

This is a scenic and pleasant journey, through Dumfries, Galloway and South-East Ayrshire, venturing into Carrick and the Southern Uplands, crossing the Southern Upland Way. For your interest here is an "extract" from a description of the route after leaving Minnigaff, taken from David Bell's book - *The Highwayman Again*:

"The Perfect Byway"

...we took the back road for Glen Trool at Minnigaff; a perfect byway this, once you get properly on it and hug the bank of the River Cree. It's narrow, full of blind corners and topsy-turvy, half the time buried in the Woodland.

We brewed up beside the burn called Coldsrtean, just abreast of Penninghame and relaxed in the shade. For the more energetic, there's plenty to look for - "The Thieves and the Deil's Dyke" are on the Moor above. There's a lesser-known "Grey-Mare's Tail" falls too, in these Woods of Cree.

We crossed The Minnoch Water, in a short time linking up with a more popular approach to Glen Trool. The scene had changed too, our Road now rolling among low heather hills, giving views of the Lamachan range and rugged Muldonach. We drew up to our second Minnoch bridge, the gateway into Glen Trool.

We joined the Straiton Road and began a long steady pull back into Ayrshire. The Merrick range came into good view and we scanned the run of new forest roads eagerly, trying to find out how far they reached into the foothills.

"Over the Top"

...Loch Moan fell away to our left on the Moor - source of the River Cree - and Fardin, which provided us with "rough-stuff" in the old days.

The rise at the former Rowantree school brought us to our feet for a short spell. We rode forward to Rowantree Toll and swooped down on the Minnoch for the last time and started on Shalloch - uphill for the next two-and-a-half miles.....down into Tairlaw Forest and touched the bottom at Tairlaw Bridge and the Girvan Water.

Straiton was peaceful in the sun and the Cloncaird Woods were bright with rhododendrons.....

TO/FROM DUMFRIES TOWN

