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With the exception of those on pages 9, 15, and 17 the illustrations are reproduced by courtesy of Messrs. Stevensons' Dairy Farms, Cumnock.



*Glaisnock Viaduct from
Murray Park, Cumnock*

Introducing CUMNOCK

CUMNOCK, in south-east Ayrshire, stands at the crossing of two very important highways. This, no doubt, accounts for the fact that a community has existed here since the far distant days when the people of the district spoke a Celtic language. One of the highways is the main road from Dumfries to Glasgow via Kilmarnock, and the other is the main road from Ayr to Edinburgh which runs through Muirkirk, Douglas, and Lanark.

At present a town of just over 5,000 population, Cumnock is important as the administrative centre of the

AN INTRODUCTION

surrounding parishes of Mauchline, Sorn, Stair, Muirkirk, Auchinleck, Ochiltree, and New Cumnock. But the town is destined to become far more important during the next ten years or so for the authorities have planned to develop it into a town of some 21,000 inhabitants. Development will be carefully planned and will cover the expansion of the town both residentially and industrially. Existing amenities for residents (set out in detail in later pages) will be extended in order to meet the needs of the growing population.

Until quite recently, Cumnock's industrial activities could be summed up by the phrase "cattle and coal," but with the introduction of a modern weaving factory (which is itself in course of steady expansion) and various other enterprises, the industrial aspect of the area has become rather more complex. Although coal-mining is

By courtesy R. D. Hunter, Esq.

The Town Hall, Glaisnock Street



AN INTRODUCTION

still of such importance to Cumnock, it should not be assumed that its surroundings are drab and depressing. In fact, the countryside round about is most attractive and some of the illustrations in this book will help to prove the point to anyone not familiar with this part of Ayrshire.

Cumnock, a derivation from two Celtic words meaning "a hollow in the hills" is very aptly named; surrounded by gently-rising hills, it lies in a beautifully wooded hollow where Glaisnock and Lugar Waters join together. Even in ancient times it must have been a place of some importance for mention is made of the town as early as the seventh century. To-day it is remembered chiefly for its associations with the Covenanters, several of whom, including Peden, Corson, Hair, and the Crossgelloch Martyrs found graves here.

In 1886 Cumnock became a Police Burgh and is now administered by a Town Council presided over by a Provost. Of the nine Councillors, one is Honorary Treasurer, one a Police Judge, and two are Bailies. The Provost is also Dean of Guild, although any member of the Council could be appointed to this office. The Provost, the Bailies and the Police Judge are the Magistrates in the Burgh Police Court, which has the same jurisdiction in the Burgh as a Justice of Peace Court in the County.

The early story of Cumnock is passed over in a few words not because there is little to say on the subject but because this book is concerned chiefly with the town's present and future. The first section describes the chief features of the town with special reference to its fine swimming pool; the second section deals with the important subjects of industry and employment; the third describes the countryside and places of interest of the neighbourhood; and the final section sets out details of the amenities and public services available to residents.



This peaceful scene in Roseburn Glen, Cumnock, is typical of the surrounding countryside. Sheep are seen in great numbers hereabouts for sheep-rearing is almost as important in the agricultural sphere as dairy-farming.

A TOUR OF THE TOWN

CUMNOCK is a well laid out town and, as far as housing is concerned, is a credit to its civic fathers and to Scotland. The streets are always scrupulously clean and about them there is an air of well-being, felt in few other burghs in the country.

The Parish Church, a cruciform Gothic structure occupying the centre of The Square, is unique in its situation. Beside it, on the south side, stands the old Mercat Cross bearing on it the arms of the Dumfries family, who have always been lords of the manor. They own Dumfries House and Estate which lie half-a-mile to the west of the town on the Ayr Road.

Cumnock Town Hall in Glaisnock Street, which runs north and south and is part of the main Dumfries-Glasgow Road, is built of red sandstone. It is an imposing building containing a main hall to seat 650 people and a lesser one which can accommodate 250. It also contains a council room, cloak-rooms, a kitchen, dressing rooms, and an excellent stage, which is capable of extension and large enough to seat—it has already done so on several occasions—the complete B.B.C. Scottish Orchestra. The dance floor, which was renewed last year, is one of the best in the West of Scotland and is in frequent use.

Apart from the Auld Kirk, which has already been mentioned, there are several other places of worship. The West Church in Bridge Street and the Crichton Memorial in Ayr Road are in the process of union. The United Free Church is in Glaisnock Street, the Congregational Church in Auchinleck Road, the Baptist Church in Barrhill Road, St. John's Roman Catholic Church in Glaisnock Street, and a Salvation Army Headquarters in Townhead Street. There are several sections of Plymouth Brethren.

Beautifully situated in Barrhill Road is the Bute Cottage Hospital. As a hospital its days are at an end and in the near future it will be put to another use in keeping with the needs of the ever-growing community.



*The Annual Carnival Parade
passes through Glaisnock Street*

The post office, in Lugar Street, within a few yards of The Square, is pleasing to the eye and of sufficient size for the needs of the population. Just opposite, and a matter of a hundred yards from the road, is the public library which also contains rooms used by the county medical authorities for clinic purposes.

A yard or two from The Square, on the Edinburgh road, rises the lofty building of Cumnock Academy. This is a senior secondary school, and takes pupils from Cumnock and the surrounding parishes. Having well over a thousand pupils and a teaching staff of close on sixty, it is the largest educational establishment in Ayrshire.

In 1949, the Education Committee of the County Council purchased Glaisnock House, a commodious mansion and well-wooded estate a mile to the south of the town for use as a rural school which will offer a three years' course in rural subjects to young people who intend to make agriculture their life's work.

The town can claim to be well served by its hotels, of which there are three. The Dumfries Arms situated fifty yards north of the Town Hall in Glaisnock Street is the

TOURING THE TOWN

oldest. The Black Bull is on the East side of The Square, and the Hotel Royal stands on the corner of The Square and Glaisnock Street.

A full banking service is in operation in the town. Branches of The Bank of Scotland, The Royal Bank, The Commercial Bank, and The Clydesdale and North of Scotland Bank are to be found, the first two in Glaisnock Street, the other two in The Square.

In Lugar Street is the Baird Institute which contains a billiard room, a museum with Covenanting relics, a reading room and recreation rooms.

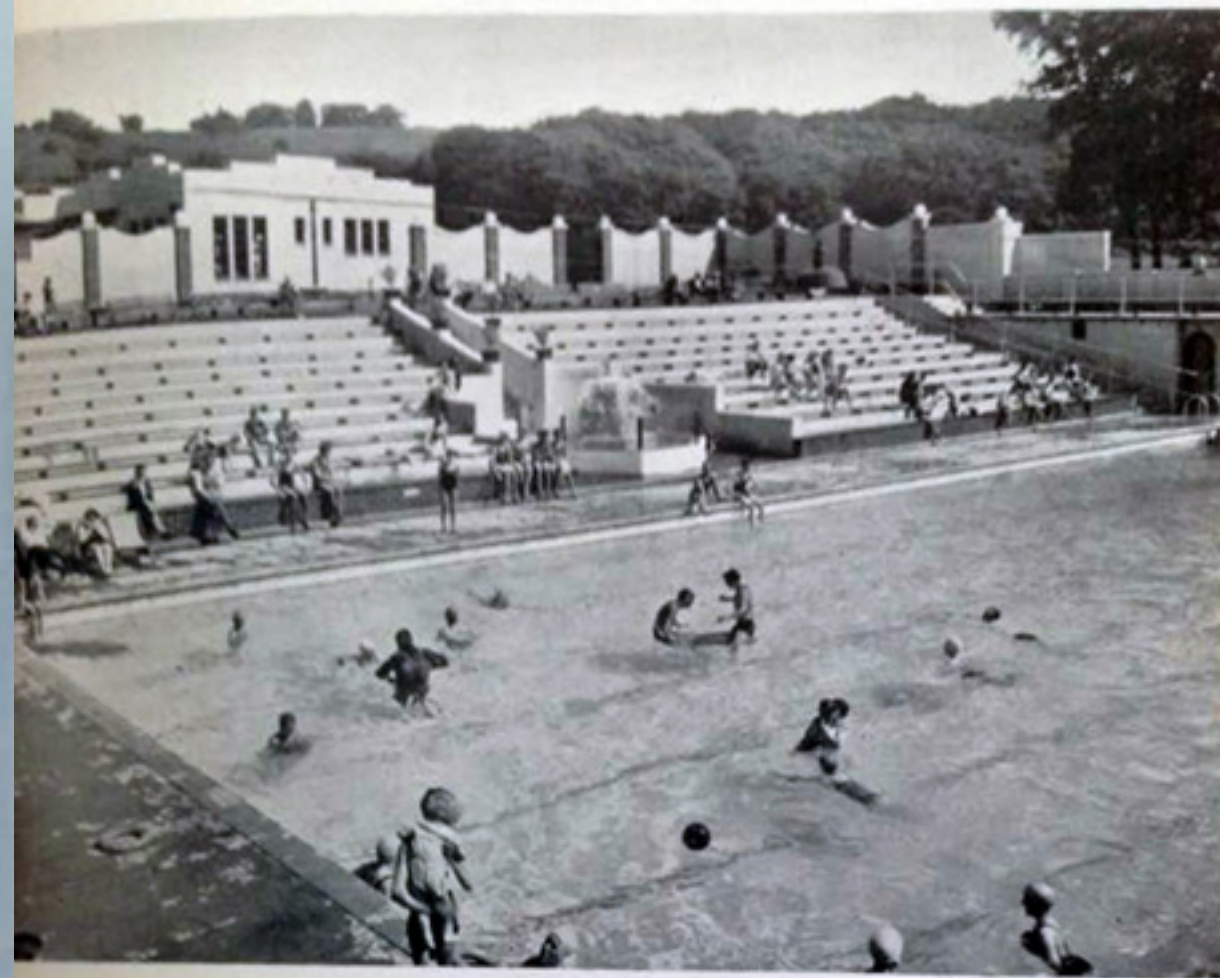
The 4/5th Battalion of The Royal Scots Fusiliers has its "C" Company Headquarters at the Drill Hall in Townhead Street. This commodious building contains a main hall, an armoury, an orderly room, and a miniature range. An annexe to it has a billiards room, a club room, a canteen, and a kitchen. Also within the perimeter are the Battalion Headquarters of the 2nd Cadet Battalion of the same regiment.

Near the Town Hall, but on the opposite side of the street, and a little further to the south, the Western S.M.T. has a depot from which buses run frequently to Dumfries, Ayr, Kilmarnock, and to Muirkirk. A great new depot to accommodate this rapidly expanding service is to be erected on the south side of Ayr Road, on the perimeter of the town. Bus services, together with railway facilities (the main Glasgow-Dumfries line and the subsidiary Ayr-Edinburgh one) make the town easy of access and egress.

THE SWIMMING POOL

No description of Cumnock could be complete without a fairly detailed reference to the swimming pool, of which the Cumnockian is justly proud. Costing almost £6,000, it was the first inland open-air pool in Scotland.

The situation of the pool, in a lovely sheltered glen on the banks of the Lugar, is superb, and amenities provided for bathers and spectators are excellent. The pool itself is 100 feet long, 45 feet wide, varies in depth from 3 feet 6 inches to 10 feet, and contains 200,000 gallons of water, filtered, sterilized, and heated by modern equipment.



Valentine, Dundee

*A view of Cumnock's fine open-air
Swimming Pool*

THE SWIMMING POOL

The diving boards were specially built to give scope for high diving and first-class spring boards have been installed. There is accommodation for 2,500 spectators each of whom has an uninterrupted view of the pool. Centrally heated dressing cubicles, cold sprays, and lavatories are more than adequate. Forming part of the pool buildings is an up-to-date café which serves light refreshments.

Cumnock has done pioneer work in swimming instruction for school children. Of course, the local children have received weekly instruction since the beginning, but Cumnock believes in doing things on a big scale and on one occasion 2,000 children from ten schools in the district were brought to the pool during school hours for demonstrations in swimming and diving. This innovation was very successful and led to the organization of educational lecture demonstrations on modern swimming strokes and diving at Troon, Prestwick and Cumnock.

Charges of admission for bathers and spectators are as follows :—

Weekdays	Adult 6d.	Juvenile 3d.
Week-ends	Adult 9d.	Juvenile 3d.
Season Ticket	Adult 15/-	Juvenile 5/-
Spectators	Daily 6d.	Season 7/6
Weekly Ticket 2/-		

Adjacent to the swimming pool is Woodroad Park which has a football pitch, three tennis courts, a paddling pool, a putting green, sand pits for children, and a free car park, while at the other end of the town, on the New Cumnock Road is Murray Park with similar facilities. At Drumbrochan, a five minute walk from the town's centre, is a sporting nine-hole golf course, and just off the Ayr Road are two excellent bowling greens.

The Cumnock Juniors Football Club whose outstanding team played in the final of the Scottish Junior Cup at Hampden Park, Glasgow, in 1950, have an excellent football stadium at Townhead Park. It is recognised as the finest junior football stadium in Scotland—complete with club rooms, washing and dressing facilities, it can accommodate 2,000 spectators in the stand and almost 20,000 on the terracing.



Valentine, Dundee

*The River Lugar from the bridge
in Woodroad Park*

CUMNOCK

The Industrial Centre

CUMNOCK lives by the land—land which is rich in two very different ways. It is rich minerally, holding beneath its surface enough coal to employ several thousand miners for the next two hundred years at least; and it is rich agriculturally, supporting cattle and poultry to the value of three-and-a-half million pounds sterling.

The town of Cumnock houses many of the mine-workers, and these grand fellows work either in their own parish or in one of the two adjacent parishes of Auchinleck or New Cumnock. There are no mines within the Burgh itself, but in Cumnock parish there are three mines: Whitehill 1 and 2, near the village of Skares and about four miles from the town; Whitehill 3 and 4, between Skares and Cumnock; and Garrallan, which is still an independent colliery outside the National Coal Board, within a quarter of a mile of Whitehill 3 and 4.

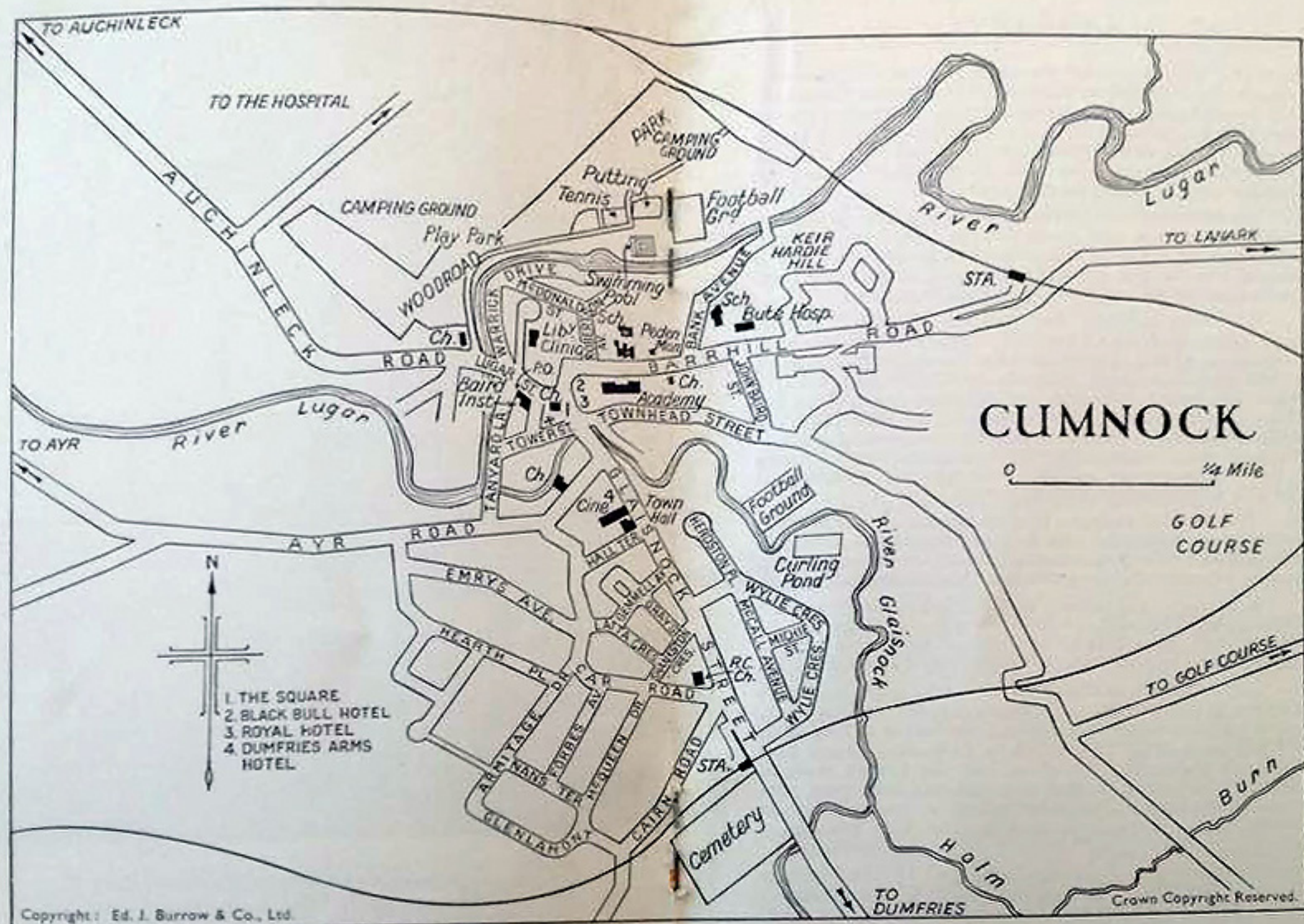
In Auchinleck Parish there are Highhouse, practically in the village itself, and the Barony—two miles west on the Auchinleck to Ochiltree road—which is the one of the deepest pits in Scotland. Cronberry Moor Pit, four miles to the east, and the vast open-cast workings at Boghead on the Muirkirk road which themselves produce in the region of a thousand tons a day, also give employment to men from Cumnock.

Taking a radius of about four miles around Cumnock a conservative estimate of the coal production of the immediate neighbourhood is 3,700 tons a day and if the radius were extended by a further mile and a half, this figure would be almost doubled. Fortunately the countryside is not—like many coal-mining areas in other parts of the country—enveloped in a grey, depressing blanket of smoke and dirt, but preserves its pastoral freshness and its sylvan beauty.

Farming of two kinds, dairying on the lower ground and black-face sheep rearing on the hills is carried on in the Cumnock area and it can be stated with complete accuracy that the town is the centre of the Ayrshire cattle



Cumnock is in the heart of the central Ayrshire coal field. This is an unusual view of the famous Barony Colliery, Auchinleck



industry. In the area of the eight parishes of Cumnock, Mauchline, Sorn, Stair, Muirkirk, Auchinleck, Ochiltree, and New Cumnock (the market and administrative centre of which is Cumnock) there are over four hundred farms large and small, each carrying a stock of well-bred, attested, often pedigreed, Ayrshires. Of these, less than one per cent has failed to pass the tuberculin test.

Actually there are 30,000 cattle of the milk-producing breed in the area, and since, for the type found here, a reasonable price per head is £65, the value of the stock is almost two million pounds sterling. Milk from local herds supplies daily the needs of 310,000 people.

The four hundred farms of the Cumnock district cover 167,000 acres of land of which 17,000 are under cultivation, 55,000 in grass, and the remaining 95,000 acres rough grazing. Crops from the cultivated land include turnips, potatoes, oats, hay, and cabbage, mostly used for cattle feeding. The 55,000 acres of grass land carry the dairy stock and the 95,000 acres of rough grazing support the total sheep population, which numbers nearly 85,000. Some 80,000 poultry are kept and eggs are produced at the rate of about nine million a year.

The pig is nowadays a notable absentee both from the farm and from the plate, for he is not considered a suitable companion for the aristocratic Ayrshire cow. As a result, Ayrshire bacon is to-day much more a memory than a meal.

It is interesting to note that a delightful liaison exists between the Cumnock miners and farmers. Many of the miners have some sort of agricultural experience and in hay-time and harvest render yeoman service on the farms.

As has been mentioned on an earlier page, a notable addition to the industries of Cumnock is the woollen trade, a new venture started by Messrs. John Foster & Son Ltd., of the famous Black Dyke Mills in Yorkshire. Their new Cumnock factory in Ayr Road, on the town's western boundary, is known as Bankend Mill and here yarn prepared in the firm's Yorkshire factory is woven into pile fabrics. It is hoped to instal further new machinery shortly.

A further 200 people are employed by the Western Scottish Motor Traction Company at its Glaisnock Street Depot, from which an excellent service radiates by main

roads and through country by-ways to the larger towns of the county, and to many places outside it.

These two subsidiary occupations have solved, to a great degree as far as Cumnock is concerned, the problem of work for women and young girls, and as a result, few of them need to leave the district to work. There is then, a much more even balance of population here, as between male and female, than in most places of a similar size and kind in Scotland.

Other employment is found in local garages; in a large retail dairy, which supplies milk daily to 15,000 adults and 5,500 school children in the immediate vicinity; and in the many and well-stocked shops of the town.

There are too, several firms of haulage contractors giving work to some fifty men, and mainly engaged in carrying milk from the nearby farms to Glasgow, and bringing goods from the city markets to Cumnock. Most of them also run a carriers business from Glasgow, Kilmaronock, or Ayr, to Cumnock. Thirty men find employment at the Wrennall Baryta Mine near the village of Cronberry.

Vast changes have taken place in the town since the days when the manufacture of the famous Cumnock snuff boxes was regarded as an important local industry, and with the scheduled development of Cumnock into a place four times its present size, many new industries are bound to spring up. But these new industries, whatever their nature, are not likely to interfere with dairy-farming and mining because for many years to come the rich land will support the famous Ayrshire breed and the earth will yield its valuable harvest of coal.



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CUMNOCK

CUMNOCK

In Ayrshire

AN account, such as this, of the countryside and places of interest of Ayrshire is almost certain to become a composition on the incomparable Robert Burns, the national bard of Scotland. For this was Burns' home and in Ayrshire are concentrated most of his associations and memories. Nearly every village in the county can claim some connection with the poet and in many of them a monument has been raised to his memory.

Some seven miles from Cumnock is a town with which Burns was very familiar—

“ In Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles
The pride o' the place and its neighbourhood a' ;
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
In Lon'on or Paris they'd gotten it a'.”

Adjoining the churchyard at Mauchline is Mauchline Castle, an interesting relic which was formerly the home of Gavin Hamilton, lawyer-friend of Robert Burns. It was here that the poet was married to Jean Armour in 1788. The ancient churchyard contains the graves of four of Burns' children. Other interesting places intimately connected with Burns include Burns' House in Castle Street, now a museum ; Poesie Nansie's Hostelry, through a window of which Burns saw the scene afterwards immortalized in “ The Jolly Beggars ” ; and Nansie Tinnock's House, Castle Street, once “ The Sma' Inn.”

Mauchline, a pleasing little town in itself, also treasures memories of George Wishart, John Knox, and the Covenanters. The surrounding countryside, watered by the River Ayr and Lugar Water, is attractive and varied and from Mauchline Hill nearby good views are obtainable.

Auchinleck, not particularly associated with Burns, is instead notable as the burial place of James Boswell, celebrated biographer of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Nearby are Auchinleck Castle and Auchinleck House, both

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AROUND CUMNOCK

associated with the Boswell family. The former is now a ruin. The village of Lugar, in Auchinleck Parish, has a claim to fame in that it was at Bello Mill, Lugar, that William Murdoch, pioneer of coal gas lighting, was born.

Ochiltree, again not particularly associated with Burns, can boast of "The House with the Green Shutters"—which gave its name to a novel by G. D. Brown who was born here in 1869.

Other places lying to the north of Cumnock include Tarbolton, Ballochmyle and Failford, all of which retain relics or memories of Burns. This area is indeed rich with such associations and only the county town of Ayr, the little village of Alloway where Burns was born, and the farm called Mount Oliphant where the Burns family lived for several years, can offer a similar store of literary interest.

Even if the stranger is not particularly anxious to make the pilgrimage to the poet's birthplace he will be well advised to journey the fifteen or twenty miles westwards to the Ayrshire coastline to enjoy the charming views of shore, sea, and sky and to sample the amusements available at the many inviting seaside resorts. Troon and Prestwick, to the north of Ayr, are popular resorts which offer every up-to-date facility and amusement, while to the south of the county town are Dunure and Maidens, quiet retreats overlooking a rocky, sand-fringed coast.

Ayr itself is the largest holiday resort on the Clyde Coast, with fine sands, safe bathing and magnificent views. In addition it is a port, an agricultural centre and market, and a town deeply rooted in history, having special connections with Wallace.

In such a few words it is impossible to do full justice to the County of Ayr and so, in conclusion, it is only fair to say that the country scene around Cumnock is as attractive as will be found anywhere in Scotland, varying as it does from the lonely highlands on the east to the rich lowlands on the west.

If it is true (as someone suggests) that to appreciate Scotland fully one must know Burns, surely to know Burns one must first get to know his homeland—Ayrshire. To this end this brief introduction to the County has been penned.

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SERVICES AND AMENITIES

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Hospitals: Cumnock is well served by the great new hospital at Ballochmyle, Mauchline, only six miles distant. The County Hospital, Ayr, and The Infirmary, Kilmarnock are also available.

Clinic facilities: The Public Health Clinic is at Millbank, Cumnock. An ante-natal clinic is held there every Tuesday at 2.45 p.m., and a child-welfare clinic is held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 2.30 p.m.

Five general medical practitioners and two dentists provide the usual facilities.

HOUSING

In all, the town council has now built nearly 1,000 houses, which number represents a high percentage of the total houses in the burgh. Of these council-built houses almost a half are occupied by miners.

The houses range in size and style from two-apartment flats and bungalows to five-apartment flats and cottages. Yearly rents vary from eleven pounds for the smaller places to thirty pounds for the larger cottages.

EDUCATION

There are two schools in Cumnock—Cumnock Academy, a senior secondary school, and St. John's Catholic School. The Academy, which provides educational facilities at every level for children between the ages of five and eighteen is the largest school in the whole county of Ayr. The courses are many and varied, and it is now possible for a Senior Leaving Certificate entrant to be examined not only in the normal subjects of the modern or the classical curricula, but also in technical subjects, domestic science, art, music, science, or commercial subjects. There is also, the only one in the County, a two year course for nursing students. St. John's, a junior secondary school for Catholic children, provides for all children at the primary stage and, in addition, provides for pupils of the twelve to fifteen age group who do not undertake a course including a foreign language.

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EDUCATION

In the near future it is hoped to build in Ayr Road an annexe to Cumnock Academy which will provide primary education for approximately 500 pupils.

As has been mentioned earlier, a residential school is to be established at Glaisnock House, two miles from Cumnock, for boys at the junior secondary stage (twelve to fifteen) who hope to make a living on the land. This is not intended to be a farm school, but a junior secondary school with a rural bias.

As the population of Cumnock grows over the next few years, an adequate number of nursery, primary, secondary, and technical schools will be built to cater for the larger population.

LIBRARY FACILITIES

The Library, a branch of the Ayr County Library, is at Millbank, Cumnock. A varied stock of fiction, non-fiction, juvenile, and reference books are available and new books are added from time to time.

The Library is open as follows :—

Monday : 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Tuesday : 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday : 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Thursday : 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Friday : 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday : 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Kilmarnock, Ayr, Dumfries, and other centres of population are easily reached by rail from Cumnock. The town has two passenger stations and is served by the main Glasgow to Dumfries line and by the branch line, Edinburgh to Ayr.

From their depot in Glaisnock Street, Cumnock, the Western S.M.T. Co. Ltd., run bus services which cover the whole of the district including Kilmarnock, Mauchline, Auchinleck, New Cumnock, Burnfoot, Muirkirk, Glasgow, Sanquhar, Dumfries and Ayr. In addition to these comprehensive services, special buses are run for miners travelling to and from the surrounding collieries.

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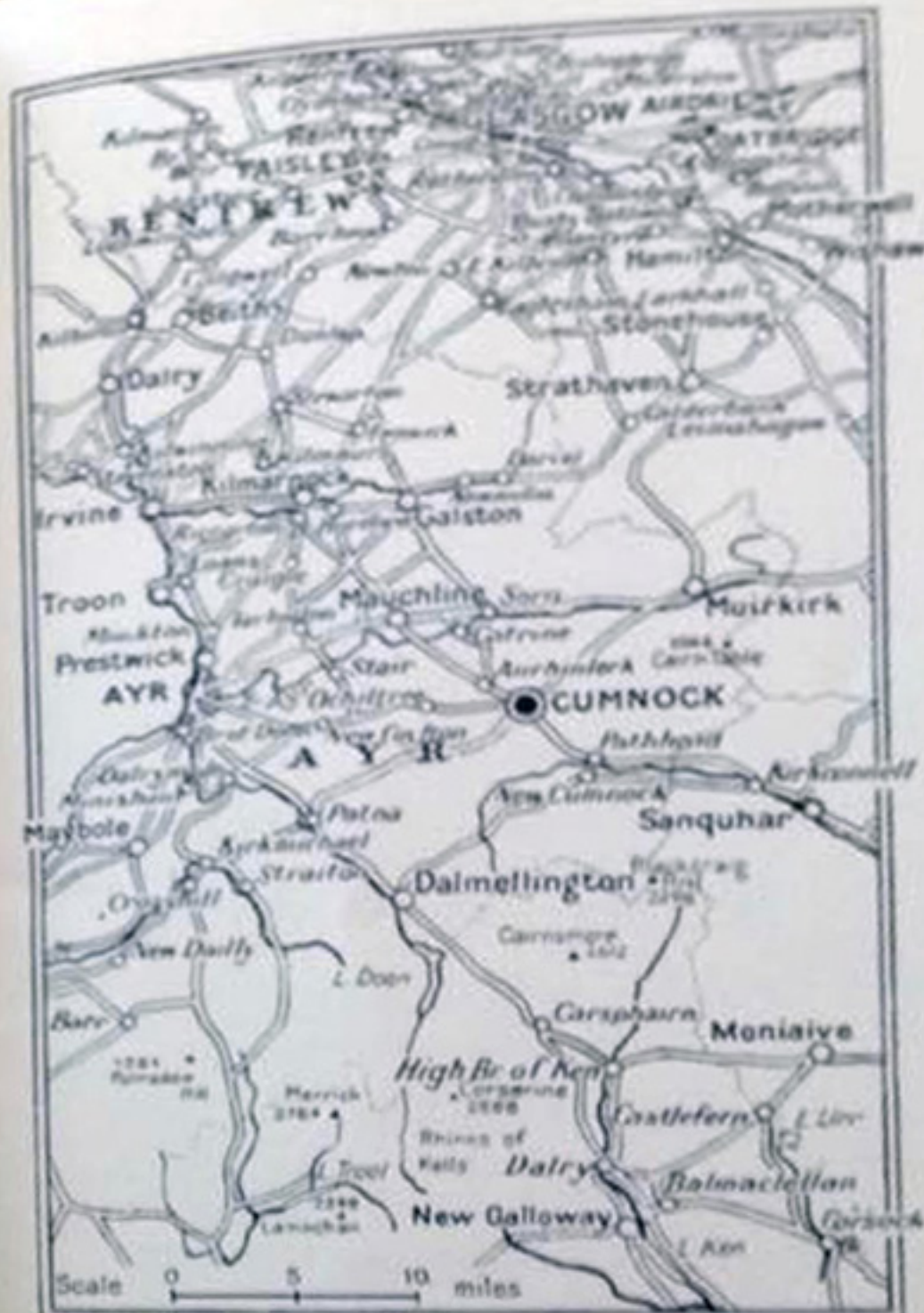
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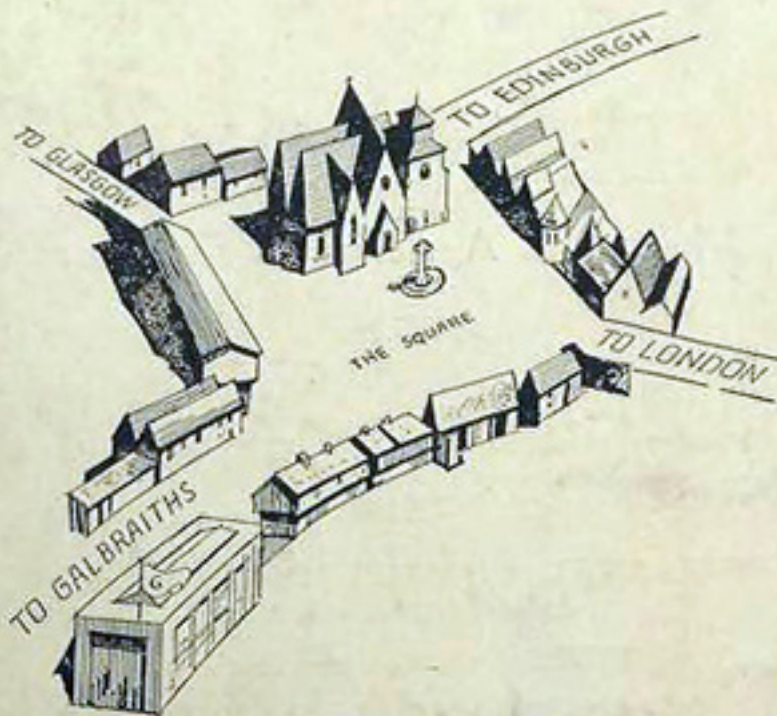
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