Original description of the NSA from the publication *Scotland's Scenic Heritage* published by the Countryside Commission for Scotland in 1978, and available on the Scotlish Natural Heritage website at http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/B464646.pdf (6.52mb)

NITH ESTUARY NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Dumfries and Galloway

Description from Scotland's Scenic Heritage 1978

The River Nith and the Lochar Water flow into the Solway Firth to form a wide tidal estuary comprising the Carse Sands, Blackshaw Bank and Priestside Bank. These extensive sands, mudflats, and saltings of an openness and horizontal scale unusual in Scotland, are complemented and enhanced by the presence of the gentle granite cone of Criffell and the long well-wooded ridge extending back to Marthrown Hill. The eastern flank of the hill, best seen from Caerlaverock, has steep convex slopes with a mixture of woodland and moorland descending into the richer sylvan and pastoral landscape around New Abbey.

By contrast Marthrown Hill is heavily wooded, but below it the riverside flats are a mixture of pasture and peat moss with associated birch trees. To the east of the tidal channel of the Nith relief is low, but the long valley is given emphasis by a long low ridge parallel with the river. The river at this point is broad and bordered by open fields, marshes and riverside trees in some places. The variety of elements constitutes a whole that is of great beauty, and constantly changes with the coming and going of the tide, which in this vicinity affects an intertidal zone of enormous width.