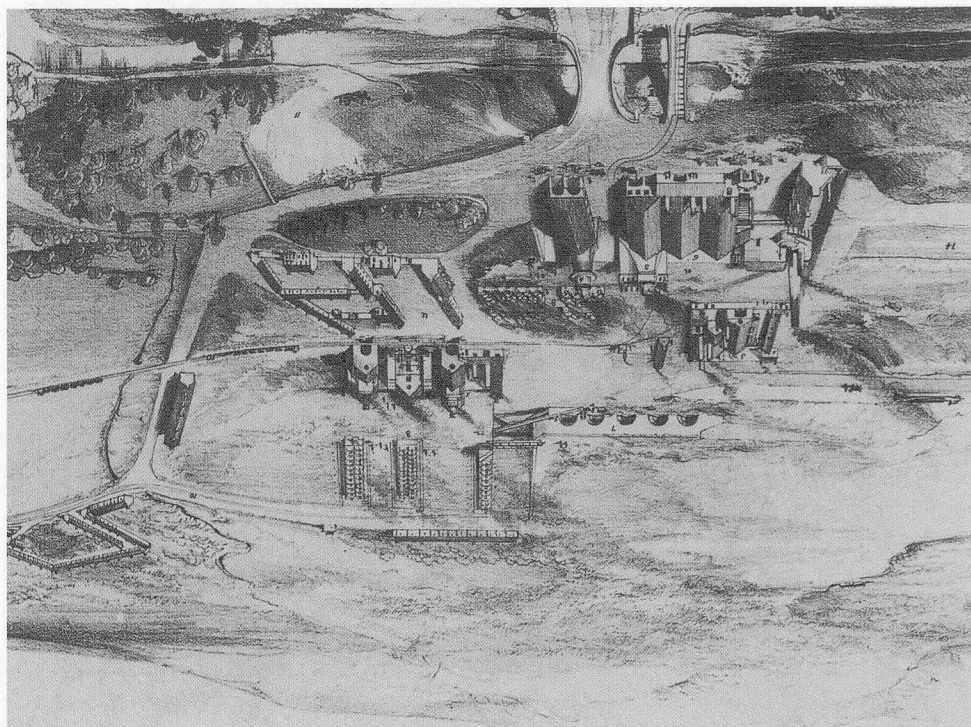
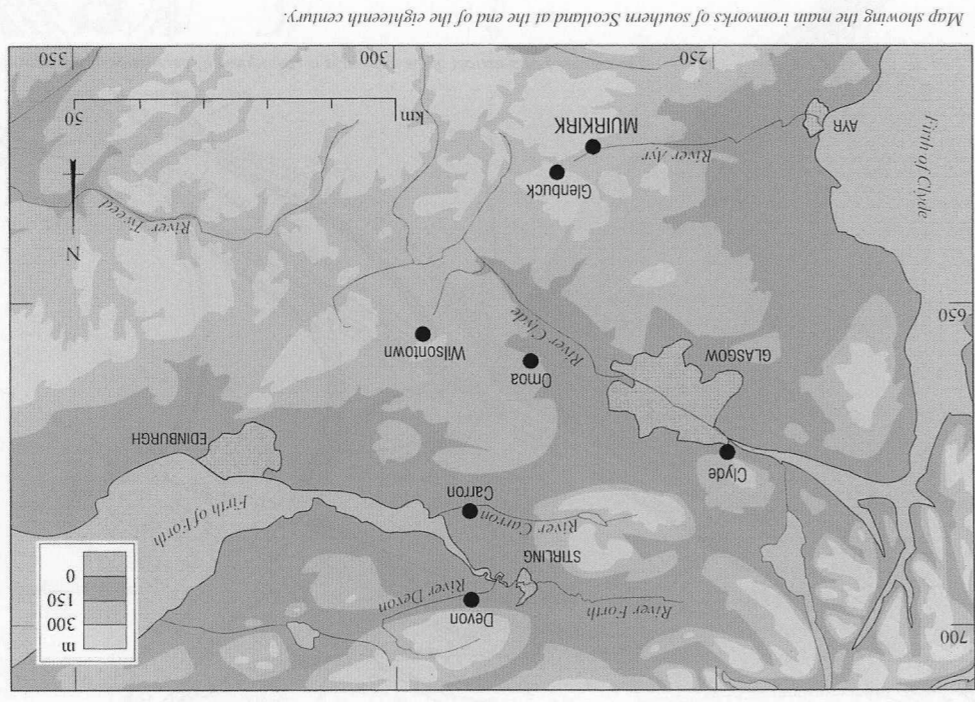


The Ironworks
A sketch of about 1840 provides a remarkable impression of the ironworks before the advent of the railway (*above*). Looking south across the River Ayr, the view shows the locations of the furnaces, forges, rolling mill and coking oven, and the majority of these buildings can be identified on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map, published some sixteen years later. The crenellated blowing engine house (*right*), which still survived in 1968, can be made out, and leading from this, across the river, there is a horse drawing well-laden trolleys. Horses were a common source of power at this time, and another can be seen pulling a barge from the towpath of the canal. The canal, which was opened in the early 1790s, was fed from the River Ayr, and supplied the ironworks with coal and limestone from the eastern part of the mineral field.



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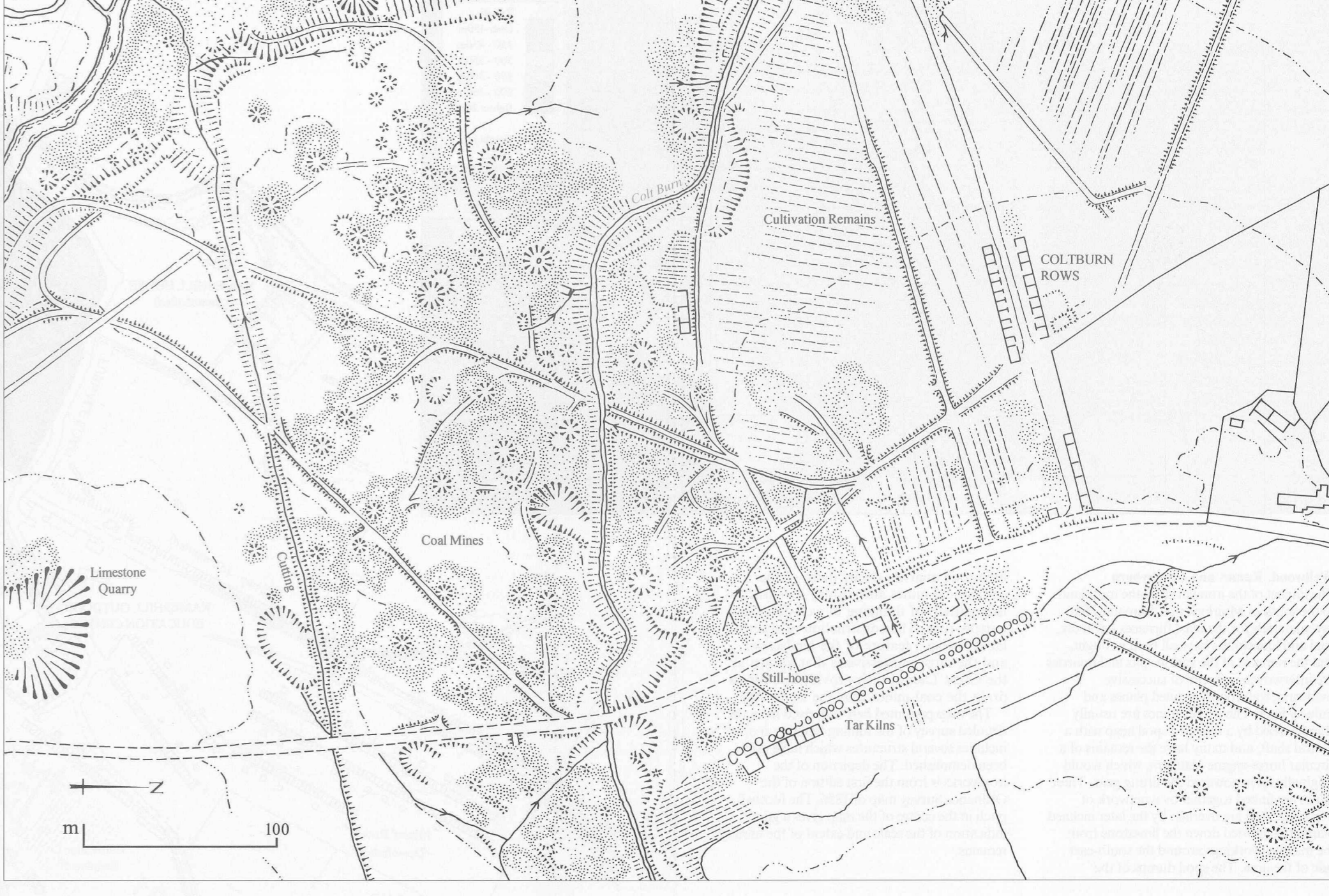


Map showing the main ironworks of southern Scotland at the end of the eighteenth century.

Such were the sentiments of the Glasgow entrepreneurs who were to establish an ironworks at Muirkirk in 1787, at a stroke, capturing a remote rural community in Ayrshire into the forefront of the industrial development of Scotland. Large quantities of coke from a tarworks, founded in the previous year at Kames to the south of the village, were an added attraction to the ironmasters, and by 1796 the ironworks was fully operational, with three large blast furnaces in production. The quality of Muirkirk iron was well known, and thus has been a key factor in the survival of the works throughout the 19th century. With the expansion of the blackband ironstone seams in 1901, however, its fate was sealed, finally closing in 1923. Coal continued to be mined at Kames until 1968, the same year that the remains of the ironworks were demolished. Despite the loss of the works, the surrounding countryside contains a rich legacy of this industrial past, ranging from the shafts and spoil tips of old mines to the footings of miners' rows, and from the lades and reservoirs that fed long-vanished water-wheels and steam engines, to the roads, tramroads and canals that supplied the blast furnaces. The story that this remarkable landscape tells, however, is not simply about the fluctuating fortunes of the village; it is also about the development of the Scottish economy since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. This leaflet presents the results of a survey conducted by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland during 1991-2. About nine square kilometres of the mineral field was examined in detail, for the first time allowing the full extent and complexity of this important industrial landscape to be understood. The information is available for public consultation in the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

We would like to thank Trevor Rees who provided the photograph of the blowing engine house, and Ian Donachie and John R. Hume for their help in the course of the survey.

"Nothing can induce us to go into such a Desert and inland place as Muirkirk but the Absolute Certainty of having The Coal, Ironstone and Limestone, very cheap."

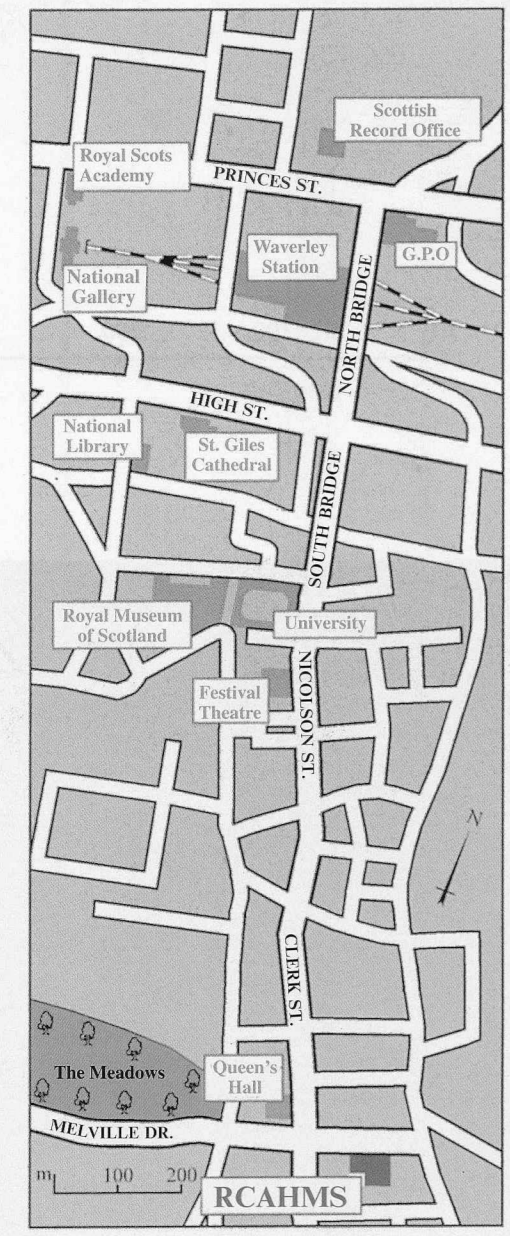


The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) is an independent non-departmental government body financed by Parliament through the Scottish Office under the sponsorship of Historic Scotland. It is directed by the Commissioners under a chairman and, with a complement of around sixty permanent members of staff, it is based in Edinburgh.

The main objectives of the Royal Commission are: to record and interpret the sites, monuments and buildings of Scotland's past, to promote a greater appreciation of their value through the maintenance of the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and to present them more directly by selective publications and exhibitions.

The National Monuments Record of Scotland is the successor of the Scottish National Buildings Record, which was set up in 1941; it now comprises complementary Archaeological and Architectural elements touching on all aspects of the human environment.

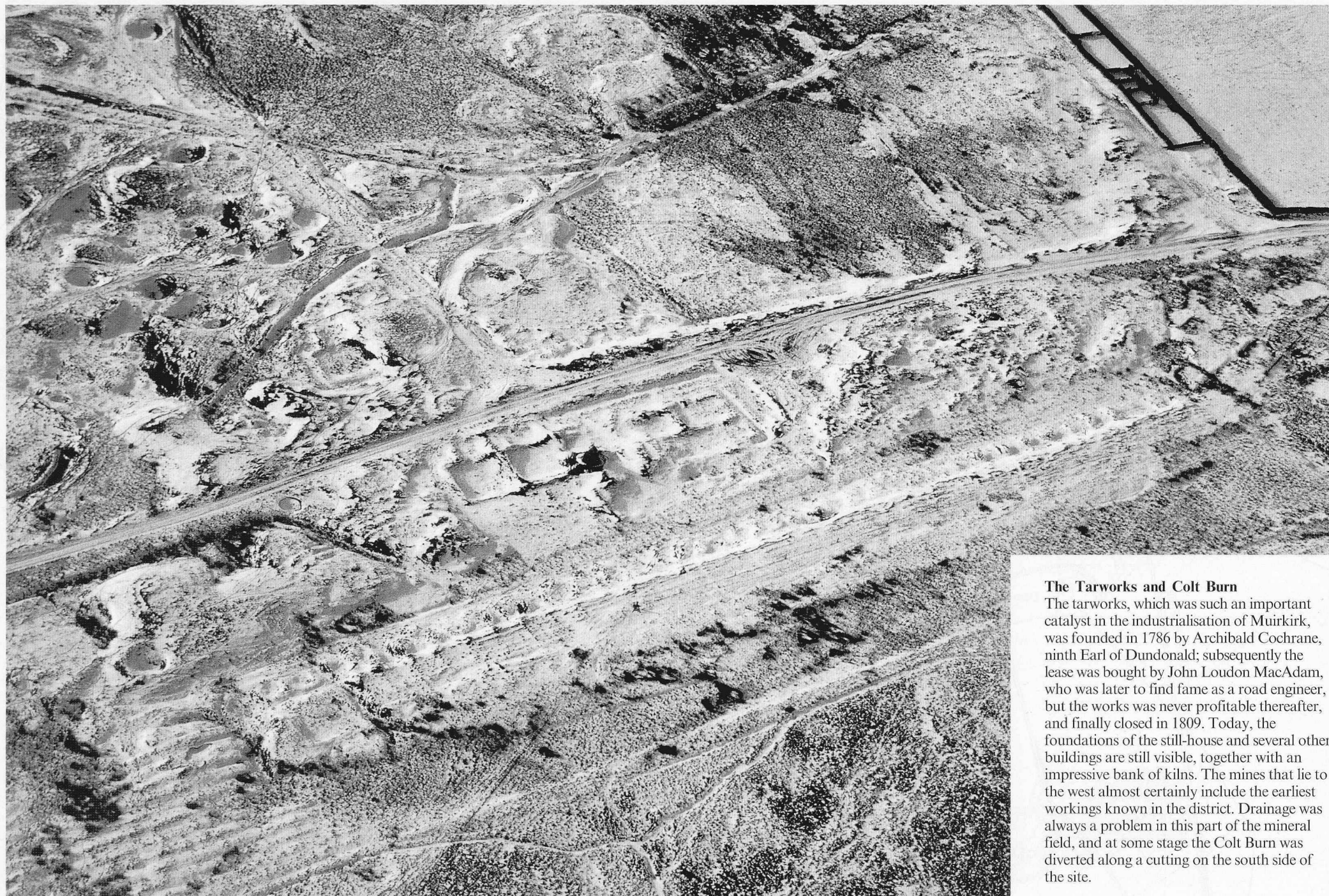
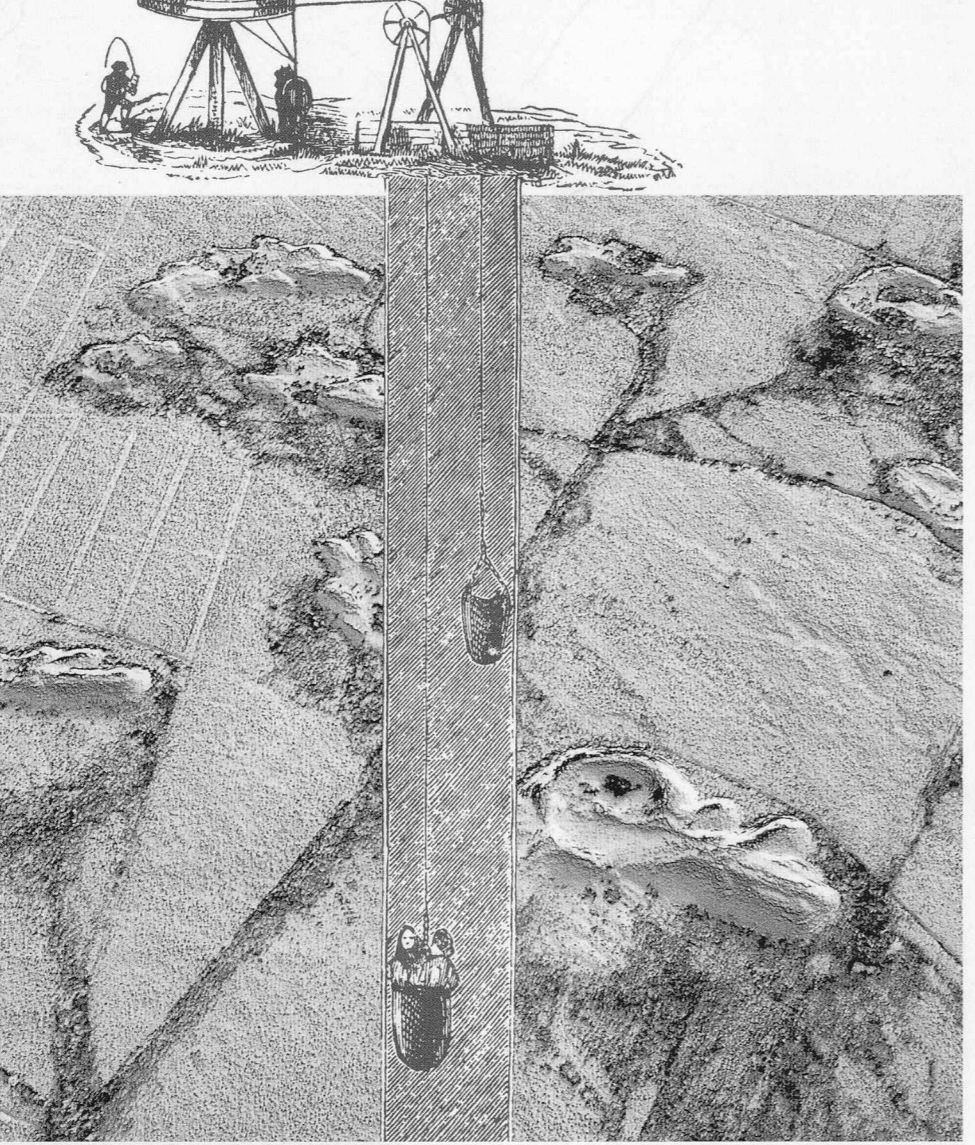
The objective of the NMRS, which is open to the public, is to provide an information service based on a central archive of pictorial and documentary material relating to archaeological sites, ancient monuments and historic buildings throughout Scotland. It has a particular responsibility to supply the Ordnance Survey with archaeological information for mapping purposes and performs a lead role in the development of local Sites and Monuments Records.



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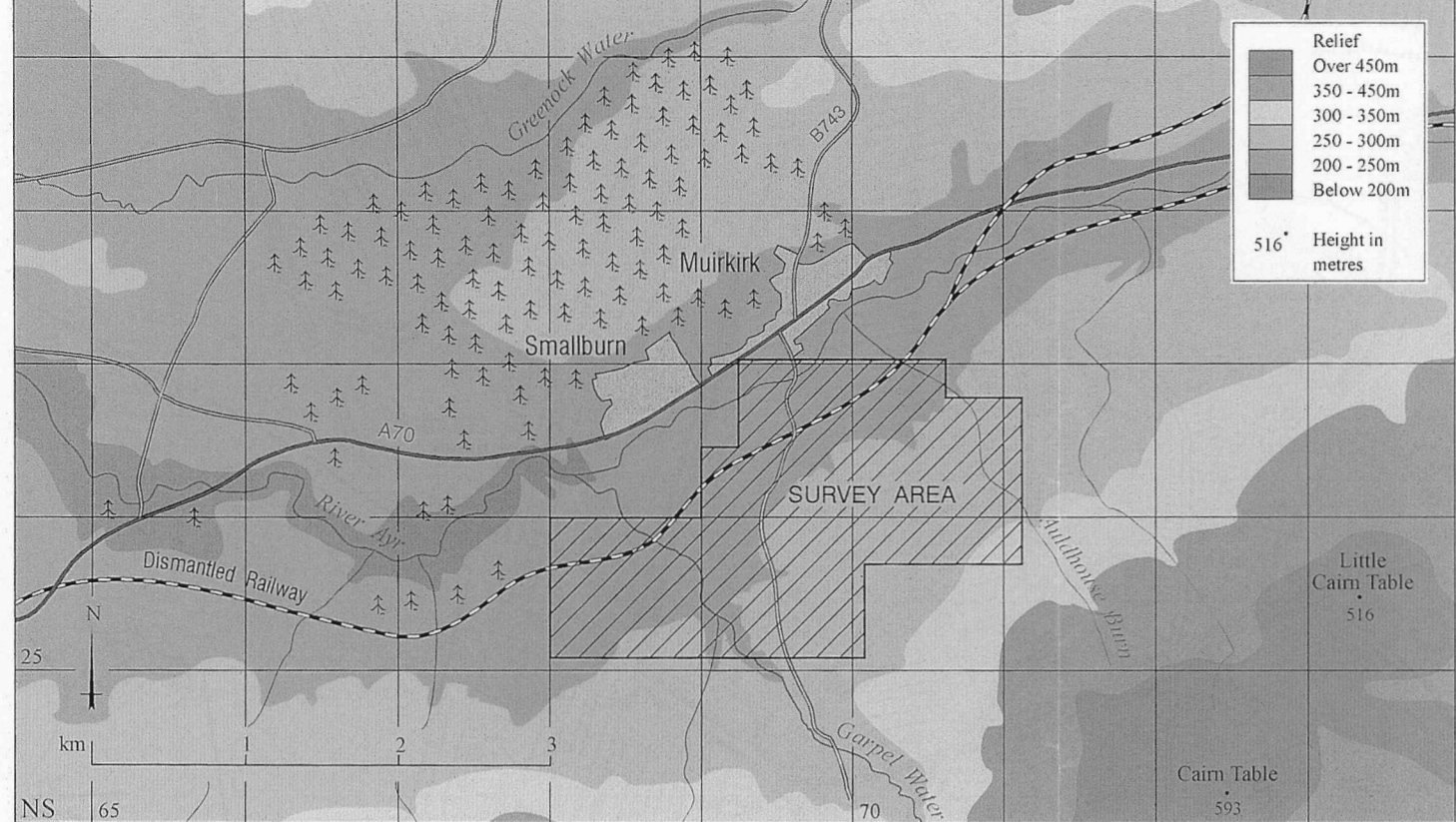
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MUIRKIRK
AYRSHIRE
An Industrial Landscape



The Tarworks and Colt Burn
The tarworks, which was such an important catalyst in the industrialisation of Muirkirk, was founded in 1786 by Archibald Cochrane, ninth Earl of Dundonald; subsequently the lease was bought by John Loudon MacAdam, who was later to find fame as a road engineer, but the works was never profitable thereafter, and finally closed in 1809. Today, the foundations of the still-house and several other buildings are still visible, together with an impressive bank of kilns. The mines that lie to the west almost certainly include the earliest workings known in the district. Drainage was always a problem in this part of the mineral field, and at some stage the Colt Burn was diverted along a cutting on the south side of the site.

MUIRKIRK, AYRSHIRE

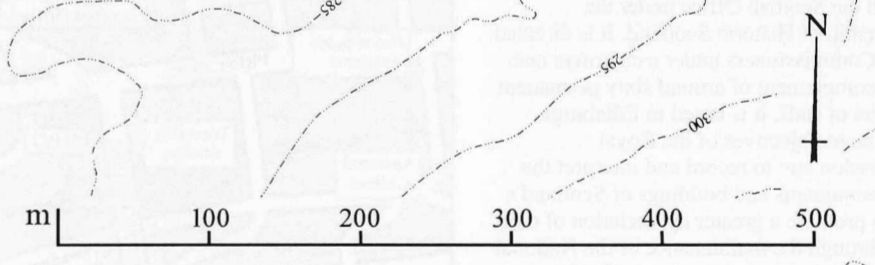
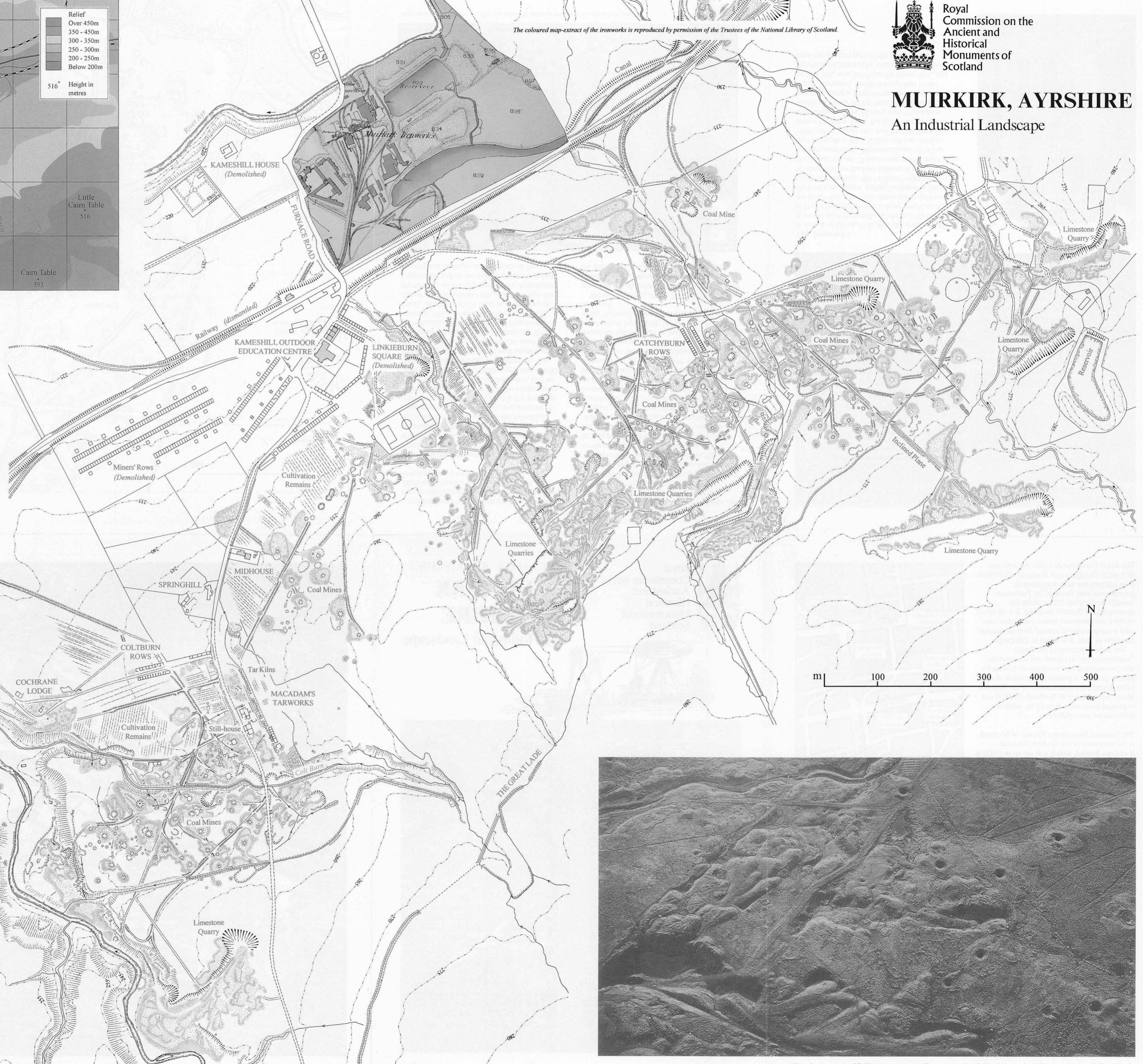
An Industrial Landscape



Wellwood, Kames and Catchyburn
 The impact of the ironworks on the moorland to the south of Muirkirk was dramatic. Here raw materials for the blast furnaces - iron ore, coal and limestone - have all been wrought, and the remains of the various pits and quarries are interwoven in a web of successive roadways, tramroads, inclined planes and railway lines. The earlier mines are usually characterised by a rounded spoil heap with a central shaft, and many have the remains of a circular horse-engine platform, which would originally have powered the lifting gear. These mines are linked together by a network of tramroads and are overlain by the later inclined planes that carried down the limestone from the massive workings around the south-east side of the area. The spoil dumps of the

limestone quarries dwarf those of the earlier coal mines and display a characteristic pattern of dumping in well-defined barrow-runs. The construction of several lades is also a feature of the landscape, and the most impressive is that known as the Great Lade, which provided power to drain the coal mines near the ironworks. The map presented here is derived from the detailed survey of the mining remains; it also includes several structures which have now been demolished. The depiction of the ironworks is from the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1856. The football pitch in the centre of the map gives a good indication of the scale and extent of the mining remains.

The coloured map-extract of the ironworks is reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.



View showing a water-filled limestone quarry and barrow-runs of spoil. The dark, circular hollows are the sites of old coal shafts.