

Archaeology on the Rhins Coast Path

South-east Rhins



There are around 1,500 archaeological sites in the Rhins of Galloway.

This guide was created to help you discover some of the highlights as you explore the stunning Rhins coastline. There are three guides in the series.


North Rhins Guide covers the path from Stranraer to Portpatrick (route sections 1 and 2)

South-west Rhins Guide covers the path from Portpatrick to Mull of Galloway (route sections 3 and 4)

This guide (**South-east Rhins**) covers the path from the Mull of Galloway to Stranraer (route sections 5 and 6)



Enjoy exploring the archaeology of the Rhins of Galloway Coast Path

 We have provided location information in the form of grid references for use with GPS, and what3words addresses for use with the free what3words app.

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment.



**KNOW THE CODE
BEFORE YOU GO**
outdooraccess-scotland.scot

Please remember the following guidelines:

Archaeological monuments can be unstable and dangerous. Never climb, sit or stand on archaeological monuments or remains.

Respect all signage and fences.

Take nothing, and leave only footprints.



Timeline of Archaeological Periods



Today's landscape bears traces of thousands of years of settlement.

The archaeology of Scotland begins after the retreat of the last ice sheet, around 12,000 years ago. There are very few visible traces of the first people who lived here (during the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic) because their lifestyles were very mobile.



Mull of Galloway

Site 1

At the southern tip of the Rhins, the Mull of Galloway is home to the largest Iron Age promontory fort in Scotland.

Two monumental earthworks cut off the promontory. The northern-most runs across the narrow neck of the promontory. Around 300m behind this is an even larger earthwork formed of three banks and two ditches, a great example of the scale of Iron Age construction. The deep ditches with banks behind, perhaps topped by tall wooden fences, would have made quite an impression.

Geophysical survey at the Mull as part of the Rhins Revealed project has discovered possible features between the two monumental earthworks: traces of an enclosure, perhaps formed by a palisade, and perhaps prehistoric roundhouses.



NX 1420 3102 (northern earthworks)
what3words: reefs.cube.pastime

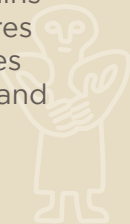


Image © Rob MacTaggart

Site 1 (cont.)

Mull of Galloway



Image © John Pickin

While the southern tip of the Rhins might seem remote to us today, it sits centrally within the Irish Sea zone. Waterborne trade routes between what we now know as south-west Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man and north-west England, place the Mull at the heart of busy land- and sea-scapes in the past.

Place-name: Scots *mull*, 'snout, muzzle' and also 'headland, promontory'. Galloway is from Gaelic *Gall-Ghàidheil*, 'the foreign Gaels', an ethnic and political grouping who occupied the area during the 9th to 11th centuries. Their foreign-ness reflects their connection to an Irish Sea Norse identity, in spite of their also being Gaels.



NX 1436 3072 (southern earthworks)
what3words:vegans.hillsides.detect



Chapel Wells

Site 2

Three holy wells – natural hollows in the rock, filled with seawater – are visible from the cliffs at low tide. The wells are associated with nearby St Medan's Chapel, dedicated to Medana, an 8th century Irish princess. The water was believed to have healing properties, and the wells were visited until the mid-20th century by sick people hopeful of a cure. On the first Sunday of May in particular, people visited the chapel to leave gifts to St Medana, and bathed in the wells.

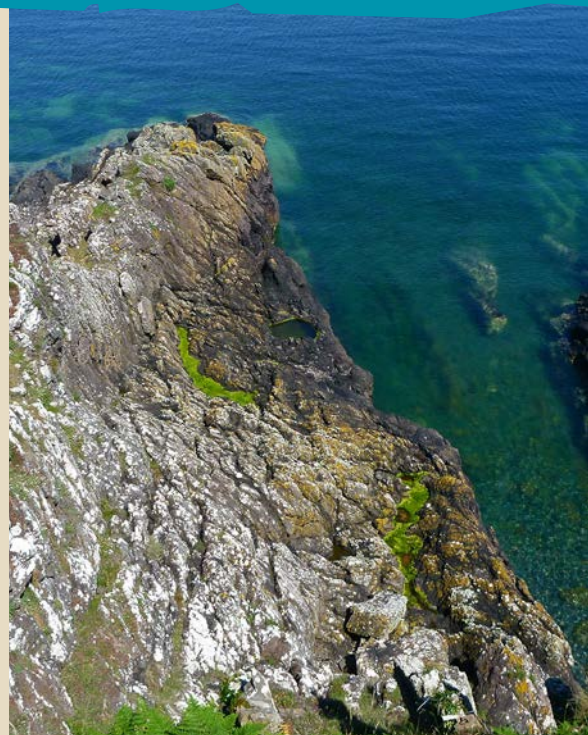
Access to the chapel and wells is difficult and not advised without a local guide. An interpretation panel close to the path provides further information about the story of St Medana.

Place-name: wells associated with the chapel!



NX 1439 3159

what3words: toned.thrones.landscape



Site 3

Wylie's Mill



The building known as Wylie's Mill on Mill Street, Drummore, was still in use in the 1970s. However, despite the name, it was apparently always a grain store rather than a mill: the cast-iron water-wheel, visible at the north-west facing elevation, is thought to have powered a grain bruiser and a grain dresser. The floors and cast iron uprights are said to have been reused from a building constructed for the Glasgow Exhibition of 1901.

Place-name: named after a previous owner. A grain merchant called James Wylie is listed in the Post Office Directory, 1911-1912. There was also a Wylie and Sons grain merchant business in Garlieston, Wigtownshire, perhaps the same family, or indeed the same business.



NX 1366 3672 (Mill Street, Drummore)
what3words: skewed.outs.dreaming

Terally Brick and Tile Works

Site 4

A small brick and tile industry developed across Galloway in the 19th century in response to demand for materials needed to create drainage. The Agricultural Improvements of the 18th and 19th centuries saw farming become larger scale and more industrialised. Field drains were installed to turn otherwise boggy ground into productive land for arable or pasture.

The brick and tile works at Terally were in operation between 1840 and 1953. The double kiln unit produced enough to meet the needs of local farms and estates. The ponds nearby were made by flooding the disused clay pits. The coal store sits very close to the route of the Coast Path.

Place-name: see next site, Terally Bay



NX 1230 4111 (coal store)
what3words: originate.limitless.soggy



Site 5

Terally Bay



The raised beach at Terally Bay has drawn people to it for thousands of years.

The earliest evidence of occupation at Terally comes in the form of scattered flints, left behind by hunter-gather communities moving through the area in the Mesolithic period.

A standing stone (left) set back from the shore hints at the bay's significance in the prehistoric ritual landscape. The stone is only around a metre tall today, but it is clearly broken and would once have towered much higher. Stones were placed upright in the Neolithic and Bronze Age as part of complex systems of rituals and beliefs.

Many centuries later, an early early medieval community chose the raised beach for a cemetery.



NX 1228 4127 (standing stone)
what3words: flanks.offstage.jiggle

Terally Bay

Site 5 (cont.)

At least 13 long cists – graves lined with stone slabs – were found to the south of the standing stone in the 1950s, discovered accidentally by workmen digging a trench.

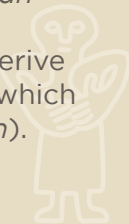
In the curve of the bay is a prominent mound (right) which may be a motte, an artificial mound on which a tower or keep would have stood in the medieval period. Some surveyors, however, have concluded that is nothing more than a natural feature.

Place-name: Gaelic, the first element is *tir*, 'land' but the second element is unclear: perhaps *allaidh*, 'wild, fierce' or *ailich* or *ailig*, 'a stony place'; *àillidh* 'beautiful, lovely', is possible, though not very common in place-names. Alternatively, it may derive from *Amhladh*, a Gaelic form of the name Olaf, which underlies the surname MacAulay (*Mac Amhlaidh*).



NX 1224 4112 (motte)

what3words: documents.kicked.survey





“The Laird of Logan hath lately built an excellent windmill”. So said the Rev. Andrew Symson, Minister of Kirkinner, in 1684.

Logan Windmill was a grain mill formed of a two-storey tower with a vault below. The vaulted tower windmill was a type used widely in late 17th century Scotland but rarely found elsewhere.

In its current form, Logan Windmill looks like a child’s idea of a castle: a circular tower crowned by a crenellated parapet. The parapet was added after the mill fell out of use, to create a picturesque feature in the landscape.

Place-name: derives its name from the extensive lands of Logan, Logan House being 2.5 km to the south-west. Logan is Gaelic *lagan*, ‘little hollow’.



NX 1152 4379

what3words: fastening.undercuts.bedrock

Ardwell Motte

Site 7

The motte at Ardwell is one of six in the Rhins, all probably dating to the 12th or 13th century. A wide ditch surrounds an artificial mound that the principal tower of a castle would have sat upon. Nothing remains of the original structure since the tower was probably built of wood.

Ardwell Motte is just off the route of the Coast Path, but accessible via Ardwell Pond Walk. More details at info.dumgal.gov.uk/CorePathMaps/Walking/Ardwell-Pond.pdf

Place-name: the second element is probably Old Norse *völlr*, 'field'. If so, the first element may be *urð*, 'a pile of stones' rather than Gaelic *àrd*, 'high'.



NX 1072 4550

what3words: olive.operation.fails



Image © Fearann Alba

Site 8

Kirkmadrine



Although not on the route of the Rhins Coast Path, Kirkmadrine warrants inclusion here because it is one of the most important archaeological/historical sites in the Rhins. The current chapel dates to the 19th century but occupies the site of an earlier church. It houses an internationally significant collection of medieval carved stones, most of which were found in the churchyard. Three of the stones are among the oldest Christian monuments in Scotland, dating to the 6th century AD. They are among just twelve early Latin-inscribed stones known in Scotland. Their presence suggests that there was an important early Christian site, perhaps an unrecorded monastery, at Kirkmadrine.

Place-name: English/Scots *kirk* + the name of a saint, probably formed by adding Gaelic *mo* 'my' to the root of the saint's name; the name is not clear.



NX 0800 4838 (signposted from A716)
what3words: mindset.dumps.website

Balgreggan Motte

Site 9

You can't miss the prominent mound of Balgreggan Motte at the western end of Sandhead Bay. This artificial knoll surrounded by a ditch was created in the medieval period, perhaps the 12th or 13th century. It would have been topped by a wooden building, or keep.

The medieval stronghold provides an excellent vantage point, and the motte was re-used as an observation point during the Second World War.

Place-name: probably Gaelic *baile gragain*, 'fermtoun of [the] district, manor, village'. Though Balgreggan farm now lies about 1 km to the west of the motte, it may be that the original *baile* settlement was not at Balgreggan farm, but down here at the motte.



NX 0964 5049

what3words: until.sagging.cluttered



Image © Leslie Barrie (cc-by-sa/2.0)



Site 10

Luce Sands Target Cones



Looming large on Luce Sands, these three target cones were constructed in 1937. They were used for target practice by trainee bomb-aimers, who did their best to hit the targets with smoke bombs.

Around 5km to the north-east is another trio of target cones, more dilapidated than those at the western end of the bay.

Place-name: Luce is from a Gaelic place-name, and is found in numerous names in the area. The original name may have been that of the Water of Luce, **abhainn lossa*, 'river of herbs/flowers'. Old Gaelic *lús* 'vigour, abundance', or the verb *lúsaid*, 'drinks', are also possibilities, again with reference to the river.

NB the target cones are below the high tide mark but clearly visible from a distance.



NX 1235 5208

what3words: discusses.standing.button



Site number



Path



Beginning/end point of
coast path route sections

Key

NOT TO SCALE

This guide was produced by AOC Archaeology Group for the Rhins of Galloway Coast Path project, managed by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Place-names information provided by Gilbert Márkus, Research Associate (Celtic & Gaelic), University of Glasgow.

Find out more about the Rhins of Galloway Coast Path at [**dgtrails.org**](https://dgtrails.org).



Supported by Kilgallioch Community Fund with funding from ScottishPower Renewables' Kilgallioch Windfarm.

