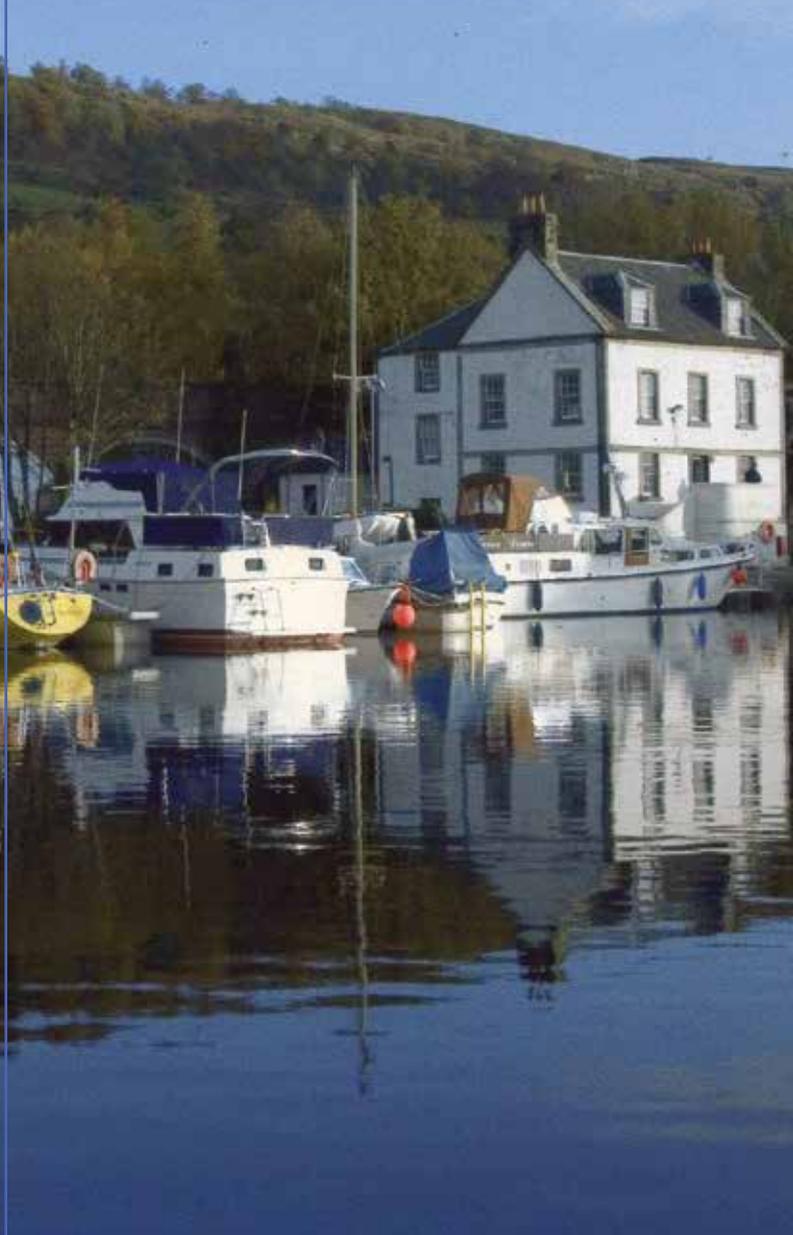
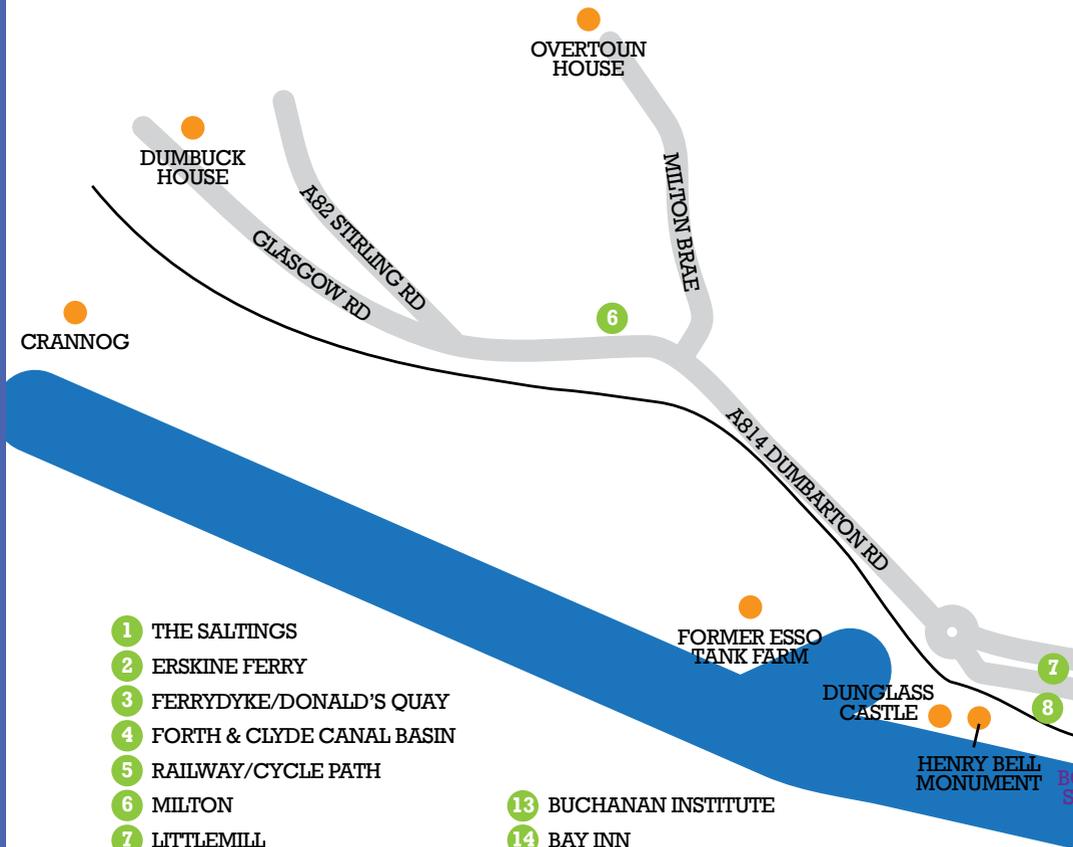




Old Kilpatrick, Bowling & Milton Heritage Trail





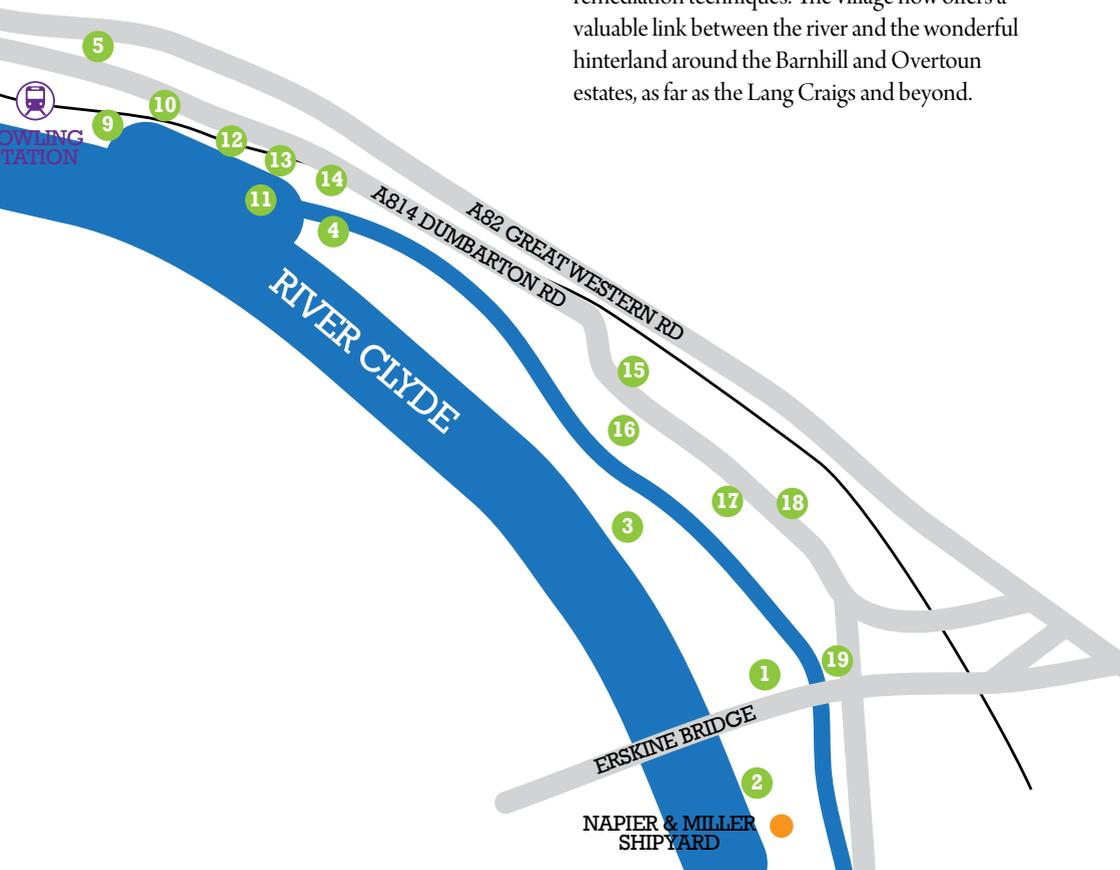
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Old Kilpatrick, Bowling & Milton Heritage Trail

This Heritage Trail takes in the villages of Old Kilpatrick, Bowling and Milton, stretching approximately three miles along the north bank of the River Clyde, westwards from the Erskine Bridge – a stretch of the Clyde that Dorothy Wordsworth declared to be superior in grandeur to the Thames in Kent. The complete route has the advantage of a well-maintained cycle track, but for those wishing to take in more of the local detail, each of the village areas can easily be explored separately.

The area has numerous archaeological sites, mostly from the Bronze and Iron Ages; Roman influences in particular, and the extant (and still to be discovered) artefacts around Old Kilpatrick, are of great importance. The village asserts itself

as the birthplace of St. Patrick – a claim disputed, according to Neil Munro *'by some foolish place called Boulogne-sur-mer, but locally we laugh at that.'* The view of the Clyde from Dalnottar Hill, above Old Kilpatrick, attracted the cream of European artists for two centuries. The significance of shipbuilding, transport and distilling, all seemingly squeezed into a narrow neck of land between river and hillside at Bowling, is as surprising as its connections with 20th century Art Deco. Beyond the ruined Dunglass Castle and the monument to the steamship pioneer Henry Bell, the early corn, textile and paper-milling undertaken at Milton have disappeared. The extensive oil tank farm latterly owned by Esso on the foreshore between Dunglass and Milton has also gone and the extensive and contaminated site is being treated by new bio-remediation techniques. The village now offers a valuable link between the river and the wonderful hinterland around the Barnhill and Overtoun estates, as far as the Lang Craigs and beyond.





1 *The Saltings*

So called because the area was once a salt marsh, the Saltings is now a nature reserve managed by West Dunbartonshire Council. It has well-maintained paths, seating and information boards which describe the wildlife. At its east-end, what is now Glen Lusset Scout Hall was once home to Jeannie Gentles who ran a canteen for shipyard workers. Close to the scout hall stood the Aurora Lamp Factory, which was Scotland's first electric light bulb factory. It opened in 1932 but closed sometime in the forties or fifties.

2 *Erskine Ferry*

Originally located a little further down the river at Ferrydyke, the Erskine Ferry was one of a number of crossing points in the area. Until 1904 the ferry crossing was maintained by Lord Blantyre and thereafter by the Clyde Navigation Trust. The ferry was withdrawn when the Erskine Bridge opened in 1971.

Napier and Miller Shipyard

The yard opened in 1904 following a move from Yoker. It notably built the last three-masted, square-rigged barques in the UK, the 'Sunlight' and the 'Rendova' for Lever Brothers, for whom they carried coconut oil from the Pacific to Port Sunlight on Merseyside; sadly both vessels were lost in the First World War. The company closed in the Depression of 1928, and the site was then used for building landing-craft, and during WW2, for the construction of Mulberry Harbours. Arnott Young & Co. also operated a ship-breaking yard nearby.

Erskine Ferry c1910





Ferrydyke, Old Kilmpatrick

3 *Ferrydyke/Donalds Quay*

At the bascule bridge and canal-side cottage, a path leads down to Donald's Quay, once the site of a ferry crossing and still the location of a beacon known as Donald's Light. Just beyond the cottage are the ruins of stables once used by the horses which towed barges on the canal. In the 18th century a Roman distance slab was found here.

4 *Forth and Clyde Canal Basin*

The Georgian Customs House marks the western terminus of the Forth & Clyde Canal, opened In July 1790. This followed years of wrangling over a route, and surveys by such eminent engineers as John Smeaton and James Watt. Although the canal was to have moderate success, its days were numbered after the railways arrived; following decades of decline, it was closed in 1963. In 2001, the canal was re-opened, mainly for recreational use, as The Millennium Link. The Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire Railway of 1896 crossed the

canal at Bowling by a fine (but now derelict) hydraulic swing-bridge operated from a now demolished signal-box straddling the tracks. There are prospects for the refurbishment of this bridge as part of a walking route.

5 *Railway/Cycle Path*

After the initial Bowling to Balloch railway of 1850 was linked back to Glasgow in 1858, the Lanarkshire & Dunbartonshire Railway (later, the Caledonian Company) opened a separate line in 1896. It built an upper level station at Bowling beside the quarry that produced Bowlingite, a stone used mainly for roadmaking. Bowling became an important transport link at a time when tourism was developing. Travellers came to the village by river, or by swift-boat on the Canal; they might spend a night at Frisky Hall before travelling by train to Balloch. From there, the journey continued by boat to the hotel at Inverarnan, via the canalised River Falloch at the head of Loch Lomond. After an overnight stay at Inverarnan, travellers continued into the Highlands and further north by stage-coach.

The upper railway was closed in 1960 and it now forms part of the Glasgow - Balloch Cycleway; the 1895 bridge over the track-bed at Manse Road is aligned with the rising sun at the equinox. Nearby stands the house once occupied by the ship-owner and art collector William Burrell, donor of Glasgow's magnificent Burrell Collection.



Forth & Clyde Canal Inner Basin

6 Milton

The 'Mill-toun of Colquhoun' had established bleach-fields in the 18th century, soon giving rise to calico printing and weaving. By 1794 Milton is claimed to have had Scotland's first powered looms, 40 of which were supposedly installed under the supervision of James Watt. Near Milton House stand two ruined battlemented towers, of three and five storeys, between which the cotton mill stood. There were violent strikes there in 1833-34, when troops were quartered at the mill and in Dumbarton.

Milton House is an elegant, two storey and basement, five-bay, gabled and pedimented mansion of 1792. Maps of 1864 clearly show the still-working Corn Mill and Print-works and, further up the hill, the ruined Cotton Mill. In the mid-19th century Biggar's Paper Mill was incorporated into part of the cotton mill; this employed seven steam engines and 90 employees for the production of fine writing papers before going out of business in 1905. Milton School, by Stewart and Paterson in 1905 has recently been B-listed by Historic Scotland.

The most interesting modern building, and winner of a Saltire Society award, is Whyte's Corner, built in 1937 by Joseph Weekes; this is a roughcast crescent of two-storey flats demonstrating a good combination of Scots vernacular and Art Deco design.

Overtoun House

Above Milton Brae is the Baronial Revival mansion of 1859-63 by James Smith (father of the notorious alleged poisoner Madeleine) for the Rutherglen chemical manufacturer James White, whose son became the first Lord Overtoun. The house, which is publicly owned, was neglected for many years after its closure as a maternity hospital in 1970 and is currently occupied by a religious organisation.

Dumbuck House

Now a hotel, Dumbuck House was built in 1824 as the estate house of the Geils family, which farmed High Mains and Low Mains of Dumbuck. In 1906, the house became the offices of the notorious Kosmoid Companies, which were at the centre of allegations of alchemy at their Dumbuck factories.

Milton House





Overtoun House

Cranmog/Canoes

On the foreshore opposite the Dumbuck Hotel lie the remains of the Dumbuck Crannog. This Iron Age communal defensive dwelling, raised from the water on stilts, was discovered in 1895 and its collapsed structure can be identified at low tide. [A reconstructed crannog can be visited at Loch Tay; see www.crannog.co.uk for information].

In 1854, Gilbert Taylor, an Erskine Ferry tacksman, recovered an Iron Age canoe 33' in length and 4' wide; sadly, it was kept in the open and succumbed to souvenir-hunters. However, in 1868, while dredging the river at Dunglass, Mr. Currie, the manager of the distillery, was instrumental in recovering two hollowed-oak Iron Age canoes, 24' and 13' in length, which are preserved at Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow.

Golborne's Dykes

The silting of the River was a hindrance to commercial navigation, and in 1768 the

canal-builder James Brindley brought fellow engineer John Golborne of Chester to Glasgow. He devised an important and highly successful system of over a hundred carefully engineered dykes to control the river's scouring action and which typically deepened the main channel from two feet to fourteen feet.

Dunglass Castle/Henry Bell Monument

Dunglass Castle is said to have been built in 1380 and occupied by the Chamberlain of Scotland Sir John Colquhoun (1430-1478).

Milton and Esso Terminal from Dumbuck Hill, 1972



Occupied by James IV's army in 1489 while besieging Lord Darnley at Dumbarton, it was maintained by the Colquhouns until the Covenanters took control in 1639. It was acquired in 1812 by Archibald Buchanan of Auchentorlie.

Within the castle walls is Dunglass House, occupied in the 1890's by Talwin Morris (chief designer for Walter Blackie, the publisher). When Morris moved to 'Torwood', the house was sold to the MacDonald family. One of the daughters, Margaret, was courted by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, whom she subsequently married at St. Augustine's Church in Dumbarton. During his many visits to Bowling, he painted several watercolour flower studies and made significant improvements to the internal decoration and furniture of the house (which is closed and semi-derelict).

When the first steamship on the Clyde, Henry Bell's COMET, made its first voyage on 6th August, 1812, the little paddle steamer stopped at Bowling to disembark two gentlemen who did not share Bell's faith in his vessel. Among those who stayed aboard was James Lumsden (1778-1856), Lord Provost of Glasgow 1843-6. On 2nd July, 1837, he instigated a public subscription for the erection of a memorial to Henry Bell. The obelisk, which stands atop the rock at Dunglass, was completed in July 1838. Neither Dunglass Castle nor the Henry Bell Monument are generally accessible, access being severely curtailed by Esso.

Houses at Littlemill, 1935



7 Littlemill

The tiny settlement of Littlemill of Auchentorlie took its name in the early 18th century from the mill that stood on the site of the now demolished Distillery. Only later did the name Bowling (or 'Bowland', or 'Bowland of Spittal', from the geographical feature) come into use. In those days the bay was a popular holiday destination for Glaswegians.

In the 1770's a bleachfield and calico print-works was established at Littlemill by John Clark, and ten years later Frisky Hall was built on the site of a fish-house used by monks from Paisley Abbey, near the now demolished shipyard. Later, when the railway came, Frisky Hall became a hotel, and achieved fame through its description by Heron in 1793 and in *'Murray's Handbook for the Clyde'* in 1854, which both praised its setting, views and decoration. Frisky Hall later fell on rough times as a workmen's hostel before being devoured by Scott's Shipyard.

8 Littlemill Distillery

Distilling took place here from the 14th century, when Dunglass Castle was built, but Littlemill Distillery, initially opened as a brewery, was probably the first licensed distillery in Scotland. Using water from the Kilpatrick Hills, peat from the Isle of Lewis and power produced by water-wheels in the Auchentorlie Burn, the distillery made malt whiskies for blending. The distillery has been demolished for many years, and the land has

Littlemill Distillery





Bowling Shipyard, 1983



Bowling Basin, 2006

been redeveloped; also sadly abandoned is the once-delightful distillery manager's house of 1791. However, Littlemill 8-Year-old Single Lowland Malt can still be found by the diligent enthusiast.

9 *Bowling Shipyard*

Shipbuilding was brought to Bowling by the Port Glasgow shipbuilder William McGill when in 1790 he constructed the 81-ton brig BROTHERS at the canal dry dock. William McGill returned to Bowling in 1800 along with his brother Thomas and rented the dry dock for £25 a year. Thomas McGill's sons

carried on the business until 1846 when the dry dock was removed, the canal basin enlarged and the bay transformed into a safe harbour. The largest of the 44 vessels to be built there was the 250-ton barque BOWLING in 1842. In May 1851 James Scott, then aged 21, along with the McGill brothers, David and Thomas, set up the firm Scott & McGill on ground owned by Scott's family at the other end of the harbour, adjacent to Frisky Hall. Their first contract was for a new hand operated wooden ferry at Erskine for Lord Blantyre that could take 4 loaded carts. In 1875 wooden hulls gave way first to iron vessels and then all steel by 1894, when the firm became Scott & Sons. Almost 500 vessels later, the shipyard closed in 1979, and the site cleared some years later.

10 *Bowling Hall*

Now known as Bowling Public Hall this was opened as a school and public hall in 1861, replacing an earlier schoolhouse in Littlemill. The forerunner of the world-famous Glasgow Orpheus Choir gave its first concert here in 1910.



Scotts workers

Public Hall, Bowling 1989



11 *Bowling Harbour*

About 1835 the Clyde Trustees built a low dyke, topped by a timber wharf, at the west end of the harbour and in September 1841 completed a new mooring station, which became a winter berthage for Clyde steamers (although severe damage was caused by a winter gale in February 1855). In 1856 the dyke was raised to 8 feet above high water and extended to enclose the harbour. In 1844 the Forth & Clyde Canal Co. also built a dyke in line with the Clyde Trustee's dyke and erected a short timber wharf on top. In 1846 Parliamentary approval was given to the Canal Co. to construct a new river harbour and canal entrance lock; costing £21,000, this was completed in 1849. One of the earliest wrecks to lie in the harbour was that of P.S. 'Industry' of 1814; the most important vessel after 'Comet', she had unique side-lever engines and spur-wheel gearing.

12 *Bowling Church*

The church was built in 1869 and was known as the Bowling Chapel of Old Kilpatrick Free Church until it became a separate charge in 1878. In 1893 a hall was built to the west of the church then in 1911 the church was extended west to link up with the hall.

13 *Buchanan Institute*

Now divided into two dwelling houses and recognisable by its 1884 date stone, this was

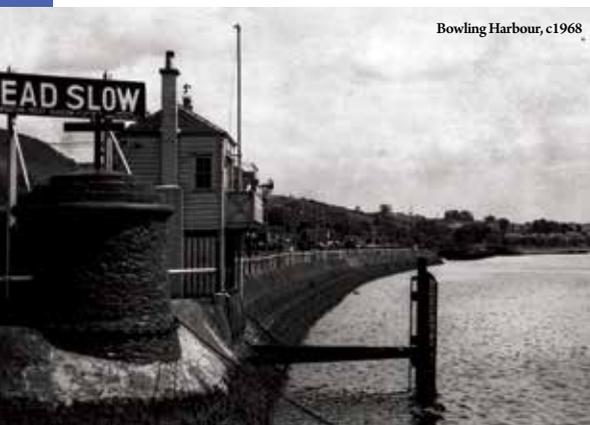
originally a Literary Institute gifted by Andrew Buchanan of Auchentorlie. It cost £2000 to build and included a billiard room with two tables and a library housing several thousand books. Between the Institute and the church stands Columbia Cottage; this was brought in section from Vancouver by Captain James Scott of Arbroath in about 1870.

14 *Bay Inn*

The Bay Inn was first licensed in 1829 and it has been in continuous use ever since. It exhibits an interesting photographic collection of Bowling history. At the end of the 18th century George Dykes built a vessel 100ft in length in a yard behind the inn.

15 *Gavinburn School*

The original school was opened in 1887, the main building being destroyed by enemy bombing in 1941. The former infant school and the headmaster's house still survive.



Bowling Harbour, c1968



Old Kilpatrick Parish Church, late 19th Century



Gavinburn Primary School House, 1980



Altar to Jupiter



Medieval Knight Sarcophagus,
Old Kilpatrick Churchyard

16 Roman Fort

Beneath the former Gavinburn bus garage lie the largely untouched remains of the fort at the western terminus of the Roman Antonine Wall. Although the wall was not built until 142AD, excavations in 1922 and 1931 confirmed that the fort existed before the wall, this doubtless due to the commanding position on the Clyde. It is believed that a bathhouse existed between the fort and the river but this was swept away in the construction of the Forth and Clyde Canal. In 1969 an altar to the god Jupiter was unearthed close to the fort. This can be seen in the Hunterian Museum of Glasgow University.

17 St Patrick's Well

According to the eminent historian John Bruce, writing in 1893, "This highly honoured and much revered saint - from whom the parish derives its name - is considered by the best authorities to have been born, if not in Kilpatrick at least in the vicinity." The story goes that in the last quarter of the fourth

St Patrick's Well



century, aged 16, he was carried off to Ireland by raiders. There is still controversy with Ireland, England and France having counter claims but many historians are convinced. The well is now commemorated by an ornamental garden.

18 Old Kilpatrick Parish Church

The present church (B listed) was erected in 1812, replacing one built in 1163 on the same site. The original church was a Celtic church, which came into the possession of the Roman Catholic Abbey of Paisley around 1232 when Dugal, the last Celtic rector, gave way. It remained Roman Catholic until 1560 when it became a Protestant Reformed Church. Within the graveyards are the family vaults of the Hamiltons of Barns, Buchanans of Auchentorlie and the Stirlings of Law.

19 Secession Church

On the south of the main road beneath the Erskine Bridge stands the Secession Church of 1793. Now converted into flats, it is recognisable by its substantial stone gateposts.

Old Kilpatrick Church, c1811





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This leaflet is one of a series of six Heritage Trails designed to guide you around some of the most fascinating local areas, and to indicate significant social, historical and architectural features. Each leaflet includes an annotated map, detailed narrative, and a number of images relating to the trail. Each leaflet will be available on the West Dunbartonshire Council website, at:
www.westdunbarton.gov.uk



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