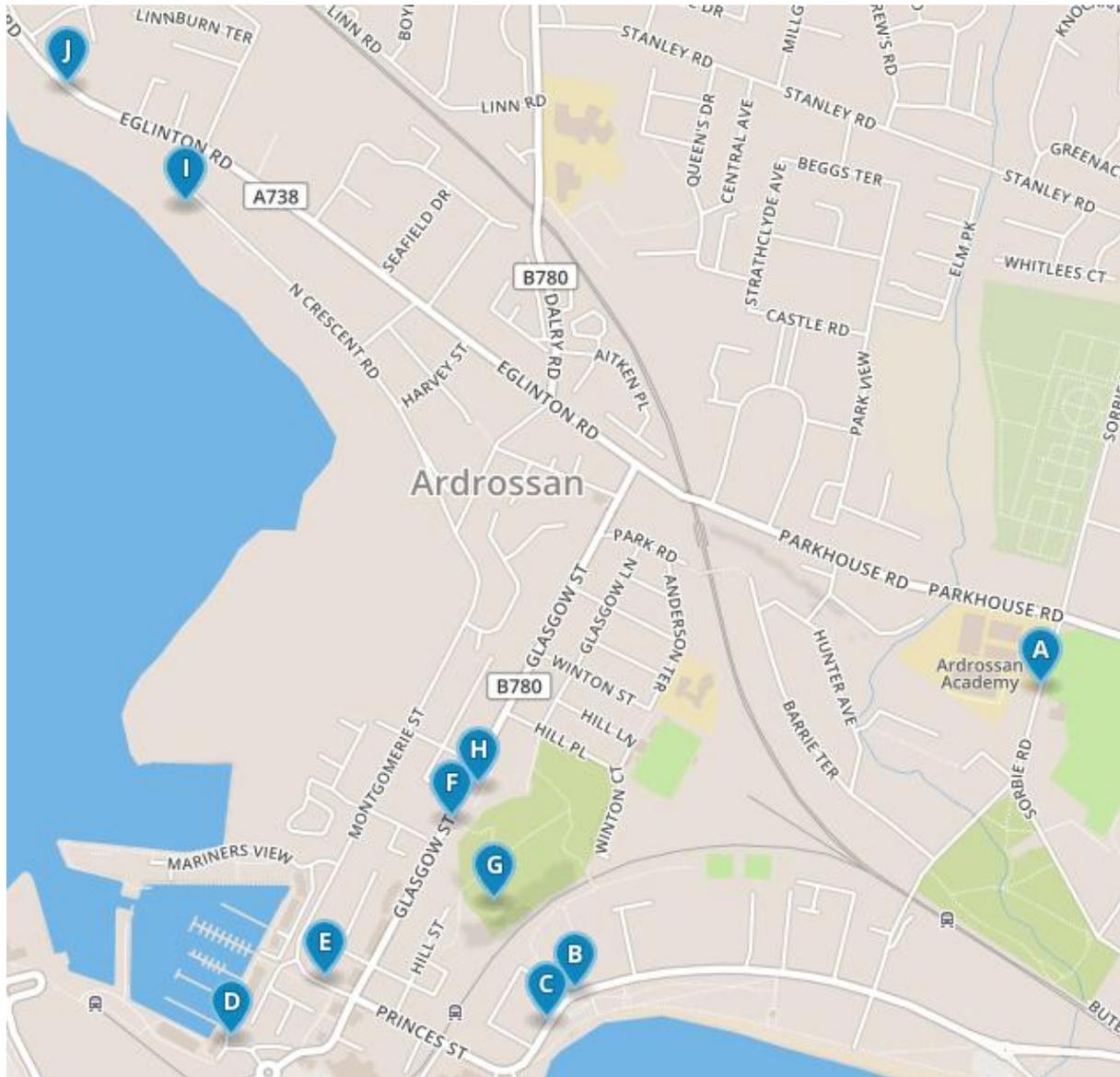


## Ardrossan Heritage Trail



Letters for each plaque can be found on the map above.

Start at Ardrossan Academy.

### **(A) Edith McArthur MBE, born 1926; actress**

Ardrossan Academy, Sorbie Road KA22 8AR

OS Grid Reference - NS 23999 42560

Plaque on main gates. Edith attended the academy<sup>1</sup>.

The actress Edith MacArthur MBE (1926 - ) was born in Ardrossan and noted for her elegant screen presence. Her best known role was the Lady Laird Elizabeth Cunningham in *Take the High Road* which she portrayed from the first episode in 1980 until December 1986. She has been most frequently seen on television with a long list of credits including *Z-Cars*, *The Borderers*, *The*

Troubleshooters, Sutherland's Law, The Standard, The Omega Factor, The Sandbaggers, Doctor Finlay, Hamish Macbeth, Casualty and Sea of Souls.

### **On to the next stop**

*Go down Sorbie Road past the Ardrossan Academicals Rugby Football Club<sup>2</sup> then down South Beach Road overlooking the Holm Plantation<sup>3</sup> to South Crescent Road. Turn right past the World War 1 Memorial<sup>4</sup>.*

### **(B) St Peter in Chains, built 1938; designed by Gillespie, Kidd & Coia**

1 South Crescent Road, KA22 8DU  
OS Grid Reference - NS 23279 42107  
Plaque at side of main gate into church grounds.

Coia and Kennedy were the key architects in Gillespie, Kidd & Coia, a Scottish architectural firm famous for their application of modernism in churches and universities, as well as at St Peter's Seminary in Cardross. Though founded in 1927, it is for their work in the post-war period that they are best known. The firm was wound up in 1987. St Peter-ad-Vincola was one of their earliest designs.

In 1938, the firm designed a church built in red and yellow brick showing a Scandinavian influence. This Roman Catholic church was constructed on the site of the 'Pavillion', a house within the ownership of the Earl of Eglinton.

### **On to the next stop**

*Continue to Arran Place, overlooking the Dasher Memorial and sunken garden<sup>5</sup>.*

### **(C) The Majestics, 1986; filming location of Tutti Frutti**

6 Arran Place, KA22 8DR  
OS Grid Reference - NS 23216 42057  
Used in filming for The Majestics.

The Majestics were a fictional, legendary Scots rock 'n' roll band within the Tutti Frutti mini series. On their 1986 'Silver Jubilee' tour, they stayed in lodgings in Ardrossan for their performance at the Club Paradiso, Ardrossan.

The photograph below shows the sunken garden at Arran Place with Elmwood in the background, the bed and breakfast used in filming.



### **On to the next stop**

*Continue on past the Barony Church<sup>6</sup> on your right and Bath Villa<sup>7</sup> on your left into Princes Street. Cross over and walk down to the red sandstone building at the corner, Ardrossan Masonic Lodge<sup>8</sup>. Turn left into Harbour Street and at the roundabout turn right to the redbrick building.*

### **(D) Ardrossan Harbour, built from 1806; designed by Thomas Telford**

Cecchini's Restaurant. KA22 8DA

OS Grid Reference - NS 22736 42052

This was the old power house for the harbour.

The foundation stone for the first pier was laid in 1808 at Ardrossan Harbour, with works commenced in 1806 by the 12th Earls of Eglinton. It was a natural harbour, greatly improved by the implementation of a design by Thomas Telford, who also planned to create a canal running from Glasgow to Ardrossan, via Paisley, Johnstone and Kilwinning, linking in with the harbour and thus facilitating the export and import of goods to and from the Irish market (lack of monies meant that this scheme was never completed). Work on the harbour halted on the death of the 12th Earl, standing in abeyance until much later.

Between 1886 and 1891, the Eglinton Dock, an outer basin, and a new breakwater were constructed by the Ardrossan Harbour Company. At its peak there were three basins, one locked, but the latter has been filled in. The harbour has been the subject of a painting by the 19th century English landscape and marine painter William Daniell, who featured it in his book 'A Voyage Around Great Britain'.

Civil engineer and architect (1757 - 1834), Thomas Telford was born in Eskdale. He was a noted road, bridge and canal builder. After establishing himself as an engineer of road and canal projects in Shropshire, he designed numerous infrastructure projects in his native Scotland, as well as harbours and tunnels. His report in 1805 established the scheme that was to deliver the canal from Glasgow to Ardrossan. He also developed the plan for the harbour at Ardrossan at the same time.

### **On to the next stop**

*Return to Princes Street and cross over to the library.*

### **(E) Rev John Kerr, 1824-1907; physicist**

Ardrossan Library, Princes Street, KA22 8BT

OS Grid Reference - NS 22890 42133

Kerr was born in Princes Street at an unknown address.

Physicist Rev John Kerr (1824 - 1907) was born in Ardrossan. Kerr's most important experimental work was the discovery of double refraction in solid and liquid dielectrics in an electrostatic field (1875) and of the so-called 'Kerr effect'. In the Kerr effect, a change in refractive index is proportional to the square of the electric field. Kerr also was an early champion of the metric system in the UK. His early experiments, now known as Kerr Cells, are preserved in the Hunterian Museum.

The photograph below and more information on Kerr can be found on his Wikipedia page.



## **On to the next stop**

*Turn back and turn left into Glasgow Street. Cross the road and continue up to the Castlehill Gates.*

### **(F) Ardrossan Castle and Parish Church**

Middle of Glasgow Street, south side, KA22 8EU

OS Grid Reference - NS 23090 42363

Plaque on gate post.

Although Ardrossan Castle is an ancient castle by Scottish standards, little is known of its early history and origins. From the 12th century, records tell us that the lands of Ardrossan were in the hands of the Barclay family, Richard de Barclay being Richard de Morville's vassal, before Montgomery of Eglinton acquired it in the mid 14th century.

The Barony of Ardrossan passed into the hands of Eglinton family following the death of the last Baron of Ardrossan, Godfrey, and his daughter and sole heir, subsequently married Sir Hugh Eglinton. Following Sir Hugh's death some time after 1376, his only child, Elizabeth, married John de Montgomerie of Eglesham and carried with her the Lordships of Eglintoun and Ardrossan.

Ardrossan Castle was the chief seat of the Montgomeries until the time of Alexander, the first Lord Montgomerie. He made Eglinton his principle residence though Ardrossan remained a stronghold until it was finally destroyed in the late 17th century, allegedly at the hands of Cromwell.

Throughout its life, the Castle seems to have been a fortress rather than a fortified house.

- Construction of the castle as we know it, began in the 13th century with the building of a gatehouse facing north with two vaulted cellars.
- It had a vaulted entrance which led through to a central rectangular courtyard surrounded by buildings.
- The buildings were surrounded by a curtain wall. This was a feature common to most medieval castles, and was simply a set of walls that surrounded and protected the interior of the castle.
- Walls were often connected by a series of mural towers to add strength and provide for better defence of the ground outside the castle. An entrance was cut into the wall and passageway created leading down into the castle ditch and it was here that a well was dug to provide water for the castle's occupants.

The Montgomeries began huge a programme of reconstruction at Ardrossan Castle in order to make the accommodation more comfortable and the defences stronger. These alterations carried on well into the 15th century.

- The gatehouse was remodelled at this time and transformed into a more typical keep or towerhouse with parts rebuilt to include a winch house to house the mechanism to raise and lower a portcullis.
- The old entrance was reduced in size creating a small doorway which may have acted as a postern and a small opening in the wall above suggests the housing for a drawbridge mechanism.
- A mezzanine floor was installed inside the entrance and a turnpike stair inserted in the south west corner and entrances made onto the courtyard and a large window facing north was created on the first floor with window seats and a fireplace positioned on the west wall.
- The old entrance was finally blocked up and replaced by a gun port in the late 15th century and legend has it that Cromwell was the culprit.

It is documented that the Montgomeries did leave Ardrossan's stronghold in favour of Little Cumbrae which was more inaccessible should Cromwell venture near during his incursions into Scotland. Castles like Ardrossan could no longer stand up to drilled armies with siege guns, so there was no point in rebuilding it as a stronghold. The Montgomeries had many other more suitable houses in which to live and sadly Ardrossan Castle was neglected until the building of the new town in the 19th Century. (Full details of the extent of the renovations can be found in *The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 104 Session 1971-72, pp201-221).

A church on Castle Hill was first recorded in 1229, in an agreement between Walter, Bishop of Glasgow, and John, Abbot of Kilwinning, recognising that the Abbot had a claim to a pension from it. The building originally measured 64 ft by 26 ft and stood within the graveyard a short distance to the north of Ardrossan Castle. The church was dedicated to St Bridget and had two altars; one for Saint Peter and the other for the Virgin Mary. The graveyard was used by the Barons of Ardrossan and the Montfode family as well as the ordinary people of Ardrossan. Following the Reformation in 1560 the parish had to provide its own ministers and the first recorded was named Porterfield.

The Church remained in use until storm-damaged in 1695. A replacement was built some two years later on the north bank of the Stanley Burn. The new church was dismantled in 1744 and another built in the more heavily populated town of Saltcoats, next to the Chapel

Well. Unfortunately, this building suffered the same fate as the one on Castle Hill, following a storm in 1773. It was completely rebuilt on the same site and remained Ardrossan's parish church until its closure in 1908. Today the building houses North Ayrshire Heritage Centre.

In 1911 council workmen landscaping the grounds around the ruins on Castle Hill discovered a stone coffin beneath the church floor. Its lid had been pushed aside revealing its contents; part of a skull and a fragment of leather. The identity of the occupant of the stone coffin, or sarcophagus, has been the subject of much speculation. Given its position, close to where the altar would have been and adjacent to the Castle, it is likely that it was made for one of the lords of Ardrossan. The ornate carving on the lid, depicting a stylised cross and a sword supports this theory and suggests the person was a soldier and a Christian. The sarcophagus, now on display in the Heritage Centre, is said to be one of the finest known examples of lowland Scottish medieval sculpture.

### **Ardrossan Castle - The Future**

I hope you have enjoyed learning a little more about the colourful history of Ardrossan Castle. From its origins in the 13th century, through to its different residents and owners, it is indeed steeped in history and I suspect has many more tales to tell us of its past. But what of the future?

The ruins of the castle are a prominent feature on the skyline of Ardrossan and they remind us of the long relationship it has had with the town. As a new chapter in the life of the castle opens we can only wait to see what direction the residents of the town would like the castle to take.

The strength and enthusiasm of the members of the newly formed Ardrossan Castle Heritage Society will certainly ensure a fabulous start to its new life. Also on board is the local Ardrossan Youth Group who are already engaged in activities to support the work of sharing the history of the castle with children and young people. Both these groups will raise the awareness of the rich history and work with Irvine Bay, North Ayrshire Council and many other partners to ensure that whatever lies ahead it is developed in partnership to make the most of our local gem.

With history in the making the future does look bright for the castle. Although what it will end up looking like is still to be decided, we can be assured that more people will definitely know about its life, its residents and its colourful past.

### **On to the next stop**

*Climb steps up to Castlehill. (There is an easier route onto Castlehill from Hill Place which is further up Glasgow Street.) Turn left to the parish church ruin then back up the hill to the castle. Then further on to the obelisk monument.*

### **(G) Dr Alexander McFadzean, 1788-1849; physician and philanthropist**

OS Grid Reference - NS 23133 42221

Plaque in front of monument where the lion stone carving is.

Physician and philanthropist, Dr Alexander MacFadzean (1788-1849) originated the proposal to form the town of Ardrossan into a burgh. He was a respected philanthropist and physician who took over and ran the Bath Complex. He was instrumental in pressing for the supply of piped water, completed after his death in 1860, and is commemorated on Castle Hill.

The hydropathic bathing facility provided hot and cold, fresh and salt-water bathing. The surviving Georgian Bath Villa is a c.1870 building which acted as the lodging house for the attached baths, now gone. The original architect was John Cleland with restoration work undertaken in 1989.

### **On to the next stop**

*Return to Glasgow Street and continue up to the Civic Centre past the World War 2 Memorial Garden.*

### **(H) Peter Nicholson, 1765-1844; architect of Ardrossan**

Ardrossan Civic Centre<sup>9</sup>, Middle of Glasgow Street, south side, KA22 8EU

OS Grid Reference - NS 23163 42432

Glasgow Street is the main street in the town of Ardrossan that Nicholson designed.

Architect, mathematician and engineer, Peter Nicholson was born in Prestonkirk, East Lothian. He was the architect appointed by the 12th Earl of Eglinton to prepare plans for the new town of Ardrossan in Ayrshire and for the next 50 years his simple but effective grid plan was adhered to.

The New Town of Ardrossan was planned and created to support the development of a new harbour and the seaward end of a canal that the 12th Earl of Eglinton planned to run from

Glasgow. The grid pattern of the town is still recognisable through Princes Street, Montgomerie Street and Glasgow Street.



### **On to the next stop**

*Cross Glasgow Street and enter Barr Street. Continue to Montgomerie Street and turn right. (Note the Fire Station to your left first<sup>10</sup>.)*

*Continue up Montgomerie Street turning north over the old railway bridge. (On your left you can see parts of the platforms of Ardrossan North Railway Station<sup>11</sup> and the area next to the sea where ShellMex<sup>12</sup> stood.) Continue on to North Crescent Road.*

### **(I) Horse Isle Beacon, built 1811; navigation beacon**

OS Grid Reference - NS 22716 43348

Plaque at end of North Crescent Road overlooking Horse Island.

Sir John Ross (1777 - 1856), born near Stranraer, was a Scottish rear admiral and Arctic explorer. In 1786, aged only nine, he joined the Royal Navy as an apprentice. He served in the Mediterranean and the English Channel before, in 1808, he acted as a captain of the Swedish Navy and in 1812 became a Commander. Sir John was the uncle of Captain Sir James Clark Ross, who explored the Arctic with him, and later led expeditions to the south pole.

Horse Isle Beacon is a 52 foot tall stone beacon and stands at the south end of Horse Isle marking the island for shipping. Erected in 1811, it was commissioned by Hugh, 12th Earl of Eglinton on the suggestion of John Ross. The hazard the island continued to present to

shipping is reflected in the number of ships that have been wrecked on the island including: Minerva (1821, brig); Morning Star (1871); Brigadier (tugboat, 1960).



### **On to the next stop**

*Continue onto Eglinton Road and turn left. Walk north to the stone bridge over the burn.*

### **(J) Mungo Campbell, 1712-1770; excise officer and murderer**

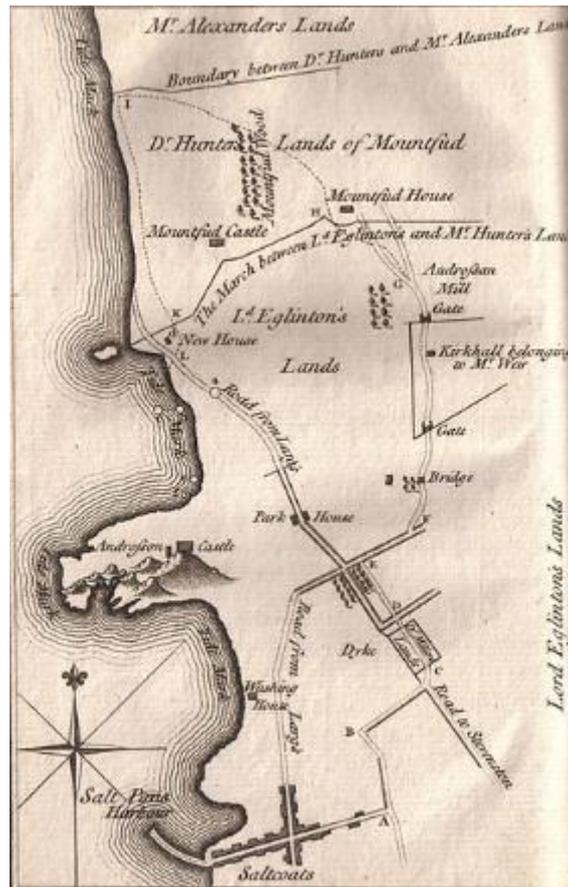
Opposite 102 Eglinton Road, KA22 8NN

OS Grid Reference - NS 22557 43497

Plaque at North Shore on stone bridge. This overlooks the rocky area on the shore where Mungo shot the Earl.

Mungo Campbell (1712 - 1770) was an excise officer and soldier based in Saltcoats, who was caught by the 10th Earl of Eglinton allegedly poaching on his lands by the shore at Ardrossan after crossing the Montfode burn. The son of the Provost of Ayr, Campbell had served in the Scots Greys during the War of Austrian Succession and under Loudon in the loyal Highlanders during the '45. Convicted of murder in Edinburgh in 1770, he hung himself in his cell and was buried at sea - much of the local sympathy was for Campbell.

The 10th Earl of Eglinton (1723 - 1769) planned and built the conservation village of Eaglesham in 1769 around the basic plan of a capital 'A'. The Earl also introduced the young James Boswell to the joys of London society in the early 1760s, and figures prominently in Boswell's London Journal, 1762-63. He was the Grand Master Mason of the Grand Lodge of Scotland from 1750-51. There are suggestions that the Earl was involved in smuggling which led to the conflict with Campbell. Below is a map of Eglinton.



***This ends the walking route.***

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<sup>1</sup> The older part of Ardsrossan Academy was built in 1933 and replaced an earlier academy of 1882 located at South Crescent.

<sup>2</sup> Ardsrossan Academicals Rugby Football Club were founded in 1921 as the Ardsrossan Acidemicals Sports Club and played their matches at Montfode Farm, North Shore, Ardsrossan.

<sup>3</sup> The Holm Plantation once had a mineral well that sold bottled water.

<sup>4</sup> This war memorial was unveiled in 1923 and has on it the carved figures of St Andrew, Robert Bruce, Admiral Sir Andrew Wood, James IV, Robert Burns, James Watt and David Livingstone.

<sup>5</sup> HMS Dasher was a Royal Navy aircraft carrier that sank off Ardsrossan in 1943 killing 379 men on board.

<sup>6</sup> The Barony Church opened in 1844 as the New Ardsrossan Parsh Church.

<sup>7</sup> Bath Villa was built in 1807 by the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Eglinton to provide fresh and salt water bathing.

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<sup>8</sup> This building used to be the town's court house until the Lodge St John Royal Arch Saltcoats and Ardrossan No. 320 acquired it in 1946.

<sup>9</sup> The Civic Centre was once called Castlecraigs and was built in 1851.

<sup>10</sup> The fire station opened in 1934 and had accommodation for two fire engines, two officers and eight men and their families.

<sup>11</sup> Ardrossan North was one of five railway stations in the town. It opened in 1888 and closed in 1932.

<sup>12</sup> ShellMex was an oil refinery mainly producing bitumen for road construction. It first started operating in 1927 and produced bitumen until 1985 and was then demolished in 1991.