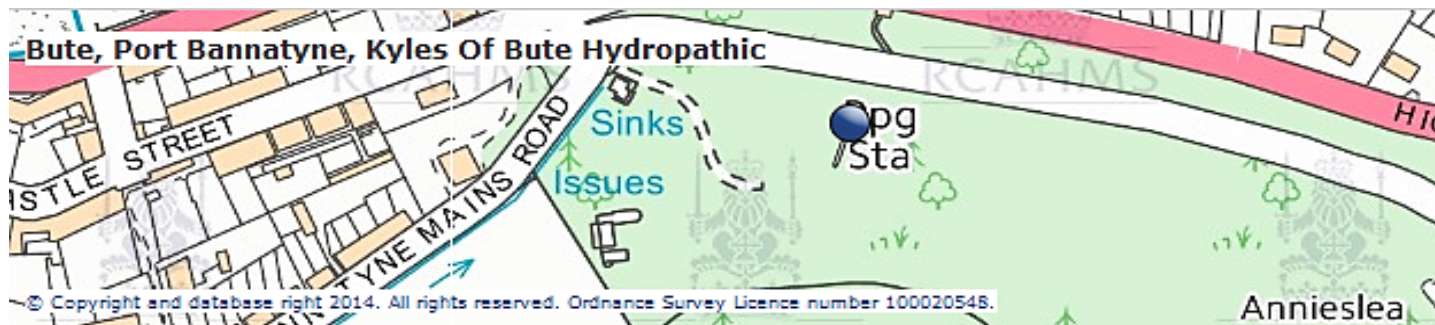




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Alternative Names Swanstonhill, Hms Verbel

Site Type HOTEL (19TH CENTURY), HYDROPATHIC INSTITUTE (19TH CENTURY), MILITARY TRAINING SITE (20TH CENTURY)

Canmore ID 180309

Site Number NS06NE 57

NGR NS 07569 67222

Council ARGYLL AND BUTE

Parish NORTH BUTE

Former Region STRATHCLYDE

Former District ARGYLL AND BUTE

Former County BUTESHIRE

Datum OSGB36 - NGR

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Architectural Notes

[NS06NE 57.00](#) NS 07563 67221 House; Hydropathic Hotel

[NS06NE 57.01](#) NS 07473 67189 Outbuildings

[NS06NE 57.02](#) NS 07478 67262 Gate Lodge and Gate Piers

Swanstonhill was a Victorian house designed by John Thomas Rothead (1814-1878) and built on a terrace on the hillside above Port Bannatyne about 1855 for a Mr John Smith. A long wing, designed by John Honeyman (1831-1914) (Dictionary of Scottish Architects), was added to the W side of the house when it was converted to an hydropathic hotel, which opened as the 'Kyles of Bute Hydro' in June 1879 (Daily Express, June 11, 1879). A wing was added to the E side of the original house about 1911 as part of the scheme of rebuilding after a fire in 1909. All that is now visible of the whole building is the landscaped terrace on which it was constructed and a large spread of demolition debris that is gradually being obscured by regenerating woodland.

The original Victorian house and its policies, which contained outbuildings ([NS06NE 57.01](#)) 90m to the WSW of the house, a gate-lodge ([NS06NE 57.02](#)) 90m to the WNW, and a garden, are depicted on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch map in 1869 (Argyllshire and Buteshire 1869, Sheet CXCV). The contemporary OS Name Book (No. 83, p.36) describes Swanstonhill as 'a very handsome cottage surrounded by ornamental ground and gardens feud off the estate of Kames, the property of James Smith Esquire.'

The 2nd edition of the OS 25-inch map (Buteshire 1897, Sheet CXCV.14) shows the hydropathic hotel, the lodge and the outbuildings, but it also depicts a large glasshouse at the SW corner of the garden, the dwarf walls of which are still visible. The outbuildings, which probably incorporated a stable, coach-house and accommodation for servants, are now no more than ruinous shells which were not recorded in detail on the date of visit. The gate-lodge has recently been reduced to a heap of rubble, though the lower courses of its walls remain intact. Two gate-piers flank the entrance to the former drive immediately N of the lodge.

Visited by RCAHMS (GFG, JRS) 2 June 2009.

SOURCE: Photographs and narrative, *Canmore*

<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/180309/details/bute+port+bannatyne+kyles+of+bute+hydropathic/>