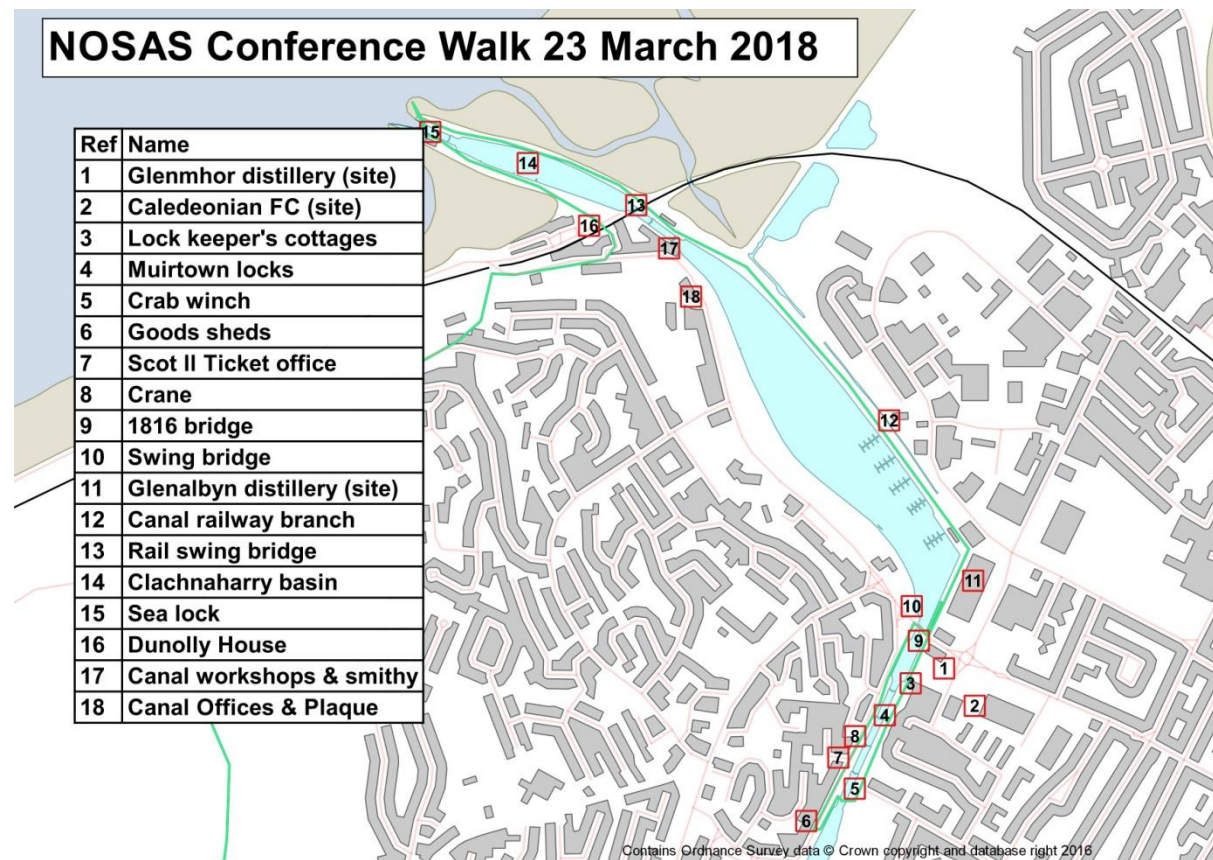


NOSAS Conference Walk March 2018

Caledonian Canal

Notes on Canal features



Introduction

These notes were compiled in preparation for a NOSAS 20th Anniversary Conference walk which visited features of the Caledonian Canal at Muirtown and Clachnaharry.

Information has been derived in the main from easily accessible online sources, especially Canmore. The book "The Caledonian Canal" by A D Cameron published by Birlinn Ltd has also proved very useful. It was originally published in 1972, but the 2005 edition includes much updated information.

Rather than attempting to produce an extensive document, the notes have been kept very brief, but links to source material have been included. These, especially the Canmore links, include many photos.

Especially recommended are two BBC audio items (Scot II and the WWI mine barrage) and a history of the Scot II (Leith Shipyards).

Not to be missed is the US Navy book detailing the story of the WWI mine barrage.

Introduction

'Telford it was by whose presiding mind the whole great work was planned and perfected.'
..... or was it really Jessop?

The Canal was authorised by Parliament in 1803, and was begun under Thomas Telford as principal engineer with William Jessop as consultant. (See Cameron, The Caledonian Canal pp 167-172 for more information)

Construction of the stretch including Muirtown locks and basin and the terminal works at Clachnaharry was delayed by difficulties in building the sea lock and the canal did not open until 1822.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/105851/inverness-caledonian-canal-clachnaharry>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caledonian_Canal

1 Glenmhor Distillery

Along with Millburn and Glenalbyn, the Glenmhor Distillery was one of three Inverness distilleries all of which closed down in 1982.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/68586/inverness-muirtown-telford-street-glenmhor-distillery>

2 Caledonian FC

The former football ground is now occupied by retail premises. Amid much acrimony Caledonian FC and Inverness Thistle FC merged to form Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC.

<http://www.caledonianfc.co.uk/index1.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caledonian_F.C.

3 Lock keeper's cottages

Probably built as a pair of lock keeper's cottages, but not as part of the original canal construction. Until recently the building operated as the Caley Inn.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/87207/caledonian-canal-inverness-muirtown-locks-lock-keepers-cottage>

4 Muirtown locks

The flight of four locks, each 180 ft long and 40 ft wide raises the canal 32 ft from the basin at Muirtown to the Dochfour reach. They were built by Simpson & Cargill from 1808–13.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/13331/inverness-caledonian-canal-muirtown-locks>

5 Crab winch

One example of many to be found on the canal.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/297919/caledonian-canal-inverness-muirtown-locks-crab-winch>

6 Goods sheds

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/180618/inverness-muirtown-locks-upper-wharf-warehouse>

7 Scot II ticket office

The building was used by MacBraynes as offices and as a passenger terminus for the Scot II which was built as an ice breaking tug in 1931 and operated passenger cruises on Loch Ness from 1961 to 1991.

Scot II ticket office

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/297645/inverness-canal-road-muirtown-locks-shed>

Scot II

<http://www.leithshipyards.com/ships-built-in-leith/1918-to-1939/102-scot-ii-yard-no-184-icebreakertug-ministry-of-transport-built-1932.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-12464421>

8 Hand Crane

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/13332/caledonian-canal-muirtown-locks-inverness-handcrane>

9 1816 Bridge

The original crossing dating back to 1816 was a double-sided swing bridge which followed a different alignment. A new bridge was installed in 1845 and the original bridge relocated to Gairloch. The stone substructure of the bridge, which was aligned with Telford Street, has been modified to accommodate the later replacement bridge. On the eastern bank the circular baseplate with its central pivot and circular track survives.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/330076/inverness-caledonian-canal-muirtown-swing-bridge>

10 Muirtown swing bridge & control cabin

The current swing bridge was built in 1935 and was operated electrically from the control cabin, with the backup option of manual control. The 1935 road gates have been replaced by automatic barriers and the bridge is now operated by hand held remote control.

Traces of earlier swing bridges are visible alongside the current bridge.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/68585/inverness-caledonian-canal-muirtown-swing-bridge-and-control-cabin>

11 Glenalbyn Distillery & US Naval Base 18

Distillery

Along with Millburn and Glenamhor, the Glenalbyn Distillery was one of three Inverness distilleries all of which closed down in 1982.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/68588/inverness-telford-street-glenalbyn-distillery>

US Naval Base 18

In 1917, the American navy transformed what was then Glen Albyn distillery into a factory where mines could be assembled.

The mines were ferried out to the North Sea to form the Northern Barrage, a bold plan undertaken jointly by the US and British navies. By the conclusion of war, the American and British navies had laid over seventy thousand mines along the 250 miles of the North Sea between Orkney and Norway.

<http://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/northernbarragem00annapol>

This is a facsimile US Navy book detailing the mine barrage operation. It includes a large number of photos.

Bob Jones

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0224vgk>

A 5 minute audio account of the events in Inverness.

<https://canmore.org.uk/event/963158>

RCAHMS/HS WWI project report

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Sea_Mine_Barrage

A detailed entry including technical details

12 Canal branch railway

This branch line to the canal is clearly marked on the 2nd edition of the OS 6-inch map and the track is still visible on the current edition of the 1:10000 map (1992).

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/187793/inverness-caledonian-canal-branch-railway-muirtown-basin>

13 Rail swing bridge

The original bridge was designed by Joseph Mitchell, completed in 1862 and rebuilt in 1909. It is painted white to limit temperature effects.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/13483/inverness-caledonian-canal-clachnaharry-railway-swing-bridge>

14 Sea lock & basin

Clachnaharry basin was constructed by building 2 banks into the sea. The sea lock was constructed by building an artificial peninsula and then excavating a lock within it.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/87203/inverness-caledonian-canal-clachnaharry-sea-lock-basin>

16 Dunolly House

The house was bought by the Caledonian Canal Commissioners prior to the construction of the canal. The ground floor was used as offices and Thomas Telford stayed in the upper floor rooms during his brief visits overseeing the construction of the canal.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/98324/inverness-clachnaharry-clachnaharry-road-dunolly>

17 Canal workshops & smithy

The Canal Workshops date from c. 1850. This was the site from where initial construction of the Muirtown Basin was co-ordinated.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/13476/inverness-caledonian-canal-clachnaharry-lock-canal-workshops>

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/252413/inverness-caledonian-canal-clachnaharry-lock-canal-workshops-smithy>

18 Canal Offices & Southey plaque

The marble plaque inscribed with a poem by Robert Southey. Originally 3 inscribed stones were to be commissioned and erected at Banavie, Fort Augustus and Clachnaharry. Only one was completed but was not erected at Banavie as planned. It was found and installed on the wall of the (former) canal offices in 1922, the centenary of the canal opening.

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/101394/inverness-45-clachnaharry-road-clachnaharry-canal-offices-and-telford-commemorative-plaque>

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