

Whistlefield is historic village

Written by Alistair McIntyre and Donald Fullarton - Last Updated Monday, 28 October 2013 13:49



WHISTLEFIELD Station was at one time the hub of what is an historic village, and it even had a royal visit.

Local historian Alistair McIntyre has a particular interest in the village, as in his childhood he lived nearby in Glen Douglas in a similar railway cottage to the one beside the station from 1951-6.

Alistair said: “When Whistlefield Station was opened in 1896, the stationmaster appointed was George Gall, and he remained in post until his retirement in 1929.

“This is a good example of a family being attracted to the area by the railway — to this day, the Gall family is still well-known in the area.

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“With the retirement of George Gall, however, the status of Whistlefield was downgraded, and thereafter, until closure and demolition in 1964-65, the station, along with the station at Shandon, came under the control of the stationmaster at nearby Garelochhead.”

The royal visit took place in 1906, when King Edward VII came by train to the area on his way to Fort William, and he was received at Whistlefield by George Gall.

His son David, a joiner, was quoted in the Helensburgh Advertiser in May 1965 as recalling the visit when, as a seven-year-old, he witnessed the arrival of the Royal Train. There were flags and decorations everywhere, he said.

The station also served as a church, and regular Sunday services were held in it. Prior to 1925, when a new platform was built, the station was beautifully decorated.

The station was also well used by the Portincapple fishing fleet, and as many as 150 boxes of fish would be loaded on to trains each morning.

Steamer parties and excursion organisers brought many visitors, and a substantial building called Fiona — which became famous from the late 1930s as the Green Kettle Tearoom — was built in 1907 as a shop and tearoom to capture passing trade generated by the railway.

During and after the Second World War, German prisoners of war held at the Whistlefield Camp were marched to the station each morning, bound for Loch Sloy and work on the Hydro-Electric scheme.

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Whistlefield is a historic village in the parish of Whistlefield, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. It is situated on the banks of the River Nith, about 10 miles north of Dumfries. The village is known for its historic buildings, including the 16th-century Whistlefield House, and its proximity to the Whistlefield Railway Station. The village is also home to the Whistlefield Golf Club and the Whistlefield Hotel.

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