

# **A75 TRUNK ROAD**

## **GATEHOUSE OF FLEET BY-PASS**

Opened by  
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SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



The Gatehouse of Fleet Diversion forms part of the A75 Trunk Road from Gretna to Stranraer. The western half of the 6.4 km long diversion provides a bypass to the village of Gatehouse of Fleet and the eastern half replaces a section of the former trunk road which has a very poor alignment. Trunk Road A75, also designated Euroroute E18, is part of the important European link to Ireland via the short sea crossing between Stranraer and Larne.

As far back as the mid-seventeenth century the importance of the route was recognised when the English Government established a line of posts between Carlisle and Portpatrick to maintain communication with their army in Ireland. One of these posts was the Gait House of Fleet wherein lived the keeper who controlled the way (or gait) leading to the ford across the River Fleet. The house still stands and is part of the Murray Arms. Later an Act of Parliament permitted a toll bridge to be built over the river.

The village of Gatehouse expanded in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century with the influx of several industries, all of which have now disappeared. Although the streets were carefully laid out for the industrial traffic of the nineteenth century, High Street and Fleet Street, joined by Fleet Bridge, were not designed to carry the large and heavy lorries which thunder through the village en route to and from the vehicular ferry at Stranraer. With the opening of the bypass, Gatehouse of Fleet will be a safer and more pleasant place for residents and visitors to enjoy the facilities and peace of this attractive country village.

The new road is essentially a single 7.3 m wide carriageway with 1.0 m wide hard strips and 2.5 m wide verges. However in rock cuttings, 5.0 m wide verges are provided, and from Fleet Forest to Barn Gaber Ridge, a distance of over 3 km, the carriageway is widened to 10.0 m to accommodate a climbing lane for eastbound traffic.

From its connection with the existing road about 1.5 km south-west of Gatehouse the new road strikes south-east over the tidal reaches of the Water of Fleet on the new 3-span Cardoness Bridge, across the Carse of Fleet on a 5 m high embankment and on into Fleet Forest. The road curves gently to the left as it rises steeply through Fleet Forest, crossing the saddle between Bar Hill and Belvedere Hill, and then curving gently to the right it passes through a deep soft and rock cutting on the southern shoulder of Belvedere Hill to emerge from the forest near Sandgreen Road Junction about 50 m above sea level. From Sandgreen Road the new road continues to climb, though less steeply, to Camphill where a junction is formed with existing road to complete the bypass of Gatehouse. East of Camphill Junction the new road continues in a south easterly direction, variously in cutting and on embankment, swinging left handed as it rises steeply again, at up to 6%, to a summit of approximately 112 m above sea level in a deep rock cutting through Barn Gaber Ridge. East of the summit, the climbing lane ends and the carriageway reverts to the nominal 7.3 m width as it falls gradually on a left-handed curve through sharply undulating ground near Glenterry to tie-in again with the existing road at Mossnae.

Several streams and farm tracks cross the line of the road and these are accommodated in piped culverts, reinforced concrete box culverts and underpasses and a 3.7 m diameter corrugated steel underpass. Cardoness Bridge, over the Water of Fleet and the major structure on the scheme, is 65 m long and comprises a 3 span bridge of steel beam and reinforced concrete deck construction supported on reinforced concrete piers and abutments with steel 'H' piled foundations.

For travellers, the new road opens up attractive views of the countryside. Where the road emerges from the rock cutting at Barn Gaber, an extensive view of the Galloway Hills is provided over the top of Bar Hill and Belvedere Hill and, where the road bursts out of Fleet Forest onto the Carse of Fleet, a fine new view of Cardoness Castle is obtained. A scheme of roadside planting is being undertaken to assist in blending the road with the existing landscape.

Construction commenced in April 1984 and was completed 3 months ahead of schedule in January 1986, at a Contract cost of approximately £7 million. The scheme has been funded in part by the European Community.



CONGESTION IN GATEHOUSE



LOOKING WEST TO GALLOWAY HILLS

#### TECHNICAL DATA

Length: 6.4 kilometres.

Carriageway: Single 7.3 m wide carriageway with 1 m wide hardstrips and 2.5 m wide verges widened to 10.0 m wide carriageway with 1 m wide hardstrips and 2.5 m wide verges on climbing lane section.

Laybys: 5 Eastbound: 5 Westbound.

Minimum Radius: 1500 m.

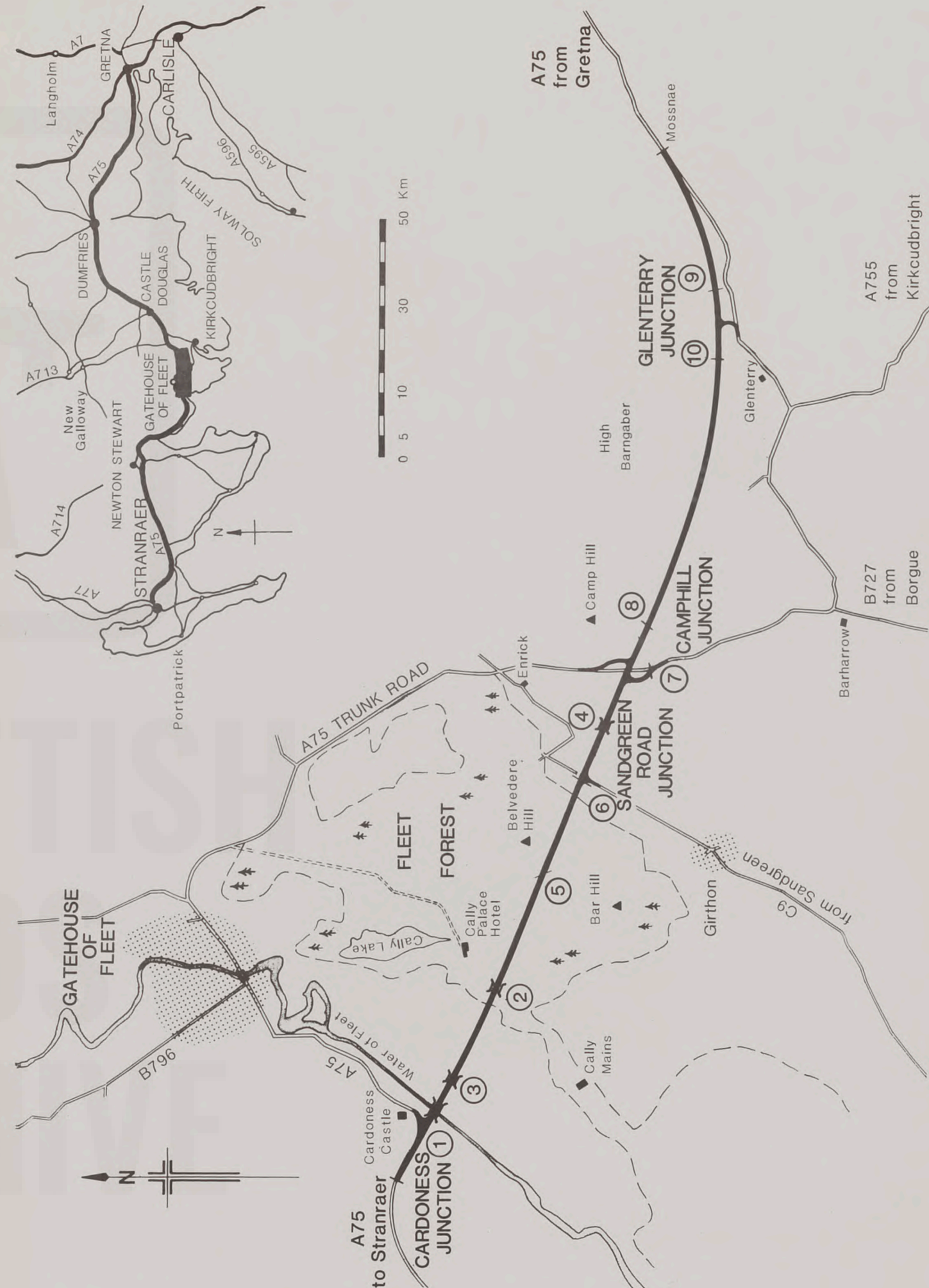
Maximum Gradient: 6% (1 in 16.7)

Pavement Construction:  
Sub-base - 150 mm. Type 1 granular material.  
Roadbase - 190 mm. lean concrete.

Surfacing:  
Basecourse - 60 mm. dense bitumen macadam.  
Wearing Course - 40 mm. hot rolled asphalt with 20 mm. coated chippings rolled in.

Area of Surfacing: 78,000 sq. m.  
Excavation: topsoil 20,000 cu. m.  
suitable material 70,000 cu. m.  
rock 200,000 cu. m.  
unsuitable material 270,000 cu. m.  
Fill required for construction: 350,000 cu. m.

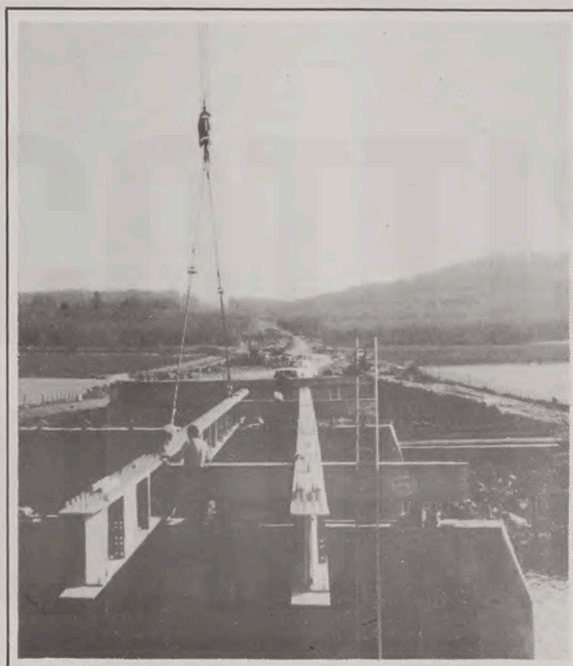
Structures: 2 bridges, 3 farm underpasses, 4 burn box culverts and 1 combined burn culvert/pedestrian underpass.







LOOKING EAST TO FLEET FOREST



CARDONESS BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

**Engineer:**  
**BABTIE SHAW & MORTON**  
*Consulting Engineers*  
 95 Bothwell Street  
 Glasgow G2 7HX.

**Contractor:**  
**WHATLINGS (Civil Engineering) LTD.**  
*Part of the Alfred McAlpine Group*  
 North Claremont Street  
 Glasgow G3 7LF.