

# ...BULLETIN

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## BALLATER STATION ENFLAMED



Members and guests of the Panel for Historical Engineering Works will no longer be able to await the arrival of Her Victorian Majesty — who would no doubt be most unamused — or even their own 21st-century motor coach outside Ballater Railway Station following a fire in the early hours of 12 May that left much of the building as a burnt-out skeleton. The fire brigade were called to the Old Royal Station at around 2 a.m., by which time the building was well alight. They managed to save a replica of the railway carriage in which Queen Victoria had travelled to and from her Braemar territories but the mannequins standing obsequiously in the museum display had all their clothes burnt off. Safety fears initially delayed investigation into the cause of the blaze but by early June it had been concluded that there were “no suspicious circumstances”. Aberdeenshire Council has vowed to rebuild the station by 2017, retaining as many original features as it can.



## THE A712: “OLD EDINBURGH ROAD” AND “THE QUEEN’S WAY”

The “Old Edinburgh Road” is named on the current 1 : 25 000 scale (Explorer) #319, Ordnance Survey map, “Galloway Forest Park South”: NX 6277, NX 5977, NX 5274 and NX 4468. It is also named at NX 5274 on the current 1 : 50 000 scale (Landranger) #77 and at NX 4468 on 1 : 50 000 scale (Landranger) #83.

The road originated as part of the long pilgrim way from Edinburgh to Whithorn via Biggar, Leadhills, Durisdeer, Penpont, Dalry, and Minnigaff (Newton Stewart). Parts of the route now lie beneath existing roads and forest tracks while short lengths have been submerged by the Galloway Hydro-Electric Development. Many of the earlier parts of the route are debatable as a multiplicity of tracks were formed and lost over the centuries. The road began to be re-engineered in the late 18th century and almost all the present A712 follows that alignment over 200 years later.

Alex Anderson studied the ground and the documented history of the western half of the road for fifty years. The following attempts to summarise his exhaustive historical findings as published in 2010, but re-arranged in an east-to-west sequence.

### KEN BRIDGE (NX 640783) – CLATTERINGSHAWS (NX 551763)

The Royal Burgh of New Galloway was created in 1630. It is uncertain whether its site was chosen because it was an existing crossroads or if the road developed to pass through the new burgh; the former is regarded as more likely. The present A712 through New Galloway dates from around 1802; an older road runs up the “official” Old Edinburgh Road across the High Street and onwards by the West Port to the junction with the present A712 at Achie (NX 621774). Westwards from here the older road, which was superseded in 1810, can be seen on the north side of the present A712. The older road reached the crossing of the Dee near Clatteringshaws. From the junction with the Craigshinnie road the older road runs south of and roughly parallel to the A712 to a point opposite the Forestry Commission car park at Clatteringshaws, where it can be seen descending through a field gate, after which it would descend into what is now the reservoir.

### CLATTERINGSHAWS

By 1721 there was a bridge here, the “High Bridge of Dee”, its site is now submerged by Clatteringshaws reservoir. The bridge is reputed to have been built in 1703 by the Synod of Dumfries “with a difficult ascent at both ends [and] an inconvenient angle in the middle”, which is likely to have been caused by the difficulty of finding suitable foundations in the irregular bed of the river. It is suggested that the bridge may have been timber rather than a stone arch or arches. In 1790 that site was abandoned and Clatteringshaws Bridge was built for the Commissioners of Supply on a new site aligned with a completely new line of road in a valley to the south of the previous route. The three-arch stone bridge [pictured right] was built by the well-known Dumfries contractor John McCracken.



It lies below the Clatteringshaws Dam beside the present concrete bridge, which was built in 1930 in lieu of compensation for the “extraordinary traffic” arising from the hydro-electric scheme.

## CLATTERINGSHAWS – CRAIGDEWS (NX 504723)

West of Clatteringshaws the pre-1786 road continued in the valley to the north-west of the present A712 past the Lily Loch (Lillie's Loch on some maps), Tonderghie (the latter reputed to have been an inn, now a ruin) and the Black Loch to the Grey Mare's Tail Burn. Parts of this section are now forest roads. The road turned down the side of the burn at a rocky precipice, the Saddle Loup. There are substantial remains of a deliberately made loop road over a shoulder of Craigdews. There is no record of when this loop road was made, probably after 1776 but before 1782.

In 1786 the Commissioners of Supply began planning a new road. This road, now the A712, on a typical 18th-century alignment began with relatively long straight lengths for two miles south-west of Clatteringshaws Bridge to about NX 532738. Here the character of the road suddenly changes to a more sinuous course following the shape of the ground on a uniform gradient. This is the point where Basil William, Lord Daar, eldest son of the Earl of Selkirk, took over. He had been pioneering a system of laying out roads to a uniform gradient and up till then had done so only on his father's estates. The system was adopted by the Road Trustees in 1796 for all their roads. Lord Daar's road continued by the present road to near Craigdews, where (now a Forestry road) it turned right up the valley to join the old road west of Tonderghie and continued towards the Saddle Loup. To avoid this precipice the road crossed the burn and continued up the shoulder of the Fell of Talnotry on a typical "Daar" alignment to a summit and then descended to the Loch o' the Lowes and beyond. Lord Daar's road survives as a very wet route alongside the loch with the present Forestry road higher up the slope to the south.

## CRAIGDEWS – CALGOW (NX 430652)

In the turnpike era the present alignment of the A712 began to be built from Calgow, the junction with what was the "Military Road", now the A75, eastwards to join Lord Daar's road to the east of Craigdews. Work was begun in 1800 on a winding alignment based on the now-deceased Lord Daar's principles and set out by his land surveyor, John Gillone, who as "County Surveyor" carried out the work. (In 1802 Gillone began the eastern length from New Galloway to Achie also on Lord Daar's principles.)

## AFTER 1810

The alignment of the A712 remains as intended for the horse-drawn carts that had began to replace pack-ponies as the principal means of moving goods in Galloway at the end of the 18th-century. Only two changes in alignment were made after 1810, a length in the 1930s when the Clatteringshaws Dam was built and a smaller realignment when the Grey Mare's Tail Bridge was destroyed by a flood on 26th August 1960 and a new bridge built on a different alignment.

In 1977 the 17-mile (27-km) scenic stretch of the A712 from New Galloway to Newton Stewart was designated by the Forestry Commission as part of the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations, and a marker stone naming it "The Queen's Way" was unveiled by Princess Anne on the 27th July of that year. "The Queen's Way" is named on the current Ordnance Survey maps.

## SOURCE

All of the facts and much of the text for the above were extracted from:  
ANDERSON, Alexander David; Old Edinburgh Road in Dumfriesshire and Galloway; *The Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, Vol.84, p.101-119 (2010).  
RCMcW, 21 June 2015



**IMPORTANT  
ANNOUNCEMENT  
ABOUT FORTH  
BRIDGE** — see  
overleaf for details.

## FORTH BRIDGE BECOMES SIXTH ALONGSIDE CORNED BEEF

The World Heritage Committee met in Bonn, Germany, in July 2015. It discussed and then included 24 cultural sites in the world heritage list, others being rejected, deferred or referred. A quarter of these newly-inscribed cultural properties are industrial or transport-related, themes still stated to be under-represented on the list. One of them has the distinctive shape that served as the Scottish Industrial Heritage Society logo, on its membership leaflet and on the rear of National Entitlement Cards (bus passes to the cognoscenti).

Railway to the top of the world? →

**The Forth Bridge (United Kingdom)** — its distinctive industrial aesthetic the result of a forthright and unadorned display of its structural components. “The Nomination should serve as an example. It is short, precise and convincing,” (said Germany); “We are inspired and encouraged to see the possibilities of such a significant site as the Forth Bridge on the world heritage list”



(Jamaica); “an outstanding structure of the 19th century, an example of human ingenuity and labour. We further congratulate the UK for the conservation of this bridge that allows continuous use since its inauguration in 1890. The World Heritage will certainly be improved with the inscription of the Forth Bridge” (Portugal).



↑ À Bonn, très bon: Miles Oglethorpe (HS), Marco Biagi MSP, Sharron Jeffrey (Transport Scotland),  
↑ Keith Nichol (DCMS), Ian Heigh (Network Rail), Matt Sudders (UK Ambassador), Mark Watson (HS).

Historic Scotland wrote the nomination in consultation with local communities and the Forth Bridges Forum. It was represented in Bonn by Miles Oglethorpe and Mark Watson. Network Rail, Transport Scotland, Historic England, DCMS and DFID (the UK Ambassador to UNESCO) were also represented. Marco Biagi, Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment in the Scottish Government, received the inscription with a suitable two-minute speech.

Other listed industrial properties include:

**Rjukan-Notodden Industrial Heritage Site (Norway)** — hydroelectric power plants, transmission lines, factories, transport systems and company towns in a dramatic landscape of mountains, manifest an exceptional combination of industrial assets and themes of new global industry in the early 20th century.

**Speicherstadt and Kontorhaus District with Chilehaus (Germany)** — built on a group of narrow islands in the Elbe, Hamburg, a coherent ensemble of port warehouses (300 000m<sup>2</sup>) exemplifies rapid growth in international trade between 1885 and 1927.

**Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining (Japan)** — considered the first successful transfer of Western industrialisation to Asia.

**Aqueduct of Padre Tembleque Hydraulic System (Mexico)** — 1530-1560, the highest single-level arcade ever built along water catchment attributes.

**Fray Bentos Cultural-Industrial Landscape (Uruguay)** — illustrates the whole process of meat sourcing, processing, packing and dispatching, at a company town.

For fuller details see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/newproperties/> and, if your editor can dedigitate quickly enough, look out for the Forth Bridges Festival on 25-26 July — <http://www.forthbridgesfestival.com> !

Mark Watson