

# Railways and Addiewell

The first trains between Edinburgh and Glasgow started operating in 1842 over the route via Linlithgow and Falkirk, which is still the route of Scotrail's flagship service today. The Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway Company (absorbed by the North British Railway in 1865) introduced services between Haymarket Station in Edinburgh (extended to what is now Waverley in 1846) and Glasgow's Queen Street terminus.

Competition for the inter-city traffic came later in the shape of the Caledonian Railway, which opened a Y-shaped route linking Carlisle with Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1847/8. The new railway divided at Carstairs for Glasgow and Edinburgh, but soon the Caledonian Railway was advertising through Edinburgh to Glasgow services via the much longer Carstairs route. West Calder's first station was on this route – it would be renamed Harburn in 1869. Further competition followed, with the North British Railway introducing through Edinburgh to Glasgow services via Bathgate in 1871, once they had gained control of the separate companies which had developed these lines.

The Caledonian Railway route between Edinburgh and Glasgow was the poor relation of the Edinburgh and Glasgow main line. In an effort to improve its services between Edinburgh and Glasgow and gain access to the important mining areas in between, the Caley planned a new cut-off line between Holytown and Mid Calder. This was called the Cleland and Midcalder line, and it brought its Edinburgh to Glasgow route down to 46½ miles. It was announced in the *London Gazette* during 1864 that a Bill would be brought before Parliament the following year proposing the new route. In fact, Royal Assent was granted in 1865.

## Addiewell Station opens

Passenger traffic commenced over the new route on 9 July 1869, but it was to be July 1882 before the Company opened its passenger station at Addiewell, where a new community had been developing around James Young's burgeoning oil works (opened 1866). Before the passenger station opened, the Caley had already opened an Addiewell loop line to better serve various mines and works. From 1871, this linked Woodmuir Junction, west of Addiewell, with Limefield Junction (between West Calder and Newpark).

A passenger station had been open at Bents since 1864. This was on an early route linking Morningside in Lanarkshire with Fauldhouse, Whitburn and Bathgate, and had been developed principally for freight. This line eventually opened a branch into Addiewell's oil works. Maps such as Airey's series of maps for the Railway Clearing House show the complexities of the railway network in central Scotland at this time.

## Addiewell to Princes Street

Today's passenger rail service through Addiewell operates between Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central, but in 1882 the Edinburgh terminus was at Lothian Road. (The station was relocated in the angle between Lothian Road and Rutland Street in 1894, and the station was renamed Princes Street.) Intermediate stations which were served between Edinburgh and Addiewell at this time were Merchiston, Slateford, Kingsknowe, Curriehill, Midcalder, Newpark and West Calder. Ravelrig Junction Platform (between Midcalder and Curriehill) was served infrequently from 1884 until the inter-war period.

## **Tinplate advertisements**

Rail services in Britain reached their zenith around 1910. The station at Addiewell would have looked very different from today, with buildings on both platforms, tinplate advertisements advertising the popular consumables of the day (like Van Houten's cocoa and Mazawattee Tea, as well as potions and pills). Numerous staff were employed to deal with the passenger and goods traffic.

## **The Big Four**

During the First World War, the private railway companies came under Government Control. When this ended in 1921, the companies were in bad shape. Road transport was now rapidly developing (for example, SMT had been founded in 1906) and making inroads into both freight and passenger traffic. Nationalisation was avoided at this time but under the Railways Act 1921, the majority of the country's railway companies were grouped in to the 'Big Four', two of which operated in Scotland. The Caledonian Railway became part of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) on 1 July 1923, while the North British Railway had been absorbed into the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) six months earlier.

## **Seven trains a day**

Looking at Bradshaw's Railway Guide for July 1922, we can see that the Caledonian station at Addiewell was served by seven trains a day between Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Princes Street, while eight trains a day operated in the other direction. Some of the faster trains, which didn't serve Addiewell, even carried a Pullman car, although the 0700 hrs departure from Addiewell to Glasgow Central even made this facility available to local commuters!

The LMS and LNER bought into SMT, the growing local bus operator, under newly acquired powers in 1929. Thinly used passenger train services were already disappearing at this time, including the service linking Lanarkshire with Fauldhouse, Bents, Whitburn and Bathgate, which ended in 1930.

## **Railways nationalised in 1948**

The post-Grouping companies had a short life of just twenty-five years. The Labour Government swept to power in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, proposing nationalisation of coal, transport and power utilities. The new Transport Bill became law in August 1947. And the railways were nationalised on 1 January 1948.

The massive new British Transport Commission operated the railway system via its new Railway Executive (trading as 'British Railways') and six regions (including one for Scotland based in Glasgow). The regions gained further control with the abolition of the Railway Executive after a further restructuring in 1953. Canals, docks, shipping services, railway hotels and road haulage also came under the BTC.

## **Excursion trains, Addiewell to Ayr**

Curriehill station closed in 1951 (only to reappear again many years later) and Newpark was axed in 1959. In the 1950s and early 1960s, regular summer Saturday excursion trains called at Addiewell en route to Heads of Ayr station (for Butlin's Holiday Camp).

## **Dr Beeching's cuts**

The British Transport Commission launched a massive Modernisation Plan in 1955, which aimed amongst many other things to abolish steam traction. By the beginning of the 1960s, the Government was becoming increasingly concerned at the losses which the nationalised railway system was making, and sought outside help. The Minister of Transport in the Macmillan Conservative Government, Ernest Marples, brought in Richard Beeching (died 1985) from ICI in 1961. Under new legislation in 1962, the British Transport Commission was abolished and its activities taken over by separate bodies - including from 1 January 1963 the British Railways Board.

Beeching's famous Report into the railway system, *The Reshaping of British Railways*, was published in March 1963, and proposed the withdrawal of many railway passenger services and closure of numerous branch lines.

## **Addiewell - threat and reprieve**

The Scottish Region of British Railways announced in November 1963 that it proposed to end the passenger services between Edinburgh Princes Street and Glasgow Central via Shotts, and close thirteen stations, including Addiewell, on and from 2 March 1964. As happened across the country, many objections were received to this proposal and the closure date was postponed until the statutory Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Scotland had had time to consider the objections received and report back to the Minister of Transport. Labour was returned to power in 1964 and eventually in 1965, it was announced that the service had been reprieved. This service was one of a small number proposed for closure by Dr Beeching that were spared – equally there are examples of services not in Beeching's report that were eventually closed. Edinburgh Princes Street station was not spared, and after its closure in September 1965, Shotts line services were diverted into Waverley. Harburn Station on the Carstairs route closed in 1966.

## **Station buildings replaced by a bus shelter**

Changed economic circumstances led to the closure of Young's oil works at Addiewell in 1956 and over the following years the decline in mining led to the closure of freight branches including that from Whitburn to Addiewell in 1963 and the Addiewell loop. Many stations were de-staffed at this time and crumbling station buildings were often demolished and replaced with a bus shelter – a situation familiar to Addiewell travellers.

## **51p Addiewell to Waverley!**

The modern era of 'British Rail' - including the double arrow logo which has outlasted British Rail itself, and the use of the 24-hour clock in timetables - started in 1965. Steam traction was banished in Scotland by 1967, as new diesel trains (first seen in Scotland some ten years earlier) gradually took over passenger services. Service levels in the timetable have gradually improved in recent years after reaching a low point in the 1970s when the off-peak service on the route was half what it is today. Kingsknowe station, which closed in 1964, reopened in 1971. A timetable from that year shows the day return from Addiewell to Edinburgh Waverley was 51 pence.

Further proposals to savage the railway network (the Serpell Report) were avoided in the 1980s and local passenger services such as that through Addiewell were later made part of British Rail's

new Provincial Services Sector (later called Regional Railways). Chris Green , who was in charge of that sector's services in Scotland, chose the brand name, ScotRail in 1983. The expanding new town of Livingston gained direct access to the rail network with the opening of Livingston South on 6 October 1984, two years after Midcalder station changed its name to Kirknewton. Wester Hailes and the present Curriehill opened in 1987. In West Lothian, train services were restored between Edinburgh and Bathgate in 1986.

## **Privatisation**

The railway system was privatised in the mid 1990s in a piecemeal fashion. Infrastructure was owned by Railtrack from 1994 and this became a public company in 1997. It collapsed in 2001 and was replaced by the Government-backed not-for-profit company, Network Rail in 2002. A new ScotRail train operating company took over the passenger services and became the last part of British Rail to be privatised in 1997. Initially ScotRail was run by the National Express Group, then since 2004 by First. A new limited-stop passenger service along the Shotts line began in 2009 but it does not serve Addiewell. Frequent livery changes on the trains and stations should be avoided, after the launch of the Transport Scotland inspired 'ScotRail – Scotland's Railway' branding in 2008.

## **Electrification of the tantalising gap?**

Train services on the route through Addiewell may still be the poor relation compared to some of the alternatives available, especially after the re-opening of the Bathgate to Airdrie route and the electrification of Edinburgh-Glasgow services via Bathgate in December 2010. Services between Edinburgh and Glasgow via Falkirk will be electrified under current plans by 2016/7, but it could be that in years to come, the tantalising 22-mile gap between Midcalder Junction and Holytown Junction that has so far escaped electrification might be eradicated, thus allowing the use of more attractive, faster, electric trains along the route.

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