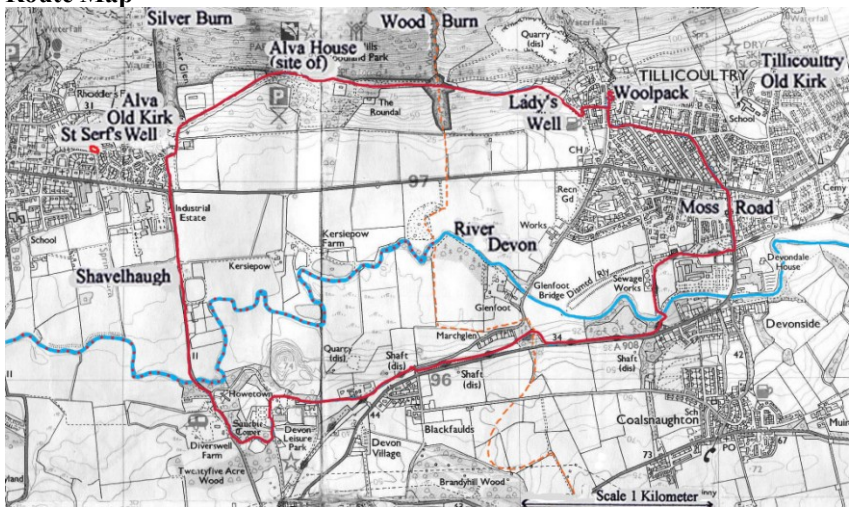
Route Map



Map based on OS Explorer 366 (detail) with modifications and additions

The Scottish Toponymy in Transition project at the University of Glasgow is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for three years (2011–14). It aims to: research and publish a place-name volume each for Clackmannanshire, Kinross-shire and Menteith; commence place-name surveys of Ayrshire and Berwickshire, and develop a framework for completing the survey of Perthshire (of which Menteith is the first volume); exchange knowledge with local communities through a series of talks, walks, exhibitions and other events. For further information, see http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/celtic/projects/stit

Further reading:

Angus Watson, *The Ochils: Placenames, History, Tradition* (Perth & Kinross Libraries 1995).

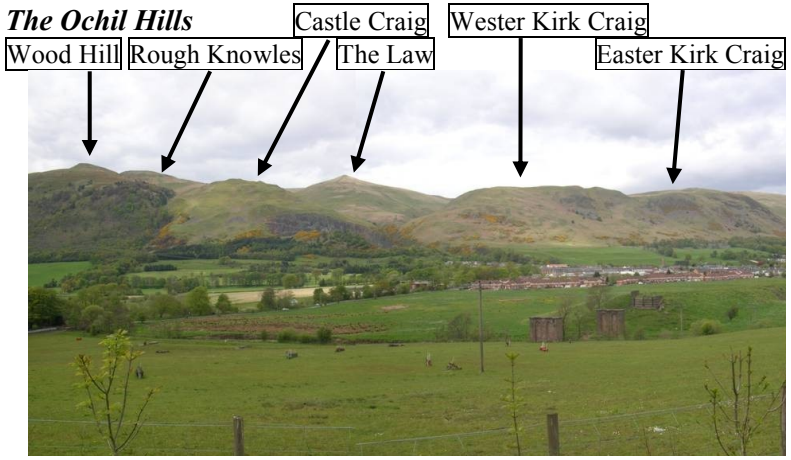
Arts & Humanities Research Council

University of Glasgow

VIA VERITAS VITA

Ochils Festival

Place-Name Walk from Tillicoultry to Alva
Tuesday 19 June and Saturday 23 June 2012
The Woolpack 10.00



An exploration on foot of some of the places and their names in and around Tillicoultry, Sauchie and Alva, taking approximately 3 hours.

Introduction

What is a place-name walk? It is a walk through past and present, through landscape and language. It is an attempt to see the modern environment through the eyes of the people who gave it the names which we still use today, taking the names themselves as our guides. These names are guides also to the languages of the past: for Clackmannanshire these are chiefly **British/Pictish**, **Gaelic** and **Scots**, together spanning around 1,500 years, with some names going back even further, such as **Dumyat** 'fort of the Maeatae', a local tribe first mentioned in the 3rd century.

The walk starts and finishes in **Tillicoultry** [*Tullicultre* c.1190, *Tullecultry* c.1195, Gaelic 'mound/hill(ock) of the back-land']. The present town grew out of several touns or farms, such as **Colinstoun** [*Collingisdawak* 1480, 'Colin's davoch' (a large unit of land-assessment), then 'Colin's toun'], later Wester Tillicoultry, **Elistoun** [*Eliotisdawac* 1480], and **Harviestoun** [*Hervyisdawac* 1480], all Scots names.

The Route

Begins at the **Woolpack** Inn (a name redolent of the once all-important local wool trade) in **Glassford** Square (named after Duncan Glassford, owner of the Tillicoultry estate from 1806 to 1810).

From here walk down Upper Mill Street and turn left into Frederick Street. This part of Tillicoultry was on the lands of **Cairnton** [*Carntoun* 1480, Scots 'farm of the cairn/burial mound']. Go along **Walker Terrace** [named after Provost A. Walker, retired 1900, **http://www.tillicoultry.org.uk/streets.htm**], with good views of the hills, **Wester Kirk Craig** and **Easter Kirk Craig** to the left, both named after the old parish kirk of Tillicoultry, to the junction with Hill Street. St Serf's miracle of raising back to life a pair of dead twin boys 'in *Tuligculterin*' can be placed in the area to the north, near where the old kirk of Tillicoultry stood.

Walk down Hill Street, carefully cross the main road (A91), then head down **Moss** Road (A908) ['the road to the moss or bog'] and just after passing **Elistoun** Drive on the left, follow the Devon Way path to the right. In the distance on the ridge beyond Sterling Mills can be seen **Coalsnaughton** [*Coschenachtan* 1480, containing Nechtan, the Gaelic form of the Pictish royal name *Naiton*]. Follow the path round and cross the bridge over the **River Devon** [*aquam de Douane* c.1180, probably from a Celtic word meaning 'deep'].

As the path continues, more and more of the **Ochils** [from a Celtic word meaning 'high'] come into view; those visible being **Dumyat** [*Demyat* 1783, 'fort of the Maeatae'], **Myreton Hill** [above The Myretoun (*Myretoun* 1665) 'marsh-farm'], **Craig Leith** [*Craigleith* 1591, Gaelic *creag liath* 'grey crag'], **Big Torry** and **Wee Torry** [from Gaelic *tòrr* '(steep, pointed) hill'], **The Nebit** (also known as the Middle Hill of Alva) [*Nevot* 1537, Scots *nebbit* 'having a nose'], **Wood Hill** (planted with trees by Sir John Erskine of Alva in 1725), **Rough Knowles** (a form of Scots *knowes*, English *knoll*), **Castle Craig** (quarried) [site of a prehistoric fort], **The Law** [1860, Scots *law* '(prominent) hill'], **Easter** and **Wester Kirk Craigs** [1860], **Elistoun Hill**, **Bank Hill** [1860, from *Bank de Dolour* 1563, Scots *bank* 'slope'], and **Hillfoot Hill** [above Hillfoot House and Farm (*Hillfit* c.1680)].

After looking down on **Glenfoot** [1783] with its bridge over the river, further on to the right is **Marchglen** [1866], so called as it lies on the march or boundary of Tillicoultry and Alloa parishes. **Black Row** (now Ben View) and **Blackfaulds** to the left remind us that this area was once famous for its coal-mines. The site of **Blains Well**, named after St Blain (of Bute and Dunblane), whose chapel was at Sauchie Tower, is marked on a 1799 plan of Sauchie Colliery and lies somewhere in the field to the right.

Passing by Bankhead Farm follow the road past the new SSPCA National Rescue Centre to **Sauchie** Tower [*Salwehop* 1266, *Salacheth* c.1320, *Salquhy* 1451, Gaelic 'willow-place'], built about 1431 by Sir James Schaw, comptroller to the king.

The next stage of the walk follows the busy road to Alva. Great care should be taken for this stretch. To the left is **Diverswell** [1798] and at the bottom of the brae on the right is **Howetown** [Scots 'farm in a hollow']. Cross the River Devon into Alva parish by **Shavelhaugh Bridge**, the name from Shavelhaugh [*Sheval hall* c.1750, Scots 'twisted or squint hall'], which once stood by the road west of **Kersiepow** [*Carspow* 1681, Scots 'a pool or sluggish stream on carse-land'] can be seen to the right.

After crossing the main road in **Alva** [*Alueth* and *Alweth* c.1175, Gaelic 'cliff plain'], walk up Silverburn Gardens at the side of the **Silver Burn** [flowing from old silver mines in the Ochils]. Follow the path to the right towards Wood Hill and the Ochil Hills Woodland Park. Pass Alva House Walled Garden, the remains of the landscaped grounds of Alva House, and the site of Alva House itself. Cross the **Wood Burn**, which marks the parish and former county boundary. To the left the quarry marks the site of **Castle Craig** and by the golf course is **Lady's Well** [probably dedicated to St Mary]. Turn right down **Shillinghill** [1866; Scots *sheeling hill* 'a piece of rising ground where grain was winnowed by the wind'] and proceed to Upper Mill Street to reach the Woolpack at Glassford Square.

James Stobie *Counties of Perth and Clackmannan* 1783, from http://maps.nls.uk/