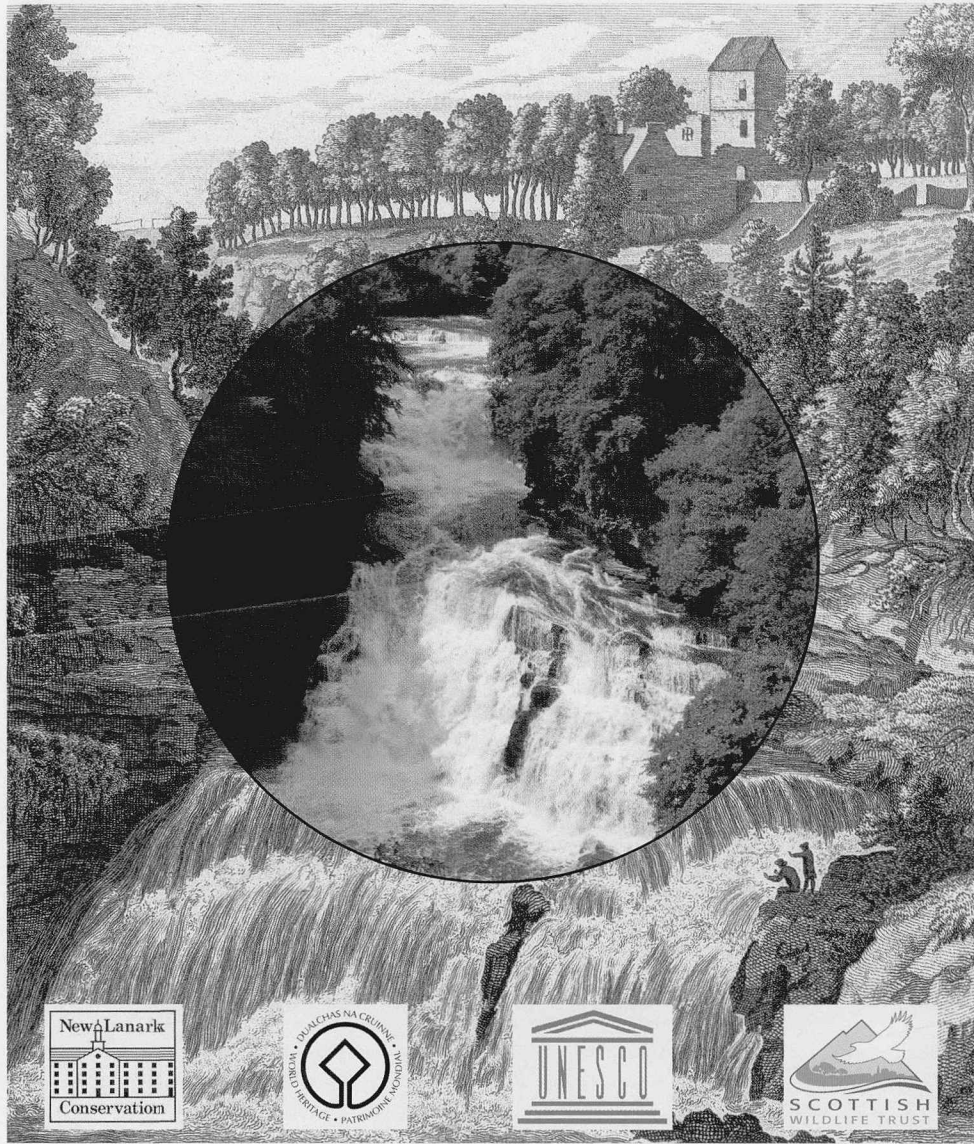




# The Falls of Clyde: Artists and Monuments



The Falls of Clyde, upstream from the village of New Lanark, have been one of Scotland's most celebrated tourist locations for over two centuries. The spectacular scenery is provided by the magnificent descent of the Clyde through a series of spectacular gorges and waterfalls in the craggy but lush landscape to the south of the historic Royal Burgh of Lanark. The Falls of Clyde were visited by some of the greatest artists and writers of their day, and have been recorded in scores of pictures and books. The purpose of this broadsheet is to illustrate images inspired by the Falls and to highlight man-made features which add to the historic interest of this spectacular location, part of which falls within New Lanark World Heritage Site. Much of the area around the Falls is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and an attractive route along the east bank of the river is provided by the Clyde Walkway. The natural, heritage and recreational interest of the Falls of Clyde reserve is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

The later 18<sup>th</sup> century saw unprecedented fascination with the landscape of the British

Isles. Writers and artists celebrated what became known as the 'Picturesque' – places with romantic associations or spectacular character which inspired emotion and awe. Sometimes the way in which such experiences translated into art or writing could be highly dramatic, as writers and artists sought to recreate the sense and feel of a place as much as its specific features. Yet it was also a time when there was a strong drive to discover, analyse and record the topography of rural Britain – almost a sense that wild places were not only places of inspiration, but clues to a greater understanding of the natural world. The exotic could indeed begin at home. This was particularly the case during the wars with France at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when limitations on travel abroad led large numbers of tourists to eschew the pleasures of France or Italy and to discover the richness and variety of the British countryside. Areas such as Snowdonia, the Lake District and the Highlands of Scotland became celebrated destinations.

One of the principal routes for the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century tourist was the so-called 'petit tour' of

Scotland. This usually started at Edinburgh and went up through Fife and Kinross-shire to Perthshire before following Loch Tay to the west and returning south, usually to an end-point at the Falls of Clyde. With three dramatic waterfalls – Bonnington, Corra and Stonebyres – the Falls (or 'Linn' in Scots) became a key venue for seekers of the sublime; a suitably spectacular destination in travel directed towards experiencing as many places of romance and inspiration as possible.

Due to the considerable costs in time and money needed to go on a lengthy tour, many of these early tourists were people of some affluence. At the Falls of Clyde, it was normal to obtain permission to visit from the local landowners and to employ the services of a guide. After 1855, when the Caledonian Railway opened to Lanark, restrictions were made on access 'In consequence of the Improper Conduct of Parties arriving by Cheap Trains'.

The responses of different artists to the Falls of Clyde vary enormously. Some of the earliest images of the Falls date from the later 18<sup>th</sup> century and

show a concern to record particular features very exactly. Paul Sandby's wash drawing of Bonnington Linn [1] demonstrates this approach. By contrast, the Scottish landscape artist Jacob More represents the Falls in paintings of the same period in a style which echoes that of the great 17<sup>th</sup>-century painter Claude Lorraine, with a precise style allied to an idealised scene of classical perfection [4 and 6]. By the time of the visit of J M W Turner in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, artistic tastes had changed dramatically, and his works inspired by the Falls demonstrate a highly romanticised approach. In one watercolour painting from about 1802 entitled 'The Fall of the Clyde' [3], he shows the river as a dramatic backdrop for bathing by naked young women. In an oil painting of the 1830s [5], possibly derived from his earlier image, the Falls are represented in an almost abstract style – an essay in light and colour more than form – which conveys Turner's profound sense of the drama and awe-inspiring power of such a magnificent series of cascades.

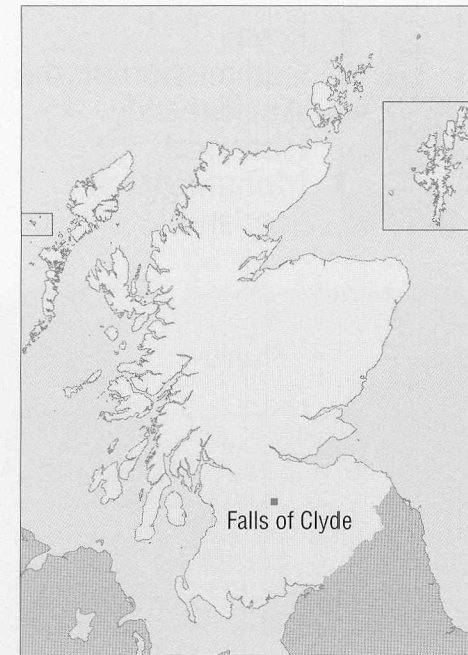
As far as man-made structures are concerned, the dramatic landscape around the Falls of Clyde



3 J M W Turner (1775-1851): *The Fall of the Clyde, Lanarkshire: Noon – Vide Akenside's Hymn to the Naiads*. 1802. National Museums Liverpool (Walker Art Gallery).



5 J M W Turner (1775-1851): *The Falls of the Clyde*. c.1840-50. National Museums Liverpool (Lady Lever Art Gallery).



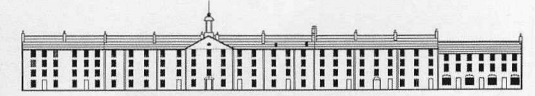
The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) records and interprets the sites, monuments and buildings of Scotland's past, and promotes a greater appreciation of their value through the maintenance of the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS).

The NMRS is open to the public (09.30-16.30 Monday to Friday) at the address below. CANMORE, the NMRS database, can be consulted on the RCAHMS website [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk).

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland  
John Sinclair House  
16 Bernard Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9NX

Tel: 0131-662 1456  
Web Site: [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk)

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**New Lanark Conservation Trust (NLCT)** is an independent charity dedicated to the restoration and development of the historic village of New Lanark, which was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 2001. The Trust aims to preserve New Lanark as a sustainable community, with a resident population and new opportunities for employment. The New Lanark Visitor Centre and New Lanark Mill Hotel are open all year round. For details of events and activities, call 01555-661345 or visit the website [www.newlanark.org](http://www.newlanark.org).

The **Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)** is Scotland's leading charity devoted to the conservation of all of Scotland's wildlife. Its Falls of Clyde Wildlife Reserve is the most popular of all its 124 properties and has been a reserve, in conjunction with Corehouse Estate and Scottish Power, since 1969. The Visitor Centre, the Dyeworks, New Lanark, is the home of the reserve's ranger service, shop and displays of natural and cultural heritage. For details of events and activities, please telephone 01555-665262 or email [fallsofclde@swt.org.uk](mailto:fallsofclde@swt.org.uk).



1 Paul Sandby (c.1730-1809): *Bonnington Linn (Falls of Clyde)*. Date uncertain. National Gallery of Scotland.

was exploited in the middle ages for its defensive potential with the building of Corra Castle (sometimes known as Corehouse although this is also the name of a later mansion situated nearby) on a promontory a short distance upstream from Corra Linn on the west bank of the river [9-12]. Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and now much overgrown and decayed, its exposed situation made it highly defensible and the entrance was protected by a substantial ditch. Set to the west of an irregularly shaped central courtyard, the main surviving block consists of four barrel-vaulted chambers running east-west [11]. Although the upper floors only survive in part, the surviving evidence suggests that they originally contained the hall and private chambers. Early views, such as an engraving of 1778 after Paul Sandby [7], from a viewpoint slightly upstream, show it far more intact than it appears today. Close examination of the surviving masonry shows extensive areas of rebuilding, and during the 1820s considerable work appears to have been undertaken to shore up parts of its structure to enhance the appearance of the castle as a romantic ruin.

Slightly downstream from Corra Castle and on the opposite bank is an early example of a

building erected principally for the enjoyment of the surrounding landscape. The Bonnington Pavilion [19-21], a two-storeyed stone-built structure which was accessible from the now-demolished Bonnington House, is dated 1708 on an inscribed panel above the main doorway. Although it was said to have been ruinous in 1772, it is shown in good condition in a drawing by Alexander Archer dated 1837 [19], suggesting it was refurbished in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Archer's drawing also shows the stair before it was rebuilt side-on to make way for engineering works undertaken for the construction of a hydro-electric scheme in the 1920s. Views from the Pavilion towards the river were provided by a window on the upper floor which was enlarged from a smaller original window and given a cast-iron balcony in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also known popularly as the Hall of Mirrors, it was described in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as being adorned internally with mirrors which reflected the dramatic vista below; Dorothy Wordsworth described the reflection of the Falls as 'bustling like suds in a wash tub'.

In response to the increasing popularity of the Falls of Clyde as a tourist venue, local landowner Lady Mary Ross of Bonnington had steps built to

enable visitors to descend to the side of the great pool below Corra Linn [15]. Her patronage is recorded on an inscribed stone panel dated 1829 set beside the steps. She also had a fountain installed beside the path between Corra Linn and Bonnington Linn, only the lower part of which now survives. Nearby, and adding to the enhancement of the area's romantic associations, is 'Wallace's Cave' [18]. A roughly semi-circular man-made space which is unlikely to have pre-dated the 18<sup>th</sup> century in its present form, it commemorates the famous Scottish leader of the rebellion against the English in the 1290s, William Wallace, who had connections with the area through his marriage to a local noblewoman.

Built to connect the north bank of the river with a small island below Bonnington Linn was a cast-iron single-span bridge made in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century by local engineering firm Paterson of Carmichael [13]. It is probable that it replaced an earlier wooden bridge shown in some early views. Built on the island was a dovecot which is shown in a number of images from the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, and from contemporary descriptions it appears to have been rebuilt as a kind of rustic summer-house or 'temple' in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Various changes have taken place around the Falls of Clyde over the past century, one of the most notable being the creation of a hydro-electric scheme in the 1920s. A short distance downstream from Corra Linn is the Bonnington Power Station [17], a hydro-electric generating station built of ferro-concrete designed by engineers Messrs Buchan & Partners of Edinburgh and built by Sir William Arrol & Co. of Glasgow. It was opened in 1927 and uses the combined energy of the Bonnington and Corra waterfalls, channelled through tunnels, surge tanks and steel pipelines, to produce over fifteen megawatts of electricity.

### DISCLAIMER

While it is intended that most of the sites described above should be made freely accessible in due course, please note that some are currently closed off for safety reasons. Access to these sites should not be attempted under any circumstances and no responsibility can be accepted for accidents caused by those attempting to do so. Please consult the map overleaf for information on access.



7 Paul Sandby (c.1730-1809) (engraved by Walker): *A View down the River Clyde from the top of Cory-Lin*. 1778. RCAHMS. (SC866003)



2 George Walker (fl.1775-1803) (engraved by Byrne): *Bonnington*. From J Critch, *Scottish scenery: or sketches in verse illustrative of scenes chiefly in the Highlands of Scotland*. 1803. RCAHMS. (SC863574)



4 Jacob More (c.1740-1793): *Bonnington Linn*. c. 1771. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



6 Jacob More: (c.1740-1793) *The Falls of Clyde (Corra Linn)*. c.1771. National Gallery of Scotland.



8 Paul Sandby (c.1730-1809) (engraved by Ryder): *View of Cory-Lin on the River Clyde near Lanark*. 1778. RCAHMS. (SC866004)





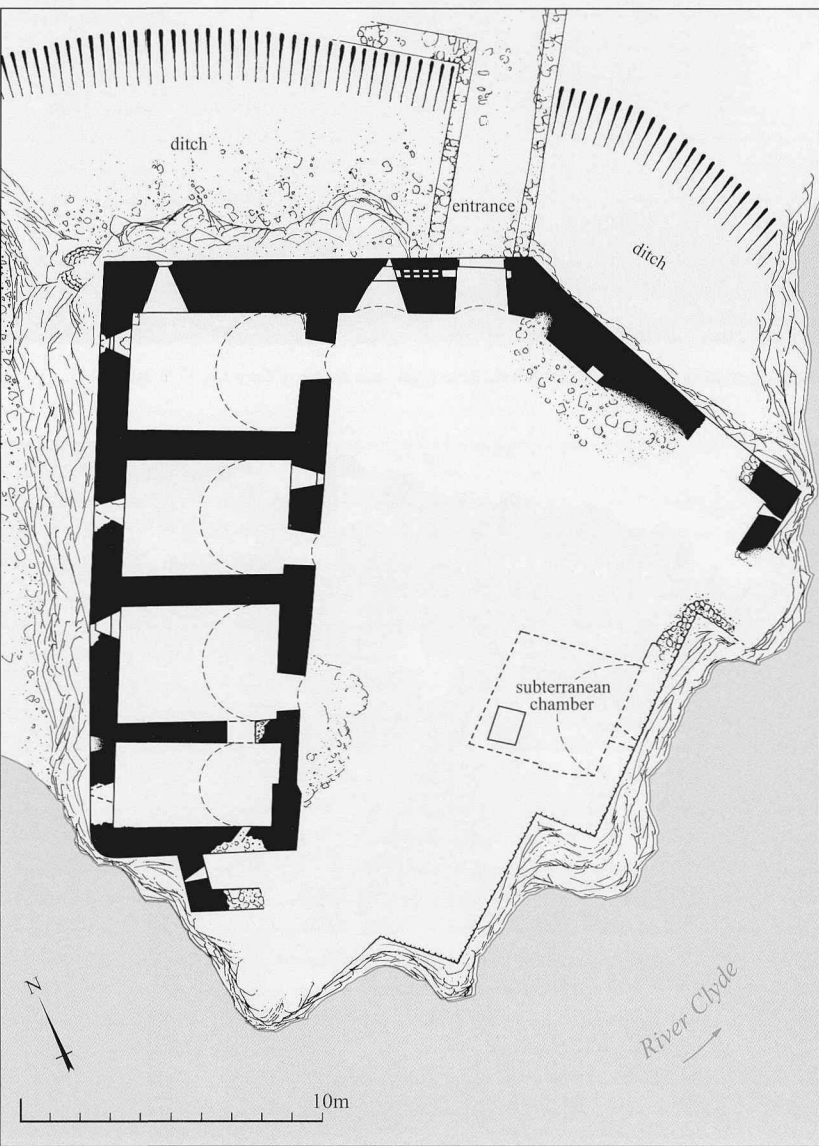
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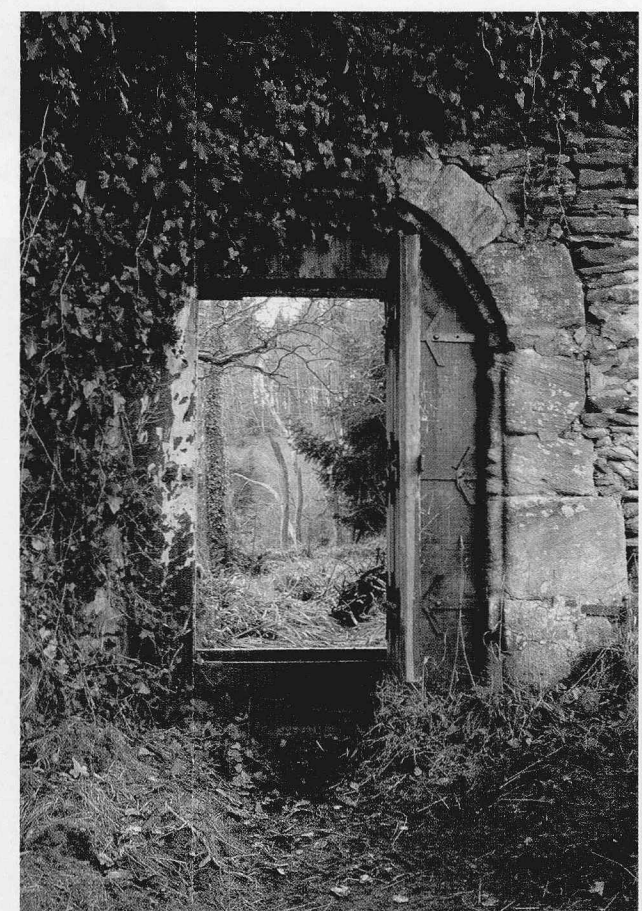
9 Corra Castle: view of the courtyard from the south. (SC877113)



10 Corra Castle: view of the entrance front from the north-east. (SC877115)



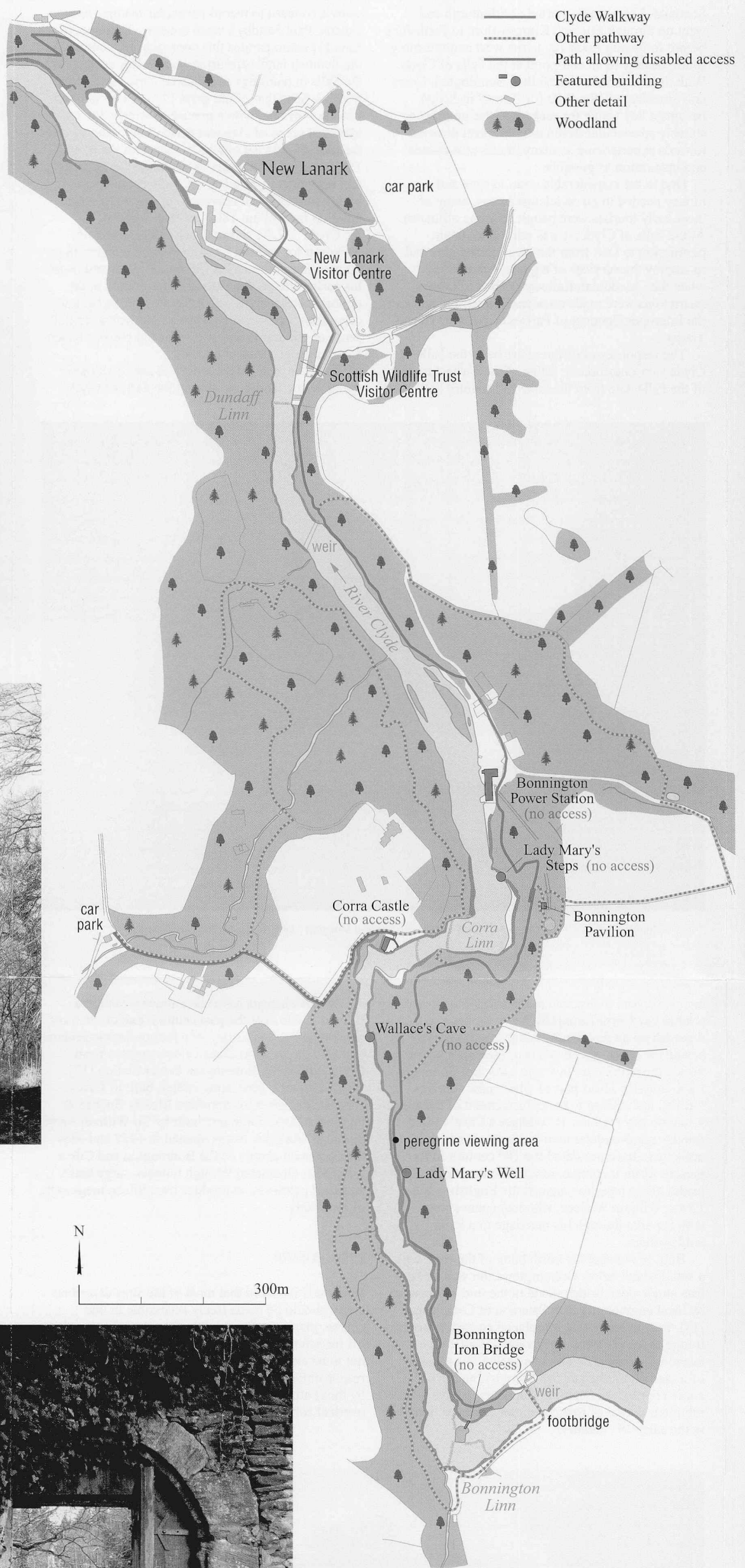
11 Corra Castle: 1:250 scale plan. (SC877114)



12 Corra Castle: detail of the round-headed doorway in the main front. (SC877114)



13 The cast-iron single-span bridge at Bonnington Linn was made by local engineering firm Paterson of Carmichael in the mid 19th century. (DP001869)



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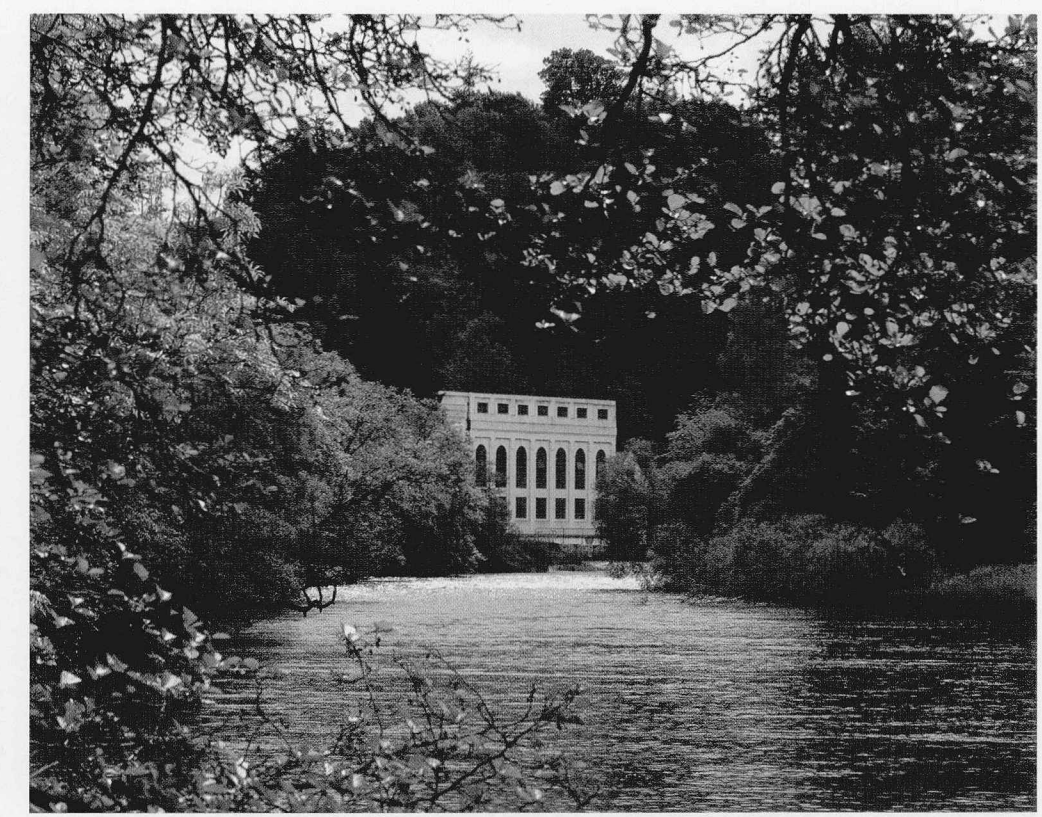
14 Corra Linn: view of the waterfall from the east (taken from the viewing-point below Bonnington Pavilion). (SC752242)



15 Lady Mary's Steps: construction detail. Now decayed and dangerous, these were built for Lady Mary Ross of Bonnington in 1829 to allow visitors access to the east bank of the river below Corra Linn. (SC877117)



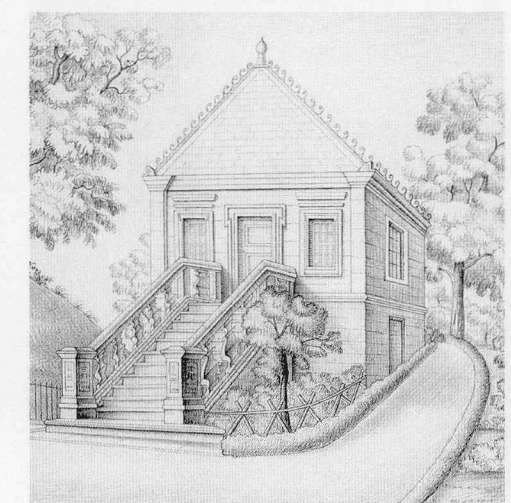
16 Bonnington Linn: view from the south. (SC877119)



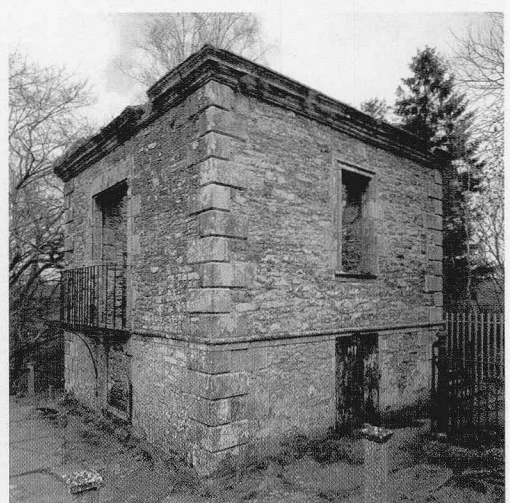
17 Bonnington Power Station: built in the 1920s to harness the energy of the Falls of Clyde for hydro-electric power. (SC882095)



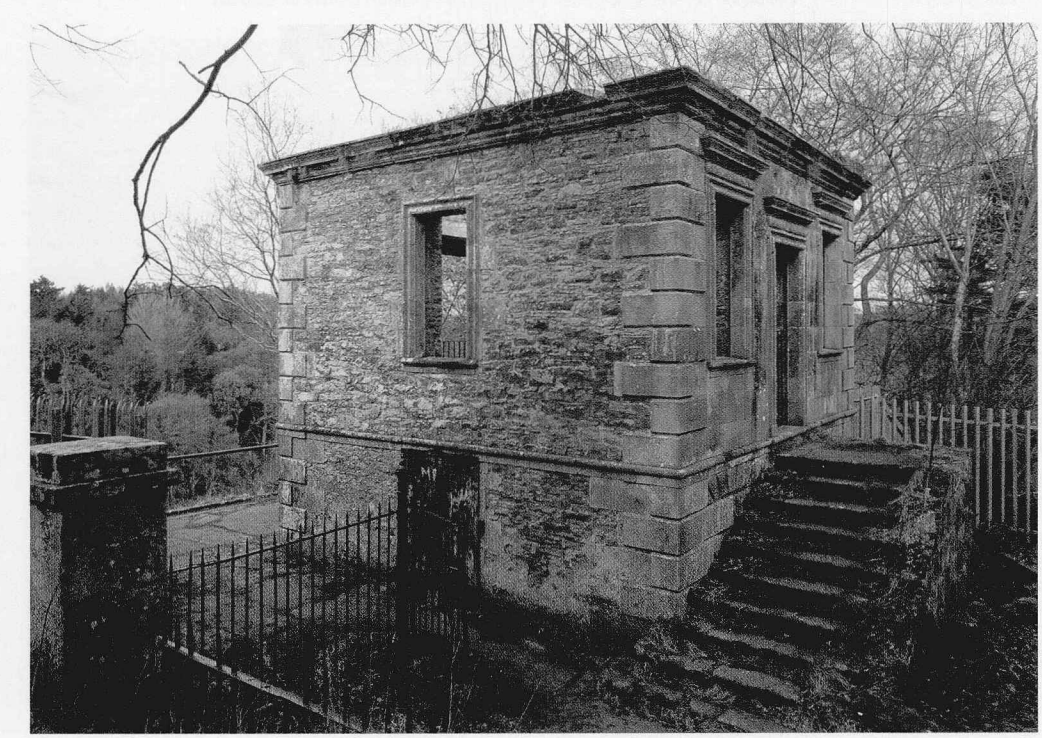
18 Wallace's Cave: view of the entrance to this artificial cave in a cliff on the east bank. (SC877118)



19 Bonnington Pavilion as drawn in 1837 by Alexander Archer, showing the original form of the entrance stair. (SC866002)



20 Bonnington Pavilion: view from the south-west. (SC879368)



21 Bonnington Pavilion: view from the south-east. (SC879364)