

### Tourists Through The Vale

The introduction of the steamboat on the Clyde revolutionized the link between Glasgow and the Vale of Leven. As early as 1815, the Dumbarton Steamboat Company was formed and introduced a steamboat, the DUKE OF WELLINGTON, between Dumbarton and Glasgow.



*Daniell Print of an early steamboat off Dumbarton Castle*

The boat carried passengers and cargo, and the charges were:—

#### Passengers.

Dumbarton to Glasgow (1st cabin)... 3/-

Dumbarton to Glasgow (2nd cabin)... 2/-

#### Cargo

Dumbarton to Glasgow, light goods 8d per cwt.

Dumbarton to Glasgow, heavy goods 8/- per ton.

Dumbarton to Glasgow, bale goods 1/- per cwt.

Although sailings from Dumbarton were hampered by the shallowness of the River Leven and the sand bar at its mouth, provisions were made at low tide for passengers to disembark at Dumbarton Castle into small boats by which they were conveyed to Dumbarton Quay. Within a few weeks of the initial service, the owners of the Vale of Leven Printfields, requested to have their goods carried by the Dumbarton Company's steamer.

Other opportunities also presented themselves. In the summer of 1816, David Napier placed his steamer MARION on Loch Lomond, sailing from Balloch at 10 o'clock in the morning. The Dumbarton Steamboat Company shrewdly advertised the availability of coaches and carts to transport tourists to the beauties of Loch Lomond.



*The Dumbarton Pilot Coach from Balloch to Dumbarton*

In 1820, David Napier introduced his own competing steamer, POST BOY, leaving Glasgow at half-past five o'clock in the morning for Dumbarton with coach connections from Dunglass or Dumbarton to Balloch. By this time the fare was 2/- in the cabin and 1/6d steerage.

The Dumbarton Company added a new steamboat and after a year of intense competition, in May, 1822, the Company entered into an agreement with the owners of the MARION, to carry the passengers for the MARION to and from Glasgow, 'the hour of sailing from Glasgow to be betwixt five and eight in the morning, and from Dumbarton from six to seven in the evening.'

One of the stipulations was that only one coach should be run between Glasgow and Balloch each day. Previously Adam Walker, who was proprietor of the Balloch Hotel had run a coach from Glasgow.

### **THE LOCHLOMOND COACH.**

Cheap, Direct, and Expeditious Travelling between Glasgow and Balloch.  
Robert & Adam Walker

Beg leave to announce that they have determined to run an Elegant New Landeau Four Seated Coach between Glasgow, Old Kilpatrick, and Balloch at the south end of Lochlomond, to start from the Buck Head Hotel, Glasgow, on Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> July current, at Six o'clock Morning, and will continue to run from the same place, every lawful morning, at the same hour, during the Season; arrives at Balloch in sufficient time for the Steam Boat MARION, which continues to sail from the Inn there every morning at 10 o'clock, plies along Lochlomond, among the numerous Islands, calling at Balmaha, Luss, Rowardennan, foot of Benlomond, Tarbet, and Rob-Roy's-Cave, and returns to Balloch in the afternoon; from whence the Coasch will start for the Buck Head, Glasgow, every lawful day at six o'clock.

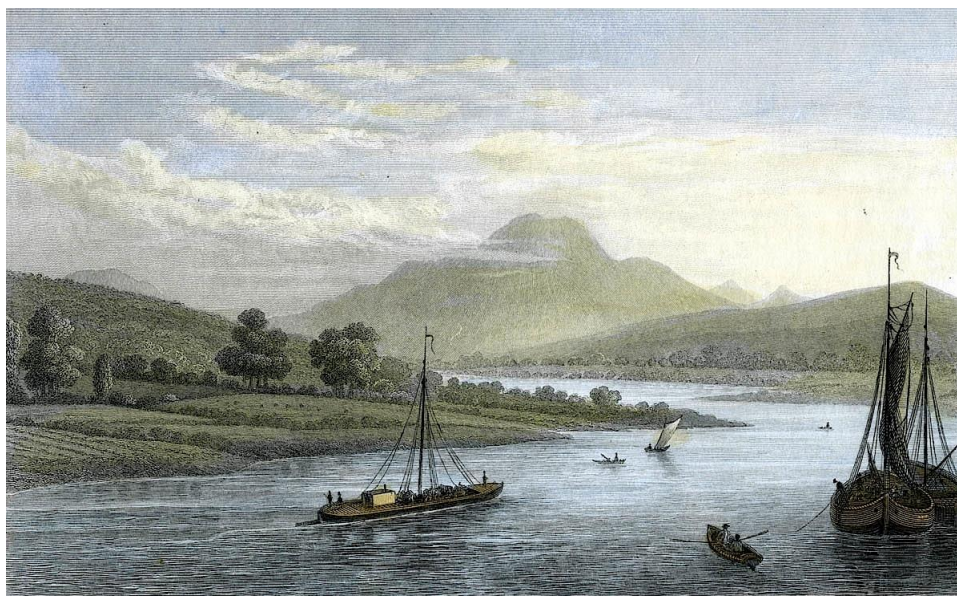
Fare only 6s. from Glasgow to Balloch.

Travellers will have sufficient time for breakfast, either at Old Kilpatrick, where the horses are changed, or at Balloch previous to the sailing of the MARION; and can also dine or take tea in the afternoon, either at Balloch on arrival of the Boat, or at Old Kilpartick on return of the Coach. It will be found upon calculation, that the expense of this safe and direct conveyance, is about the same as it would cost the traveller going down the Clyde in one of the Steam Boats—getting on shore at Dumbarton Castle by a small boat—and then taking another coach from Dumbarton to Balloch. 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1821.

The following is an account of a tourist in 1824 of the procedure on reaching Balloch.

“Arrived now at the source of the Leven, and the border of Lochlomond, we alighted from the Dumbarton coach, and, by traversing a plank, got into a long narrow hulk, which doubtless had performed service, like the dagger of Hudibras. However, it served its purpose, in conveying us to the steam-boat in twenty minutes, or half an hour, impelled against the stream of the Leven, by four sturdy fellows, with long poles reaching to the bed of the river. At length we got on board the MARION steam-boat, which soon commenced sailing on her diurnal voyage.”

The same tourist also recounts his impression of passing through Renton and seeing the Smollett Column. “Of that column, the inscription is broken, the base unprotected, dilapidated, and surrounded by a profusion of rubbish. Situated as it is almost close to the public road, I fear much its present condition exhibits less of time's decay than of that propensity to mischief for which our national peasantry have become almost proverbial.”



*A Leven Scow sailing on the tide as far as Dalquhurn*

At an owner's meeting on 6th December, 1824, there was a request from the proprietors of the Vale of Leven Printfields to have their boat towed to Glasgow by the DUMBARTON steamer. The steamer owners considered it degrading to be seen creeping upstream with the "Vale" barge in tow, and the Company Clerk intimated 'the meeting decline towing the boat,' but they offered to carry the Vale of Leven goods on board the steamer 'at a moderate rate.'

By the 1830s, business was brisk and the Company organised a coach service between Bonhill and Dumbarton to accommodate the good folk of the Vale. The coach had 'four wheels, and iron springs, and was driven with one horse,' and was managed by a gentleman who was paid a few shillings per week by the Company, in addition to the fares. The coach was called the "Tylagraph" and was timed to arrive at Dumbarton Quay at 7.30 a.m. when the first boat for Glasgow was due to leave. The company minutes were full of complaints that, the coach was always late, much to the annoyance of the captain and the Dumbarton passengers. At this time, the steamer fares from Dumbarton to Glasgow had been reduced to 1/- in the cabin and 6d in steerage. Steerage, 6d. However, the coach fare from Dumbarton to Bonhill was 1/- for all passengers.

There was also the tourist coach that ran from Dumbarton to Balloch in conjunction with the steamer from Glasgow in the morning and returned in the evening to catch the 6 o'clock boat back to the city. This coach crossed the Leven at Dumbarton and made its way up the west bank by Renton and Alexandria. Around 1830, the fare on the coach from Dumbarton to Balloch was 1/6d.

Cont'd.





*Dumbarton with a Coach approaching Dalreoch Toll.*

In December 1838, the Dumbarton Steamboat Company found a competitor for the trade. A new concern, the Dumbarton and Glasgow Steam Packet Company, popularly known as the New Dumbarton Steamboat Company challenged for the business. After a year or two of competition, the two companies managed to cooperate and a smooth service provided four sailings each day to and from Glasgow. Business was expanded with a service to Arrochar, connecting with the Loch Lomond steamers at Tarbet.

#### **CHEAP SAILING TO LOCHLOMOND BY ARROCHAR**

One of the Dumbarton Steamers Sails from Glasgow every morning at 7 o'clock for Dumbarton, Greenock, Gourock, Ardentinn, and Arrochar. By this tour passengers will have about three hours to view, from Tarbet, the beautiful and picturesque scenery of Lochlomond, and return in the evening.

Fares, for one day's sailing—Cabin, Three Shillings; Steerage, Two Shillings

10<sup>th</sup> June 1840

N.B. – One of the above Steamers will sail from Glasgow every Saturday Afternoon, at four o'clock for ARROCHAR, returning early on Monday morning, till further notice.

The period around 1840 represented the zenith of the Dumbarton Steamboat service. An advertising brochure relates how to embark on a trip from London by the ROYAL ADELAIDE Steamship to Edinburgh and thence:

“Wednesday.—Set off at 7 this morning in one of the new swift Iron Boats (These boats now leave Edinburgh for Glasgow at 6, 8, 10, 12, and 2 o'clock, every day.) on the Glasgow Canal; and after a delightful run through a variety of fine scenery, reached

Glasgow at 1 afternoon. Visited some of the principal Manufactories, and other objects worthy of notice in that fine city.

6½ a.m. Thursday.—Embarked on a Steam Boat on the River Clyde. When near Dumbarton, about 15 miles from Glasgow, the river suddenly widens, and the scenery becomes of the grandest description, the mountains of the Western Highlands coming into view.

From Dumbarton we went by a short ride to Balloch, the southern extremity of Loch Lomond, which we reached at 10 o'clock in the forenoon. Embarked in a Steam Boat on the Loch; and after winding through its beautiful wooded islands, we sailed up to Rob Roy's cave, and landed at Inversnaid.

From thence we crossed a neck of land which separates Loch Lomond from Loch Katherine, on which a boat awaited to convey us to the Trossachs, a narrow and romantic pass which forms the eastern end of that Loch."

The cost of the entire trip was 10 guineas, itemized to the last penny: Tavern Bill, Glasgow, 8/6d; Steam Boat to Dumbarton, 1/-; Coach to Balloch, 1/6d; Boat on Lochlomond, 4/-; Bill in Steam Boat for Breakfast and Dinner, 4/6d; Inversnaid to Trossachs, 5/6d.

In addition to the traffic on Loch Lomond, the Dumbarton Steamboat Company was also involved in a number of other tourist enterprises. They continued with the service to Arrochar.

Cont'd.

**CHEAP CONVEYANCE  
TO AND FROM  
LOCHLOMOND AND ARROCHAR**

THE DUMBARTON STEAMERS sail every day from GLASGOW (from the Lower End of the Broomielaw) every Morning at 7 o'Clock for Dumbarton, with Passengers from Lochlomond, and THE STEAMER ON LOCHLOMOND Sails from Balloch at Forenoon for Balmaha, Luss, Rowardennan, Tarbet, Inversnaid and the Head of Lochlomond, and returns to Balloch in the Afternoon.

The MAID, or VALE OF LEVEN, Steamers Sail from Glasgow Bridge every lawful day (Monday excepted) at 8 o'Clock Morning, direct for Greenock, and Sail from there at quarter-past 10 for Gourock, Dunoon, Ardenteenie, and Arrochar where she remains for about two hours and returns to Glasgow, calling at the above places.

Fares from Glasgow to Arrochar and back, Cabin 3s, Steerage 2s.

Passengers by the Arrochar Steamer can join the Lochlomond steamer on her passage down, at Tarbet.—or Passenger by the Lochlomond Steamer, after being at the Head of the Lake, by landing at Tarbet on returning, can join the Arrochar Steamer.

By this arrangement Passengers can view the *whole of Lochlomond and Lochlong* the same day, and return to Glasgow in the Evening.

Steamers' Fare for the Day's Sailing, *from Glasgow to the Head of Lochlomond and returning by Lochlong to Glasgow*:—

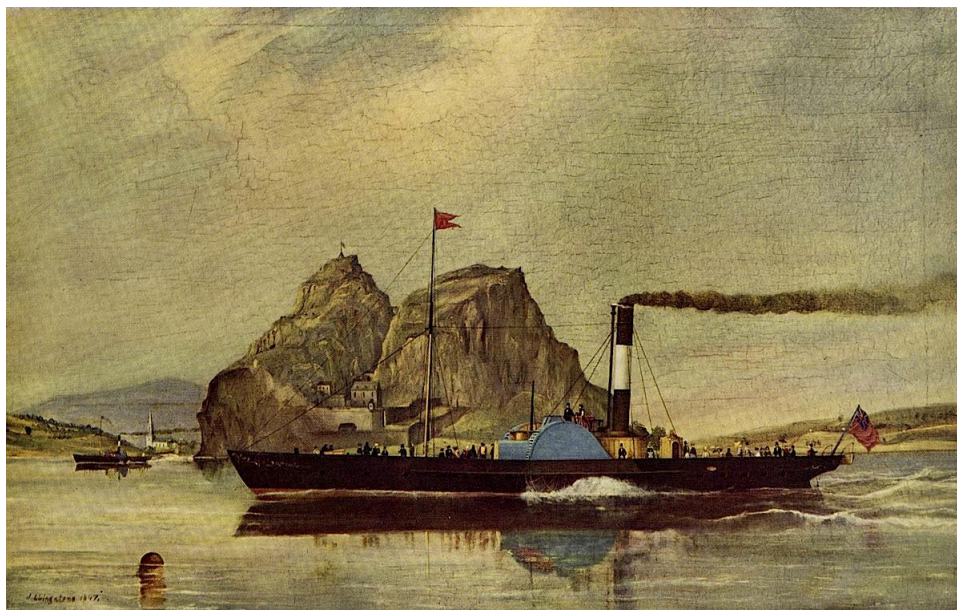
**SIX SHILLINGS**

Tickets for the Tour to be had from the Masters of the Steamers. Omnibuses are in waiting to convey Passengers to and from Balloch.

The Arrochar Steamer Sails from Greenock every Saturday, at 6 o'Clock evening, for Arrochar; and returns from Arrochar on the *Monday Mornings*; and Sails from Greenock, for Arrochar at quarter past 10. Passengers from Glasgow for Arrochar etc., are conveyed to Greenock on the Monday Mornings, by the Dumbarton Steamer at 7 o'Clock.

Passengers from Rothesay will meet the Arrochar Steamer at Dunoon at 11—or Passengers going to Dumbarton by the first boat from Rothesay will meet the Omnibus from Dumbarton at a quarter before 9—and can take the Tour of *Lochlomond* and return by *Lochlong*.

Glasgow 20<sup>th</sup> June 1843



*LOCHLOMOND of 1845 in Dumbarton Steamboat Company colours.*

In 1842, another new company tried to muscle into the trade. Again a price war ensued and the steerage fare from Dumbarton to Glasgow dropped to 2d. There was also some significant competition between the King's Arms Inn at Dumbarton and the Balloch Inn as to who would provide best for the needs of the tourists.

#### **SAILING ON LOCHLOMOND**

Tourists and Parties of Pleasure are respectfully informed that the Trip up Lochlomond is now greatly facilitated. The Steamer leaves Glasgow at Seven o'Clock Morning, and arrives at Dumbarton Quay at Nine o'Clock. Half an hour is allowed for Breakfast at the Kings' Arms Inn, Dumbarton, from which an Omnibus runs direct to the Steamer LOCHLOMOND, at Balloch.

Parties leaving Glasgow by the Steamer at 4 or 6 o'Clock in the Evening, can be accommodated in the Kings' Arms Inn, Dumbarton (MRS. CURRIE'S), with good Parlours and well-aired Bed Rooms and have time the following morning to visit the Ancient Castle and other places in and around Dumbarton, previous to the Omnibus leaving for Balloch.

Mrs Currie begs to return her most sincere thanks for the patronage so liberally bestowed upon her for upwards of thirty years, and to intimate that no effort will be spared on her part to merit a continuance of favours.

Kings' Arms Inn  
Dumbarton 16<sup>th</sup> June 1843



## **VISITORS TO LOCH LOMOND**

### **ADAM WALKER, BALLOCH INN**

Respectfully intimates to Tourists and others visiting LOCH LOMOND that having made Extensive Alterations to the above Inn, the accommodation will be found of the best description. The Parlours and Bed-Rooms are large, and elegantly fitted up, and the Stock of Wines &c., very superior and at moderate rates. The Stabling and Offices are new and commodious, with Lock up Coach House. The Posting Department is also very complete with Vehicles of every description, and careful Drivers. Parties can also be supplied with Pleasure-Boats, for Sailing through the Islands and Fishing upon the Lake.

From the situation of his House, in the immediate Vicinity of Lochlomond, its increased accommodation and comfort, and the reduction in Coach Fares, Adam Walker hopes to be favoured with a continuance of that support which he has hitherto experienced, and which it will be his study to merit.

Adam Walker Runs Handsome OMNIBUSES between the INN and DUMBARTON at the following Hours:—From Balloch for Dumbarton at 7 Morning and waiting at Dumbarton the arrival of the Dumbarton Steamers with Passengers for Lochlomond, when sufficient time will be allowed for Passengers to Breakfast at Balloch before proceeding up the Lake. From Balloch at 5 afternoon and from Dumbarton at 6 and 8 Evening, on the arrival of the Glasgow Steamers, giving Tourists who prefer sleeping a night at Balloch, before proceeding up the Lake, and opportunity of viewing the Picturesque Scenery on the Lower part; and by going a short distance, to the summit of “Mount Misery” will have one of the finest views of the Islands and the Lofty Mountains in the district.

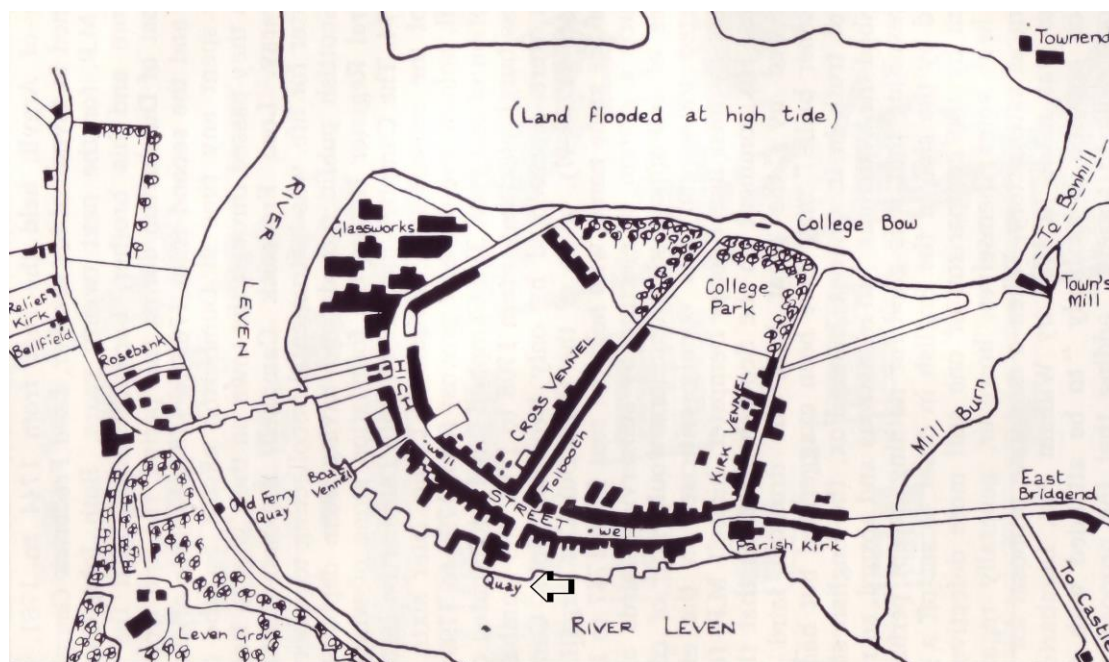
Travellers will find it greatly to their advantage by proceeding at once to Balloch, where a good and comfortable Breakfast will be awaiting them at the above and commodious and romantic Inn. Parties can be in no fear of losing the Steamer as she starts from the Inn Door.

Please ask for WALKER’s OMNIBUS on arriving at Dumbarton Quay.

Tickets to be had at Mr. Hill, Elephant Inn, Dumbarton

The two Inns in Dumbarton that served as starting places for the coaches and omnibuses that took passengers from Glasgow to Balloch for the Loch Lomond tour were both within easy reach of the Dumbarton Quay. The Town’s Inn, known from 1833 onwards as the Elephant Inn was owned by the burgh and built by the same person who built Dumbarton Bridge, John Brown. It was opened a few years before the bridge was built in 1765 and was situated in the High Street near to Dumbarton Cross where it stood until its demolition in the 1930’s. From there passengers could board the omnibus owned by Mr Adam Walker of Balloch Inn to convey passengers to the Inn from where they took a trip on the Loch steamer which sailed “from the Inn door.” That omnibus almost certainly travelled by Bonhill and Jamestown, which was regarded as the less comfortable of the two routes from Balloch to Dumbarton because of the hills and corners.

The other Inn was the Kings' Arms that in 1843 was owned by Mrs Currie whose first husband was Robert Denny, uncle of Peter Denny and who had been in business for three decades at the time. The Inn was located on the north side of the High Street a little to the east of Quay Street and so would also have been very convenient for passengers. From there the coach made its way to Balloch by way of Dumbarton Bridge, Dalreoch, Renton and Alexandria.



On reaching Balloch, the steamboat of the time, LOCHLOMOND, would be boarded in the river with ferrymen rowing from the banks. The scene is described in "Balloch and Around" by James Barr. "One day, then, I chanced to be at Balloch, and although the coach had arrived with a goodly cargo of passengers, a row-boat for carrying passengers to the steamer still waited. At length the cause of the delay became apparent as three gentlemen hove in sight. They were arm-in-arm, the one between being tall and unusually stout, displaying a capacious white vest, and a profusion of ruffled linen protruding from his breast. The day was very warm, and this, with the exertions to get along, heightened his complexion, and caused such a copious perspiration as to heavily laden his expressive face. This was none other than the notable Samuel Hunter, editor and proprietor of the *Glasgow Herald*, who, at a steep part of the road, required to alight so as to allow the coach to proceed on its journey."

In 1845, a new steamboat, Waterwich, competed for the Loch Lomond trade. One of her owners was the Marquis of Breadalbane who wanted to open up the Lochaber district. A canal was dug to the Inverarnan Inn at the Head of the Loch and a coach run in conjunction with the steamer.

**SPLENDID TOUR TO AND FROM  
LOCHABER, LOCHLOMOND AND THE CLYDE  
BY THE ELEGANT NEW COACH  
“THE MARQUIS OF BREADALBANE”**

**ON AND AFTER TUESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> CURRENT**

An Interesting NEW CONVEYANCE between GLASGOW and FORT-WILLIAM, by Steam-Boat and Four-Horse Coach, leaving Fort-William on *Monday, Wednesday and Friday*, at 5 a.m.—arriving at Glasgow about 7 p.m.; leaving Glasgow on *Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday* at 7 a.m. *per* the Dumbarton Steam-boat—arriving at Fort-William about 9 p.m.; by way of Lochlomond, Glenfalloch, Strathallan, Holy Pool, Dalnaree or King’s Field, Tyndrum, Hills of Glenorchy, Marquis of Breadalbane’s famed Deer Forest of the Black Mount, the Moors of Rannoch and the Hills of Sheehallan, passing near to General Wade’s Old Military Road, best known as the Devil’s *Stair-case*; the Royal Forest, the famed Glenco, which for wild scenery surpasses any other in Britain; the Meeting of the Three Waters; Black Hill, with Ossian’s Cave, along the beautiful valley of Glenco; Balahulish, Balahulish Ferry, along the Banks of Loch Linne to Fort-William which lies at the foot of Ben Nevis, the highest hill in the United Kingdom in the vicinity of which are the Ancient Black Castle of Inverlochry, Glen-Nevis Waterfall, the Vitrified Fort, the Rocking-Stone, Fingal’s Cave, the Dark Mile of Locherlich, Prince Charles’s Monument at the head of Lochshiel showing him waiting for the gathering of the Clans; Sir John Cameron’s Monument; and the Caledonian Canal. There is not perhaps in all Europe another line of communication, of equal distance, which combines a more varied, a more beautiful, a grander or more sublime description of scenery, than the proposed line.

Seats can be secured at the Tontine Hotel Coach Office, Trongate from which a an Omnibus starts for the Dumbarton Steamer at the Broomielaw a quarter before Seven a.m.

**Fares**

Inside and Cabin, throughout 22s 6d.

Outside and do. do. 17s 6d

Conveyance by Steamers two times a week to Inverness and to Glasgow.

Conveyance by Coaches three times a week to Kingussie via Badenoch, meeting the Edinburgh, Perth and Inverness Coaches

Fort William, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1843

The three companies involved in the Dumbarton Steamboat trade eventually amalgamated in 1846 with the spectre of the railway to Glasgow opening a few years later. When the railway opened in 1851 between Bowling and Balloch, the Steamboat Company continued with a service linking passengers from the Broomielaw to Bowling. Landing at Bowling was on the newly constructed Bowling Pier.

## THE BOWLING RAILWAY

Air—Toddy Roe.

To see a friend the other day,  
And banish care and spleen away;  
From Glasgow I did start so gay,  
To catch the Bowling Railway.

We started from the Broomielaw,  
Had such sprees as you ne'er saw;  
And steamed it gaily down the Clyde,  
To catch the Bowling Railway.

Soon we reached the Bowling Quay,  
Like furies to the train did flee;  
Unto a third-class quick did pop,  
Upon the Bowling Railway.

For Dumbarton I was booked,  
'Tween two old maids got nicely hooked;  
I like a duck in thunder looked;  
That day upon the Railway.

Then off we flew at lightning pace,  
As if old Nick he gave us chace;  
To baby rags my bones were shook,  
That day upon the Railway.

My eyes were blinded by the steam,  
The two old hags did howl and scream,  
And clutched me in their bony arms,  
In that confounded Railway.

I thought they would have strangled me  
And when I tried myself to free,  
I cut my nose upon the glass,  
Lord, how I cursed the Railway

My hat blew off, I don't know where,  
My wig went spinning in the air,  
And my poor head was left bare,  
Upon that rueful Railway.

My travelling wallet disappeared,  
The passengers at me all jeered,  
The very children laughed and sneered;  
I could have sunk the Railway.

But my misluck did not end here,  
My very staff did disappear,  
While with my watch some shark made  
free,  
That day upon the Railway.

My brain swam round, my limbs did shake,  
A thief my pocket-book did take;  
I thought I was among the damned,  
In that confounded Railway.

When at Dumbarton we arrived,  
The train it stopped, I was capsized,  
And day of horrors, broke my leg  
Just stepping out the Railway.

I fell into a dirty pool,  
Was left in it a while to cool;  
O crickey, how I cursed the day  
I caught the Bowling Railway.

I thought I was about to die,  
When my friend I did descry;  
Then jumped upon my pins like mad  
From that infernal Railway.

Cont'd.





*Bowling Pier around 1910 with the steamer ISLE OF CUMBRAE*

By 1858 when the railway opened through to Glasgow, business had greatly declined and much of the trade on the steamers was confined to cargo. Several attempts were made to resurrect a service, the last in 1867 by Peter Denny with the steamboat LOCHLOMOND. The boat was laid up in 1869 and shortly thereafter was sold.



*LOCHLOMOND of 1867 at Dumbarton Quay.*

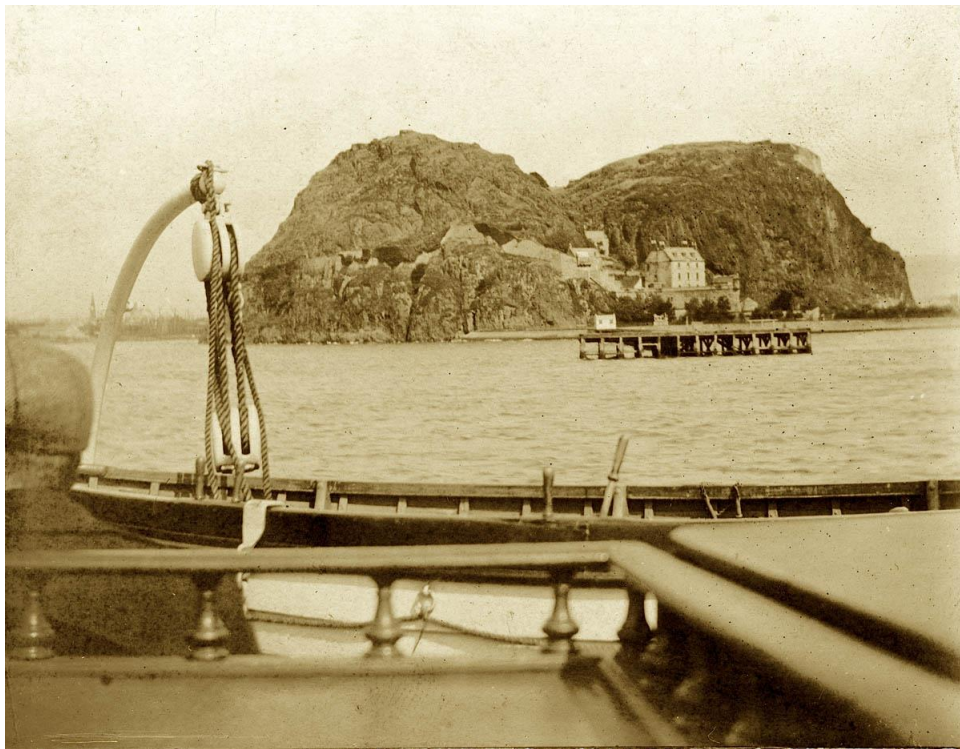
Regular sailings from Dumbarton Quay ceased in 1869 although regular excursions were run in 1889 by the steamer Hero, then owned by a Mr. Orr.





*Steamer HERO ran excursions from Dumbarton Quay in 1889.*

When the new pier at the Castle was opened in 1875, there were renewed hopes of regular steamer calls at Dumbarton. However, the business did not develop and the pier closed in the early 1900s after it was damaged in a storm.



*Dumbarton's "white elephant" Pier from a passing steamer.*