

BALLOCH COMMUNITY WOODLAND PROJECT

**AN INTERPRETATIVE PLAN
FOR SULWATH CONNECTIONS**

DRAFT

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1.1.1.1. INTRODUCTION

1.2. Case Study

The Balloch Community Woodland Project is one of a linked programme of 21 diverse projects being developed in the Sulwath Connections Landscape Project. This document is part of the development stage of the Sulwath connections Landscape Project and identifies proposals to encourage a better understanding of the value of the woodland.

It is anticipated the proposals described will provide a framework for Project Managers to follow which will assist the development of education and interpretation that is stimulating, interesting and enjoyable.

1.3. Balloch Wood

Balloch wood is a linear woodland set in the valley of the Balloch Burn that flows from the hills west of the settlement of Creetown to the Cree Estuary. The Project has been developed by a partnership of Creetown Initiative and Forestry Commission Scotland and is subject to a 25 year management agreement with Balloch Wood Community Project.

1.4. Planning Interpretation

A Design Guide for the graphic presentation of Sulwath Connections has been developed by Dumfries and Galloway Council which will ensure that each project is recognised as part of the Sulwath Connection ‘family’. However, each project, like a member of the ‘family’, will have a different personality and distinct identity that can be emphasised through the presentation of interpretation and information.

The purpose of the interpretive planning process is to bring together all the information required to provide a consistent approach to interpretation for the Balloch Community Woodland.

The document has been divided into sections that will set out a process for delivering interpretation for the woodland:

- Resources
- Aims and Objectives
- Audience
- Interpretive Objectives and Themes
- Techniques
- Managing, Monitoring and Evaluation

2 RESOURCES

2.1. Existing resources

Proposals for Balloch Wood will also need to take account of existing access and interpretation provision to avoid duplication and ensure effective communication of key messages. It is essential that the proposals do not compete with existing panels and create clutter in the countryside or overwhelm visitors with leaflets.

The Balloch Community Woodland Project already has a distinct graphic identity used on the existing boards and leaflets using a stylised fern frond as a logo.

As well as providing an introduction to the history of the wood the existing panels cover the following specific topics:

- Squirrels
- Archaeology / Red Well
- Wildlife ponds / Curling

The panels also show the location of the way marked trails including:

- Burnside
- Pond Trail
- Larch Trail

This path network provides access into a working forest. The valley setting results in paths with many steep gradients and combined with the informal beaten earth paths which are sometimes muddy. These constraints restrict the potential for providing access for the less able. The steep valley sides and linear nature of the wood also limits the opportunities to further develop circular routes within the path network.

2.2. Information

Detailed research is needed to inform the interpretation and develop the distinctive features, both commonplace and unique that define the special character of Balloch Wood.

The first stage has been to collate information on the diverse elements of historical, cultural and natural heritage. These are numerous topics that could be covered by interpretation and the key to good interpretation is to be selective. A summary of the information selected is included in the Appendix. It is considered the topics worth interpreting are:

- Use of Wood in the Past
- People and Jobs that have Depended on the Woodland
- Habitats and Wildlife Supported by the Woodland

It is important that whoever is preparing the interpretation will need to have a good understanding of the topics. Where possible, liaisons with other groups and organisations that provide interpretation in the area should take place.

3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. Aim for Balloch Wood Interpretation

Interpretation is a communication process designed to reveal meaning and relationships of our built, natural and cultural heritage. The aim of the interpretation will be for visitors to recognise and understand the identified themes and sub themes. However, while it is hoped that visitors will discover more about the place it is recognised that the experience will be a recreational event for most people. The aim for the Balloch Community Woodland interpretation is to:

Make a visit an enjoyable experience that leads to a better understanding of why trees are an important part of our rich social heritage.

3.2. Objectives

The broad objectives for interpretation may be placed under the following three headings:

▪ **Learning**

Learn about a special landscape by encouraging visitors to seek a deeper understanding of the place and provide information suitable for use by local schools. The project is an opportunity to reveal the stories behind the people, wildlife and the woodland enabling the visitor to better appreciate the landscape and the part Balloch Wood has played in the social history of the Village.

▪ **Behavioural**

Whet the visitors' curiosity to explore the countryside. Engage the visitor by providing information that captures the imagination. History, archaeology, geology and ecology could become the catalyst required to turn the visitors into explorers. The activities promoted must establish a balance between the land managers needs, the conservation of wildlife habitats and the provision of a recreational facility.

▪ **Emotional**

Undertake simple, sensitive and sympathetic changes that make visitors feel welcome and enjoy the experience. The rural nature of the route is part of the special character and it is therefore important to control change to limit any negative impact of the project on Balloch Wood.

4 AUDIENCE

4.1. Audience Groups

The more that is known about a target audience the more effective the interpretation can be. While there has not been a survey to identify the potential audience for the project an audience type has been identified by the client.

Residents and Short Stay Visitors/Organised groups of Young People

The walking sector is the most likely to use Balloch Wood. This group will consist of pedestrians and will include:

- Adults without children (but with dogs) on regular circular or short walks.
- Local families on an occasional outing wanting an easy circular walk, with opportunities to play.
- Retired couples or groups on an occasional outing wanting a calm/quiet/easy circular walk.
- Families on holiday on a single outing wanting an enjoyable experience of the countryside.
- Organised groups of young people from schools, youth clubs, brownies, etc.

The table attempts to summarise the interests and expectations, previous knowledge, length of visit and likelihood of repeat visits that characterise this group.

Local / Environmental Tourism / Walking

Identifiable audience group	Interests and expectations	Background knowledge about the project and area	Number of visits	Length of the visit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local families on a day out (local community) - adults without children - retired couples - families on holiday - groups of young people 	Calm and quiet, walk, interpretation experience, landscape and viewpoint, a picnic, open air play	Medium to none. Know the area well to not very well	Several times a week to one off or yearly	Between 1 hour and 3 hours

The local community, all those living and working in the area, are expected to be frequent visitors and therefore a particularly important audience for this project. Creetown Initiative has the role as a communication and information link between the local community and the partners of this project. The Initiative can help manage the public relations using the following communication tools: website, newsletter, press releases and direct communication.

Local information and interpretation providers are both an audience and deliverers. They must understand and support the project so that they can provide a positive role in the provision of interpretation.

Formal information and interpretation providers include:

- Rangers
- Tourist Offices
- Visitor Centres

Informal information / interpretation providers include:

- Shopkeepers
- Accommodation providers (B and B, Caravan site)
- Local residents.

5 INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVES AND THEMES

5.1. Project Objectives

For Balloch Wood Project the objectives are:

- Actively involve visitors with interpretation that encourages them to discover the woodland.
- Expose the hidden and commonplace so that visitors understand more about the changing woodland.
- Create quality work that helps to promote Creetown as a visitor destination.

5.2. Project Themes

The key interpretive theme for the project has been identified as:

- The trees in Balloch Wood have tales to tell.

Trees have entered our culture more thoroughly than other plants because of their size, longevity, economic usefulness and impact on the landscape.

There are no trees in the wood that are particularly remarkable because of their age, size or historical interest; however each tree species has its own role both socially and ecologically. Every tree has a special place in our culture, both past and present.

Sub-themes have evolved from the information collated:

- **Trees are a mute witness to the changing landscape.** An old beech tree adjacent to a stone dyke will have seen many changes in the woodland. The 1845 Statistical Account notes that the forests in the parish are ‘principally composed of oak and ash, and are cut down at the end of every twenty-five or thirty years’. The changing agricultural and industrial use will have also been witnessed over the last 200 years.
- **Trees are respected because of their meanings in our society.** The hawthorn known locally as ‘Ferrythorn’ (not within the forest) is said to be as old as the town and marks the place where travellers to Wigtown were ferried across the estuary. In 1682 Symson noted ‘I have observed many hawthorne-trees growing in several places.....the country people commonly account the cutting down of those trees ominous and tell many stories of accidents that have befallen such as attempted it.’
- **Trees have special uses. A wauk mill was used in the cloth making process.** The cloth straight from the loom was too greasy and loose to use. The cloth had to be washed and pounded with water driven hammers to make it suitable for suits. After pounding and rinsing the cloths were stretched on racks to dry. These were horizontal bars of oak, the top rail was fixed and the bottom was adjustable to accommodate differing width cloth. Both rails were studded with tenterhooks, L-shaped nails that hooked into the cloth to keep it stretched. Hence a familiar expression ‘to be on tenderhooks’.

The trees in the wood that can be used to reveal the sub themes include; Hawthorn, Birch, Willow, English Oak, Sycamore, Sweet chestnut, Elm, Hazel, Ash, Beech, Alder, Norwegian Spruce, Sitka Spruce, Japanese Larch, Pine, etc.)

6 TECHNIQUES

This section is divided into three parts:

- The first identifies the priority interpretation media for the identified audience.
- The second recommends specific interpretive techniques.
- The third part has selected the media suitable for informing visitors and promoting Balloch Wood.

6.1. Interpretation Media for the Audience

Each audience group will require different mediums for interpretation. The proposed media for the audience group is summarised below in order of priority:

Local / Environmental Tourism / Walking

Identifiable audience group	Interpretation interests, expectations and background knowledge	Proposed media (in order of importance)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local families on a day out (local community) - adults without children - retired couples - families on holiday - groups of young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would all be very interested in local stories told by the trees. - would come back several times but they would read the panels only one time. - walkers would not stay in one place a long time and so will not have much time to read panels but would come back to discover more. - groups would make use of printed work sheets and enjoy exploring the woodland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discovery Trail - Information Shelter - Website (with worksheet print outs and film show)

6.2. Interpretive Techniques Proposed

For the following interpretive techniques to be successful it is important that there is a clear brief, the client has good involvement in the process and the correct designers and makers have been selected for the project.

Tree Discovery Trail

This technique uses strategically placed specially designed markers along the existing footpaths. The markers are linked to provide a series of clues in a 'treasure trail' of individual trees, some of which would be close to the main path while others may require an exploration of the woodland using narrow tracks to special places. This method would be particularly good in engaging young people by encouraging them to find the marker and the associated tree species hidden within the woodland. The stone/timber markers will respect traditional local materials and retain the natural scale and subtlety that forms the existing identity of Balloch Wood.

While the footpaths provide the most obvious opportunities for discovery trail interpretation, it is also possible to develop the idea further by producing rucksacks for visitors to take with them.

Available from the Creetown Exhibition Centre and/or The Gem Rock Museum, the rucksacks can be provided for walkers as an aid to exploring the countryside. Artefacts, worksheets and information sheets can be included into the rucksack to enrich the experience of the walk.

Worksheets and information sheets can be developed to support environmental studies topics from the 5-14 Scottish Curriculum.

Information Shelter

Panels are generally recognised as a good tool for providing information at key places. The location should be at a central point in the footpath network that has a special character and perhaps links with a past use such as the old farmstead at Ballochamour NX 4859 5871 which may be accessible along a new path loop.

It is suggested the new information point be constructed as a shelter designed to draw attention to the qualities of timber from the species found in the wood. It would be fitted with high quality information panels that provide interpretation on the social and ecological value of specific tree species that can be found in the wood.

However, it should be remembered that local people are expected to be regular visitors and for these people interpretation on panels very quickly become redundant. For this reason the shelter should be more than a stand for panels, it should also provide other functions such as a shelter from the weather, a rest place with comfortable seats or a hide from which to watch wildlife.

Website

A website is an increasingly useful tool for marketing a facility, (see promotion proposals below), but is also suitable for interpretation and education. Print outs from the website can be to provide a school pack that complements the rucksacks by linking to the 7–14 Scottish Curriculum Environmental Studies Topics.

Examples below show how Balloch Wood may be used:

Birds: Become a bird watcher and identify species. Develop skills by recording bird visitors to a feeder.

Plants for wildlife: Examine and draw flowers. Survey for flowering and non-flowering plants. Discuss vandalism and its effect on the environment.

Animal habitats: Examine the need for bird / bat boxes. How to encourage wildlife. Plant wildlife area. Examine feeding relationships.

Our local area: Identify local plants and animals. Set up a feeder. Discuss care of the environment.

6.3. Promotion Proposals

The role of interpretation should also be considered when developing proposals for promoting Balloch Wood.

Marketing tools

There are many tools that can be used to market the project and interpret the site including leaflets and events. For the Balloch Wood it is proposed to further develop the existing Website to incorporate the above proposals.

A website provides a 'shop window' for visitors out with the area. It can provide current detailed information that enables visitors to discover and plan their visit. It is essential that the website is regularly updated so that it can be linked to new education, interpretation projects or events.

There are also opportunities to provide interpretation through a film show on the website. The main challenge of the web film show will be to successfully communicate the character of Balloch Wood in a short time (2mins). There might also be an opportunity to use the information gathered for the short film to produce a longer (12mins) film that visitors would buy as a souvenir.

7 MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.1. Management Operations, Maintenance and Lifecycle

The external interpretation should be constructed from robust natural materials so that they have a long lifecycle with minimal maintenance implications. It is the intention to manage the area to establish a balance between economic needs, conservation of wildlife habitats and provision of educational and recreational facility.

The ultimate responsibility for management operations and maintenance for the life of the interpretation will lie with (see management agreement)

Evaluation and improvement

It is essential the interpretation is monitored and evaluated as the project develops in order to determine its success. A review of the interpretation should be implemented annually and the interpretation developed to reflect the findings identified.

Observation and simple interviewer administered questionnaires are recommended as the techniques to be used for evaluation of the interpretation.

8 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations identified in the interpretive plan process have been collated into a series of actions. The actions are listed in priority with an indicative programme and costs:

1 Further research and writing

Detailed research is needed to inform the interpretation and develop the distinctive features, both commonplace and unique that define the special character of Balloch Wood. When the material has been collated and selected it will be necessary to write text for the various outcomes including panels, website and worksheets.

Programme: Year One.

Outline cost: £3,000

2 Path works

There is a need to undertake clearance work, particularly to fallen trees and under-storey to open up views within the area as well as provide route to explore the woodland. The works will retain the beaten earth surfaced paths that are already part of the woods identity. It is considered advantageous to implement this work at an early stage prior to other proposed actions.

Programme: Year One.

Outline cost: £8,000

3 Carved marker posts

Eight carved stone/timber markers are proposed to indicate a treasure trail of trees. The markers will respect traditional local materials and retain the natural scale and subtlety that forms the existing identity of Balloch Wood.

Programme: Year Two.

Outline cost: £8,000

4 Shelter

An orientation point and shelter / hide is to be designed to draw attention to the qualities of timber. This structure will be a shelter from the weather, a rest place with comfortable seats and a hide from which to watch wildlife.

Programme: Year Two / Three.

Outline cost: £25,000

5 Website

It is proposed the existing Website is further developed to incorporate information, maps and worksheets that can be downloaded. The website will be linked to new education, interpretation projects and events.

Programme: Year Two / Three.

Outline cost: £1,000

6 Film

Interpretation may be enhanced through the use of a film show on the website to successfully communicate the character of Balloch Wood in a short time (2mins). The information gathered for the short film should be utilised to produce a longer (12mins) film that visitors could buy as a souvenir.

Programme: Year Two / Three.

Outline cost: £10,000

7 Panels

Four high quality information panels are proposed for within the shelter. They will provide interpretation on the social and ecological value of the specific tree species that can be found in the wood.

Programme: Year Three.

Outline cost: £3,000

9 APPENDIX

1 Setting

2 Historic Background

- Town development
- Balloch wood and associated buildings

3 Example of Local Context for Tree Species

- Hawthorne

4 Wauk Mill

1 SETTING

1.1. Situation and Climate

Located in the most southerly part of Scotland, Balloch Wood is a maritime wood situated on the coast of the Solway Firth. It has an insular climate which is damp with relatively mild winters and cool summers. In common with other western areas of Scotland the heaviest rainfall occurs in the winter with spring being the driest time of year. The prevailing wind is south-westerly.

1.2. Geology

The basic rock formations are sedimentary deposits lain down on an ocean bed 440 million years ago. As different sized particles settled down they eventually became rocks of different textures such as shale, mudstone, siltstone, greywacke and conglomerate. By 410 million years ago when two continents collided the ocean floor was folded and stacked together to form mountains. Two igneous intrusions are located south of Balloch Wood and consist of white granodiorite, a coarse grained granite formed when the molten rock slowly cooled. The mountains have been eroded by the ice ages exposing the granite and reshaping the landscape to form the southern uplands, and its foothills that are undulating with gently rounded summits. When the ice retreated from the last ice age the ground was left with a layer of ground up rock mixed with pebbles and boulders. Veins containing mineral deposits have been exploited in the Creetown area. Lead and copper ores were mined nearby at Pibble and numerous trial workings were undertaken. A small lead mine existed in Balloch Wood between 1862 and 1864.

1.3. Landscape

Balloch Wood is categorised as a Narrow wooded valley in the Dumfries and Galloway Landscape Assessment.

The key characteristics of this landscape character found at Balloch Wood are:

- The narrow incised valley with wooded slopes.
- The dominant broadleaf woodland adjacent to the burn with conifers on higher slopes.
- The small pastures enclosed with drystone dykes above the woodland.
- The narrow lane following the valley and providing access to higher moorland.

The narrow wooded valley contrasts with the open character of the estuarine flats below and the moorland on the nearby hill tops.

2 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

2.1. Town Development

Little is known about the early history of Creetown, however there is no doubt that the towns origins were based on its coastal location and river crossing point. The Blaeu's map 'Middle Part of Galloway' 1654 depicts 'Ferry town' as two parallel lines of dwellings. In 1684 Symson described 'Ferrietown' as 'a little clachan upon the east side of the river Cree, where there us'd to be a boat for the ferrying of passengers over the water of Cree in their passage to Wigtown.' (Symson also noted the hawthorn trees in the area see appendix 3)

The 'planned' town of Creetown appears to have been started in 1785 by the local landowner John McCulloch of Barholm who founded the Burgh of Barony in 1791. The following year R Heron observed that the lack of a plan being formed when the village began to be built achieved a pleasing effect of an irregular village and 'the Ferrytown of Cree is a village of no great antiquity....supported by coasting trade'. He was unaware of any 'considerable manufactures' having been established in the town.

The 1794 Old Statistical Account stated that various industries had recently been established in the town including a cotton spinning mill, a tannery and a mill for making shot lead. Water was the main source of power at this time and the mills will have been located adjacent to the burns in the town. The development of industry was given as one of the reasons for an increase of population from 104 in 1764 to 442 by 1784. However it was noted that despite trail workings for lead and the high quality of the granite most of the men worked at sea.

Local granite was first used for building in the late 18th century, in 1831 the quarry was leased by the Liverpool Dock Trustees and within three years the population of Creetown had grown to 2,300.

The 1845 New Statistical Account reported that 'the tan-work, cotton manufactory and mill for lead shot... have long been given up'. The mill used for cotton spinning appeared to have been turned into a wool carpet factory and continued to work until 1870.

Lead and copper mining was important in the area with Black Craig reaching the height of production between 1770 and 1790 and Pibble Mine flourishing between 1849 and 1856. Numerous mine workings were started but most of them were not very productive. A short lived mine existed within Balloch Wood on the steep side of the burn and produced 11.5 tons of lead ore between 1862 and 1864. This mine was marked on later editions of the 1st ed OS (NX 488 588).

The granite quarries remained the main industry for the town providing stone for the construction of Liverpool docks and other projects world wide. The stone was exported as wrought stone and later as aggregate for road building and concrete products. Today the granite quarries and precast concrete works have closed with Barr Steel being the only industry found in Creetown.

2.2. Balloch Wood and Associated Buildings

Ballach an amar is believed to be derived from ‘crossing place of channel’ and appears to refer to the ford across the burn at NX 4865 5880

There is no historic reference to Balloch Wood before the 19th century and contemporary descriptions by travellers through Galloway in the 17th century often suggest that the region was barren and treeless. A typical example was Sir William Brereton who stated in 1636 that ‘there is very little or no timber in any of the south west parts of this Kingdom’. There is, however, evidence to show that coastal locations in Kirkmabreck parish were both cultivated and wooded. The text in the Blaeu Atlas of Scotland, 1654, distinguishes between ‘those who live on the Moors, that is wilderness, survive by feeding animals and have large flocks of sheep’ and ‘those who live on the Machars, that is the cultivated low lying places, make there their living from cultivating the fields; nor do they lack fertile pastures and flocks.’ The Blaeu’s map is based on the surveys undertaken by Pont 60 years earlier and in the ‘Middle Part of Galloway’ depicts tree symbols surrounding the small settlement of ‘Ferry town’, the country house ‘Kassinkary’ is shown enclosed and surrounded by trees and ‘Lairg hil’ is shown with scrub symbols at its base. While the tree and scrub symbols can only be indicative the maps imply that this area was far from tree less.

The Roy Map of 1747-55 was undertaken as a military survey of Scotland after the Jacobite rising of 1745. Although produced principally to identify locations for new military roads it also shows areas of woodland, parkland around country houses, cultivated areas and enclosures. The area around ‘Ferrytown of Cree’ is shown with enclosed cultivation on the coastal flats and woodland to the south on the lower slopes of the surrounding hills. ‘Cassincarry’ is shown with enclosed gardens and adjacent to the town the lower valley of an unnamed burn (Balloch Burn) is shown as wooded. Unenclosed cultivation is shown on some of the slopes above the woodland before becoming open moorland. By 1763 a military road (Corse of Slakes) was built east of Creetown following the line of the Balloch Burn. However this road was soon replaced by a new coast road, built in 1786 as an easier alternative to a climb over the moors.

In the Old Statistical Account 1794 the coast road was noted as a ‘pleasant stage in Scotland, the whole being diversified with woods, gentlemen’s seats, and beautiful inclosures, hills rising on the one hand the bay on the other’. The hills provided the principle fuel of peat although ‘in many places of the parish there is whins and brushwood which poor people gather for fuel’.

Heron wrote in 1799 that ‘along the skirts of the hills on the east side of the Cree and of Wigton Bay, there is much natural wood’ and that hills ‘are fringed, in many places, with underwood; hazels, furze, and rising oaks and birches.’

The Ainslie map 1797 shows woodlands on the lower coastal slopes south of Creetown and also surrounding 'Barholme' house. South of the old military road an area of woodland is shown spanning both sides of the valley of an unnamed burn (Balloch burn). The map shows two buildings; 'Ballachanour' and 'Toucherrig' which appear to be small farms. No further record has been found for 'Toucherrig'. Sasines dated 1784 show 'Ballachanamre' was a farm within the Cassencarrie Estate. It appears again in 1826 as a 2 merkland farm 'Ballachamore'. By the time of the 1841 census neither of the two properties are recorded.

Descriptions in 1845 tell us that 'there are considerable forests of natural wood in this parish, especially upon the banks of Kirkdale and Cassencarrie. These forests extend for several miles, and are principally composed of oak and ash, and are cut down at the end of every twenty-five or thirty years'.

6'' : 1 mile OS 1st ed 1849-51 clearly shows trees along the banks of Englishmans Burn (Balloch Burn) and up stream of the ford is Ballochanour Wood. The Old Military Road crosses the burn at Billy's Bridge.

A number of ruined buildings are shown west of the woodland:

- Wauk Mill annotated 'in ruins', NX 4850 5885, is a single unroofed building that appears to have been used to felt cloth woven by weavers (see appendix 4). There is also a reference to this building having been used as the dye-house.
- Ballochanour NX 4853 5879 consists of one roofed and one unroofed building annotated 'ruins' and with a footpath link to Creetown and across the ford to the Old Military Road.
- Ballochanour NX 4859 5871 is shown as one unroofed building, annotated 'ruins'. It is surrounded by a curvilinear dyke, which suggests this was a pre improvement farmstead. Similar farmsteads are marked nearby at NX 4985 5935 and NX 5000 5905.
- The landscape has been divided into a grid of small and medium sized rectilinear fields, mostly shown as rough pasture and a Hay Ree is shown at NX 4930 5885.

In 1866 the James Caird bought the Cassencary estate. Caird was one of the most influential proponents of the philosophy of 'high farming' and believed that the increased understanding of sciences would lead to increased production. He was a journalist and wrote 'High farming as the best substitute for Protection' and 'English Agriculture in 1850-51'. He became an MP in 1857 but continued to be an active farmer until his death in 1892.

6'' : 1 mile OS 2nd ed 1893-4 continues to show trees along the banks of Englishmans Burn (Balloch Burn) and Ballochanour Wood with the woodland above the renamed Balloch Bridge marked as Balloch Wood. The field pattern is similar to the pattern 45 years earlier although some fields have been enlarged and larger areas are shown as rough pasture.

The ruined farmstead appears to have been converted into a small enclosure. The curling pond appears at the northern end of Ballochannour Wood at NX 4940 5910.

The cycle of harvesting and planting continued at Ballochannour Wood and by the 1920's the wood had been extended to the south at its eastern end. Creetown Initiative have collated local anecdotes of 'Johnny Montgomery's' saw mill adjacent to Balloch Bridge when the woodland was felled in the 1930's.

In 1958 the wood area was purchased by the Forestry Commission from the Cassencary estate. The tree planting undertaken at this time to the east of the wood is likely to have been the first time grazed land had been planted for hundreds of years.

The current design plan identifies the Balloch Wood as a Natural Reserve that employs low impact forest management regimes. Clear felling is not proposed and the working forest will retain continuous tree canopy cover in most places. The re-stocking plans include areas of Sitka Spruce, Norway Spruce and Japanese Larch as well as large areas of broadleaf planting with open space. The ruins of the Wauk Mill and Ballachannour are identified as places of archaeological interest.

British Geological Survey 1996 Geology in south-west Scotland

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Slevin, J - Rambles round Creetown and district

Sinclair, J 1983 The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799

Symson, A 1823 A large description of Galloway

Blaeu Atlas of Scotland, 1654

Roy Map of 1747-55

Taylor and Skinner 'Survey and Maps of roads of North Britain'

6'' : 1 mile OS 1st ed 1849-51 / 2nd ed 1893-4 / 1'' : mile 3rd ed 1922-3

3 EXAMPLE OF LOCAL CONTEXT FOR TREE SPECIES

3.1. Hawthorn

Crataegus monogyna

An ancient twisted and gnarled hawthorn known locally as Ferrythorn is said to be as old as the town and marks the place where travellers to Wigtown were ferried across the estuary.

The tree became a landmark, a location to meet others and a trysting place of lovers.

In 1682 Symson noted ‘I have observed many hawthorne-trees growing in several places, the boughs or branches, (and many times the bole too,) I have observed growing, or inclining towards the south-east. The country people commonly account the cutting down of those trees ominous, and tell many stories of accidents that have befallen such as attempted it, especially those trees of the greater sort.’

The ferrythorn is an example of a tree that leans towards the south-east.

The hawthorn, also known as the Maytree, marks the arrival of spring and has various religious meanings.

4 WAUK MILL

Wauking, Waulking or Fulling is a process of making cloth thick and felted by a process of soaking, beating and shrinking. Weaving was a cottage industry before the industrial revolution and many wauk mills were built in the countryside because the cloth straight from the loom was too greasy and loose for use. The washing with soap / urine and beating became mechanised in the middle ages when hammers powered by water mills pounded the cloth. Often the urine was collected by cask from cottagers who were paid per bucket.

After the pounding and rinsing the cloths were stretched on racks to dry. These were horizontal bars of oak, the top rail fixed and the bottom rails adjustable to accommodate differing width of cloth. Both rails were studded with tenterhooks, L-shaped nails which hooked into the cloth to keep it stretched. Hence the familiar expression 'to be kept on tenderhooks'.

Early mechanised wauk mills often became the nuclei of later woollen factories and although the mill in Balloch Wood was abandoned by the 1850's the mill west of the wood was converted from a cotton mill to a woollen carpet factory.