

OAKWOOD PRESS SCOTLAND



AYRSHIRE'S FORGOTTEN RAILWAYS

A Walker's Guide

by Alasdair Wham

**NEW
FOR 2013**

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A Walker's Guide

The coming of the railways transformed Ayrshire from a county with a poor underdeveloped network of rutted roads, where carters manfully hauled raw materials around, to a county where the 'iron road' linked coal pit to port or iron works and where people could join in the transport revolution and travel. By the mid- nineteenth century blessed with rich coal deposits, fertile fields and with traditional industries like textile and weaving Ayrshire's industry was ready to take advantage of the railway era and flourish. With an expanding railway network Ayrshire's goods could reach new markets and in return it also became a destination for people wanting to go for a day 'doon the watter' or for a game of golf on one of the famous links courses.

Ayrshire's railways proudly held many early railway records, such as the historic Kilmarnock & Troon Railway, opened in 1812, with the first passenger service in Scotland and one of the first in the world. This route saw one of George Stephenson's earliest experiments with a steam engine and also has the oldest surviving multi-span bridge in Scotland, recently restored, which is found at Laigh Milton near Kilmarnock.

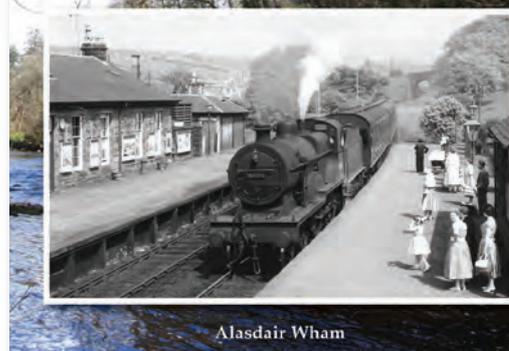
Railway engineers were confronted with many challenges such as the Ballochmyle viaduct built to cross the deep red sandstone gorge created by the River Ayr which boasted the largest masonry span of any railway bridge in the world when built. Other viaducts were also required to tame Ayrshire's many rivers.

Alasdair Wham tells the story of the growth and shrinkage of Ayrshire's railway network and explores their heritage, tracing disused trackbeds and visiting sites of railway interest. Sections of former trackbed that can be walked are highlighted in a series of walks, enabling the curious to explore Ayrshire's railway heritage on foot. The book will appeal to those interested in Ayrshire's social and industrial history as well as the railways. Tales of incidents which occurred along the route are also included, ensuring a fascinating read for those interested in railways or those who just enjoy a good story.

The book is well-illustrated throughout with both historic photographs and photographs showing the remnants of the railway routes today. Clear maps and grid references enable those interested to explore the lost lines and the surviving railway heritage.

Alasdair has previously written a series of popular guides to Scotland's lost railways. His extensively researched work will satisfy the enthusiast while his intriguing stories will captivate the general reader.

The book is to A5 format, 200 pages with 165 images.



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