

Semple Stories, Lochwinnoch's Glories

Walk 3 – Old Town and the Park

Castle Semple, West Gates, Eastend and Auld Simon, Johnshill, Parkhill
Woods, Lochshore, Castle Semple

Route Map



General Roy's Map of Lowland Scotland

Lochwinnoch is a small settlement close to Parkhill



Gates Road

- This was the original and main entrance, with gatehouses, to the former Castle Semple Estate (1).
- Castle Semple Estate has a long history, but originally owned by the Sempill family who built the Collegiate Church and first Castle Semple around 1504.

West Gates



Skippers Path (2)

- The original crossing of Castle Semple loch was by boat – cattle, goods, people.
- The settlement of Lochwinnoch was centred around the Kirk and Eastend. ‘Skippers Path’ was a lane which connected the Auldtoun to the boat and is thought to be named for the boat ‘skipper’.
- It is thought that the original Skippers Path would have been nearer to the West Gates.

Possible site of the earlier ferry crossing



Castle Semple Loch and Boat House, Lochwinnoch

Eastend (3)

- This was likely the wealthy part of the village. The picturesque cottage called 'Knapdale' was built in early 1800s.
- As children, some older residents of Lochwinnoch called this "the millionaire's house".

Knapdale c.1900's



St John's Kirk and Auld Simon (4)

- Formerly, a private chapel for the Sempills' until the Reformation, when it became the Parish Church. Modest and house-like, it was repaired and extended in 1729, making it cruciform. It was knocked down when the new Parish Church built in 1808.
- All that remains is the crow-stepped gable, bell-turret and inserted clock due to the Factory Street (St Winnoc Road) weavers complaining that they needed the clock to tell the time.
- Auld Simon is thought to be the name of one of the weavers who wound the clock mechanism which, continues to be wound by locals today.

Looking down High Street from Auld Simon (4)



Johnshill (5)

- No.5 is thought to be the oldest (still standing) house in village. Ground level hole in the wall used to be private well for household. There were lots of springs and wells in this area – part of the reason the settlement established here.

The oldest house in the village (5)



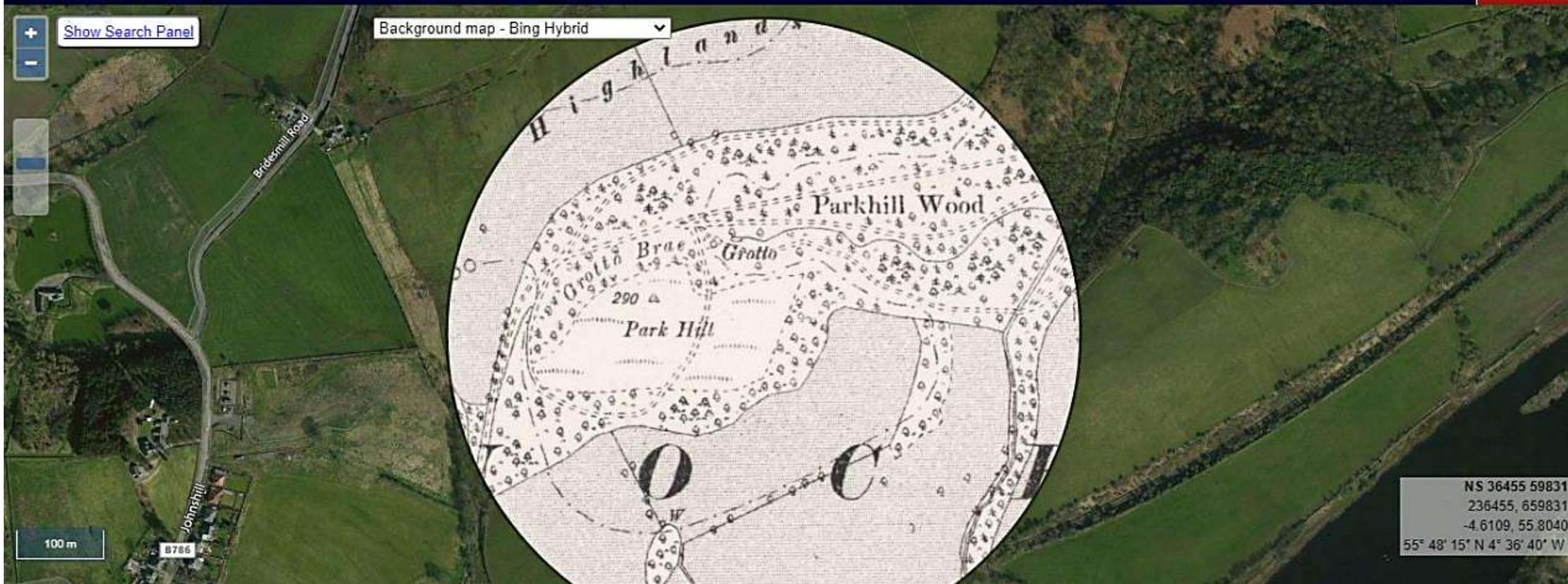
Looking down Johnshill towards the Kirk (6)



Johnshill (7)



Parkhill Woods (8)



Parkhill Woods cont.

- This was a recreational area. Walking, riding horses, a small carriage for the ladies but, also a way of displaying your wealth through landscaping and the type of plants or trees you had.
- The grotto (8) was an ornamental and decorative feature which, may have been covered in turf and plants to appear as a cave.
- What you see today, is a reconstruction and a best guess at what the original may have looked like.
- Enjoy a stroll through these woods. They are classified as Ancient Woodland because Parkhill has been forested since at least 1750, when the first accurate map of Scotland was created.

Lochshore Path

- The Loch (9) was created over 9,000 years ago, during the last period of glaciation. It is called a ribbon loch – long, narrow and fairly shallow (3m).
- Much like the more well know Loch Ness, which is also a ribbon loch – Castle Semple Loch has a legendary creature associated with it, too!
- Beware of the white horse rearing out of the Loch for it comes to take your daughters away! If a girl climbs on its back, the Faerie Horse frae the Faur Countrie will take your daughters to the Kings and Queens o Elf-land. Never to be seen again.