

Kinghorn's Industries



This is a photo of an accomplished, imaginative and original work in ink and watercolour by James Dorward. It is a tribute to Kinghorn's bygone industries. We thank him for posting the photo on Kinghorn Photos Past & Present.

Before the industrial revolution Kinghorn was in a sorry state. The borough was poor and rundown. The inhabitants also had a bad reputation as a bunch of ne'er do wells who preyed on the Midlothian ferry passengers arriving and departing from Pettycur harbour.

Kinghorn was well placed to benefit from the industrial revolution being blessed with a good sized Loch to supply industry with water and a shoreline on the Firth of Forth that gave access to the world's oceans.

In the late 18th century the Loch attracted mills. They used its water and its burn's 100 foot drop to the Forth as a power source. The coming of the railway in 1847 ended the era of the Pettycur to Midlothian ferries. It also brought in many new manufacturers to Kinghorn. The Scotsman 18th October 1886 reported that "The Binnend Oil Company has acquired from Kinghorn Town Council a piece of ground near the Loch to erect a candle factory operations to start immediately. Proximity to the new railway; which is being rushed forward, and the loch burn required for cooling purposes has determined the choice of site."

Other examples: The site of Abden Shipyard was right next to the main railway line and a siding was created to supply the yard with materials; The Bottleworks again was built conveniently near the main railway line and a siding was constructed to provide transport of materials and products.

These industries and others, for example, Gibson's Cleekworks, the Glue Works and the Tannery attracted workers from other areas of Scotland. These workers increased the population and boosted the local economy thus helping create the Kinghorn we know today.