



Clyde River Steamer Club

SPECIAL
EXCURSION

From Ayr, Troon, Largs and Gourock

To Arrochar

by T.S. Duchess of Hamilton

Saturday 7 September 1968

The Arrochar Route

The route up Loch Long and Loch Goil was opened up in the earliest days of steamships, although Lochgoilhead always used to be a more important destination than Arrochar because of the through route via St. Catherines to Inveraray and the north. The first steamer on Loch Goil was the wooden paddler *DEFIANCE* (1817), commanded by Captain Peter ('Paddy') Graham, formerly of *COMET* (1812). The following year, 1818, *OSCAR* (1814) commenced running on the station also. For a considerable time, Arrochar was served partly by the vessels of this fleet, known later as the Loch Goil Company, and partly by the vessels of the fleet of Dumbarton steamers. The connection of the latter company was due to its interest in providing a connection with the steamers plying on Loch Lomond. From 1820 *POST BOY* had connected at Dumbarton with *MARION* (1816) on Loch Lomond, coaches being run between Dumbarton and Balloch. The other connection was that still used today, between Arrochar and Tarbet, a distance of some two miles. And so for thirty years or so, the trade was in the hands of old wooden steamers like *ST. CATHERINE* (1825), *ST. GEORGE* (1826) and *LOCH GOIL* (1835) on the one hand and *DUMBARTON* (1820), *LEVEN* (1823) and *SOVEREIGN* (1824) on the other. The first *LOCH GOIL* was replaced by a second in 1841, still under Graham's command, and by 1850 the steamers employed were *BREADALBANE* (1847)—the first iron steamer associated with the route—and *QUEEN* (1850). Until that year, passengers were landed at a jetty at Arrochar but in 1850 the pier was built.

In 1853, the Dumbarton Steamboat Co. had built from Denny's yard a steamer specifically for their service to Arrochar—*CHANCELLOR*, a name long associated with the Loch Long station. She was a very comfortable two-funnelled boat, and her cabin was well to the fore in the fifties in providing comfort for her passengers. She sailed on the Clyde under Captain John Wilson for eleven seasons before being sold for service in the Isle of Wight. Her opponent for a short time was the experimental double-hulled steamer *ALLIANCE* (1857) which had a central paddle-wheel, and which could lay claim to being the first 'saloon steamer', as her designer, George Mills, had had saloons built on the main deck. Around this period it is reported that another old steamer *QUEEN OF SCOTS* used to make a special trip to each Arrochar Communion, starting on the Sabbath morning from Glasgow about 05.00, and returning late in the evening. Many unholy scenes were witnessed on the steamer and ashore, and it seems that the Glasgow youths whose piety took them on this trip spent more time gathering shell-fish during the day and roasting them round the steamer's funnel on the journey home.

1861 was the last season of *CHANCELLOR* and her place for the following two seasons—the last when the sailing was given all the way from the Broomielaw—was taken by *LADY BRISBANE* (1842) and *NELSON* (1855). The Loch Lomond Steamboat Co. did not appear to be satisfied with the service provided by these steamers and so they decided to run the Arrochar connection for their circular tour themselves and so they ordered from Blackwood & Gordon in 1864 a steamer designed after their own *PRINCE CONSORT* (1862) with sponsons carried right round from stem to stern, giving a very large deck space. The funnel was placed forward of the paddle-boxes, and this second *CHANCELLOR* did not carry a mast. A subsidiary concern was formed to run this vessel, known as the Loch Long Steam Boat Co., but in 1867 it was amalgamated with the parent company to form the Loch Long and Loch Lomond Steam Boat Co. *CHANCELLOR* ran from Helensburgh to Arrochar from 1864 till 1879, and in the height of the season made two double journeys every day, berthing overnight at the Loch Long pier.

The company decided to replace their Arrochar steamer by another of the same name in 1880, the older vessel being sold in 1881 to Hugh Keith & Co. for the Glasgow-Gareloch service under the name *SHANDON*. This third (and last) *CHANCELLOR*, built by Chambers of Dumbarton, was the last Clyde steamer to have the old-fashioned narrow saloons with alleyways all round. She sailed for her original owners—from Craigendoran when that pier was opened in 1882—for only five years, because in 1885 her red funnel with black top had two white bands divided by a black one painted on, as she had become the property of the

old Lochgoil Steamboat Co. The company's name was changed to the Lochgoil and Lochlong Steamboat Co. Ltd.; under their flag sailed, as well as CHANCELLOR (1880), WINDSOR CASTLE (1875) and EDINBURGH CASTLE (1879). During this period, CHANCELLOR often relieved for a spell to and from Lochgoilhead, especially in the spring of the year.

1891 is a landmark in the history of the Arrochar route, for it was in that year that railway-owned steamers first invaded the waters far up Loch Long. The Glasgow & South Western Railway, on deciding to run their own fleet from their base at Princes Pier, bought six second-hand steamers: among them was CHANCELLOR, destined for their run to the Holy Loch. The Craigendoran-Arrochar service passed into the hands of the North British Steam Packet Co., which had LADY ROWENA (1891) built from McNight's of Ayr to take CHANCELLOR's place. This steamer was novel in that, with her fore-saloon carried forward of the mast, she had a large dining-saloon forward and no accommodation aft below the main deck. She was thus obviously intended as an excursion steamer although she was not a large vessel, and this excursion trade has stayed largely in the hands of the N.B. and their successors right to the present day. LADY ROWENA sailed during her first season via

Excursion to ARROCHAR (Loch-Long)

FOR LOCH-LOMOND

BY THE "DUCHESS OF HAMILTON" (DAILY)

GOING.				RETURNING.				
		Sats. only.			Sats. only.	Ex. Sats.	Sats. only.	
	a.m.	a.m.			p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	
Kilchattan Bay ...lve.	a7 10 11 15		Tarbet—					
Millport (Old Pier) „	a7 38 10 55		(Coach) ...lve.	...	2 15 5 10			
Largs ... „	8 7 10 50		Arrochar—					
Wemyss Bay ... „	9 0 ...		(Coach) ...arr.	...	2 35 5 30			
Rothsay ... „	9 45 12 15		(Steamer) ...lve.	12 40 2 45	5 35			
Craigmore ... „	9 50 12 20		Lochgoilhead ... „	...	6 30			
Innellan ... „	10 10 12 40		Gourock ... „arr.	1 55 4 20	7 55			
Dunoon ... „	10 25 12 55		Greenock (Prin. P.) „	2 10 4 35	8 10			
Kirn ... „	10 30 1 0		Kirn ... „	2 15 5 8	8 40			
Hunter's Quay ... „	... 1 5		Dunoon ... „	2 20 5 8	8 45			
Gourock ... „	10 47 2 0		Innellan ... „	2 35 5 25	9 0			
Greenock (Prin. P.) „	11 0 2 45		Craigmore ... „	2 55 5 50	9 20			
Lochgoilhead ... „	... 4 20		Rothsay ... „	3 05 55 9 25				
Arrochar—			Wemyss Bay ... „	5 10 7 0 ...				
(Steamer) arr.	12 30 5 15		Largs ... „	4 37 7 40 10 10				
(Coach) ...lve.	1 15 ...		Millport (Old Pier) „	4 08 2 10 45				
Tarbet „ ...arr.	1 35 ...		Kilchattan Bay ... „	4 30 8 25 11 10				

a 5 minutes earlier on Mondays.

b Passengers change at Craigmore.

FARES (excluding Pier Dues at Arrochar, and Coach Fare between Arrochar and Tarbet.)

FROM	Cabin	St'ge	FROM	Cabin	St'ge
Kilchattan Bay ...	2/6	2/-	Innellan ...	2/6	2/-
Millport ...			Dunoon ...		
Wemyss Bay ...			Kirn ...		
Rothsay & Craigmore					

Tickets available during the Season, with liberty to break the journey at any Station or place on the Route.

For full particulars of Loch-Lomond Tour see the Companies' Excursion Programme, which may be had at the Companies' Offices or on board the Steamers.

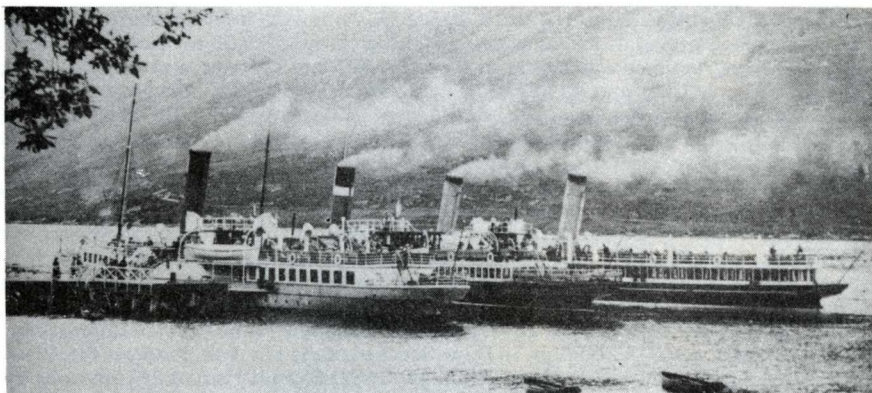
From CSP/G & SW
Programme of Excursions
July and August 1911

Princes Pier, and so there was no need for a G. & S.W. steamer to connect with the train from St. Enoch; but the Caledonian Steam Packet Co. had their own steamer to connect with the train from Central at their newly-opened (1889) terminal at Gourock. This was GALATEA (1889). In fact, GALATEA did not touch Gourock, but sailed from Rothesay at 10.50 via Innellan, Wemyss Bay (Largs and Millport connection), Dunoon, Kilm, Hunter's Quay and Blairmore. The Gourock connection was made at Dunoon.

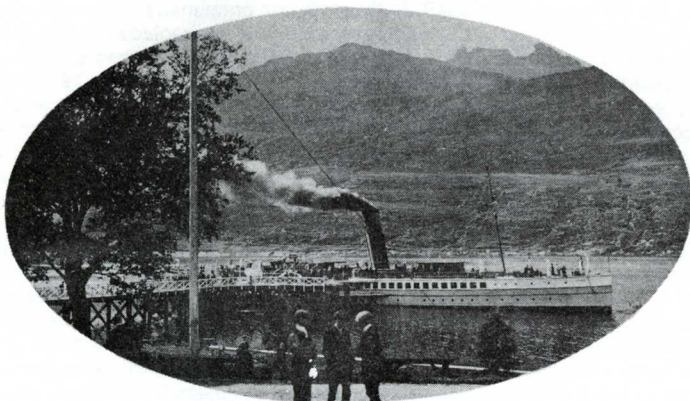
The following year, 1892, saw the fiercest competition of all with all three railway companies providing a service; this year LADY ROWENA sailed via Gourock and the G. & S.W. had to provide their own steamer from Princes Pier. They did in fact provide one of their new crack paddlers MERCURY and NEPTUNE (1892). In addition, the two remaining Loch Goil boats WINDSOR CASTLE and EDINBURGH CASTLE made regular calls at Arrochar throughout the nineties on holidays and other special occasions. Often one sailed to Arrochar via Lochgoilhead while the other made the journey first to Arrochar and then on to Lochgoilhead, but latterly they normally made one or other pier their destination. The most interesting excursion of this type was one by EDINBURGH CASTLE on Monday 12 April 1897 when, on the occasion of Paisley Spring Holiday, she sailed to Arrochar from Paisley. It is also interesting to note that WINDSOR CASTLE's last public sailing before being sold to Turkey was on the Victoria Day Holiday, Thursday 24 May 1900—to Arrochar.

1892 was in fact the only year when there were three daily steamers, for the C.S.P. decided to withdraw from the contest and instead rostered GALATEA to sail Round Bute and instituted a series of excursions with MARCHIONESS OF LORNE (1891) where Arrochar was the destination only on one day per week, Monday. These excursions were taken over by the new DUCHESS OF ROTHESAY in 1895, and two years later, when the company bought the Arran via Kyles steamer IVANHOE (1880) from the Frith of Clyde S.P. Co., the 'Rothesay' and IVANHOE changed places. When, however, the latter was in turn displaced from her excursion sailings in 1906 by DUCHESS OF HAMILTON (1890), the run to Arrochar on Mondays was dropped from the programme. Meanwhile, the N.B. and G. & S.W. continued to give their daily service, the former with LADY ROWENA every season until 1902, when, on the resumption of direct control of the steamers by the North British Railway Co., she was withdrawn. In fact during the spring and early summer of 1903 she was on charter to the Loch Goil company, but that concern had ceased to number Arrochar in its ports of call. Under N.B. management she had sailed from Craigendoran around 10.40 via Helensburgh (until 1899), Princes Pier (1891 only) or Gourock (1892-95), Dunoon, Kilm, Hunter's Quay (1895-97; 1902), Blairmore and Ardentinn (ferry). In addition, from 1897, she made a call by ferry at Portincaple to land passengers on a new Circular Tour via Portincaple, Whistlefield and the West Highland Railway. This did not seem to attract many tourists and the call was dropped after 1906. LADY ROWENA was replaced in 1903 by REDGAUNTLET (1895), and, in September 1904, DANDIE DINMONT (1895) took her turn on the service. In 1906, the N.B. Railway had another steamer built and lavishly fitted out specifically for the Arrochar run—MARMION. She continued on her original station, sailing incidentally via Lochgoilhead, only until the close of the 1914 season, for she was requisitioned as a minesweeper in April, 1915. WAVERLEY (1899), the crack ship of the N.B. fleet, was not taken over by the Admiralty until November of that year, and so was able to deputise for MARMION in the summer of 1915. After that year, the excursion was suspended for the duration of the war.

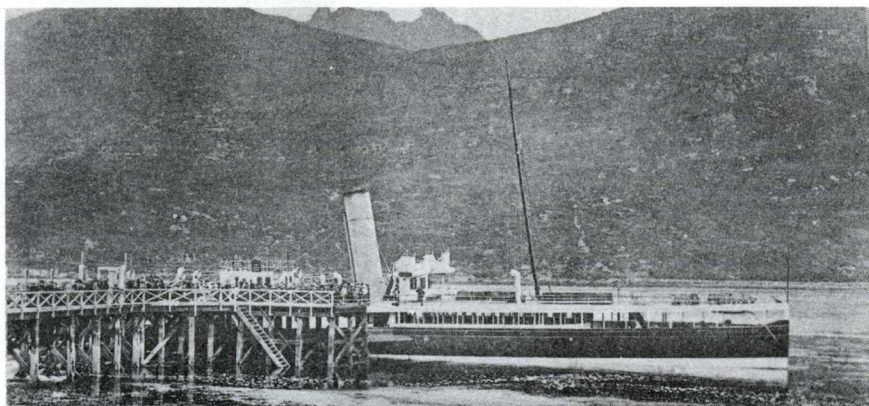
1915 was also the last year of the G. & S.W. steamers plying to Arrochar, for after the war Arrochar no longer featured in the company's sailing rosters. Following their first season of opposition to the N.B. with MERCURY/NEPTUNE, they continued with the new MINERVA (1893), which remained at least partly associated with the run until 1903. CHANCELLOR visited her old haunts on occasions, as did GLEN ROSA (1893), the sister-ship of MINERVA when she was relieved as Ayr Excursion steamer in 1896. From 1898 until 1903, GLEN ROSA and MINERVA interchanged week about between Arrochar and the Kyles run, with the new MARS (1902) joining them from time to time in 1902 and 1903. From 1904 until 1914, MARS was almost exclusively the G. & S.W. Arrochar steamer, the only exceptions being in 1908 when ATALANTA was on the run for most of the time and in 1911 when, according to the 1909 pooling arrangements between the G. & S.W. and C.S.P. companies, the latter company operated the service for that year. The steamer allocated by the management was



GLEN ROSA, LADY ROWENA and IVANHOE at Arrochar, 1899



JUNO at Arrochar



DUCHESS OF HAMILTON at Arrochar, 1911

DUCHESS OF HAMILTON. The usual G. & S.W. route was from Rothesay around 09.45 to Princes Pier, calling at the usual piers, and then around 11.00 to Kilcreggan, Cove and Arrochar. Until the pier was closed in the mid-1890's, a call was also made at Coulpport (which had only been opened in 1880). On Saturdays from 1895, there were two double runs, the afternoon sailing being via Lochgoilhead. 1915 saw NEPTUNE return to Arrochar.

Other visitors to Arrochar included the G. & S.W. Ayr Excursion steamers. SCOTIA (1880) gave such a trip on Wednesday 15 June 1892 (the Ardrossan Merchants' Holiday), GLEN ROSA gave almost weekly calls during the 1894 and 1895 seasons. NEPTUNE followed suit during 1896 and 1897, and when JUNO (1898) became the 'Ayr boat', she continued the practice. Some of her cruises, as on Wednesday 21 August 1907, started from Girvan, and on occasions, as on Thursday 20 July 1911, two steamers sailed to Arrochar from the Ayrshire ports, MARS taking the Troon passengers. QUEEN-EMPRESS (1912), the white-funnelled Williamson paddler, made a special charter excursion from Ayr on 13 August 1913.

During the week commencing 28 August 1899 a stranger found her way to Arrochar. This was CARRICK CASTLE, built in 1891 in Southampton; she was formerly the Glasgow, Ayrshire & Campbeltown S.B. Co.'s CULZEAN CASTLE (1895) but at this time was sailing for Clyde Excursion Steamers Ltd. The excursion was in fact advertised as a 'Musical Cruise' and 'The Celebrated Scottish Troubadours' gave concerts on board.

KENILWORTH (1898) reopened the Arrochar route after the war—in 1919—and, when released the following year, MARMION, with her promenade deck extended to the bow, took over; but when WAVERLEY re-appeared in July she replaced MARMION and worked this route each season until 1937, with the exception of 1931 when she sailed to the Kyles, the new paddler JEANIE DEANS then taking over the excursion. In 1923, WAVERLEY, in common with the other members of the N.B. fleet, came under the control of the London & North Eastern Railway, but her appearance was not altered. She used to leave Craignedoran shortly after 10.00 for Gourock, Dunoon, Kilm, Blairmore, Lochgoilhead and Arrochar, returning to Craignedoran via the Loch Long piers and Kilcreggan. She then would take the evening run down to Rothesay and back with passengers both from Arrochar and the Loch Lomond Tour, just as is done at present. Passengers from Rothesay changed at Dunoon in the morning, except for a period in 1920 when the Arrochar boat started from Rothesay and it was Craignedoran which required the connecting service. A call by ferry was also made if required at Ardentinn up to the 1928 season. In 1938, WAVERLEY returned to the Kyles track for her last year of peace-time service, and JEANIE DEANS, her extensive cruise programme being axed, sailed to Arrochar. The following season, the L.N.E.R. fleet was reduced by two units and this caused JEANIE DEANS, again the Arrochar steamer, to take the morning run down to Rothesay and start off her excursion from there. Until her breakdown on 26 July, TALISMAN (1935) sailed to Arrochar on Saturdays; thereafter, with TALISMAN out of commission for the rest of the year, 'Jeanie's' superior carrying capacity dictated her presence down firth and MARMION, for the first time since 1920, again sailed daily to Lochgoilhead and Arrochar.

For many years in the inter-war period, the Craignedoran steamers had it all their own way, but in some seasons they had opposition. Back in 1912, the old Loch Goil company had been taken over by Turbine Steamers Ltd. in association with David MacBrayne Ltd., and two seasons later, the veteran EDINBURGH CASTLE had been withdrawn. A diverse assortment of steamers filled the gap thus caused, and from 1922 until 1927 the mantle fell on the famous MacBrayne paddler IONA (1864). IONA sailed down the river to Princes Pier, Gourock, Kilcreggan, Blairmore, Ardentinn (until 1926), Carrick Castle, Douglas Pier and Lochgoilhead and then sailed back down Loch Goil and up to Arrochar. While IONA was Club Steamer in 1923, CHEVALIER (1866) deputised on the run. When she was required at Oban in 1928, her place on the Clyde was taken by LORD OF THE ISLES (1891) on her last season, and so the Loch Goil colours—which she had never shed—were once again seen at Arrochar. This service was not given the following year, and when it was restored by QUEEN-EMPRESS in 1930 once again it was to Lochgoilhead only. However in 1931 and 1932, the last years of the daily service from Glasgow, Arrochar was once again included in the itinerary. It is worthwhile to note that these sailings were the only attempts since the very early days to run a regular service to Arrochar all the way from Glasgow.

Apart from charters and odd special excursions, the only other steamer to touch at our

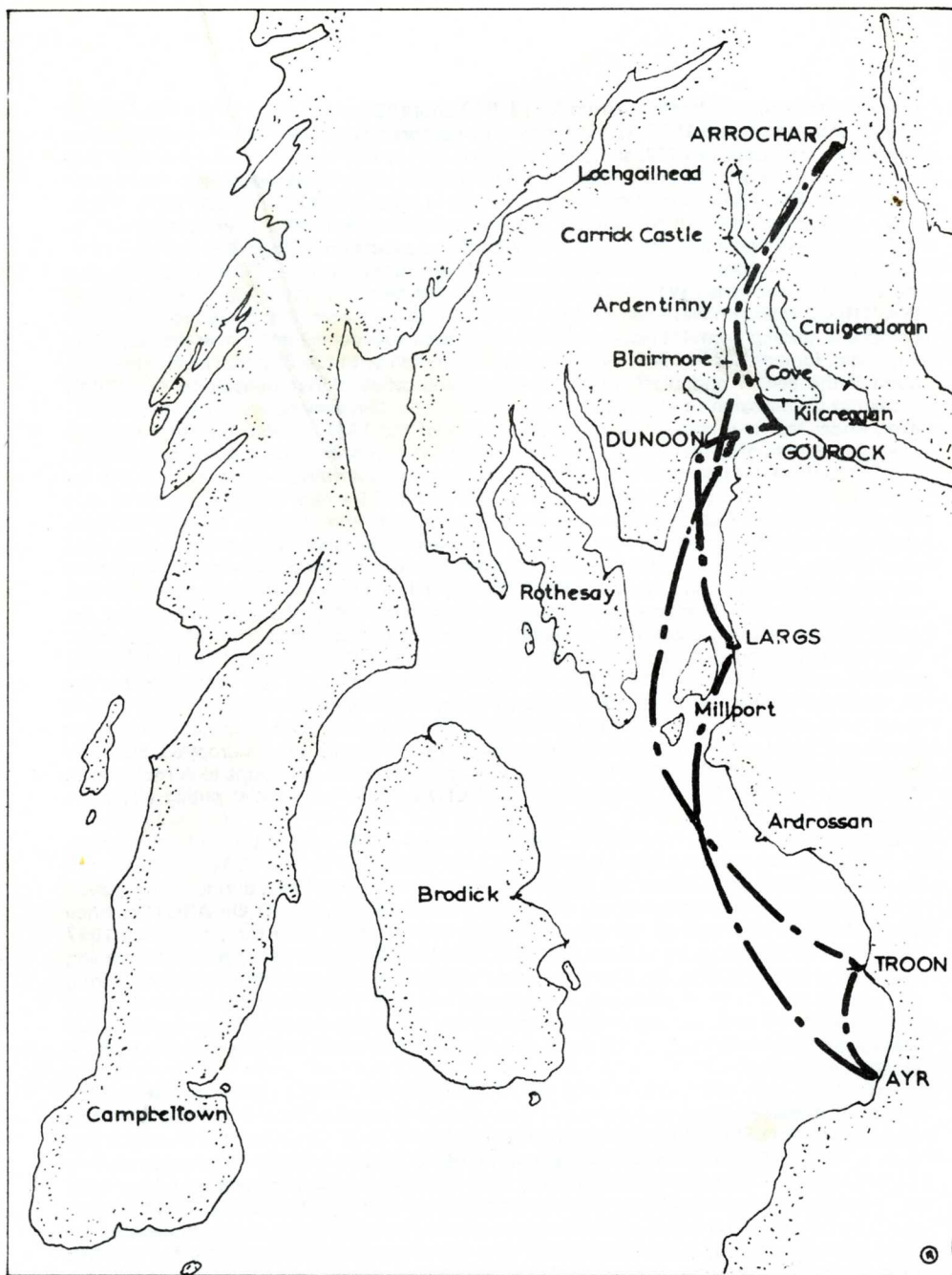
pier during the period were those from Ayr: JUNO until 1931 and DUCHESS OF HAMILTON (1932) from 1932 until 1939. The latter gave five excursions annually except in 1935 when there were only four. In 1939, she often sailed via Arran. The 'Hamilton' was delivered late from the builders and the Ayr Excursion programme for June, 1932 was partly undertaken by ATALANTA. This included Arrochar on 23 June. In August 1930, GLEN SANNOX (1925) had a spell of sailing out of Ayr, and on Tuesday 5, she took the run from Girvan to Arrochar.

The 1939-45 war again wrought havoc with Clyde excursion sailings and day cruises to Arrochar were suspended from 1940 until 1946. Not until the L.N.E.R. had built another steamer to replace their war losses could the service be resuscitated. Launched in 1946, WAVERLEY was commissioned in June 1947 and for that year only continued the 1939 practice of starting from Rothesay. After only one season, Arrochar lost for ever the red, white and black funnels, for in 1948, WAVERLEY, in common with the other L.N.E.R. steamers, donned the yellow and black funnel colouring indicative of her transfer to the British Transport Commission (and in 1951 to the C.S.P.). The daily service was continued, however, under the new management until the close of the 1951 season, but after that the changing pattern of tourist traffic and the desperate need for economies cut the service down in 1952 to three days per week, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays—and that is how it has remained ever since, except for the years 1953 and 1954 when Wednesdays were also included. During 1952 itself, the cuts were alleviated by the fact that JEANIE DEANS, employed that year largely on day, afternoon and evening cruises from coast resorts, paid several visits to Arrochar on days when the regular steamer was elsewhere. TALISMAN happened to be on the Arrochar service on Thursday 3 July and went aground on a sandbank some yards from the pier as she tried to take the sweep ready for a quick departure. Her passengers were brought ashore by the ship's lifeboats (to the strains of 'The Volga Boatmen' from the band) and taken back down the loch on MARCHIONESS OF GRAHAM (1936) which was from 1947 until 1953 the Ayr Excursion steamer. Like her predecessors, she included Arrochar in her cruise programme, sailing, unusually, via Dunoon, and making calls once or twice per month; but when CALEDONIA (1934) took over from her in 1954 her speed did not allow her to undertake such a long run and the cruise was dropped, although in 1955, like DUCHESS OF MONTROSE (1930), she did sail on occasions to Arrochar from Ardrossan. In 1955, too, DUCHESS OF HAMILTON made one special public excursion from Ayr to Arrochar.

Little remains to be said. When the 'Maids' appeared in 1953 the Saturday Lochgoilhead and Arrochar service was allocated to MAID OF ARGYLL to free WAVERLEY for the Rothesay service, and a 'Maid' has performed it ever since. Until 1960, during which period it was changed to an afternoon run (1955), it was exclusively MAID OF ARGYLL, since 1961 MAID OF CUMBRAE and MAID OF SKELMORLIE took their turn, and since 1967 also MAID OF ASHTON. In addition, MAID OF CUMBRAE in 1954 inaugurated an evening cruise from Gourrock, Dunoon, Kirn and Hunter's Quay to Arrochar on four Thursdays during the season. From 1955, the Kirn call was dropped and from 1958 the cruise was undertaken by MAID OF ARGYLL starting at Craigendoran. In 1961 however, the Craigendoran 'Maid' merely gave a non-landing cruise to Loch Long and Loch Goil and the following year it stopped altogether.

From 1954 until 1957, COUNTESS OF BREADALBANE (1936) gave a connection on Thursdays between Largs and Dunoon for the Arrochar steamer. From 1958 this duty was given to MAID OF CUMBRAE or since 1961 whichever 'Maid' performed the Dunagoil Bay Cruise. From 1961 until she was withdrawn in 1964, JEANIE DEANS alternated regularly with WAVERLEY between Round Bute and the various day cruises, and so the 'Jeanie' once more became a regular caller at Arrochar. Since taking over from her, CALEDONIA has left the Loch Lomond Tour to her younger consort and has only appeared at Arrochar once—on Thursday 13 July 1967 when WAVERLEY was out of service. After Lochgoilhead pier had received its last passenger call by MAID OF SKELMORLIE on Saturday 10 July 1965, the Arrochar boat merely sailed via Loch Goil.

And so the usual story is told. A route which boasted three daily steamers in 1892 has in 1968 one steamer thrice weekly; but she is more than adequate for the demand. There is seldom overcrowding on the Three Lochs Tour today, either on WAVERLEY or the Loch Lomond steamer MAID OF THE LOCH.



TROON AYR LARGS DUNOON GOUROCK ARROCHAR

0915 > 1000 > 1130 > 1220 > 1330

1710 <

< 1115