



©Highland Railway Society

Now occupied by a playground, **the station** on the Muir of Ord to Fortrose line was opened in 1894 and closed to passengers in 1951, and freight in 1960. The busy loading bank was generally full of wagons bringing in coal, fertiliser, animal feed and groceries, returning with potatoes, corn, and during the 1940s and 1950s, sugar beet, as well as regular loads of cattle, sheep and pigs.

Situated beside the station was the wooden Young Men's Club shown in the picture, now demolished. The nearby stationmaster's house is now a private home.

**The Pole** (now Pole Cottage) was named because the mail was hung from a pole to be collected by the passing mail coach. Until 1831 the mail to and from the south went via Fortrose and then over the Firth to Fort George. After this date, the mail coach went from Beaully to Cromarty via Munloch, returning on the same day.

**Munloch Bay** has long been important in the area. Ships were built and registered from the village. On the southern side a jetty and storehouse existed in the late 1800s, and can be seen as a gravel tongue sticking out of the bay. Quantities of bricks and tiles still survive in the mud. The bay has also been a source of good quality clay. Further information about the bay can be found on the RSPB sign on Munloch Bay (off the A832).



Picture courtesy Taylor family / Highland Archive Centre

This picture shows **Rose Cottage** on Back Street (Burn Place), probably in the late 1800s. Note the thatched roof. A dairy was later attached to the cottage. The current building has been altered and extended.



The **bakery** was a large building, with bakehouse, shop and a dwelling. In the 1960s it was replaced with four houses. Next door is the former **bank**, in Munloch from at least the late 1800s, closing in 2014.

The **school** and **hotel** are both depicted on maps from the late 1800s. The hotel may date as far back as the 1700s, and is reputed to be a coaching inn.

After the Kilmuir and Suddie parishes were united in 1756, a new Church of Scotland was built by Alexander Ross in 1764 on the outskirts of Munloch (near the present war memorial). It remained in use until 1934, when the congregation transferred to the present church. At that time the roof was taken off, and it became ruinous. The **present church** in Munloch started out as a Free church in 1886, built to replace a wooden structure at Bogallan. It later became the United Free Church, and then in 1929 when the United Free Church joined with the Church of Scotland, became Church of Scotland, and replaced the Church of Scotland church built on the outskirts of Munloch village.

A **prisoner of war camp** was situated in the field beside the church during World War II. It housed Italian, then German prisoners who helped on the local farms. After the war it was used for displaced persons, and then in the 1950s to house boys brought from Glasgow to help in the potato harvest. They were known to be a rough lot, and were shown a film every night, to keep them occupied.

**Viewmount** was the home of Dr Brodie and then Dr Stewart. Dr Brodie had the first car in the village. Ryefield and Tulloch Ard were later homes of doctors in Munloch.

**Sugar Hill**, so named because the owners made their fortune growing sugar in South Africa.

**Munloch Hall** has been in community use since the late 1800s. It served as a drill hall for the Territorial Army and the regular army. The rifle club stored their ammunition under the drill sergeant's house to the right. After the 1970s it became the village hall after renovations.



Picture courtesy Hazel Chisholm

*Please note that many buildings are still in use, while others are unsafe. Please respect private property and do not enter buildings. Please take care on the busy main road.*



## Munlochry Village

### A Walk around

#### Introduction

In 2014 a group met to explore the heritage of Knockbain Parish, and in particular shared memories and investigated sources and maps about the village of Munlochry. A great deal was discovered in a short time. This leaflet provides a tour of many of the buildings in the village, and can be done in an easy walk in about an hour. An optional diversion to look at the site of the railway station, so important to the village in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, can be made.. Further information on some sites is also on the map.

#### Early Munlochry

People have lived in the Munlochry area from prehistoric times. A Bronze Age burial dating from three thousand years ago, was discovered to the south of the village. To the south-west a number of stone tools have been discovered, including this scraper now in Groam House Museum.



Photo: S. Kruse

The earliest known record of Munlochry (Gaelic *Bun-Lochaidh* meaning 'inner end of the loch') dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It subsequently appeared in maps (as Minlochry) from the 1500s and 1600s. At that time it was probably a Kilcoy estate 'fermtoun', centred on the farm now known as Munlochry Mains and comprising a corn and threshing mill, farm workers' cottages and perhaps a smiddy. As Kilcoy estate's only access to the sea, there was also a jetty and a grain storage gurnal, located on the southwestern shore of the Bay.

The growth of Munlochry appears to originate from the 1760s when Fort George was constructed from stone quarried from the nearby Bennetsfield quarry. Further growth followed the building of a station at Munlochry on the Black Isle branch of the Highland Railway in 1894.



Drawing by Anne Hodgson after an old postcard

Further information about the sites described in this leaflet, as well as others in the parish, can be found in the document *Remembering Knockbain Heritage*, in Fortrose Library and available from the ARCH website [www.archhighland.org.uk](http://www.archhighland.org.uk).

(front top picture) for allowing us to reproduce pictures and drawings.

This leaflet was produced in 2014 as part of a project organised by Knockbain Community Council, with courses provided by Susan Kruse of ARCH (Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands), and with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Highland Council. Participants would also like to thank Highland Council Archives, Groam House Museum, and the many people who contributed their knowledge. Thanks also to Hazel Chisholm, Sue Taylor, Alasdair Cameron, Anne Hodgson and Jenny MacLeod

#### Suggested route:

(See also *information on map overlay*)

Starting at the car park, the former mill pond (pictured on front), turn left down the hill passing by the mill. **Munlochry meal mill** existed from at least the 1800s on this site. The marriage stone above the mill door is dated 1740 with the initials DMK and EMK. The mill operated until the 1960s, famed for the quality of its products. There were other mills around Munlochry, including tidal mills. **Taylor's buildings**, now the village shop, contained two shops, houses and flats. Taylors sold agricultural goods, ironmongery, sweets, clothing etc on the right side, with Riddochs the grocers on the left. The corrugated iron building behind housed coaches and then delivery vans. The Taylor family had shops in Munlochry from 1842 to 2012, building the current shop premises in 1878. Riddochs were there from the 1930s to 1960s.

Continue down the road. Just before the church, turn left and look at the site of the POW camp. Turn around, carefully cross the road, and head back into the village. You will pass Greenhill Cottage, one of the earlier houses in the village, the school and hotel. Over the bridge is the site of the bakery and former bank. After the bank, turn left up the lane to Burn Place, formerly Back Street. Walk along Burn Place, passing the site of the dairy and smiddy.

At the intersection, an optional diversion will take you up to the site of the station (see map).



Picture courtesy Hazel Chisholm



Photo courtesy Hazel Chisholm

was in use within living memory, with an attached cottage.

On Back Street, now known as Burn Place. 'Rose Cottage' had a dairy attached. Next door 'Hillview' was the residence of the coal merchant whose coal yard was located at the Station. There was another smiddy next to a burn (now partly in a culvert). It was in use within living memory, with an attached cottage.

On the north side there were bakeries, bank, hairdresser, old post office (which also operated the manual telephone exchange before it became automatic), a draper (now a blinds shop), a saddler's shop with attached house and a smiddy in the 1870s.

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Photo courtesy Alasdair Cameron

#### Shops

Only the stationmaster's house and the course of the tracks can be seen today.

The house at the corner of Millbank Road housed the Nurse's Cottage from 1930. In 1961 it was extended and a surgery attached. It continued as a nurse's residence until 1988, and is now a private home. Note the plaque on the front of the house.

Continue up Millbank Road past a number of former shops. The large building by the present bus shelter was the old Post Office which moved across the road to its present site in the 1950s. The present blinds shop was formerly a drapers. Next door was the saddler's shop owned by Donald MacSwede. His initials are carved above the doorway.

Continue up the hill, crossing the a burn, site of another old bridge, now replaced with a culvert.. At the junction is 'The Pole', where post bags were hung for the mail coach.

Look towards the bay, so important to the history of the village. Head back towards the village, passing Viewmount and the Village Hall. Cross the road at the hall and follow the path to a milestone dating from at least the late 1800s. Munlochry was well connected by roads from an early time, with roads shown on maps from the 1700s.



Detail from Taylor & Skinner map, 1776.  
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Continuing towards the car park you will also pass the sites of the garage and carpenter's shop, and the current post office.