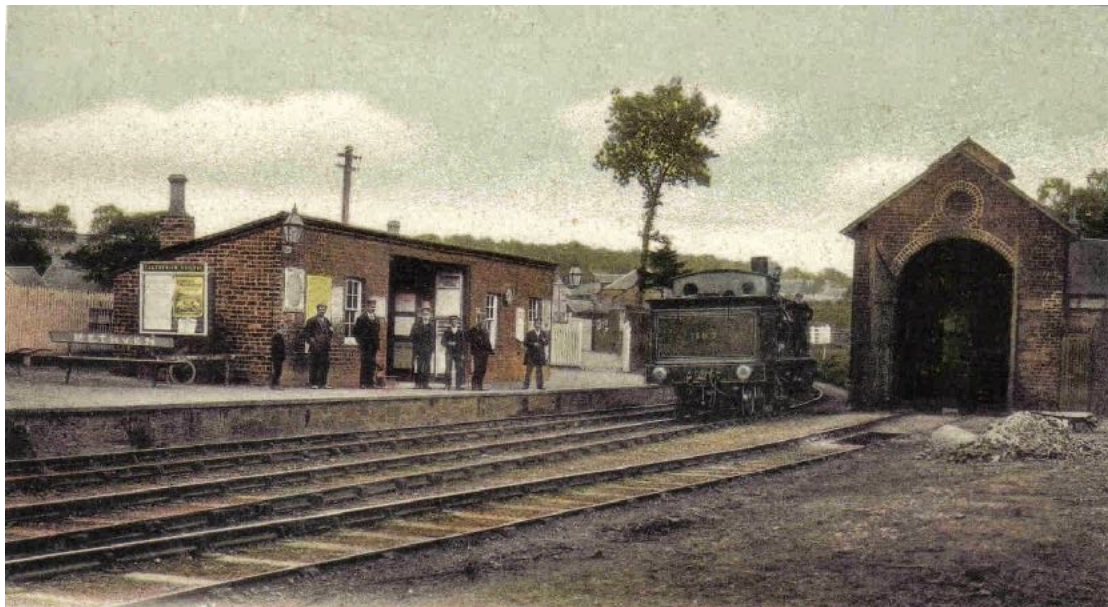


Transport Links

This is about some of the nineteenth century transport links between the Logiealmond area and Methven, particularly its station.

When our car needs repair or an MOT we take it to Methven Coachworks, which is on the site of Methven railway station. The Perth, Almondbank and Methven line was opened for goods and passengers in 1858 and from Methven you could get a coach to Crieff. In 1866 the line was extended to Crieff, but, sadly for Methven, the new line branched off at Methven Junction, a kilometre to the south of the existing station. This left just a spur into the village and for a year there were only horse-drawn goods wagons on it until an engine was made available.

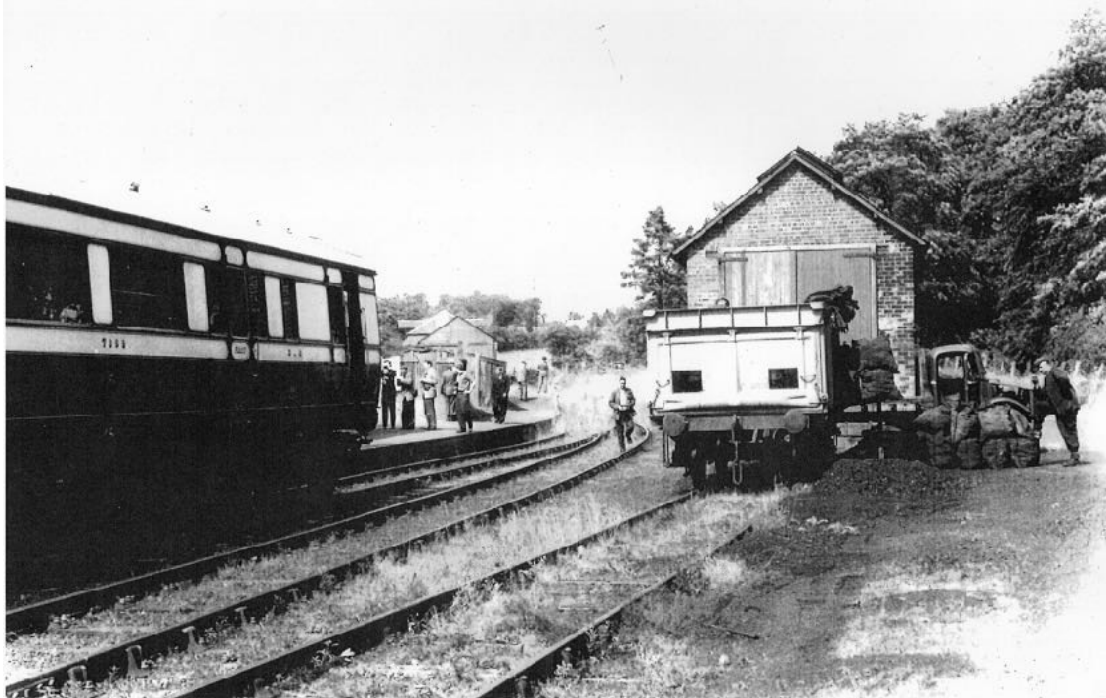
Methven Station post card; the staff on the platform, the tank engine and engine shed



Jimmy Gilzean of Methven Coachworks has lived in Methven all his life and has an interest in its history. He remembers the excitement as a boy of seeing the last train to the station in 1965. It ran off the rails as the driver did not realise that some of the line had already been lifted. He has a photo of the Royal Train at the station in the 1960s with the paparazzi taking photos and a coal

truck being unloaded. Presumably the Queen had gone elsewhere for a comfortable night.

Methven Station, The Royal Train - with thanks to Jimmy Gilzean



Jimmy has another photo showing a horse-drawn cart coming down Station Road. The picture is on a post card that has itself taken an interesting journey. It was sent from Methven in 1908 to a brother and sister in Shanghai, China, and addressed to the Shanghai Gas Company. The message is about family news, but it has the intriguing note in pencil 'via Siberia', so did this take a long train journey rather than a long sea voyage?



The picture on the post card is of even greater interest to us as the farmer's cart is bringing slates from Criaglea Quarry in Logiealmond to be sent off by rail. Production at the quarry was at its peak from the 1870s to the early 1900s. It employed at least 27 in 1871, 66 in 1901 and about 30 in 1911, but closed in the First World War.

Post card of Station Road, Methven, with horse and cart, sent in 1908, with thanks to Jimmy Gilzean



The Caledonian Railway took over the line in 1868 and their archive is in the National Records of Scotland. The Traffic Books 1883-1908 give total minerals, passengers and goods going in and out at each station. The kinds of minerals going out are not differentiated, but the Methven tonnage is much higher than other local stations, probably due to slates from Craiglea quarry. It rises steeply through the 1890s to a peak of 3,365 tons in 1903 and then falls off, as did production at the quarry. The incoming mineral tonnage is proportionate to other local stations, and was probably mainly coal. This might have been a convenient return load for the Logiealmond farmers and their horses, though it was a long haul back up the hill: over 425 meters and 11 km down from the quarry, but a little shorter going home as they did not have to go as far.

Some farm tenancy agreements in Logiealmond included transport of slates as well as carting coal or peat to Logie House. Thomas Wylie comments in his Recollections of Logiealmond: 'The slates were carted by the farmers at a good price per thousand to Methven Station or to Perth or Crieff as might be necessary. This was a great help to the small farmers all about because it was money certain for work. Farm produce is never certain till the money is in the pocket.' Also: 'The Peddie known as 'Red Wull'... was for a long time overseer of the slate quarries when they were leased by Jack of Dunkeld. He had the patronage of the carting from the quarry to Perth or Crieff or wherever the slates were to be delivered. The small farmers mostly all carted. It was a way of getting money when money was hard to come by. There used to be petty jealousies among them about getting their turn. '

There is a more ephemeral link between the Logiealmond parish and Methven station. In the 1870s the Free Kirk Minister in Logiealmond was a young man called John Watson. He progressed to Glasgow and then Liverpool and became a popular preacher. In the 1890s, under the pen name of Ian McLaren, he wrote some short stories and some novels which became immensely popular, and they were set in Logiealmond. Methven station and station master also featured in the stories. His first book, *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush*, gave that genre of fiction the name of 'kailyard' (a reference to the Jacobite song, 'There grows a bonnie Briar Bush in our Kailyard'). The books were seen by some critics as sentimental and depicting a simplistic view of rural life, but readers loved them.

McLaren's Harrietfield was called Drumtochty, Methven was Kildrummy and Perth was Muirton. The novels sold in thousands and were particularly popular with Scots who had emigrated to America. Readers wanted to visit the places in the story. Logiealmond was short of facilities for visitors and Methven benefited. You could arrive by train, be taken on a drive and be back for the train out, or you could stay the night. If you want to buy an old postcard of Harrietfield, look for ones labelled Drumtochty.

This is an edited version of an article for the West Stormont Historical Society's newsletter 2017.

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Leslie's Directory for Perth & Perthshire, 1895

CXX

METHVEN.

METHVEN HIRING ESTABLISHMENT.

ESTABLISHED OVER 80 YEARS.

The "Kildrummie" of Ian M'Laren's "Bonnie Brier Bush.

LANDAUS, BROUGHAMS, BRAKES, WAGONETTES, DOG-CARTS, &c.

NEAREST STATION TO TRINITY COLLEGE, GLENALMOND.

Circular Drives round "Drumtochty."

N.B.—Parties arriving in Methven by 12.43 p.m. train can do the round and leave by the 6.10 p.m. train for Perth.

LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS PUNCTUALLY ATTENDED TO.

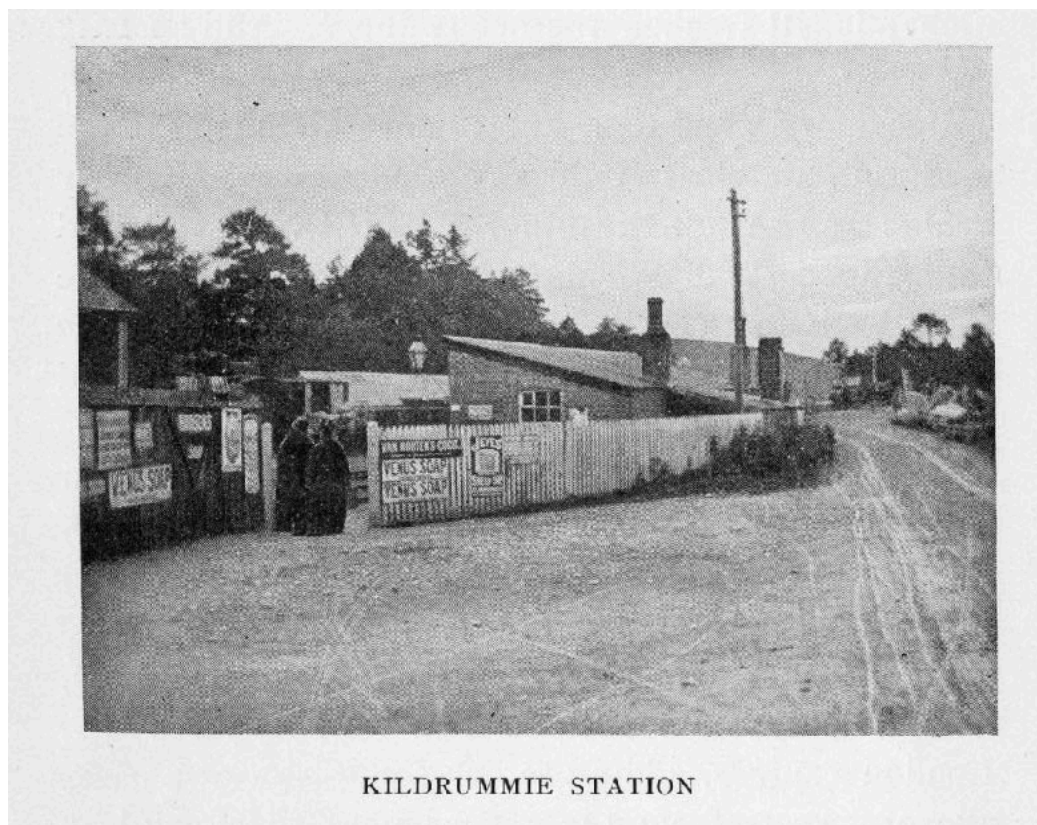
CHARGES STRICTLY MODERATE.

R. DONALDSON, Proprietor.

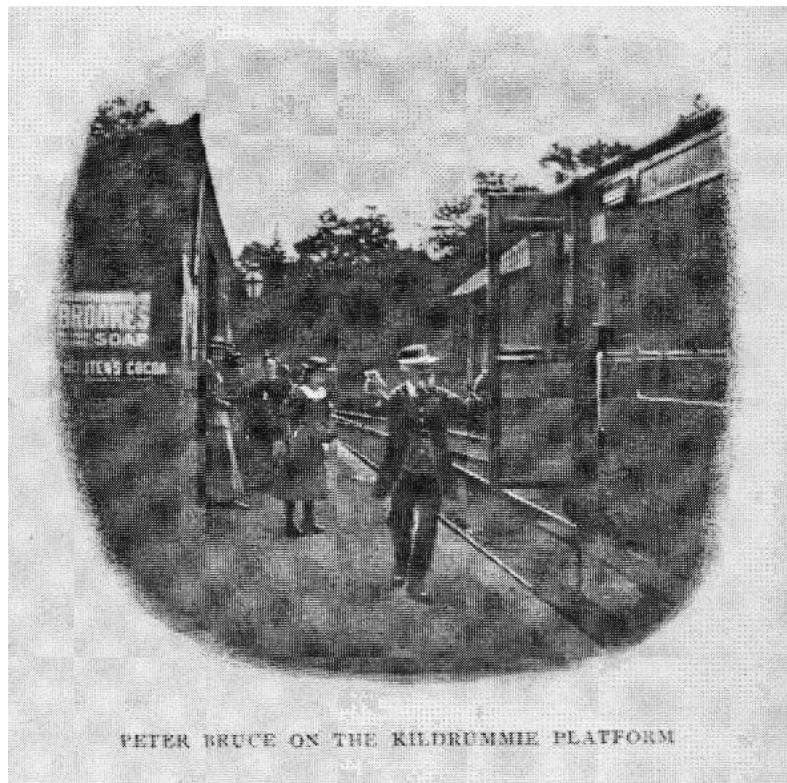
Harrietfield, Valentine's post card



Methven Station from The Days of Auld Lang Syne by Ian McLaren, illustrated Clifton Johnson, 1894



From Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush by Ian McLaren, illustrated Clifton Johnson, 1894



From The Days of Auld Lang Syne by Ian McLaren, illustrated Clifton Johnson, 1894

