over the flooded causeway and avoided capture.

Isle is used in the traditional meaning of an island or the sometime islands which become accessible on foot at low tide. However, in the west of Galloway the word Isle is also used to describe a rock or rocky outcrop close to the shore.

**RELATED PLACE NAMES: ISLE**

ISLES OF BURROW - NX462341

ISLE OF PARTAN - NX088343

PARTAN ISLES - NW985553

# JUNIPER FACE

## CLIFF WHERE JUNIPER GROWS

Juniper is a long-lived, native tree with 'berries' that are used to flavour food and drink. They thrive in some of the harshest environments in Scotland and are found on remote crags in upland areas and on the coast where it grows flattened against exposed rock faces. This very slow growing plant forms a low growing carpet with a gnarled trunk and can be over 200 years old. Junipers are found on the Rhins coast, but you need a keen eye to spot it clinging onto high cliffs.

Trees rarely feature in Dumfries and Galloway coastal place names although lone hawthorns are a notable exception and appear as landmarks on old maps. Perhaps the reason these trees were notable in the landscape was because superstitious people believed it was unlucky to cut them down and so they lived to a great age. Examples of thorns in place names can be found on maps at the settlement of Carsethorn and at the Ferrythorn which marks an ancient ferry crossing at Creetown.

GRID REF: NW959650

### RELATED PLACE NAMES: BUSH OR TREES

BORETREE HEUGH - NX837502

CARSETHORN - NX991599

FERRYTHORN - NX472584

FISHERS' BUSH - NY005661

JUNIPER ROCK - NW959648





GRID REF: NX518526

# KAA'S CAVE

## JACKDAW OR CHOUGH CAVE

Kaa's Cave near Carsluith and Keaw Cove on the rocky shore west of Kirkcudbright refers to birds nesting in caves. Keaw and Kaa are Scots names for jackdaw but may also referred to the 'red-legged jackdaw' or chough that habitually nested on cliffs on the Galloway coast but are now extinct in the area.

Corbies Cove and Ravens Nest are place names identifying nesting sites. Corby is a Scots name for the raven, the largest of the crow family, with a distinct shape and a heavy bill. Tumbling in the updrafts of a sea cliff the 'gronking' call of a raven is one of the most evocative sounds of our rugged shoreline. Ravens often return to the same spot each spring and bring new nest material so that nests become large, untidy piles of sticks. These towers of sticks may remain as a landmark long after the nest has been abandoned.

**RELATED PLACE NAMES: CHOUGH, JACKDAW AND RAVEN**

CORBIES COVE - NX528522

KEAW COVE - NX675446

RAVEN'S NEST - NX673450 / NX719434

# LAURIE'S ISLE

ISLAND WHERE  
LAURENCE LIVED

Ardwall Island is a tidal or sometime island that is named after the estate it now forms part of. Locally it is also known as Laurie's or Larry's Isle and this alternative name held in oral tradition refers to a fisherman and shepherd, Laurence O'Hagan. He originally came from Ireland and lived in a humble cottage on the island 150 years ago. Known as Laurie Higgin, he was believed to be a good boatman but drowned one morning in June 1867 when returning to the island from Gatehouse of Fleet. There are a number of tall tales of Laurie being involved in smuggling or wrecking to supplement his income and establish a tavern on the island.

There is often an element of truth to these stories and although by the time Laurie lived on the island the smuggling trade was in decline there are several secret 'brandy holes' where contraband could have been hidden. Archaeologists excavating a monastery site on the island revealed the remains of what appeared to be a tavern established long before Laurie lived there.

GRID REF: NX571493



RELATED PLACE NAMES: TIDAL ROCKS AND PEOPLE

MARION'S ISLE - NX146337

RICHARDSON'S ROCK - NX655432





GRID REF: NX155305

# MULL OF GALLOWAY

## BARE PROMONTORY OF GALLOWAY

Coastal cliffs provide some of our most spectacular views and with so many rocky projections into the sea it is not surprising to find numerous place names including the words Point or Head but some use more obscure words to describe a promontory.

The Mull of Galloway at the southern tip of Scotland on the Rhins feels remote and wild on a blustery day and is a spectacular location to visit at any time of year. The Mull takes its name from the Gaelic *maol* meaning a bold bare summit but it is commonly used to describe windswept promontories in Dumfries and Galloway including the Mull of Logan, Mull of Sanninness and Mull of Ross. At the northern extremity of the Rhins the headland is named Milleur Point which is derived from the Gaelic *maol odhar* meaning grey promontory. The Rhins, is a name used to name the land in the far west of Wigtownshire, is derived from the Gaelic *rinn* meaning promontory or point and describes the headlands either end of the hammer head shaped peninsula. The same word can be found marking smaller promontories including Ringwee, *rinn bhuidhe*, meaning yellow point and Ringdoo, *rinn dubh*, meaning black point.

### RELATED PLACE NAMES: PROMONTORY

MILLEUR POINT - NX018736

MULL OF LOGAN - NX076418

MULL POINT - NX634446

MULL OF SINNINESS - NX227517

RINGDOO POINT - NX606455 / NX171555

RINGWEE - NW991547 / NX148347

# NEEDLES EYE

## NARROW ARCH

Two tall narrow arches on the Colvend coast have been christened as Needles Eye as a metaphor for their distinctive shape and perhaps refers to the biblical quote 'it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God'. Arches, large or small, are created by the erosion of cracks and faults where the action of the sea slowly grinds out a hole in a projecting rock face. There are many examples of arches along the coast but most of them are below high water mark or not remarkable enough to have earned a place name on a map.

Throughout Dumfries and Galloway remnants of old-world customs linger as place names. These suggest a time when superstitions held an important influence on the lives of local people. Arches were often thought to be un-natural and therefore the work of the devil and known as Devil's Arch or Bridge. The largest 'Devil's Bridge' is found north of Port Logan where the arch springs out of a high cliff and plunges into the sea below.

GRID REF: NX889544



### RELATED PLACE NAMES: ARCH

DEVIL'S ARCH - NX461341 / NX437348

DEVIL'S BRIDGE - NX075417 / NX461341

LITTLE BRIDGE - NX081416

NEEDLES EYE - NX914561



GRID REF: NW992551

# OUCHTRIEMAKAIN CAVE

## MCKEAND'S SUMMIT CAVE

Two small caves at the back of Port Mora (known locally as Sandeel Bay) north of Portpatrick are named on old maps. Ouchtrimackin Cave, named after a nearby farm and is probably derived from Gaelic *uachdar* meaning summit and the local name McKeand. It was believed to be the retreat of a hermit and is now more often known as Monks Cave. The other, called Dropping Cave, was named after the water falling over the mouth of the cave. It was reputed to have kill or cure properties for children with whooping cough.

Belief in the properties of holy or healing water made some coastal locations important places for curing disease, particularly those affecting children. Some were known for healing particular afflictions and usually involved bathing, washing or drinking rituals. Certain days were said to be more effective than others; with the first Sunday in May being known as Co' Sunday (Cave Sunday) when it was a tradition to leave gifts after visiting.

- RELATED PLACE NAMES: HEALING PLACES**
- BROW WELL - NY085675
  - CHAPEL WELL - NX143315
  - PETER'S PAPS - NX076422
  - ST MADANA'S WELL - NX364400

# PHYLLIS'S

## PROMONTORY WHERE PHYLLIS LIVED

Known as Phyllis's by local people the low promontory on the east side of the Nith estuary is marked on maps as Scar Point. The name Scar originates from an old Norse word *sker* meaning rock in the sea and is found in the Scares, islands in the middle of Luce Bay. In south west Scotland, it is mostly used to describe a reef littered with rocks which are exposed at low water on the tidal flats. Scar Point joins many other Scars named in the inner Solway including Corbelly Scar, Bowhouse Scar, Rough Scar, Brewing Scar, Powfoot Scar, Howgarth Scar and Whan Scar.

It was in this area where Phyllis Laurie lived in a shack until she died in 1942 at the age of 72. Phyllis was a local character who was feared by the local children. As local resident Stephen Powell still remembers; "As boys....we all thought 'of course she's not a witch', but none of us really put it to the test – in case we overstepped the mark and turned into a frog or something!" This area is still known as Phyllis's by local people.

GRID REF: NY005661

RELATED PLACE NAMES: HOMES ON THE SHORE

JOHNNY LOGIES - NX375387



**RELATED PLACE NAMES: FOUNDERS**

GARLIESTON - NX477464

PORT LOGAN - NX096404

PORT WILLIAM - NX337435

STAIRHAVEN - NX208536



GRID REF: NY148654

# QUEENSBERRY

VILLAGE PLANNED BY  
MARQUESS OF QUEENSBERRY

For a number of years Queensberry was an alternative name for Powfoot. A Pow is a slow-moving, ditch-like river, flowing through coastal land and Foot describes the point where it enters the sea.

By the early 1800s the Marquess of Queensberry had a traditional terrace of cottages built on the shore that offered lodging for sea bathers seeking cures for numerous ailments. The new village was called Queensberry as it was common for planned settlements to be named after their founder. Other examples include Port Logan after Colonel Andrew MacDowall of Logan, Stair Haven after the Earl of Stair, Port William after William Maxwell of Monreith and Garlieston after Alexander Stewart Lord Garlies son of the Earl of Galloway. However the name Queensberry did not stick and the place name reverted to Powfoot.

The Edwardian red brick houses and circular bathing pool are all that were completed of an ambitious plan to create a new seaside resort at Powfoot. It was designed to rival Blackpool but the development was disrupted by the First World War and remains a seaside village.

# RUMBLEKIRN

## NOISY CAVE

*Kirn* is Scots for churn and the rummel or rumble refers to a place that resembles a churn in noise or motion.

The Scottish Gallovidian Encyclopedia describes a Rummlekirn as *'gullets on wild rocky shores, scooped out by the hand of nature; when the tide flows into them in a storm, they make an awful rumbling noise'*.

The rumbling sound is the noise of erosion as stones whirled round by waves wear away rock to form sea caves. The vertical joints found on many rock formations lead to the cave, referred to as a cove in local place names, being enlarged along lines of weakness sometimes breaking out onto the clifftop and forming blow holes. As the roof of the cave continues to collapse, a slit is often formed and eventually a steep-sided narrow gully or slock is created. Further erosion creates small bays often referred in place names as slunks or holes.

GRID REF: NX622445

### RELATED PLACE NAMES: SOUNDS

CLINKING COVE - NX691436

CLINKING HAVEN - NX662490

THUNDER HOLE - NX657440

THUNDER HOLE BAY - NX656441

RUMBLEKIRN - NX596473



**RELATED PLACE NAMES: SALT MAKING**

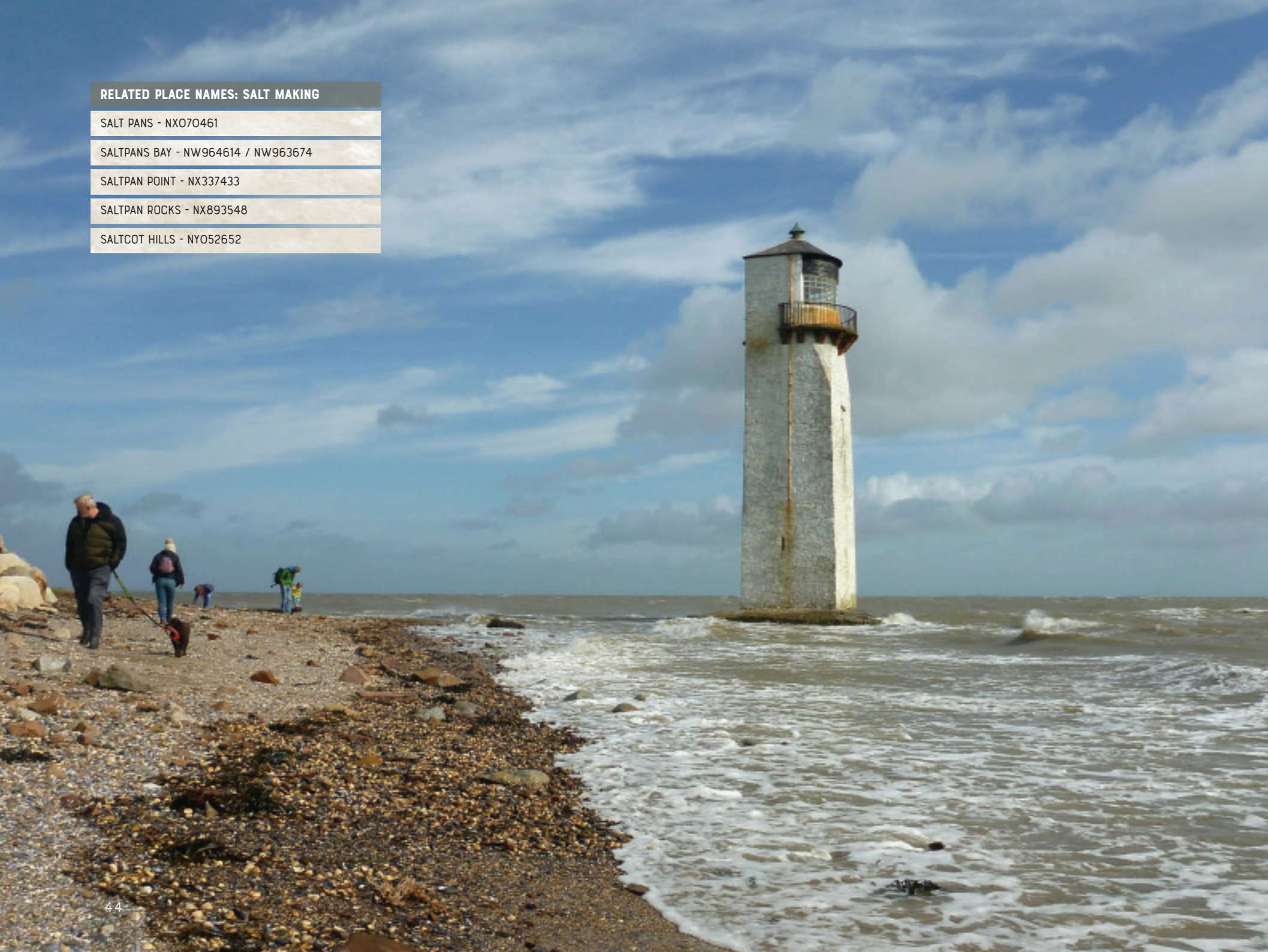
SALT PANS - NX070461

SALTPANS BAY - NW964614 / NW963674

SALTPAN POINT - NX337433

SALTPAN ROCKS - NX893548

SALTCOT HILLS - NY052652



GRID REF: NX977542

# SOUTHERNESS

## SALT MAKERS PROMONTORY

Southernness is a small village constructed in the 1760s around the base of a lighthouse, erected to warn sailing ships approaching Dumfries of the dangerous rocky promontory. Southernness appears to describe a southern point, where ness originates from the Old Norse word *nes*, meaning promontory. However, the modern name is misleading because research shows Southernness is a corruption of its old name Salterness, meaning salt maker's promontory.

Salt making was an extremely important industry for the preservation of food especially fish and meat. The manufacturing process involved the boiling of salty water, collected from rock pools known as bucket pots or extracted from salty mud on the shore called sleetch. Wood, peat or coal was used to heat the salty water in shallow metal pans until salt crystals were formed. This highly seasonal industry collapsed when tax on salt imports were reduced in the early 1800s and has left few physical remains in the landscape. Evidence of the many salt works along the Solway coast is found in medieval monastic manuscripts and a small number of salt place names.

# TORRS WARREN

## HILLY RABBIT ENCLOSURE

Torr is a Gaelic word meaning conical hill, mound or heap. The farms of Low, Mid and High Torrs were all located on the undulating sand dunes at the head of Luce Bay. Romans were the first to bring rabbits to the United Kingdom, however, these three farms were within the holdings of the Cistercian monastery at Glenluce Abbey and the monks may have been responsible for the introduction of rabbits to the area. In the late 1700s a written account mentions a warren where rabbits were being farmed to export skins to the English market and carcasses sold to local people at four pence a pair. By the mid 1800s it is noted that great numbers of rabbits are found on the coast and 15,000 dozen are killed yearly.

The names of nearby farms Genoch Mains and Genoch Square are derived from the Gaelic *gainmheach* meaning sandy. The meaning is duplicated in the name of the settlement of Sandhead at the head of Luce Bay.

GRID REF: NX143550

### RELATED PLACE NAMES: SAND

GENOCH MAINS - NX136564

GENOCH ROCKS - NW967706

GENOCH SQUARE - NX133559

SANDHEAD - NX098498





RELATED PLACE NAMES: WITCH

NORTH WITCH ROCK - NW993544

SOUTH WITCH ROCK - NX002534



GRID REF: NX672452

# WITCHWIFE'S HAVEN

## POINTED STACK BAY

The reason this sheltered bay at the mouth of the River Dee in Kirkcudbright Bay was named after a witch is not clear. Several pointed columns of rock or stacks surrounded by sea have been associated with witches, such as North Witch Rock at Portpatrick and it may be that the sea stack within this bay has inspired the place name.

Witchwife's Haven is no longer marked on maps but it remains a haven for small boats waiting for the tides to change, or sheltering from an unfavourable wind. Today it is known by sailors as Flint Bay because of the many flints found only in this location. A wreck in January 1816 provides an explanation for this geological oddity. The sloop, 'Ellen and Agnes', laden with beef, hides, and flint was lost here and three crew were drowned. All that remains is a bay scattered with the cargo of flints and a place name that is part of our oral tradition.

# YELLOW ISLE

## LICHEN COVERED ROCKS

Colours are commonly used in place names usually referring to rocks covered in red and green alga or black and yellow lichen. The contorted rocks are grey but on every exposed cliff face the surface is coated with horizontal stripes of colour. The base the cliff is beige where barnacles live in the intertidal zone, further up is a band of black tar lichen that creates a tideline along the splash zone and above that the grey and bright yellow lichens that give Yellow Isle its name. In some place names the colour yellow appears as Buie, a corruption of the Gaelic word *buidhe*, which has sometimes been shortened to Wee and probably explains why Wee Cave, located between Yellow Isle and Ringwee, is so big!

Many place names refer to the colour black which might describe the colour of the lichens or to a dark or forbidding location. The Gaelic for black, *dubh*, is often corrupted to the word doo and may be easily confused with the Scots for dove, particularly in caves inhabited by rock-doves.

GRID REF: NW991547



### RELATED PLACE NAMES: YELLOW

BENBUIE - NX369393

BENWEE - NX139307

WEE CAVE - NW992548

RINGWEE - NW991547 / NX148347

## GLOSSARY

|                              |                                |    |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----|
| Altar Stone                  | Outer (marker) stone           | 9  |
| Benbuie                      | Yellow Hill                    | 51 |
| Blockan Hole                 | Fish pool - fishing mark       | 13 |
| Bloody Slouch                | Red gully                      | 10 |
| Bloody Neuk/Rock             | Red corner /rock               | 11 |
| Boretree Heugh               | Elder tree cliff               | 27 |
| Brandy Cove / Craig          | Smugglers cave / rocks         | 20 |
| Broad Stone                  | Wide (marker) stone            | 8  |
| Brock's Cove / Brock's Holes | Badgers cave                   | 18 |
| Brow Well                    | Ridge well                     | 36 |
| Butcher's Cave               | Red cave                       | 11 |
| Carsethorn                   | Thorn tree on low-lying land   | 26 |
| Carrickamurlan               | High tide rock                 | 16 |
| Chapel Well                  | Holy and healing pool          | 36 |
| Clinking Cove / Haven        | Noisy cave / bay               | 43 |
| Corbies Cove                 | Ravens cave                    | 29 |
| Craiglebbock                 | Flounder rock                  | 13 |
| Devil's Arch/Bridge          | Natural arch work of the devil | 34 |
| Dirk Hatteraick's Cove       | Smugglers cave                 | 21 |
| Dookers Bing                 | Cormorant rock                 | 14 |
| Ducker Bay / Craig / Rock    | Cormorant bay / rock           | 15 |
| Ebbsea Craig                 | Tidal aid to navigation        | 16 |
| Ebbstone                     | Tidal aid to navigation        | 17 |
| Ferrythorn                   | Tree marking ferry crossing    | 26 |
| Fishers' Bush                | Tree providing shelter         | 27 |
| Flint Bay                    | Flint (lost cargo) bay         | 49 |
| Fleuk Hole                   | Flounder pool                  | 12 |
| Foxes Rattle / Fox Rattle    | Fox den                        | 18 |

|                               |                              |    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----|
| Garlieston                    | Lord Garlies planned village | 41 |
| Gauger's Loup                 | Customsman cliff             | 21 |
| Genoch                        | Sandy                        | 46 |
| Halfebb Stone / Halftide Rock | Tidal aid to navigation      | 16 |
| Hestan Island                 | Horse island                 | 22 |
| Hestan Rack                   | Horse island causeway        | 22 |
| Horse Mark                    | Rock mark                    | 23 |
| Inchshalloch                  | Fox island                   | 18 |
| Isle of Whithorn              | Island at port for Whithorn  | 25 |
| Isles of Burrow               | Rocks near settlement        | 24 |
| Isle of Partan                | Crab rock                    | 24 |
| Juniper Face                  | Cliff where juniper grows    | 26 |
| Juniper Rock                  | Rock where juniper grows     | 27 |
| Johnny Logies                 | Where Johnny Logie lived     | 39 |
| Kaa's Cave                    | Jackdaw cave                 | 29 |
| Keaw Cove                     | Jackdaw cave                 | 29 |
| Laurre's Isle / Larry's Isle  | Island where Larry lived     | 30 |
| Little Bridge                 | Natural arch                 | 35 |
| Lochanscadden                 | Herring pool                 | 13 |
| Lythe Mead                    | Fish meadow                  | 13 |
| Mare Rock                     | Rock                         | 23 |
| Marion's Isle                 | Rock where Marion drowned    | 31 |
| Meg Merrilees Cave            | Smugglers cave               | 20 |
| Milleur Point                 | Bare promontory              | 33 |
| Mull of Galloway              | Bare promontory              | 33 |
| Mull of Logan / Sinniness     | Bare promontory              | 33 |
| Mull Point                    | Bare promontory              | 33 |
| Needles Eye                   | Narrow natural arch          | 34 |
| Ouchtriemakain Cave           | Mckeand's Summit Cave        | 37 |
| Partan Craig                  | Edible crab rock             | 13 |

|                              |                                     |    |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----|
| Peter's Paps                 | St Peter's breast / healing cave    | 36 |
| Portancorkrie                | Red port                            | 11 |
| Port Logan                   | MacDowell of Logan village          | 41 |
| Port William                 | William Maxwell of Monreith village | 41 |
| Phyllis's                    | Where Phyllis lived                 | 38 |
| Queensbury                   | Marquess of Queensbury village      | 41 |
| Raven's Nest                 | Raven haunt                         | 29 |
| Richardson's Rock            | Rock where Janet escaped            | 31 |
| Ringdoo                      | Black point                         | 33 |
| Ringwee                      | Yellow point                        | 33 |
| Rock McGibbon                | McGibbon's (marker) stone           | 8  |
| Rumblekirn / Rummlekirn      | Noisy cave                          | 42 |
| Sandhead                     | Sand at top of bay                  | 46 |
| Saltcot Hills / Saltpan      | Salt manufacture                    | 44 |
| Scart Craig / Cave           | Cormorant rock / cave               | 15 |
| Scarty Head                  | Cormorant promontory                | 15 |
| Scares                       | Rock in the sea                     | 38 |
| Southernness                 | Saltmakers point                    | 45 |
| Spring Stones / Spring Stane | Tidal aid to navigation             | 16 |
| Stairhaven                   | Lord Stair's port                   | 41 |
| St Madana's Well             | Holy / healing spring               | 36 |
| Thunder Hole / Bay           | Noisy cave / bay                    | 43 |
| Torrs Cave                   | Cave on Torr (Hilly) Farm           | 21 |
| Torrs Warren                 | Hilly rabbit enclosure              | 46 |
| Wee Cave                     | Yellow cave                         | 50 |
| Whan Scar                    | Stoney hollow                       | 9  |
| Witchwife's Haven            | Pointed stack bay                   | 49 |
| Witch Rock                   | Pointed stack                       | 49 |
| Yellow Horse                 | Yellow rock                         | 23 |
| Yellow Isle                  | Yellow coloured rock                | 50 |



Solway Firth  
  
Partnership



Front cover: Hestan Island