



Maccaferri reinforcing being laid out on the Lorg road

## Improving timber transport case study

# Lorg Glen and the B729

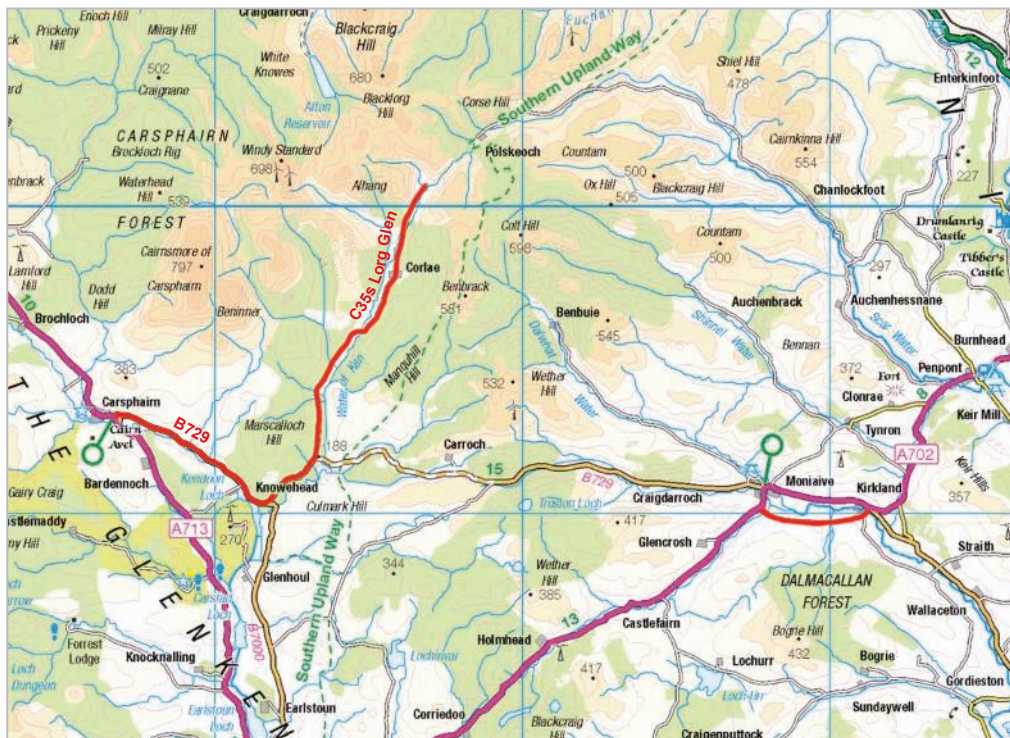
<b>What?</b>	Strengthening and improving public roads
<b>When?</b>	2008–2012
<b>Where?</b>	Lorg Glen to Carsphairn, Dumfries & Galloway
<b>Who?</b>	Dumfries and Galloway Council
<b>How much?</b>	Lorg Glen and Moniaive: £1.2m (STTS £626 931), B729 winter damage: £268 704 (STTS £134 350), B729 strengthening: £240 000 (STTS £98 856)
<b>Timber tonnage</b>	70 000 tonnes per year



Resurfaced Lorg road.

The B729 is a largely single track road from which three glen roads reach up into the plantation forests of Lorg Glen, Blackmark, Cornharrow, Auchenstroan and Troston, covering 3200 hectares.





Location map.

## Lorg Glen

Harvesting started in the Lorg Glen in the 1990s and fairly promptly led to wrangles between the Council and the forest management companies over the capacity of the fragile road to cope with timber traffic. The handful of residents, along with visitors accessing the Southern Upland Way, also complained about encountering timber lorries on the narrow road. The discussion process that developed was a precursor to the timber transport groups that became formalised at the end of the decade.

In 2004, with the announcement of grant funding through the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS), the Dumfries & Galloway Timber Transport Group set up a steering group to come up with a solution for the Lorg Glen. Various options were considered, such as converting the road to a Swedish-style gravel-surfaced road or building an alternative in-forest route. Upgrading the 6.7 km public road made the most sense. The road was already there, the bridges were up to standard and it accessed all the forests.

However, the soft ground under the road posed a real engineering challenge. Importing huge volumes of rock was not feasible so the engineers proposed a steel 'Maccaferri' reinforcing mesh set between two 75 mm layers of tarmac. This is expensive material.

The STTS bid was submitted in early 2008 requesting 70% of £1.3m. The project proposed reinforcing 6.4 km of road as well as putting in six passing places and creating a four vehicle car park with picnic tables at the top of the road. The project also included works on a short stretch of public road around the village of Moniaive to reduce the impact of timber transport on the community. This involved widening some bends, creating passing places to provide a bypass for loaded lorries around the village, a new community footpath from the village to the school and a footbridge over the Dalwhatch water.

After some negotiation, the STTS agreed to provide 50% of £1.2m with co-finance coming from the Council and from contributions of road stone from the forest owners. Other sources of funding were found to help pay for the footpath. By spring 2009, after a road closure of 12 weeks, the work was complete.

### Reinforcing the B729

The reinforced Lorg Road has held up well to the high levels of timber traffic but the road it feeds onto, the B729, was requiring regular maintenance and showing signs of fatigue. In the severe winter of January 2011 many of the forest roads were closed and the sawmills were running short of supply, so the accessible log stacks along the B729 attracted a number of timber lorries. However the freeze / thaw action had raised sections of tarmac on the road and, when the lorries passed over, the surface crumbled in a dramatic fashion.

The STTS responded positively to a request from local authorities to help fund emergency repairs on roads vital to timber transport. This money, together with contributions from the forest industry partners, helped Dumfries and Galloway Council to re-open the road.

Damaged section of the B729.



The Council recognised the inherent weakness in the road, and later that year applied for STTS funding to reinforce remaining sections of the 8 km from Carsphairn to the junction with the Lorg Glen road.

This time the reinforcement was with Tensar Glasstex P50 – a glassfibre felt. The existing tarmac surface was sprayed with bitumen and the sheets of Glasstex rolled out, prior to capping with a 40 mm tarmac overlay. Ditches were cleaned, the bends and passing places were widened and also lengthened within the existing road line.

Both the Lorg Glen road and the B729 to Carsphairn are still categorised as 'consultation routes'. A working group has been set up to protect the investment in the road, co-ordinating harvesting and trying to prevent large volumes coming onto the roads at once. Loaded lorries are spaced evenly throughout the day to allow the road to recover between passes, with a particularly close eye kept on the state of the road during winter.

Glassfibre felt with tarmac overlay.



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