

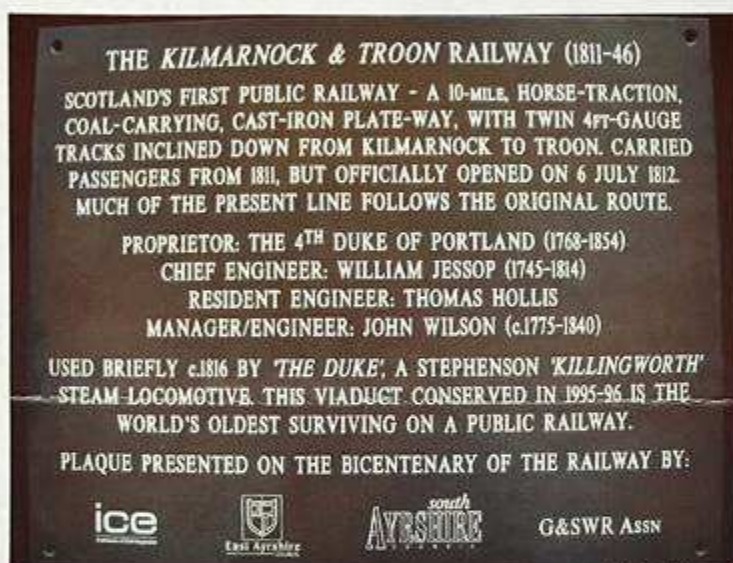
ice|scotland  
Panel for Historical Engineering Works  
Scottish Group

Objectives: To record and promote knowledge of works illustrative of the history and development of civil engineering and to encourage excellence in the conservation of significant examples

ice  
Institution of Civil Engineers

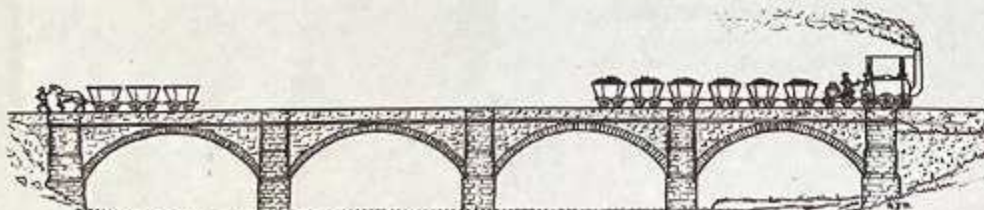
**KILMARNOCK & TROON RAILWAY BICENTENARY – 6<sup>th</sup> JULY 2012**

This railway was built for and at the expense of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Portland mainly for facilitating the carriage and export of coal from the Kilmarnock area and, with the associated new harbour at Troon, cost c. £150,000. Other basic details can be seen on the K&TR200 plaque to be erected at Laigh Milton Viaduct:



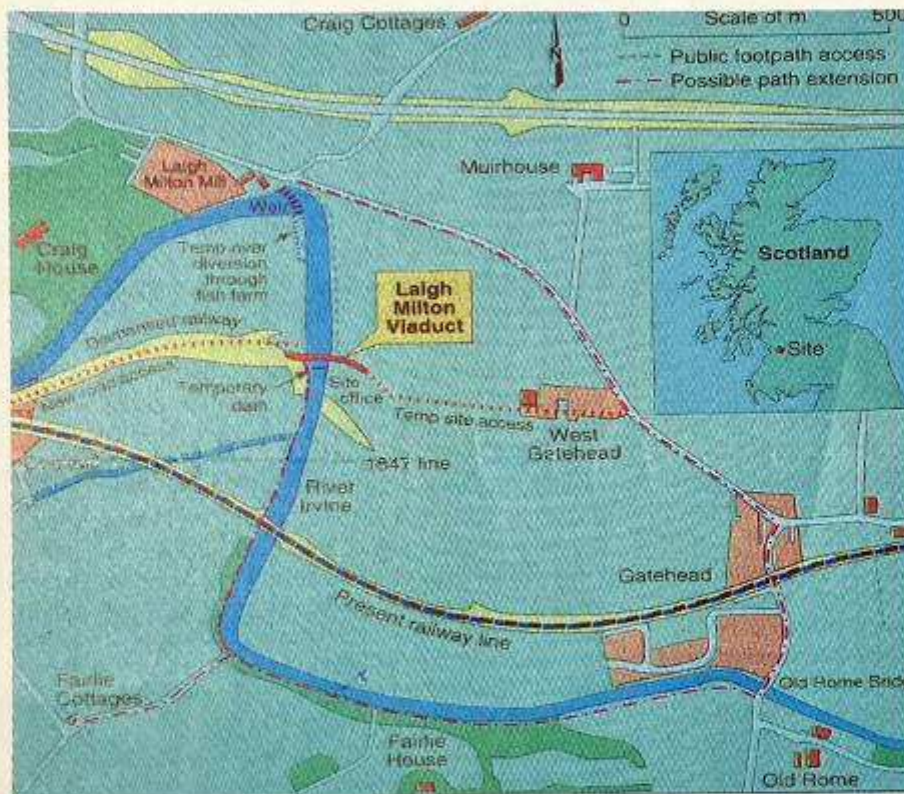
© Roland Paxton

The railway had the unexpected distinction of being Scotland's first passenger railway. Passengers were travelling on it in August 1811 in privately owned wagons drawn by one horse. For 1837-38 its usage was about 200,000 passenger miles a year with coal dues nearly 90 times greater at £7,196.\* Commercially the *Kilmarnock & Troon* was so successful that, on Robert Stephenson's advice, it was leased rather than purchased by the Glasgow & Ayrshire Railway in 1846 and continued in existence until 1899. The railway was one of the earliest to operate with steam locomotion and a trial was conducted in c.1816, by George Stephenson's brother using a basic 'Killingworth' type of locomotive appropriately named 'The Duke' (as shown below\*). It succeeded well but its vertical piston action sheared off many of the 3ft long (0.9m) cast iron plate-rails at the edge of their stone block supports. It is unlikely that the engine was used after 1817. Its fate has been a matter of much conjecture, but the writer can confirm from original records that it was sold to the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Elgin on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1824 for £70 and transported to Charlestown, Fife.



Registered charity number 210252  
Charity registered in Scotland number SC038629

Much of the present line, which was upgraded by the Glasgow & South Western Railway in 1865, engineer William Johnstone, follows the original line. There was a major deviation at the River Irvine near Laigh Milton Mill where progressively larger radii curves were adopted as travel speeds increased. Note on the plan\* the 1847 line immediately south of the original viaduct which was achieved with a timber viaduct, engineer John Miller [1805-83, 'Scotland's Brunel'], which served until being bypassed in 1865.



In initiating and organising the K&TR200 plaque the Institution recognises the railway's outstanding historical significance and wishes to encourage the viaduct's custodians and owners since its conservation in 1996, East and South Ayrshire Councils, to develop its public potential as a national tourist attraction and as a safe crossing of the river for a footway/cycleway facility.

6 July 2012.

Professor **Roland Paxton** MBE FICE FRSE  
 School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University  
 Vice-Chairman, ICE Panel for Historical Engineering Works.

\*R. A. Paxton 'Conservation of Laigh Milton Viaduct, Ayrshire'. *Proc.ICE, Civ.Engng.* 1998, 126, 73-85.