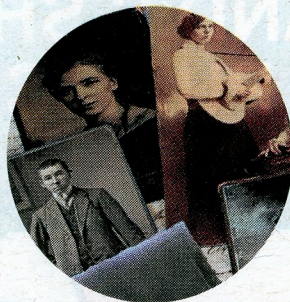


Tracking Dunrobin's fascinating history

ON June 20 1870 an Act of Parliament was passed granting the 3rd Duke of Sutherland, George Sutherland Leveson Gower, permission to build a railway on his estate, stretching from Golspie to Brora and onto Helmsdale.

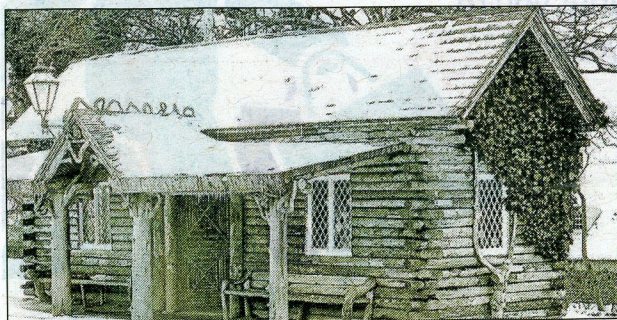
Although the act wasn't passed until June 1870, construction had started earlier, in anticipation, and the Dunrobin to West Helmsdale section of the line opened on November 1 that year. The Duke of Sutherland's railway was originally built to develop the infrastructure of the Sutherland estate (with stations at Golspie, Dunrobin, Brora and Loth) and its construction was funded by the Duke himself.

Dunrobin Station also



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opened in November 1870 as part of the project. Originally a private station for the duke's home at Dunrobin Castle, over the years the station has been known as Dunrobin, Dunrobin Castle and



Dunrobin private station in the snow, 1902.

Dunrobin Halt. The station was rebuilt in 1902 before closing on January 29, 1965 and then being reopened as "Dunrobin Castle" on 30 June 1985. These days the station is usually open in spring and summer each year for tourists visiting the castle.

In addition to having their own private station, the Dukes of Sutherland also had their own train. In 1895, the 4th Duke - Cromartie Sutherland Leveson Gower - bought a 0-4-4 tank engine and named it Dunrobin. This, used by the family until around 1920, was used to haul the duke's train between Dunrobin Castle and Inverness. In addition to the engine, the Duke also owned two coaches, a four-wheel saloon and a bogie saloon which played host to various dignitaries over the years including four kings (King Edward VII, King George V, King George VI, Alfonso King of Spain, and Kaiser Wilhelm II) and Winston Churchill.

In 1949 British Railways removed the duke's right to run his train and the locomotive and both coaches were subsequently sold. The locomotive



Dunrobin locomotive and saloon ready to be used by the King, 1902.

Picture: Highland Railway Society and Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Am Baile

and the four-wheeled saloon went to a Captain Howey and displayed at the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway in Kent. Changing hands again, the next owner took them to Canada where they remained until 2011 when they were bought by Beamish, the Living Museum of the North, in County Durham. Having returned the locomotive and saloon to the UK, Beamish have spent the intervening years restoring the engine to once again pull loads. It is interesting to note that the Dunrobin was never actually owned by the Highland Railway, despite being synonymous with the line!

The Dunrobin played host to Edward VII, George V, George VI, Alfonso King of Spain and Kaiser Wilhelm II.

HIGH Life Highland's archive service is responsible for collecting, preserving and making accessible historical records in relation to Inverness-shire, Nairnshire, Sutherland and Ross and Cromarty.

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stored at the Highland Archive Centre and date from the 14th century. They include charters, minute books, correspondence, accounts, maps, photographs and films, and contain more than 100,000 items.

The centre is currently shut but if you would like to contact the service, phone 01463 256444.

Or alternately you can send them an email: archives@highlifehighland.com