

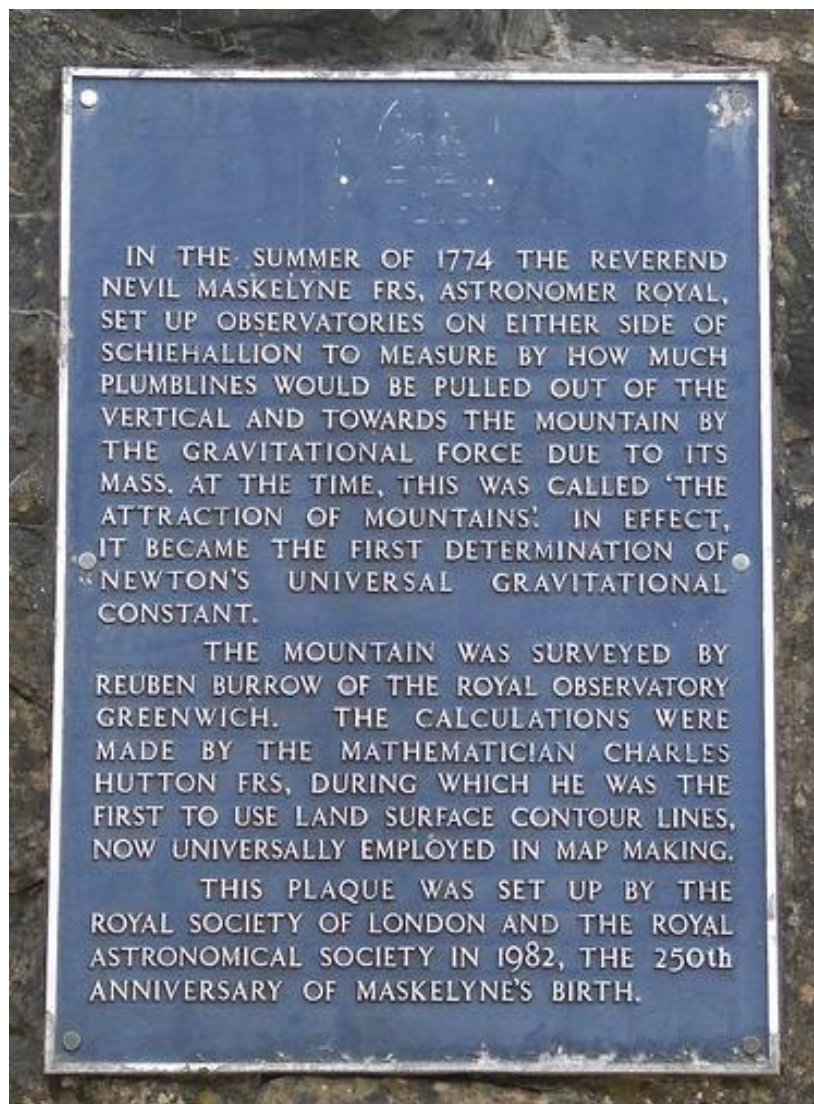


**Figure 1: Portrait of Rev. Nevil Maskelyne** © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, presented by the descendants of Nevil Maskelyne.

**REV. NEVIL MASKELYNE**  
(6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 1732 - 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1811)

Maskelyne was born in London and graduated in mathematics from Cambridge University in 1754. Admitted to the Royal Society in 1758; Astronomer Royal from 1765 until his death.

In 1772 he proposed to the Royal Society the Schiehallion experiment for the determination of the Earth's density using a plumb line. Observations were carried out in 1774, assisted by Reuben Burrow, William Roy, William Menzies and a team of labourers, at a cost of some £420. The experiment demonstrated Newton's law of gravitational attraction was correct, and the Earth's mean density is at least twice that of rocks near the surface. On Schiehallion the sites of the northern and southern observatories, and two Cairns on the summit ridge, are still visible, as shown in Figures 3-5.



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**Figure 2: Plaque set up in Maskelyne's memory on his 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary on site at Schiehallion** © Carol Pudsey.





**Figure 3: Observatory site on the northern slopes of Schiehallion, with remains of stonewall bases. © Carol Pudsey**



**Figure 4: Observatory site on the northern slopes of Schiehallion, NN72105545. © Carol Pudsey**

*Researched by Carol Pudsey/Edited by Naomi Harper - 2013 (NH/CL)*





**Figure 5: Observatory site on the southern slopes of Schiehallion, NN71995412, alt. 730 m. © Carol Pudsey**



**Figure 6: Cairn on East Ridge of Schiehallion NN72625460 © Carol Pudsey**

References:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevil\\_Maskelyne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevil_Maskelyne)



*This is part of a series of Tayside Geodiversity biographies. Who have we missed? Please contact us if you would like to see someone included in the future.*

