

Lanark

Heritage Trail

Explore this bustling town and discover historical highlights



[Map and information](#)

A warm welcome to

Lanark

This leaflet describes a walking tour around the historic market town of Lanark. You will not only come across lovely old buildings of architectural interest, discover the development of the town throughout the years, but uncover some of Lanark's hidden treasures. Welcome to 'oor toun'!

Lanark is a market town in the central belt of Scotland, and is approximately 28 miles from Edinburgh and 25 miles from Glasgow. Population is approximately 9,000.

It lies high on the east bank of the river Clyde, close to its merging with Mouse Water, a tributary. The strategic location guarding the Clyde Valley was first recognised by the Romans, who built a fort, on what's now known as Castlehill (Bowling Green). The Romans were followed by others fortifying this site, and in 978 AD, King Kenneth II of Scotland held at least one parliament in Lanark Castle.

William I, 1165-1214, frequently made Lanark Castle his residence. However by mid 14th century, the Castle had fallen into disuse, but the associated street pattern remains today.

Lanark has served as an important market town since medieval times, and King David I, made it a Royal Burgh in 1140, giving it certain mercantile privileges relating to Government and taxation. King David I realised that greater prosperity could result from encouraging trade. Lanark streets were formally laid out and burghage plots created. These were long narrow strips of land known as rigs and fronted by a house on the street. Closes followed the line of the rigs off the High Street and are still in use today.

no. 1

The Station

In 1855, a branch line was built to Lanark from the main Glasgow to Edinburgh railway line. It allowed goods to be carried in and out of the town and allowed people an easier route to visit the town and surrounding villages, including New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde. Behind the station, on the site of the Medical Centre, there was a sawmill, and opposite, on the site of the flats, there was a fancy box works, adjacent to the station for transporting goods.

Lanark Memorial Hall

Lanark Railway Station



no. 2

Memorial Hall

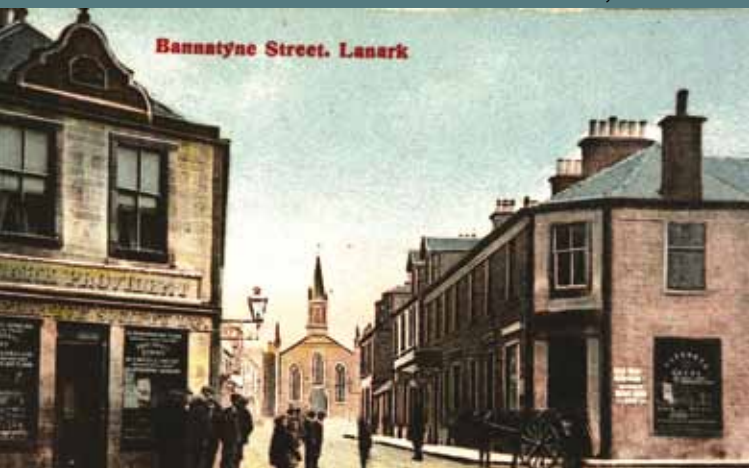
Lanark Memorial Hall was built in 1926 in memory of 232 men belonging to Lanark and District who lost their lives in World War 1. This grand old hall has served the community for over 90 years. It is now a Grade B listed building and has recently been refurbished.

The Hall is a multipurpose community facility, accommodating a wide variety of community groups and an events venue. It also houses a historic timeline of the Royal Burgh of Lanark researched and developed by Lanark Museum Trust and local schools.

no. 3 Co-operative Buildings

The old Co-operative building, Co-op Logo on the top of building, is at the top of High Street. The rooms above the shop is where Keir Hardie held his first Labour Party meeting.

Bannatyne Street



no. 4 High Street

Off the High Street there are various 'closes' on the right - Bulls Close; Duncan Close; Hunters Close and more. These all cut through and follow the lines of the old Rigs or Burghage created by King David I in 1140.

High Street



no. 5

The Tollbooth

The Tollbooth was built around 1778, but is on the site of a much earlier Tollbooth. It was used for many functions, a guard house (Jail), a weigh house, shops on the ground floor, the Sheriff Court and Council room on the first floor and a large room for the gentlemen of the town on the top floor. Today we can only see the top two floors due to the gradual change in the level of the High Street of some 12ft in the last 200 years. The provost's (Mayor) lamp, dating from the 1890's now stands at the side of the Tollbooth, it was formerly situated outside the current provost's (mayor) house.

High Street



Today it is a well used building in Lanark for public exhibitions, meetings, fairs and sales, and historical traditions, such as the Het Pint on 1 January each year. (The Het Pint was first recorded in the Burgh records in 1662. The funds to start the tradition to provide even the poorest Lanarkian with a drink to greet in the New Year was taken from a bequest to the town intended to put '5 penniless pupils' a year through their education at Lanark Grammar School. It has been adapted throughout the years with townspeople attending on New Year morning to collect their penny and a pint of mulled ale. This still happens today, with a 'secret recipe' of mulled wine being served (in a wine glass!) and the pensioners attending can claim a crisp new £1 note!).

no. 6 *St Nicholas Church*

The church was built in 1774 on the site of an earlier 12th century chapel. Within the steeple is the 'Toun's great bell', the oldest bell in Europe, believed to date from 1130 when it was housed in the Old St Kentigerns Church. It was recast in 1659 and again in 1983.

On the side of the steeple there is a plaque which says:

*'I did for thrice centuries hing,
And unto Lanark people ring.'*

The Church has recently been refurbished, and there were skeletons found which possibly date back to William Wallace's era.

St Nicholas Church

William Wallace statue



Lanark is one of the very few towns with direct links to William Wallace and still in existence today are the ruins of Old St Kentigerns Church, where Wallace was married to his sweetheart, Marion Braidfute and the site of Lanark castle, where Wallace first drew his sword and killed Hazelrigg, the English governor, in retaliation for killing his wife Marion. He was brutally executed in London in August 1305.

Mel Gibson played his part in the film, Braveheart. The 8 foot (2.45m) statue of William Wallace stands above St Nicholas Church door, a gift to the town in 1822. It was sculpted by Robert Forrest, a local man, from an ancient drawing of William Wallace.

no. 7

Clydesdale Inn

There was a Franciscan Friary on lands granted by Robert the Bruce, sited between the Clydesdale Inn and Greyfriars Church. The old street names date back, reminding us of the history of the area. (Friars Lane, Friarsdene).

The Clydesdale Inn was formerly the Clydesdale Hotel built in 1791, by the Town Council and the gentlemen of the county, as a first class coaching Inn. In 1827, the elegant and spacious assembly rooms were added to the rear. By mid 1800's, the hotel had become an important staging post, with coaches departing for Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. William and Dorothy Wordsworth and Charles Dickens were among important visitors. The old kitchen of the hotel is floored in stone slabs which may date back to monastery days (downstairs). Also it has been reported that the Inn is haunted by a grey monk!

Clydesdale Inn

Hope Street



no. 8

Hope Street

In Hope Street you will find old Victorian houses and on the right the Lindsay Institute, the Library, built in 1914 with trust funds left to the town by Charles Lindsay. The toilet within the Library is original in all features except for the toilet seat, which has been replaced! Also on the right, the Council buildings, built 1834 to 1836, and the Sheriff Court built in 1868. On the left St. Kentigerns Church, (built 1884), is now flats.

no. 9

YMCA Building

The YMCA building, is the home of The Royal Burgh of Lanark Museum which houses a collection of items illustrating the ancient and varied history of the town.

no. 10

Hyndford Place

The crow-stepped gable of Hyndford House, is a 17th century townhouse and former home of the Earl of Hyndford. It has a curved window at the corner, with the distinctive Lanarkshire panes from Victorian period (1837 to 1902).

Jacks the Ironmongers was founded in 1836, an old established shop of the town, a veritable 'Aladdin's Cave'.

Crow-stepped gable

Girnin' Dug



no. 11

Castlegate

At the beginning of Castlegate look up to see the little dog on the corner of the roof - the 'Girnin' Dug', he was put there by the man who owned the house.

Sometime in the 1800's, a Miss Inglis, lived in Castlegate, on the opposite side. She took a dislike to her neighbour's dog, and complained so much that the dog was put down. Her neighbour was so angry that he had a statue made to look like the dog, with a growling expression, placed on the roof, facing Miss Inglis's house so that she could see it at all times from her window!

William Wallace

Also at the top of Castlegate there is a Memorial plaque where William Wallace's House stood.

This is believed to have been the town house of the Laird of Lamington, the father of Marion Braidfoot.

William was already an outlaw when he and his followers came to Lanark area. This is when he probably met the young Marion, aged 18, and they fell in love. They were married in the old St Kentigerns Church, and lived in this house. He tried to avoid trouble until some English soldiers taunted him as he was leaving the Church, by suggesting that his baby daughter was not his. He lost his temper, and killed a soldier.

St Kentigerns Church

William Wallace plaque



He and his men went into hiding at Cartland Crag, and when he heard the English had killed Marion's brother, he left his hiding place, to visit his family. His whereabouts were betrayed to the English Sheriff of Lanark, William Heselrigg, and they unexpectedly raided the house.

After a skirmish, Wallace fled again into hiding. When Marion refused to tell Heselrigg where William was hiding, he put her and their child to death. William Wallace was incensed, and the same night, he and his men crept into Lanark Castle, Wallace killed Heselrigg in his bed and gave the order to slaughter the whole garrison.

This was the spark that led to the revolt and the victory of the Battle of Stirling Bridge in September 1297.

Edward, King of England's, attitude to Wallace is best summed up in the following statement; 'No words of peace are to be held out to William Wallace in any circumstance whatsoever unless he places himself utterly and absolutely in our will'. Sir John Mentieth betrayed William Wallace to the English who hung, drew and quartered him at Smithfield, London on Monday 23 August 1305. There is a wreath laying ceremony here annually.

Castlegate



Castlegate was Lanark's most important and imposing street in medieval times. It was a very wide street, leading to the castle, as the buildings in the middle were not built until the late 1800's. Originally the houses on each side would have been constructed of wood.

The car park area, on the right, was originally the site of early medieval markets. Street markets are occasionally still held here. The crow step gable of the house tucked into the right dates from 1640 and housed the Grammar School between 1650 and 1841. Parish Church Hall on the left is used continuously, as a crèche, Sunday school, clubs, coffee mornings and fayres. On the right, the Bloomgate Institute was built in 1838 as a school for the poor and is now in use as flats.

no. 12

Lanark Castle

The bowling green at the bottom of the Castlegate is on the site of Lanark Castle which dates back to David I, 1124 to 1153. The natural earth mound was surrounded by a timber structure, forming a defensive fortress. The castle was regularly used as the King's residence during the medieval period. Robert the Bruce held a court in the castle in 1321.

It was also the occasional meeting place of the Scottish Parliament which met here in 1293, 1294 and 1295.

The mound was used for military drills and grazing until the 18th century when it was reduced in height and by 1760 a bowling green was established. You can read the plaques at the bottom, and also at the top of the hill at the entrance of the bowling green.

Lanark Castle

Castlebank House



no. 13

Castlebank Park

Castlebank House was built in 1760 and gradually extended by owners throughout the years. It was sold to the Council in 1951 and was divided into flats commanding views over the Clyde Valley. The grounds, used as a public park, are currently being restored, re-siting and replacing play equipment. Also the area of the old tennis courts and sawmills are in planning stages to be converted into an horticultural educational site, for use by schools, clubs, and Lanark in Bloom. The old Dell Path has been reopened to walk to the River Clyde.

no. 14

Delves Park

As you walk through Delves Park, turning left to walk up Delves Road you will get a beautiful view across to New Lanark. You will also pass Glenmuir, the famous knitwear factory (shop open daily).

Wellgate



no. 15

Wellgate

Wellgate follows the original line of the medieval street from the narrow entrance where the Wellgate port once stood. The street is named after St Mungo's Well or the Town Well which was situated on the left hand side of the street where the buildings are set back. Although the original dwellings would have been made of wood and replaced with stone buildings in the late 16th, early 17th century the street retains much of its original character.

no. 16

Wellgatehead

Wellgate, where the road branches, connected the centre of the medieval town with Old St Kentigerns Church. The open land was developed during the Victorian period, with Lanark Grammar School being built in 1848. Lanark Grammar School was sited at different parts of the town in its 800 year old history. This building on the right side of the street, was built in 1884 and comprised the Infant, Primary and Secondary Departments. The playground was elevated above the street, and the field adjoining was only used on exceptionally sunny days. It is now closed and will be converted into flats.

no. 17 St Kentigerns Church

St Kentigerns Church is at the entrance to the Cemetery. It is believed to date to pre 1140's, and was known as the 'Oot Church' as it lay just outside the town.

The old town bell of Lanark hung here, and now hangs in St Nicholas Church. Sir William Wallace and Marion Braidfute were married here in 1296, and it was here that the English soldiers taunted Wallace about his daughter, and led to the slaughter of the Lanark Sheriff and the garrison at Lanark Castle, and subsequently revolt throughout Scotland.

St Kentigerns Church

Murray Chapel



no. 18 Murray Chapel

Within the cemetery, the large building to the left is Murray Chapel. It was erected and bequeathed to the community in 1912 by Helen Martin Murray in memory of her parents, brother and sisters.

Helen Martin Murray was born in New Lanark in 1832, the youngest child of John Murray, the Manager of the Cloth Store in New Lanark.

After the death of her father, the three daughters and their mother moved to Glasgow and set up a successful 'dress and mantle' business in West End of Glasgow. George Murray, only son, was a watchmaker and jeweller. He set up in Calcutta, and made a considerable fortune.



The sisters also retired with 'ample means'. One of the sisters married and lived in Millport. Agnes and Helen took great pleasure in 'prolonged continental trips'.

During one of the trips Miss Agnes Murray died very suddenly in Boulogne, and some years later when Mr George died, Miss Helen Murray was left quite alone. Helen died on 10 January, 1918 after a short illness, aged 85.

The family are interred in the family burial ground in Lanark.

Helen Murray, during her lifetime gave very generously to charity.

She gave two cottage homes to Quarriers, a new ward to the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, and numerous large sums to various benevolent societies and individual cases. She and her brother also presented a beautiful stained glass window to Lanark Parish Church (now St Nicholas Church) in memory of her sister Agnes.



In a letter to the Chairman of Lanark Parish Council, dated 10 July 1912, she states,

'I have been privileged to erect in my native town, primarily in memory of my parents, my brother and my sisters but essentially as a building sacred to the dead, where they might rest till the last sacred rites of burial were performed. On account of my advanced years I regret that I cannot in person be present to hand the building over to your custody to serve its purpose in the way that you in your wise discretion may deem most suitable for the needs of Lanark and district'. She also sent a cheque of £1000, 'to be invested at your discretion, and from the interest derived from same such sum as you think necessary is to be laid aside annually, while the balance of income may be devoted to the good of the poorer section of your community in such a way as seems to you or your successors most suitable from time to time. That this building may be of service in your midst, available under your control to rich and poor alike, irrespective of denominations or creed, and that the sanctity of the surroundings may be helpful to many is the wish of the donor.'

The building is currently in disrepair, but hopefully it will be refurbished soon and be used again for the community and school projects. Also within the cemetery, is the Martyr's Stone. Lanark was a great Covenanting Centre and the stone was erected to the memory of those who suffered the Solemn League and Covenant. Some were executed, some were deported and some had lands and belongings confiscated.

Covenanter gravestone dated 1682

The Martyrs Stone



no. 19

Stone Ring

This B-listed building, is a 19th century stone built octagonal auction room and was part of a series of buildings from the Lanark Auction Market.

no. 20

St Mary's Church

St Mary's Church was originally built between 1856 and 1859 by the Monteith family of Carstairs. In 1907 it was all but destroyed by fire, and was rebuilt between 1908 and 1910. It has recently been refurbished, with help from Grants, and through great effort of the parishioners in fund raising. St Mary's is a beautiful Church and still houses some fine examples of work by famous Victorian architects, artists and craftsmen. eg stained glass windows by Ballantine of Edinburgh, MARGA (Margaret Agnes Rope) of Arts and Crafts School and Hardman and Co of Birmingham; there is also a strong Pugin influence.

'Spirit of Flight'

Lanark Loch



no. 21

Lanark Loch

The 'Spirit of Flight', at the entrance to Lanark Loch is a memorial to commemorate the centenary of the Lanark Air Show in 1910. This was only the second British Air Show held and attracted competitors from all over the world. Over 250,000 came to Lanark over eight days in August 1910.

A rail station was constructed at Lanark Racecourse with a special timetable, with preference given to first class passengers. The three tonne sculpture, designed by Jois Hunter, is 6.5 metres high by 10 metres, and features three replicas of planes that flew at the Air Show, the Bristol Box Kite, a Bleriot and an Antoinette. Lanark Loch is a lovely setting, home to many swans. There are children's play areas and walk-way around the Loch. During the summer months there are trampolines, putting, boating etc.

Silver Bell trophy

Tote Tower



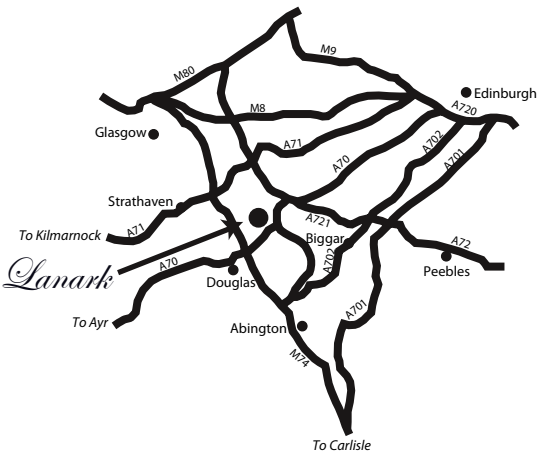
no. 22 Lanark Racecourse

The site of Lanark Racecourse and the Tote Tower. The famous 'Silver Bell' trophy is one of the oldest trophies in UK and the race took place at Lanark. The first winner engraving was in 1628, but it is believed to be older, possibly dating back to late 1500's. It was missing for many years and was 'found' stored in the vault in 1836, when the Lanark Town Council was moving premises.

The prestigious Silver Bell race is now held at Hamilton Racecourse annually for this great old trophy. Lanark Racecourse is no longer a racing venue, but is used by the public for walks etc and the grounds can be hired out for shows, festivals and rallies etc. The Tote Tower dates back to 1929, and was the first 'Robot Bookie' in Scotland and second in UK. A 220 strong staff were employed to run the tower. The hand operated number boards could show info for up to 26 runners. The Tote Tower is a reminder of the long history of racing at Lanark traced as far back as the 13th century.



St Nicholas Church



Images courtesy of South Lanarkshire Council and the Royal Burgh of Lanark Museum Trust



Produced by The Royal Burgh of Lanark Community Council and The Lanark Community Development Trust.
 Designed by Regeneration Services, Community and Enterprise Resources, South Lanarkshire Council, September 2013.

Thank you to Eleanor McLean