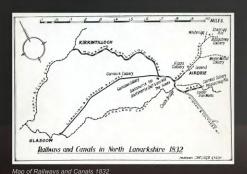
THE RAILWAY CONNECTION

The Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway

The Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway was promoted, financed and controlled by the coal and iron masters of the Monklands area. Unhappy with what they considered as the excessive tonnage dues charged on the Monkland Canal, they decided that the only solution was to build their own railway. The 10 mile track stretched from Palace Craig near Airdrie to the Forth & Clyde Canal at Kirkintilloch. From its completion in 1826 the railway was associated with the transportation of coal and pig iron from the Monklands to the Forth & Clyde Canal, much of it for the Edinburgh market.





Locomotive 891 on Monkland and Kirkintilloch Line 1898

Design

The most important feature of the Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway was the malleable iron rails manufactured to John Birkenshaw's patent. Birkenshaw's rails were designed to support heavy locomotives more effectively than earlier cast iron types. They were first used on the Stockton & Darlington Railway, in 1825.

The Garnkirk & Glasgow Railway

Railway The Garnkirk & Glasgow Railway was completed in June 1831, as a direct route to Glasgow from Gartsherrie, where it joined the Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway, to the company's Glasgow depot at Townhead. Locomotives were running on it within a month of its opening. The first locomotive was the 'St Rollox'. The grand official opening took place on 27 September.



Locomotive 76103 at Kirkintilloch Basin, with inspection saloon. 1961

Transporting Minerals

In its attempt to compete with the Monkland & Kirkintilloch Railway in the transport of minerals, the Glasgow & Garnkirk was at a serious disadvantage. Its Glasgow terminus was on the 'cut of junction' between the Monkland and Forth & Clyde canals which was too shallow to allow it to load directly onto deep draught vessels, thus losing it access to English or Continental ports. This situation was not remedied until the 1840s when the 'cut' was finally deepened.

