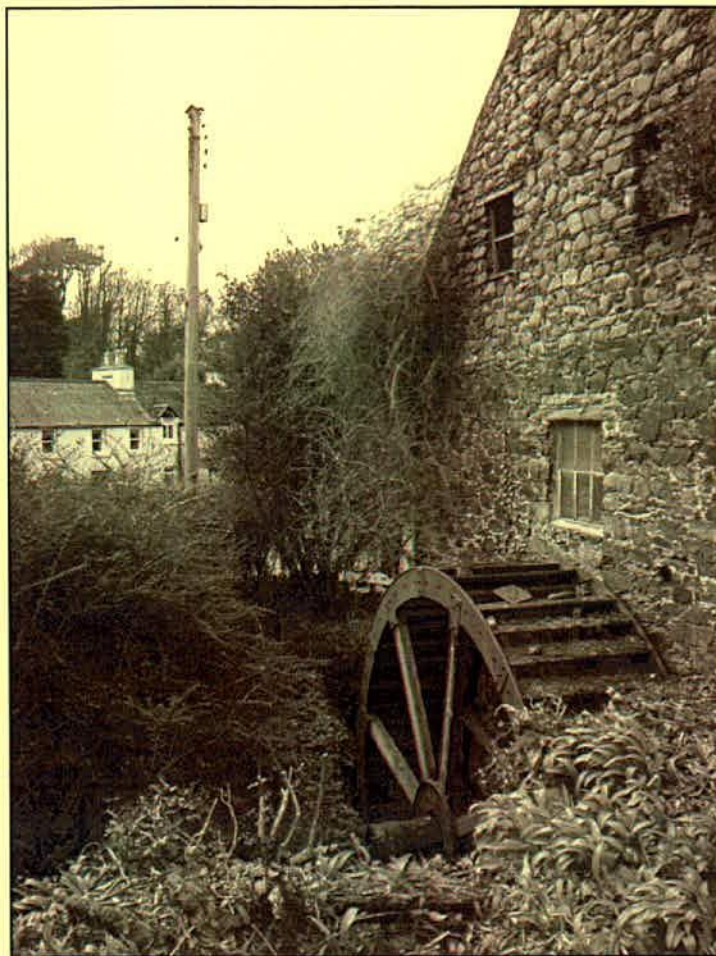


Glen Wyllin Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

To be read in conjunction with the Kirk Michael & Glen Wyllin
Conservation Area Order 23rd June 2006



Department of Local Government and the Environment
Rheynn Reiltys Ynnydagh as y Chymmyltaght

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.0 Glen Wyllin is situated to the southwest of the village of Kirk Michael, on the West Coast of the Isle of Man, being some 6 miles north of Peel. It is obvious from the width of the glen that it was cut out of glacial drift by a watercourse of far greater significance than today's placid stream. Glen Wyllin in Manx Gaelic means 'Mill Glen', and in the past there were two water-driven corn mills at Glen Wyllin. One of them stood beside the seaward end of Shore Road until it was demolished in 1978 to prevent it falling over the rapidly approaching cliff top caused by coastal erosion. The other mill was much older, and was listed in the earliest complete Manorial Roll of 1511 to 1515. A mill building still stands today beside the dwelling known as Mill House.
- 1.1 Today Glen Wyllin has two distinct areas. To the west of the A4 Peel to Kirk Michael Road is the campsite and trout farm area, whilst to the east is the largely residential hamlet of Glen Wyllin. This was not always the case, as at the end of the 18th century the road south from Kirk Michael to Peel turned left at the bottom of the hill, forded the river, mounted the steep bank opposite, and after crossing the adjacent field continued towards Peel through the entrance of Ballacregga Farm. Probably the most commonly used line of communication was the highway from Barregarrow to the glen, known locally as the Cooildarry. This was the main road north prior to the new road being built from Ballamenagh (Handley's Corner) to Cronk Bane in the last decade of the 18th century.
- 1.2 The Manx Advertiser in July 1834, reported that: 'A bridge has recently been built in Glen Wyllin and a new line of road formed at immense expense'. This new bridge involved a considerable amount of work, including bridging the river, cutting deeply into both banks and filling in the centre. This substantially diminished the gradient of the previous road, and effectively separated the glen into two separate and distinct areas.
- 1.3 The western coast of the Island in the vicinity of Glen Wyllin has suffered severe coastal erosion in the past. This can be illustrated by reference to the Ordnance

Survey maps published since 1869. On the 1869 map (Appendix 1), Kerrow Cruin Mill (sometimes spelt Kerroocruin) is shown standing well back from the cliff edge with field number 518 standing in front of it. By the time of the revision of the Ordnance Survey map in 1967 (Appendix 2), field number 518 has disappeared and the mill is standing very close to the edge of the approaching cliff top.

- 1.4 By 1978, when the next Ordnance Survey map was published (Appendix 3), the mill is standing at the cliff edge and was in fact demolished in that year. To the east of the mill is a building marked as Kerroocruin, and this too has been lost and is therefore not shown on today's Ordnance Survey map.
- 1.5 It is also interesting to note the difference in the proximity to the cliff edge of the tanks of the Clearwater Trout Farm. In 1978, they stand well back from the shoreline, but today they adjoin it.

2. The Development of Glen Wyllin

- 2.1 The improved access into Glen Wyllin appears to have lead to a growth in the number of dwellings as was revealed by the 1841 census, where a number of small industries can be noted. By 1851, a total of fifteen dwellings are recorded in the census, which is roughly the same number as exists today.
- 2.2 The Ordnance Survey Map of 1869 revealed that a considerable amount of expense and effort had been expended in a large amount of amenity planting throughout the upper glen above the residential settlement. This included paths, ornamental ponds and a summerhouse designed with visitors in mind.
- 2.3 The next major change in the development of the glen came in the 1870s with the construction of the Manx Northern Railway, and saw the first train arriving at Kirk Michael in September 1879. Glen Wyllin together with its neighbour, Glen Mooar, provided a test of engineering skill, as viaducts were required to carry the railway over these deep cuttings. Specially trained masons from England built the pillars for these viaducts from stone quarried in Glen Mooar, with the exception of the red corner stones, which came from a quarry just outside Peel.
- 2.4 The opening of the railway provided a boost to the local economy, and also allowed residents of the area to commute to the towns for their employment for the first time. It also allowed local children to acquire higher education in Douglas or Ramsey, and farmers to send their produce to market to satisfy increased demand particularly in the summer season.
- 2.5 The west of the Island was for the first time effectively opened up to visitors. In 1890, Glen Wyllin was opened as a pleasure resort, and a footpath constructed to the glen from Kirk Michael station enabled visitors to reach the glen in a matter of minutes. An account written at the time stated: "Glen Wyllin is comparatively unknown with its plantations, arbours, summerhouses, sea-bathing, freshwater lake, tennis courts, bowling green, croquet, swings, hobby horses and other games. It has also has a well-appointed refreshment room.

Glen Wyllin is remarkable for its picturesque beauty and so genial and invigorating is its air that it has been called the Madeira of the North".

- 2.6 In 1935, the Isle of Man Railway Company purchased the pleasure grounds for £1,200 and further developments were undertaken, including the excavation of the boating lake. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the pleasure grounds were closed down, but when they reopened the post-war period proved to be their most successful ever.
- 2.7 When the railway closed in 1965, the fate of the glen was sealed and it was offered for sale the following year. After some years in private ownership, during which the glen subsided into dereliction, it was eventually acquired by the Manx Government for a figure of £28,000, £16,000 more than they could have purchased it for some 12 years earlier. Ownership was transferred to the Forestry Board in 1979, and it is now maintained as a Manx National Glen. An extensive area is used as a campsite with associated facilities, including a children's playground and at the seaward end of the glen is a trout farm.

3. The Prevailing and Former Uses Within the Area

- 3.1 As previously stated, Glen Wyllin today has two distinctly separate areas dissected by the A4 Peel to Kirk Michael road. To the east of this road is the residential settlement, whilst to the west is the former pleasure grounds now occupied by the campsite and trout farm.
- 3.2 The hamlet of Glen Wyllin, to the east of the road, is today purely residential. This is in complete contrast to the situation in the early 19th century. One of the largest commercial enterprises undertaken was the construction of the brewery complex in the early 1800s. The earliest mention of the brewery was in 1820, and its success was short lived as there is no mention of the brewery after 1861, and it is marked as disused on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1869. Much of the brewery appears to have been demolished sometime after that date, although the cottage Lyndale appears to be the only remaining part of the brewery still standing.
- 3.3 According to village folklore, the dwelling house of the brewery became the premises of a village school, this again having only a short life span from 1875 until 1881.
- 3.4 The 1841 census lists a wide variety of industries within the community, including: brewing, spinning, weaving, shoe making, farming and tailoring.
- 3.5 By the 1881 census, the cottage industry had completely disappeared, and only the two corn mills continued to provide employment. The Kerrow Cruin Mill, at the seaward end of the glen, closed in 1931 and was converted into a fish hatchery by the Manx Government in 1948, and the mill buildings were demolished in 1978.
- 3.6 Glen Wyllin Mill, which is sometimes known as Harry's Mill, dates from the beginning of the 18th century. It was operated by Mr. Harry Faragher until his

death, aged 82, in 1963. It was used by a local farmer until its final closure in about 1966.

3.7 In the 1830s, deposits of Fuller's Earth were discovered in the upper glen, in the area that is now the Cooldarrey Nature Reserve. This enterprise closed down at the beginning of the First World War.

3.8 Today, the eastern portion of the glen is purely given over to residential settlement, whilst to the west of the main road the majority of the area is occupied by the campsite and its facilities, with the Clearwater Trout Farm at the seaward end of the glen. Also within this portion of the glen are four dwellings.

4. Building Types and Styles within the Conservation Area

- 4.1 There are no dominant architectural styles within the Glen Wyllin conservation area. Indeed, there are few buildings within the area of any great merit, and designation could not be justified purely upon the qualities of the built environment.
- 4.2 Within the hamlet of Glen Wyllin, architectural styles are exceedingly varied. Amongst the oldest properties appear to be Glen Wyllin House, built in the 1840s; the disused mill that dates back to the early part of the 18th century, and Lyndale, which was part of the former brewery complex and was built prior to 1820. By the time the 1869 Ordnance Survey Map was produced, a number of buildings can be identified in positions corresponding to those of today's dwellings, although a number appear to have been significantly extended. It is clear that the majority of the brewery buildings were removed and replaced by the pair of semi-detached houses Viking and Sunnyside. These have now been extended and incorporated into a single dwelling known as Cheu Grianagh. This property is Edwardian in appearance, and of a totally different style to other properties within the glen.
- 4.3 Despite extensive alteration and extension, Glen Wyllin House retains the typical Manx characteristics of clipped eaves and substantial chimneys to either gable wall. It now has a veranda porch to the front elevation, with bay windows to the rooms either side of the front entrance door.
- 4.4 Lyndale is a traditional Manx cottage, which appears to be substantially unaltered externally other than the provision of an entrance porch.
- 4.5 On the opposite bank of the river is a pair of semi-detached cottages known as The Nook and Riverside. These have the appearance of belonging to the inter-war period.

- 4.6 Magnolia Cottage is shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1869, but has been extensively altered since that time. The property has a rather bland and featureless elevation to the highway, whilst to the rear it is apparent that the original traditional Manx cottage has been extended several times resulting in a number of flat-roofed projections.
- 4.7 Whilst the old mill appears to remain substantially unaltered since its working days, the same cannot be said of the adjacent mill house, which appears to have been substantially altered and remodelled in the 1970s. It now appears to retain few, if any, of its original features, with the exception of the main walls.
- 4.8 The Firs is a traditional Manx cottage situated up a small track, which was formerly the old road serving the north of the Island. The property appears to remain substantially unaltered externally, and has the traditional three-bay frontage, with windows to either side of a central entrance door at ground floor level, with three windows above these apertures at first floor level.
- 4.9 There are a pair of semi-detached cottages known as The Cottage and Spring Haven, which can be identified on the 1869 Ordnance Survey Map. Whilst The Cottage bears traditional Manx characteristics, Spring Haven does not. It has peaked dormer windows at first floor level and a projecting front entrance porch. Adjacent to these properties is Cooil Glass, which is a detached dormer-bungalow that appears to originate from the late 60s or early 1970s.
- 4.10 Rose Cottage is a Manx cottage differing in appearance to any other property within the glen, being of one-and-a-half storey construction, but having no front entrance doorway.
- 4.11 The remaining three properties within the hamlet bear no resemblance to each other. The first, Fuchsias, is a single-storey, bay-windowed bungalow, probably dating from the 1920s or 30s.