Auchincruive

History of Auchincruive

Auchincruive is part of the ancient seat of the Cathcarts. Richard Oswald, a merchant from London bought the estate in 1764. The Oswald's of Auchincruive were a prominent family. Richard Oswald was celebrated for his part in helping negotiate the American Declaration of Independence. He was however, held in less regard for his part in the African Slave Trade.
Auchincruive is now part of an estate gifted to the Secretary of State by John Hannah of Girvan Mains. It is home to the Scottish Agricultural College and the Hannah Research Institute. The main building on the estate is Auchincruive House or Oswald Hall. Some of the interiors were designed by the famous architect Robert Adam.

Auchincruive has strong links with one of Scotland's most famous historical figures, William Wallace. After a skirmish with English soldiers, Wallace was concealed in Leglen Wood and it became a place that he was to return to many times to hide from English troops.

This is also where Robert Burns sought inspiration for his tribute "Scots Wha Hae". A monument to both men can be found at Oswald's Bridge.

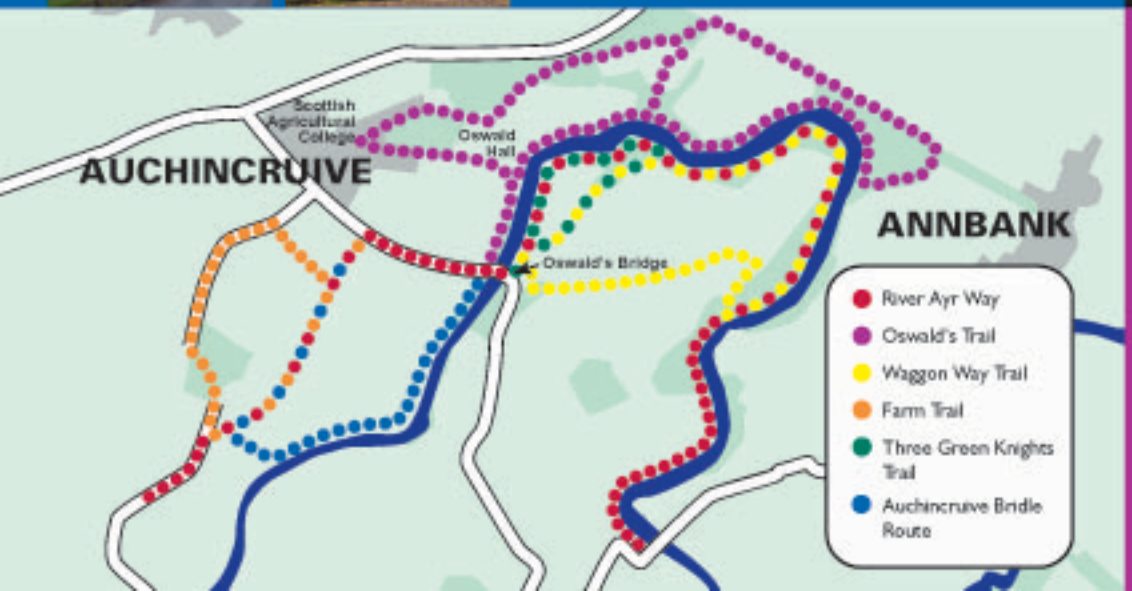
River Ayr Way through Auchincruive

The River Ayr Way is a 66km (44 miles) route which follows the River Ayr from its source at Glenbuck to the sea at Ayr. Seven local path networks around the villages of Muirkirk, Sorn, Catrine, Mauchline, Annbank and Mossblown, Tarbolton and Coylton have also been developed to provide local connections and circular walks to further enhance the walking experience in Ayrshire. The route follows the river on the south bank from Tarholm Bridge, which is about 1km southwest of Annbank. After entering Craighall Wood, you reach "Wallace's Seat", a promontory overlooking the river where William Wallace reputedly sat contemplating the battles with the English.





Continue along the route of the old wagon trail until you come to Oswald's Bridge. This takes you into Auchincruive Estate, before joining the Ayr to Auchincruive cycle route and heading west.



Farm Trail Walk

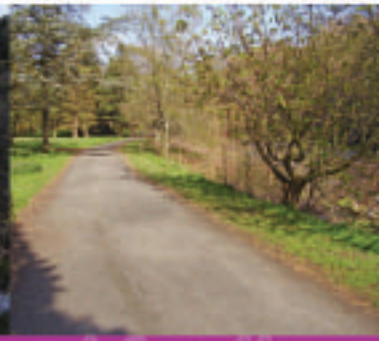
Following the public road enter the farm track. From Mount Charles there is a magnificent panoramic view inland over Oswald Hall to the Ayrshire hills and seaward over the coastal towns to the Firth of Clyde, Heads of Ayr, Bute and the Cumbraes, the Carrick Hills and the Mull of Kintyre. Continuing from this vantage point you find yourself on the old coach road to Ayr. On a clear day Arran and the Mull of Kintyre are visible. The trail descends through the woods and fields to a point overlooking the River Ayr and the main cropping part of Auchincruive Farm. The remainder of the walk takes you through mixed woodland which provides a variety of habitat for a number of birds. Also look out for roe deer, foxes and badgers.

Three Green Knights

Start from Oswald's Bridge car park. The bridge was built in 1826 as an estate bridge possibly built upon an earlier one. Turning immediately left along the south bank of the river; look out for heron and dippers feeding. Over the stile following the fence line enter Pheasant Nook where the path winds its way through attractive mixed woodland. A steep climb takes you to the top of the Three Green Knights' field. This is named after three green mounds which are still visible in the field. At this point stop and admire one of the most attractive views in the area. Westward across the river, the hanging gardens, Oswald Hall, Mount Charles, the Carrick Hills and on a clear day, the distant hills of Arran can be seen.







Description of Walks

Oswald's Trail

Walk up the river to Oswald Hall. With the river ahead the route passes the hanging gardens which forms a lovely landscape feature built by unemployed miners in 1830.Upstream where the gardens are now situated is the site of Millholm, an ancient hamlet. Part of the bank was washed away in 1966 exposing an old mill lade.The riverside path enters Brocklehill Wood and continues along the farm track passing Nellie's Gate. The journey is completed by following the estate road back

Waggonway Trail

Start at the car park and cross Oswald's Bridge. Look out for dippers, herons and duck. From the gate on the left, the route follows the edge of the field to the top corner of the Three Green Knights' field with its panoramic view. Passing through Pheasant Nook Wood, the path eventually follows the route of the old waggonway which was constructed in the 19th century. It served pits along the route and transported coal in wagons pulled initially by horses and later locomotives to Ayr harbour. The route now goes through Craighall Wood, eventually reaching "Wallace's Seat". Leaving the woods follow the track over Loudoun Law and enjoy the pleasant pastoral views and ambience of the rural setting.