"Gatehouse virtual pub crawl" walk

Gatehouse once had a population of over 2000 and was a bustling town with cotton mills and other heavy industries, many of which relied on significant manual labour. Hard labour meant thirsts to be quenched, a requirement that was met by numerous pubs in the town.

Robert Heron in 1792 commented that 'tippling houses were wonderfully numerous' and the Minister of Girthon parish said 'besides a good inn, there are about 15 houses where spirituous liquors are sold'.
Few of these pubs are believed to have been inns like the Murray Arms, which also offered accommodation.
Some were only a room in someone's house, or a corner in a grocer's shop.
The water quality was at best unreliable - so drinking beer might have been a safer option.

William Daniell, who visited Gatehouse in 1815, reported that 150 gallons of whisky was drunk weekly.

Note: not all the drinking establishments referred to below were trading at the same time.

Start the walk at the Town Car park.

The Brewery - across the street is a large building behind the house painted yellow. The brewery was one of the first industries in Gatehouse, opening in 1769, and no doubt supplied many of the local pubs. It continued to produce beer, and latterly lemonade, until about 1900.

The Angel Hotel

Opposite the brewery, behind the Spar/Galloway Lodge building is the former **Angel Hotel**. The building was purchased in the 1802 by Joseph McNish from Georgia, USA, a plantation owner. He turned the building into an hotel - **The Angel Tavern**. It eventually closed in 1990s and is now a private home.

Walk up the hill to the Angel Hotel.

The Wine House

On the other side of High Street there are houses accessed by a flight of steps (**The Red Steps**). The house on the left (69 High Street) was known as the **Wine House**. This was not a pub but is understood that a business to supply gentry with wine was established here in the 1790s. The house has a large cellar.
In the 1850s, the building was possibly known as the **Shoulder of Mutton** pub that was owned by Alexander McClellan,

Sam Petries

The left side of the **Apothically** shop was once a pub. It was popular with cotton mill workers who could take a path from the mills and exit onto the High Street via the close next to the pub.
It later became a grocer's shop (**Halliday's**) but in the late 20th century it was the **Post Office**.

Cross High Street and turn left into Victoria Street.

Victoria Inn

The small building on the left was the **Victoria Inn** between 1870 and 1913. For many years it was owned by **Jessie Thompson**. In certain light conditions part of the name **THOMPSON** can be seen above the door. The house was at one time joined internally to 57 High Street. The beer cellar was below the High Street house.

Return to High Street, turn left and walk up to the charity shop.

The Black Swan

For many years the charity shop (49/51 High Street) was **The Black Swan**. It then became **McAdam's** grocery shop.

Across the road, the old Town Hall was once The Commercial Inn

This inn was in use during the early 1800s until it was sold and demolished to be replaced by the Town Hall building in 1885. One of the last landlords was **John Wilson**. His son, also **John, of the 17th Lancers, was killed during the Charge of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava in 1855.**

The Bank of Fleet

Although this is now a hotel and pub, this was originally the townhouse for the Birtwhistle family who owned 2 cotton mills in the town. Later it was sold to the Union Bank of Scotland. When the bank closed in 1962 it became a guest house, and later a small hotel.

Continue to the corner with Digby Street

Slimmon's

The corner property **(39/41 High Street)** was owned by Hugh Slimmon. This was a grocer's shop and a pub. In 1919 the property was bought by the Frullani family who opened an ice cream parlour and café.

Turn left along Digby Street

Digby Street had several pubs but their positions are unclear.

The Earl Grey - possibly 3 Digby Street

Robert Burns (Burnie Hoose) now demolished but possibly where 12 Digby Street is today.

Royal Oak run by Alex Purdie in the 1830s. He was banished from the town for swindling.

Turn right into Catherine Street

Nannie Walker's

31 Catherine Street. The Walker family lived here from the 1840s. Grace Walker was a spirit dealer and grocer between 1861 & 1891.

Continue up Catherine Street to the corner with Ford Road.

Bluebell Inn

10 Catherine Street was run as a pub by **William & Jane Munro** between the 1830s and 1850s.

The road beside the pub led to the ford over the River Fleet so there was a lot of passing trade. The small window at the side may have been used to serve passers-by.

In 1866 the building was sold to the **RC Church** and the upstairs converted into a chapel, which remained until 1971.

Walk along Ford Road, cross High Street into Ann Street.

Murray Arms Hotel

Probably the oldest pub in the town. **Richard Murray of Cally** was told to erect an inn and tollhouse in 1662 when a new toll bridge was built over the Fleet. It is probably on the site of an earlier inn.
Known as the **King's Head** (or Head Inn) until the 1820s when it became the **Murray Arms**.

The **Tollhouse or Gaithouse** was the small building adjoining the **Masonic Arms.**
Prior to Gatehouse having a Town Hall (1885), the dining room was known as the **Assembly Rooms** and held various civic functions.
The inn also ran the **posting stables across the road**.
The town bowling green was in the Murray Arms garden until 1939.
Robert Burns used this inn on his journeys through Galloway and is said to have written 'Scot's Wha Hae' whilst lodging there in 1793.

Further up Ann Street on the right

The Bay Horse

Like the Murray Arms this pub was on the original road entrance into Gatehouse from the east and it operated as an inn from 1787 until the 1860s. Also like the Murray Arms, Robert Burns is said to have used this inn.
"The Green Man Inn" (fictional pub). The building to the left of the Bay Horse was used for exterior shots of the pub during the filming of "The Wickerman" in 1973. The interior was filmed at The Ellangowan Hotel in Creetown. The building has been converted into houses – one of which is named "Willow" – the name of the innkeeper's daughter in the film, a part played by Britt Ekland.

Across the road on the left

Masonic Arms

The Masonic Arms was built about 1812 but there is thought to have been an earlier **Mason's Arms** somewhere in High Street.
The hall above the pub was used by the Masons for their meetings but was also rented out and has been used as an exam hall for Girthon School, dances, weddings and other functions. The upper floor is now converted into bedrooms.

Walk back down Ann Street towards the clock and turn left.

6 High Street (building after Bluebell Interiors)
Mary McKay was a grocer who sold spirits between 1881 and 1901.

Bain's (the next building - with the picture windows)
8/10 High Street was run by **James Bayne** from the 1830s until the 1850s. He was an ironmonger/blacksmith as well as a spirit dealer. Apparently the gentry in the town favoured this pub.

Black Bull

9 High Street (seen across the road – to the left of the "Ferguson" shop front)
Run by **Thomas Fowler**, grocer & spirit dealer between 1841 and 1861.
Later it was bought by the **Stewartry Dairy**

Taggart's
24 High Street
From 1850 - 1880s this was owned by Provost James McTaggart. He was a shoemaker and spirit dealer.

30 High Street
Between 1825 and 1850 Mary Thomson ran a tavern & public house - **'The Crown & Thistle'.**
Dixon Gibson was a grocer, hostler and spirit dealer in the 1850s and 1860s. This pub may have been called **The Rising Sun.**

The Thistle (house to the right of the archway)
38/40 High Street
1837 Pigot's directory lists **John Denniston** as grocer, innkeeper and vintner.

There were also some pubs in Fleet Street.
Walk down High Street and cross the bridge.

The Crown & Thistle (**or The Crown**)
The large house on the left, just over the bridge, was a pub during the 19th century. It is now a private house.

The Ship Inn
1-3 Fleet Street
This was the first building in Fleet Street (1794) about 30 years after the first buildings in High Street.
It has always been an inn although part of the front of the building was a butchers in the 1930s. At one time there was a garage behind the hotel on Dromore Road which had a petrol pump near the front door.
For a period between the 1920s and 2000 it was known as the **Anwoth Hotel**.
During the 1920s and 30s it was popular with the artists in the town such as Hamish Paterson, Alick Sturrock and Mac Fleming. Fleming's wife, authoress Dorothy L. Sayers stayed at the Anwoth in 1931when she was writing her detective story 'Five Red Herrings'.

The Beer Garden across the road was originally intended to be used as a manse and glebe for the 'Wee Kirk' beside it. The church was originally built in 1840 as a Secessional Church (Presbyterian) but is now **St Mary's Episcopal Church.**

Elsewhere in Fleet Street, there was a pub called **The Anchor** run by **Anthony Hewetson**.

Only The Ship Inn, the Murray Arms and the Masonic Arms have always been used as pubs.
Now, maybe finish your virtual tour of the pubs with a libation at the real **Ship Inn**.

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