

Perthshire Since 1970 – A Statistical Update

David Perry

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Public Administration

The Third Statistical Account for the counties of Perth and Kinross was published in 1979 although the articles within it were mainly written in the late 1950s and early 1960s and were ready for publication by 1971¹. Since then there have been two reorganisations of the system of local government in Scotland. As a result of the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1973, in 1975 the whole structure of local government in Scotland was altered. The counties and burghs which had been the basis of local administration since the 12th century were abolished and replaced by a two-tier system of Regional and District Councils, which lasted only for some 20 years. Following the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1994, this two-tier system was replaced in 1996 by the present unitary council system.

For Perthshire these changes resulted in 1975 in the demise of the two royal burghs of Perth (first mentioned in 1128 and the second burgh of the kingdom after Edinburgh) and Auchterarder (first mentioned in 1246, but defunct as a royal burgh in the late 17th century; it became a police burgh in 1894 and was re-admitted to the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1951). The 10 non-royal burghs also lost their status: Abernethy (burgh of barony 1459, police burgh 1877), Alyth (burgh of barony 1488, police burgh 1877), Dunblane (a defunct medieval burgh of barony, police burgh 1870), Coupar Angus (burgh of barony 1607, but probably the successor to the burgh of barony of Keithick 1492; police burgh 1852), Doune (burgh of barony 1611, police burgh 1890), Blairgowrie (burgh of barony 1634, police burgh 1876; united in 1929 with the police burgh of Rattray formed 1872), Crieff (burgh of barony before 1672, burgh of regality 1687, police burgh 1864), Callander (police burgh 1866), Aberfeldy (police burgh 1887) and Pitlochry (created a small burgh in 1947).

Not only did the county of Perth (which covered an area of 2,528 square miles or 654,752 hectares) and its various burghs disappear, but the western part of the county (Menteith, Strathyre, Glen Ogle, Glen Dochart and Strathfillan) were transferred to the new Stirling District Council, Muckhart in the south was transferred to the new Clackmannan District Council and Invergowrie and Longforgan at the east end of the Carse of Gowrie were transferred to the new City of Dundee District Council. The new Perth and Kinross District Council combined the rest of Perthshire and the county of Kinross with the addition of Kettins from the county of Angus.

Under the new dual administrative system, local government powers were divided between regions, which controlled major planning, social services, housing, police and education; and districts which controlled local planning, planning applications, building control, libraries and licensing. Perth and Kinross District Council was one of three districts, along with Angus and Dundee, within Tayside Regional Council.

The local government reform of 1996 saw the abolition of Tayside Regional Council and its powers transferred to the new unitary authorities of Perth and Kinross Council, Angus Council and Dundee City Council. At the same time Invergowrie and Longforgan were transferred to Perth and Kinross Council, which now covered an area of 528,581 hectares or 2,041 square miles.

Since then the only major administrative change has been the introduction of devolution with the

¹ *The Counties of Perth and Kinross*, D B Taylor (ed), The Third Statistical Account of Scotland, p11. Coupar Angus: Culross the Printers, 1979.

establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. In 2012, to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee, city status was restored to Perth, although Perth is not a self-governing entity.

Population

The various administrative changes make comparisons of population difficult. The last census return for Perthshire in 1971 showed a population of 127,104, a slight increase from 126,230 in 1961². However, but based on the present Perth and Kinross Council area, the equivalent figures are 119,528, down from 120,517³. The equivalent figure for 1981 is a population of 113,533 which had increased to 125,702 in 1991⁴. In 2001 the population of Perth and Kinross Council was 134,949⁵, which had increased to 146,652 in 2011⁶. In 2018 the population was estimated at 151,290⁷. The population growth shows the attractiveness of Perth and Kinross for residence. This has led to the growth of new housing developments across Perthshire, resulting in the expansion of many of the villages and towns. Perth itself has been part of this trend, especially in the Cherrybank and Broxden areas of the city, as well as at Craigend on the site of the former Friarton Prison. There are currently proposals to expand west of the current bypass and build on land between the A85 to Crieff and A9 to Stirling.

A striking feature of the population is the increase in the number of retired people living in the area. In 1961 those aged 65 or over in Perthshire amounted to 13.4%. In 2001 those aged 65 or over amounted to 18.55% of the inhabitants of Perth and Kinross; by 2011 this had increased to 20.16% and was estimated at 23.2% in 2018. In contrast working age inhabitants are static if not declining: 62.9% in 1961, 62.5% in 2001, 62.68 % in 2011 but estimated in 2018 at 60.5%. The increasing age of the population as a result better living, health and housing conditions has of necessity resulted in a rise in the number of care homes and sheltered housing for the elderly no longer able to look after themselves, both in Perth and outside.

Forestry

Perthshire is called 'Big Tree Country' and has been particularly associated with woodland planting from the time of the Fourth Duke of Atholl, the 'planting duke', in the late 18th century, when the

² *ibid*, p24.

³ GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Perth and Kinross District through time | Population Statistics | Total Population, *A Vision of Britain through Time*. URL: http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10056640/cube/TOT_POP. Date accessed: 14th January 2021.

⁴ *ibid*.

⁵ URL: https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/14337/2001-Census-Perth-Kinross-Council-profile/pdf/2001_Census_Perth_Kinross_Council_profile.pdf?m=634847741352330000. Date accessed 14th January 2021.

⁶ URL: https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/22558/Summary-of-Census-2011/pdf/PKC_SUMM_PKC.pdf?m=636099766215970000. Date accessed: 14th January 2021.

⁷ 'Perth & Kinross by Numbers (Perth & Kinross Council area) Key Statistics 2019'. URL: https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/44938/Perth-and-Kinross-by-Numbers-Factsheet-2019/pdf/Perth_Kinross_By_Numbers_Factsheet.pdf?m=637055415268770000. Date accessed: 28th January 2021.

duke planted larch trees on his estates. His example was followed by other landowners. In a census in 1947-9 the Forestry Commission recorded 150,372 acres of woodland in Perthshire over five acres, of which 126,903 acres were in private ownership and 23,469 acres belonged to the Forestry Commission. These consisted of 46,662 acres of coniferous trees, 13,561 acres of broadleaved trees and 3,897 acres of mixed forestry with 261 acres of coppiced woodland, 37,535 acres of scrub and 48,249 acres of felled ground. In 1883 94,563 acres of woodland had been recorded⁸. In 2014 Scottish Forestry, the Scottish Government's agency responsible for forestry policy, recorded 88,315ha (35,741 acres) of woodland in Perth and Kinross Council, of which 57,611ha (23,315 acres) (65%) was private and 30,704ha (12,426 acres) (35%) public. Coniferous trees amounted to 50,561ha (20,462 acres) (57%), broadleaved to 8,592ha (3,477 acres) (10%) and mixed to 13,149ha (5,321 acres) (15%). The remainder comprised shrub, 217ha (88 acres) (0.2%), and young trees, 15,796ha (6,393 acres) (17.8%)⁹.

Forestry has many benefits, a current priority being to mitigate the affects of climate change as trees capture carbon in the atmosphere. Forests also provides an economic resource for building and craftsmen, as well as supporting tourism and leisure, and benefiting the environment by stabilising soils and improving biodiversity.

Orchards are a special category of trees subject to ongoing research. A recent study for Perth and Kinross has identified 185 orchards (defined as five or more fruit trees) of various types and sizes, comprising 64.2ha (26 acres), the average size of orchards being 0.38ha (0.94 acre), most orchards having fewer than 30 trees¹⁰. Many of the orchards were small domestic sites, only five commercial sites being recorded. Recent developments involve the creation of community orchards at Dunkeld, Comrie, Errol, Longforgan and Dupplin. Historic Scotland has replanted an historic orchard at Elcho Castle.

Railways

By the end of the 19th century Perth was a major railway junction for routes north to Inverness and Aberdeen, east to Dundee, south-east to Fife, south to Edinburgh, south-west to Stirling and Glasgow and west to Strathearn and Oban. It was also a centre for transport of goods by rail. By the 1960s this had declined. The Strathearn line had closed in 1951 and many rural stations were closed in the 1950s and 1960s. The closures of the original Caledonian/LMS mainline to Aberdeen through Strathmore in 1967 and the direct North British/LNER route to Edinburgh through Glenfarg in 1970 continued this decline. The former route had provided a last run for Sir Nigel Gresley's former LNER A4 Pacifics on the three-hour expresses between Glasgow Buchanan Street Station and Aberdeen from 1962 to 1966. The closure of the Strathmore line led to the upgrade of the former Caledonian/LMS branch line to Dundee West Station as the new mainline to Aberdeen through Dundee Tay Bridge Station.

⁸ *The Counties of Perth and Kinross*, D B Taylor (ed), The Third Statistical Account of Scotland, p46. Coupar Angus: Culross the Printers, 1979.

⁹ *Forest & Woodland Strategy 2014-2024 (Update 2020)* Perth and Kinross Council, pp10-11. URL:

https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/45535/FWS-SG-January-2020/pdf/Forest_and_Woodlands_Strategy_January_2020.pdf. Date accessed: 14th January 2021.

¹⁰ *A National Orchard Inventory for Scotland. Area Report for: Perth and Kinross*, C Hayes and K Hempel, p19. URL:

<https://www.orchardrevival.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/PERT-Orchard-Inventory-Area-Report-v1.1-2018-web.pdf>. Date accessed: 26th January 2021.

Since then Perth has had gains and losses from the railways. In 1966 Perth became one of the destinations for the new motorail service to and from London Kensington, an overnight sleeper service for passengers and their cars. This replaced the Car-Sleeper Limited introduced in 1955 between Perth and London Holloway. Motorail services to Scotland were withdrawn in 1988. In 1975 passenger services, withdrawn in 1955, were reintroduced on the route to Edinburgh via Ladybank in Fife. The double-track sections of the Highland mainline had been singled by 1970 but in 1976 the section between Dalwhinnie and Blair Atholl was redoubled to cope with increased passenger traffic for the oil industry. The former Princes Street Station in Perth, closed in 1966, has been demolished and replaced by housing; it had been originally erected in 1848 as a temporary station and terminus of the Dundee and Perth Railway which had declined to use the General Station until it was taken over by the Scottish Central Railway in 1863¹¹.

As the junction for the Highland, Caledonian and North British Railways, much land in Perth became the sites of goods yards and sheds for these three companies, reduced to two, the London, Midland and Scottish Railway and the London and North Eastern Railway after 1923. With the decline of the railways for transport of goods and passengers, most of these former railway goods yards and sheds have been replaced by commercial developments: St Catherine's Retail Park to the north of Perth Station and a Tesco supermarket to the south. The last remaining major vacant former railway land lies to the west of Dunkeld Road. Perth station may itself be the object of proposed change: to restore the original frontage before the enlargement of 1885, when platforms 3 and 4 were laid out. Elsewhere in Perthshire the only station to close since the 1970 was at Errol which closed in 1985.

With the privatisation of the railways between 1994 and 1997, responsibility for railways was split between Railtrack (replaced by the not-for-profit Network Rail in 2002), which owned the infrastructure, and train-operating companies, which were awarded franchises to operate services. ScotRail under various franchises has operated Scottish train services to and from Perth, with Caledonian Sleeper providing an overnight service to London Euston. The only other franchise operating at Perth Station is the East Coast Main Line holder providing a daytime service (The Highland Chieftain) each way between Inverness and London King's Cross. Until 1984 the daytime Inverness service to London (The Clansman) had used the West Coast Main Line to London Euston, with an overnight sleeper service (The Royal Highlander); the latter was withdrawn in 1988. In December 2019 The Highland Chieftain service was upgraded from an Inter-City 125 train unit to a new Azuma train unit, designed and built by Hitachi. Along with privatisation went privatisation of British Rail's hotels, including Perth's Station Hotel and Gleneagles Hotel.

1968 saw the final withdrawal of steam traction on Britain's railways, except for special private steam tours, with its complete replacement by diesel or electric. In Scotland electrification has not progressed further north than Dunblane, although proposals have been made (but not yet accepted) to electrify the lines to Inverness and Aberdeen through Perth. A proposal to re-open the direct route to Edinburgh through Glenfarg has also been made but the former railway line has been built over at the summit and pass of Glenfarg by the M90 motorway; a replacement line here would be inordinately expensive. The expansion of villages beside the existing railway lines because of the increase in population has not so far led to the re-opening of any of the closed stations, although proposals have been made for the re-opening of the stations at Bridge of Earn, Abernethy and Blackford, so far to no avail.

¹¹ Peter Marshall, *The Scottish Central Railway, Perth to Stirling*, p155. The Oakwood Press (Oakwood Library of Railway History, OL101).

Roads

There has been little change to most of Perthshire's road system since the 1970s and 1980s. The major changes in the late 1970s were to the trunk roads which saw the creation of a bypass around the south and west sides of Perth with the opening of the Friarton Bridge in 1978 at the north end of the M90 motorway from Edinburgh and the Forth Road Bridge, and the dualling of the A85 (now A90) between Perth and Dundee. The A9 was dualled to the south of Perth but only partially dualled north of Perth at that time bypassing all villages and towns along the route, leading to its being dubbed the 'Killer A9' from the number of accidents on it, especially at the junctions where traffic was expected to turn right across on-coming traffic. These dangerous crossings were eventually replaced by grade-separate junctions at Bankfoot and Ballinluig in 2009. Currently the dualling of the rest of the A9 is underway. Similar grade-separated junctions were built on the A90, which was just as dangerous as the A9 from all the agricultural traffic on it, at Kinfauns (2007), Glendoick (2006), Inchmichael, Inchtute and Longforan (1996).

Industry

As a primarily rural county Perthshire was heavily dependent on agriculture for its prosperity. Before the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries most rural estates had agriculture-related industries: water mills for grinding grain, blacksmiths for shoeing horses and making and repairing tools, and breweries. (Water from a well or river was unsafe to drink, but as brewing heated the water, killing off any harmful bacteria, ale or beer was the safest drink for most people - lairds, nobles and merchants drank wine; distilling had the same effect, hence whisky is the 'water of life'.) The Agricultural Revolution brought about great changes to the landscape. The medieval open fields and runrig system, centred on the ferme town, were replaced by enclosed fields and a new crop rotation system. The marshy lands of the Carse of Gowrie and Strathmore were drained and brought under cultivation and new villages and settlements were laid out for workers displaced from the older ferme towns. Sheep became the predominant livestock in the hills in place of cattle. These changes brought about the demise of most estate-based industries and their replacement by those in the towns and villages described in the First and Second Statistical Accounts. Most of these had already gone by the time of the Third Statistical Account, and most of those described in that account have now gone.

The decline in agriculture since the census of 1841 is revealed in the following table¹²:

Year	Agriculture	Mining	Manufacturing	Util+Const +Transp	Consumer Services	Business Services	Public Services
1841	13,908	251	16,411	3,344	10,005	1,190	778
1861	16,938	453	17,305	5,611	10,678	1,492	1,584
1881	14,180	397	15,464	6,266	9,945	1,449	1,751
1911	11,559	612	13,360	8,442	12,304	2,633	2,302
1931	9,047	525	9,025	7,970	18,474	3,190	4,395
1951	10,159	231	7,268	9,675	15,054	1,966	7,185
1971	5,896	1,318	7,035	7,626	14,490	3,836	9,661
1991	3,928	272	6,357	8,208	16,011	5,796	12,046
2011	2,780	120	4,506	12,339	17,476	9,946	17,917

¹² https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10056640/cube/IND_SECTOR_GEN

(The figures are the equivalent figures for the area of Perth and Kinross in the pre-1975 censuses.)

The figures show not just the decline in agriculture but the decline in manufacturing as well. The biggest change has been in public services, with the expansion of local and central government responsibilities, with the next biggest increases in utilities, construction and transport and business services (professions). Consumer services (shops, etc) have also increased but by less than half. Perthshire has changed from a productive workforce and economy, based on agriculture and industry, to non-productive ones based on consumption and public service. In this it reflects similar changes in Scotland and the rest of Britain.

Water was still powering the grain mills at Aberfeldy and Blairgowrie in the 1970s, although both have since ceased. Only the mill at Blair Atholl, which became a store after milling ceased in 1929 and whose restoration began in 1977, is still a water-powered grain mill, one of only three such mills in Scotland, although Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, which has taken on a lease of Perth's Lower City Mills for its office, are considering restoration of its water wheel. Milling in Perth had ceased by 1953, the building operating as a granary until 1966 when it finally closed¹³.

Increased mechanisation in agriculture means that there are fewer than half of the workers employed in it than in 1971¹⁴. In addition to the traditional beef, dairy and sheep farming, there is the soft fruit industry in Strathmore and the Carse of Gowrie, although the harvesting of the fruit is now dependent on foreign workers, especially from Eastern Europe, rather than itinerant and female workers or schoolchildren as at the time of the Third Statistical Account. The use of polytunnels to protect from the wet Scottish summers has benefited the industry if not the countryside. It is not clear what effect withdrawal from the European Union will have in the long-term on the soft fruit industry and its use of foreign labour. Poultry farms, honey farms and fish farms are more recent developments. The former has benefited the chicken processing plant at Coupar Angus, the only one of its kind in Scotland. The latter have in effect replaced the traditional salmon netting stations on the River Tay, but line fishing on beats on the Tay remains a popular sport, although catches are encouraged to be released to preserve fish stocks. More unusual are a number of tea gardens in Perthshire where tea plants are grown, two near Crieff at Broich and Dollerie, St Martins near Perth and Megginch Castle in the Carse of Gowrie; these produce specialist teas.

Weaving was originally a rural domestic industry with handlooms in the house. These were replaced by water-powered factories and mills, Stanley Mills, built in 1786, being the one of the first in Scotland. There were two principal locations for water-powered factories and mills in Perthshire: Perth with the Lade sourced from the River Almond, and Blairgowrie.

Perth was never a major industrial centre, although as a medieval royal burgh it had eight crafts or trade incorporations which held monopolies and regulated their crafts within the burgh: wrights, baxters, hammermen, glovers, tailors, shoemakers, weavers and fleshers. With the abolition of the burgh's trading privileges in 1846, these crafts fell into decline and, although some incorporations still exist, they do so as charitable organisations for their members rather than as practising crafts.

The Lade, owned by the burgh, powered several textile works along its length, the revenues from which made the Lade a valuable contributor to the burgh's Common Good. With the closure of all these works, the Lade is now more of a liability than an asset, although more use could be made of it as a walking route and nature and heritage trail. At the time of the Third Statistical Account there

¹³ *Lower City Mills. Watermill Tour.* Perthshire Tourist Board leaflet, nd.

¹⁴ URL: https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10056640/cube/IND_SECTOR_GEN. Date accessed 23 February 2021.

were still industrial concerns in Perth associated with the Lade although all have now gone: Pullars' dry-cleaning and dyeing works (closed 1993), Moncrieff glass works (closed 1996 but re-established in Kinross in 2000) and the Wallace Works for linen weaving, later jute, demolished in the 1990s. In addition there was a bleachworks at Huntingtower which closed in 1982.

Of the former 16 mills spinning flax or jute situated on the River Erich at Blairgowrie, only four were still operating by 1960¹⁵ but all are now closed. Bramblebank Mill closed in 1963 and Keathbank, Ashgrove and Brooklinn Mills closed in 1979, all unable to compete with cheaper foreign imports. Keathbank became a visitor centre and heraldry centre but is now converted to flats. Bramblebank was recently burned down. Netherton Mill to the north of Blairgowrie is now converted to a house.

Elsewhere Stanley Mill closed in 1989; it was saved from demolition in 1995 by Historic Scotland, the predecessor of Historic Environment Scotland, and the Phoenix Trust and is now mainly converted to flats with one range preserved as a historic site maintained by Historic Environment Scotland. Macnaughton of Pitlochry's tweed mill closed in 1983. Alyth's jute factory closed in the 1990s. Abernethy's textile factory closed in the 1980s. The Glenruthven Mill in Auchterarder is now a heritage centre and business centre and the Gleneagles Knitwear factory is closed. The bleachworks at Luncarty and Stormontfield closed in 1996 and 1971 respectively.

In the former parts of Perthshire now in Stirling Council, Springbank Mill in Dunblane is now converted to housing and Ashfield silk dyeing mill closed in 1976. Deanston Mill, Kilmadock closed in 1965 and is now a distillery.

Perth was also formerly the worldwide headquarters for General Accident insurance company, which merged with Commercial Union in 1998 to form CGU, which in turn merged in 2000 with Norwich Union to form CGNU, known since 2002 as Aviva; it has an office at Cherrybank, Perth, formerly the world headquarters of GA. Perth is still the headquarters for SSE, formed in 1998 from the merger of Scottish Hydro-Electric and Southern Energy, and for Stagecoach, the public transport group founded by Brian Souter and Anne Gloag in 1980. Scottish Hydro-Electric was the privatised company formed as the successor to the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board in 1991.

Perth was at one time renowned for its whisky distillers, Dewar's, Bell's and Gloag's, but all have now gone. Dewar's of Perth distillery on Glasgow Road, closed in 1962 when bottling was transferred to a new bottling plant at Inveralmond, which in turn closed in 1994. Matthew Gloag and Sons, producers of The Famous Grouse, were taken over by Highland Distillers in 1970, which closed the former Gloag premises in Kinnoull Street in 1996, moving to new premises at West Kinfauns. In 1999 Highland Distillers were in turn taken over by Edrington which closed their offices at West Kinfauns in 2017. Bell's was acquired by Guinness in 1985 which became part of Diageo in 1998.

There are still a number of distilleries operating in Perthshire. Some are long-established distillers of whisky like Glenturret near Crieff (1763/1775), Blair Athol (at Pitlochry!) (1798), Edrour (1825), Aberfeldy (1898) and Tullibardine (1949). Others are products of the recent interest in craft distilling: Strathearn Distillery near Methven (2013), which claims to be Scotland's original craft distillery, The Lost Auchnagie Distillery at Tulliemet (2013) and Aberargie (2017). Others produce craft gins: Persie (2014), Perth Distillery (2017) and Gatehouse Gin near Auchterarder (2019), with

¹⁵ *The Counties of Perth and Kinross*, D B Taylor (ed), The Third Statistical Account of Scotland, pp250, 315. Coupar Angus: Culross the Printers, 1979.

one mead producer at The Rookery at Enochdhu (2014) and a botanical spirits distiller at Alyth (2018). In addition there are the Cairn O'Mohr winery (1987) near Errol and Inveralmond Brewery (1997) in Perth. None of these provide the employment that Perth's big three distillers formerly did.

Quarrying for stone or sand and gravel is a long-established industry in Perthshire since at least the quarry pits for the Roman road from Ardoch to Bertha. Lots of small local quarries for limestone for fertiliser or mortar making, or whinstone and sandstone for buildings and boundary walls, or sand and gravel for road-making are depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps as disused. The Third Statistical Account mentions whinstone quarries at Blairgowrie as mostly disused for roads and buildings since the latter were no longer being built of stone and the county council had centralised its road materials from the quarry at Collace, on the west side of Dunsinnan Hill opened in 1953¹⁶; it is now operated by Tayside Contracts. A sand and gravel quarry is operated near Blairgowrie. Quarries at Abernethy and Doune are now closed. Perth's Friarton Quarry has also recently closed and has been reported as a possible site for housing development.

Replacing these old quarries is the mine at Foss, opened in 1985, which produces 42,000 tons of barite (formerly barytes) per annum for use in the oil and gas industry. The 30-ton lorries which carry the mineral from the mine have to cross General Wade's bridge at Aberfeldy, opened in 1733 for the horse and carriage! However, because of geological difficulties with the mine, it is likely to close, if it has not already closed, and be replaced by another barite mine at Duntanlich. The Duntanlich site contains 7.5 million tonnes of barite, has a simple geological structure and could supply the whole of the UK's requirements for more than 50 years at planned production rates of 120,000 tons per annum¹⁷. A gold mine is being established at Cononish near Tyndrum in the former western part of Perthshire, now in Stirling Council, following the discovery of gold there in the 1980s; the site was previously operated as a lead mine in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is intended to produce 23,370 ounces over nine years and employ 63 workers¹⁸. Gold prospecting is also being undertaken on the south side of Loch Tay and in Glen Almond.

Tourism

The demise of most of the industrial and manufacturing premises means that Perthshire is now heavily dependent on tourism, particularly seasonal visitors in summer. The only major winter tourist attraction is the ski centre at Glenshee. Accommodation is provided for tourists in hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments and self-catering holiday homes and there is no shortage of bars, restaurants and cafes which, with hotels, provide seasonal employment.

There is likewise no shortage of attractions for visitors to Perthshire. There is a wealth of historic and archaeological sites from the stately homes of Scone Palace, Blair Castle and Drummond Castle through Historic Environment Scotland-maintained Elcho, Balvaird and Huntingtower Castles to an abundance of prehistoric and Roman sites and the Crannog Centre at Kenmore, which unfortunately burned down this summer but this tragedy has spurred on plans to move to a new site on the other side of the loch. Outdoor leisure activities are provided by an abundance of walks exploring the countryside and historic towns and villages, with leaflets and maps as guides. With marketing as

¹⁶ *The Counties of Perth and Kinross*, D B Taylor (ed), The Third Statistical Account of Scotland, pp252-3, 286. Coupar Angus: Culross the Printers, 1979.

¹⁷ URL: <https://imformed.com/barytes-uk-mine-replacement-for-m-i-swaco-by-2017/>. Date accessed: 9 March 2021.

¹⁸ URL: <https://www.scotgoldresources.com/projects/cononish-project/>. Date accessed: 9 March 2021

the 'Big Tree' county Perthshire has many woods and forests for walkers, administered by Forestry and Land Scotland (the replacement for the Forestry Commission in Scotland), the Woodland Trust or private landowners. Long-distance walkers are catered for by the West Highland Way in parts of western Perthshire now in Stirling Council as well as the Rob Roy Way between Drymen in Stirlingshire and Pitlochry. The National Trust for Scotland maintains Branklyn Garden in Perth, the Hermitage and the Ell Shop at Dunkeld and a visitor centre at Killiecrankie as well as the National Nature Reserve at Ben Lawers, and the beauty spots of Linn of Tummel and Craigower forest and mountain. For those so inclined there is bungee jumping at Garry Bridge, north of Pitlochry, and water-rafting and canoeing at Aberfeldy. The proposed redevelopment of Perth City Hall as a museum centred around the Stone of Destiny to be housed there is expected to be a major draw for tourists.

What effect the Covid-19 pandemic will have on these attractions and premises remains to be seen as we are about to ease out of the lockdown and restrictions on travel. The main drawback to tourism is the inadequate country road network which comprises mainly narrow roads unsuitable for cars and unsafe for cyclists, a situation unlikely to change in the future.

Covid-19

The long-term effects of the pandemic on Perthshire remain to be ascertained. The short-term effects are more obvious. Before the pandemic, retail shops were already under pressure from on-line retailers and out of town centre retail parks. The closure of most hospitality venues and non-essential businesses has threatened their viability, with some closing permanently and others re-opening under a burden of government and bank loan debt as well as deferred taxes and rent unlikely to be repaid and, no doubt, eventually going under. The most prominent casualties in Perth's city centre have been Debenham's, Lakeland and Edinburgh Woollen Mill. Other casualties are an Italian coffee shop and beauty salon. Another coffee shop has changed hands. Outside the city centre, Frankie and Benny's restaurant in St Catherine's Retail Park was shut permanently.

The former Italian coffee shop has reopened as another business. Another coffee shop has opened in a shop closed before the pandemic. The former cat shelter shop, closed before the pandemic, has re-opened as a plastic-free organic fruit and veg shop. As usual, one business's misfortune is another's opportunity.