

STRATHAVEN

HERITAGE TRAIL



A Walk in the Past

Welcome to Strathaven, a town steeped in history dating back to medieval times, brimming with stories of the past.

This self-guided heritage trail, developed by The John Hastie Museum Trust, will lead you through the town's most significant historical landmarks, offering a glimpse into the events and people that have shaped this charming town over the centuries.

Follow the map and take your time to explore each stop along the way.

The Common Green (1) The heart of the town today. It would once have hosted markets, fairs, and community gatherings. As this is not the oldest part of the town, can you imagine where the heart of the town would have been before?



Memorial to Rifleman Khan (1), a German Shepherd dog who pulled handler Lance Corporal Jimmy Muldoon from the sea after German forces bombed their landing craft in 1944 during the Battle of the Scheldt. Khan, awarded the PDSA Dickin Medal, was allowed to return with Muldoon to Strathaven.



Look across to the distinctive blue building of Strathaven Tea Room. How old do you think this building is? Look up, to the central chimney stack.



Gebbie and Wilson Solicitors - the oldest business in the town, founded by William Gebbie in 1816. The plate on the wall shows the traditional term for solicitors.

Bridge Street (2) crosses the Powmillon Burn via Victoria Bridge, 1860. The site of Creative Strathaven is where Strathaven's Fire Pump was stored, to be hauled out by vehicle in times of need.



The Taal, on the right, a former Edwardian dance hall, resembles a steamship floating on water. As The Cabin Tearoom, it was a popular venue for wedding receptions in the 50s and 60s. As a filming location, it featured in the BBC drama series *Tutti Frutti*, starring Robbie Coltrane and Emma Thompson.

Turn around to view across Allison Green (28) and the Powmillon Burn, to the former East Church (30) now a residential property.

Continue to Alexander Taylor bakers - the oldest bakers in Scotland est. 1820. Pass the **Boo Backit Brig** (3) to find yourself standing before the historic **Strathaven Castle** (4), c. 1350.

The castle's constructor is unknown, but it was owned by a number of landholding families over the centuries. It's last resident, Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, died in 1716, after which time the Castle was left to ruin.

Here the Powmillon Burn met with hard basalt rock. The Castle is sited on a virtual island. The hard edge of basalt rock formed a series of waterfalls, perfect for a mill.

The **Town Mill** (5), once the largest corn and flour mill in the parish, closed in 1966 and is now a heritage and art centre. Head down the sloping lane between the Mill and Castle.



The path behind the Castle brings you to The **Old Cross** (6). This was the ancient heart of Strathaven.



Look across Kirk Street to a narrow lane, Main Street, once called Wide Close! News was once read to villagers from the windows of the building at the head of Wide and Strait Closes.

Before leaving this location, visit our **John Hastie Museum** (7) at the bottom of Todhill Street!

Return to the end of Bridge Street, to turn up Castle Street. As the road bends left, you are walking through one of the oldest parts of Strathaven, named Sandknowe. The big iron gates mark the former entrance to **Strathaven's oldest graveyard** (8), opened in 1659, although legend has it that it has been a burial ground for over 900 years. Adjacent, was the site of St Mary's Chapel, the earliest-known church, established c. 1001.



Cottages once lined both sides of the road, alongside a gaol (also once used as a school), and the Claverhouse Inn. Most buildings were originally thatched, and demolished during the last century.

A recess in the graveyard's high stone wall, shelters a **monument** (9) marking the site of the home of Radical James "Purlie" Wilson - a much-respected Strathaven man, executed in 1820 for his political opinions. He, and other Radicals, took up weapons to



protest at the Corn Laws that had driven up the cost of food. These Laws had caused great hardship amongst the Strathaven Weavers. He was arrested, charged, found guilty of high treason and hanged at Glasgow Green.

His body was dug up and brought back to Strathaven. A headstone in the cemetery marks his burial plot.

At Pathfoot, climb the steep path to the **Strathaven Cemetery** (10). Take a deep breath and climb Kirkhill the stairway to Strathaven's **War Memorial** (11), founded just after World War I, with a later addition to commemorate those who fell during World War II.



At the summit of Kirkhill, the finest viewpoint in Strathaven, can you spot Tinto Hill, some 20 miles East in Upper Clydesdale; below, Strathaven Castle (4); Strathaven Town Mill (5); the spires of Avendale Parish Church (24), of the former East Church (30) and Trinity Church (32); and Strathaven Academy (33)?



You may even be able to see the dramatic outline of Loudoun Hill, a volcanic plug formed in an eruption some 500 million years ago.

Kirkhill was built up over many centuries. A story that it was a military development to enable troops to bombard the Castle lacks evidence. It's clear, however, that the shape of the hill was altered long ago.

Join North Street again. Head over the rise to meet Commercial Road.

The handsome **stone house** (12) at the corner of Overton Road wasn't always there - it was moved and re-assembled from another part of town. The date on the gable end reveals when the building, formerly The Commercial Inn then Royal Bank of Scotland, was removed from the centre of the Common Green after a new bank was built.



There is an option to extend your walk further along Commercial Road, into Glassford Road (blue dashed route), to the former weaving village **Flemington** (13). The old weavers' cottages are little changed externally



since they were built in the late 18th century. Long before Strathaven became a very busy weaving town with industrial weaving

factories, weavers worked their looms in their own homes. Flemington was also the site of the terminus of the first railway to Strathaven. The Station with its passenger and goods facilities lay behind the weavers' cottages.

Head back down Commercial Road. Turn right onto Glasgow Road and cross to observe the front gardens of the Weavers' cottages ahead, where the mill lade used to flow. This row was once known as "Poverty Row".

Strathaven's weaving industry grew in the late C18th and early C19th, with weavers becoming employees of mills and working on larger looms in industrial settings. **Kilwuddie Mill** (14), in Chapel Road, was one of the town's major factories built in 1888. It closed in 1974 and, while its big chimney is gone, some parts remain today.



Enter the award-winning Strathaven Park at the far end of Holm Street.

The George Allan Park with the Barrie Shelter (food, toilets), **Boating Pond** (15), famous **miniature railway** (16) running since 1949, and an **ornate cast-iron bandstand** (17) installed in 1902. The **John Hastie Park** (18) with bowling, tennis and football pitches, and beautiful flower beds. The park is a venue for many



Strathaven events throughout the year such as Scotland's earliest hot air balloon festival, and the annual Strathaven Gala Day. As you head to the exit on the other side of the John Hastie Park into Lethame Road, look across to the **war memorial** (11) up on Kirkhill.



At the junction with Townhead Street, the **Weaver's Inn** (19) on the left, formerly The Crown Hotel. Walk up Townhead Street.



The **Buck's Head Hotel** (20), an old coaching inn. Note the name above the door, in the glass panel. Robert Hamilton owned a number of drinking establishments in the town from 1883. After his death in 1913, his wife became proprietor, M H Hamilton, until after 1920. Perhaps the name changed back to Robt Hamilton because their son, also Robert, took over after Mary's death.



Can you guess which buildings in this street may have been the old Post Office and Ritz Cinema?

Stop to rest on the bench outside the West Church. At the height of the weaving industry in Strathaven, this was the location for discussion and debate among the weavers, who gathered here during their lunch hours. These meetings became known as **The Weavers' Parliament** (21).



Here, you have the option to take a shortcut (blue dashed route) to Kirk Street (25).

Otherwise, continue to Colinhill Road and the old **Crosshill School** (22).



The Headmaster's house was the central part of the building, which was used from 1851 to 1904 when the new Strathaven Academy opened. It was later used as a primary school as part of the Academy. It has a small tower on top, but something's missing – what do you think used to hang there?

Turning into Kirk Street, the path through the grassy area is known as **Lover's Lane** (23)! This was once part of the cattle market until it was relocated to where Sainsbury's is now.

Avendale Parish Church (24), was built in 1772 to replace the medieval St Mary's Chapel. Do you remember the name of this street? Many old placenames tell stories about life long ago.



The Scout and Guide Centre (25). Look carefully at the stone wording on the front of the building. Before it became our Scout and Guide Centre, what was the purpose of the building?



The house at the corner of Station Road used to be Strathaven's **Police Station** (26). On the opposite corner, the former site of the Union Bank.

Station Road? What do you think was once on this street and the main way in which people used to travel to and from the town?



Strathaven Central and Strathaven North stations were opened in 1904, closer to the town centre than the 1860s Flemington terminus. Strathaven North closed in 1945, and in Oct 1965, the last passenger train ran out of Strathaven Central.

Wellbrae. Likely the site of a public well. In fact a good number of houses in Townhead Street, Kirk Street and Thomson Street had wells in their rear gardens.

Opposite, the former **Sun Hotel** (27), now residential. The lower two buildings, early C19th Georgian, display a medallion in the tympanum below the chimney stack, as seen on other buildings around the town.



Back at the **Old Cross** (6), you have options to return to the Common Green and finish the trail;

- turn left down **Main Street** (blue dashed route) to finish or
- continue downhill to cross the **Boo Backit Brig** (3) and walk up the shopping area of Waterside Street.

Allison Green (28) This large green space in the centre of town was once the washing and bleaching green, established in 1775 by the combined societies of masons, shoemakers, weavers and tailors. It was named after George Allison who purchased and presented the land to the town in 1890. Have a look for the steps created for access to the burn.



Before leaving Waterside Street, access The Ward and look for the old stone cottage on the left. This is a **Beaming Shed** (29). Find out what happened here. There is an information plaque on the wall.



The **East Church** (30), consecrated as a "Relief Church" in 1777 for Avendale Parish Church (24), where the congregation was overflowing. Worship, here, ended only recently. The building is now residential, as is the building on the opposite side of the street, the most recent former police station.



Continue walking along Green Street to cross Walker's Bridge.



Walker's Bridge (31) is a substantial two arch masonry bridge built over the Powmillon Burn around 1790, widened in 1880. Cross this bridge to return to the Common Green.

As you reach the end of the Strathaven Heritage Trail, we hope you leave with a deeper appreciation for the town's rich history and enduring charm.

Thank you for joining us on this journey through time, and we encourage you to return and discover even more of what makes Strathaven so special.

Developed by the Trust of
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