

Established 1825

THE DUNALISTAIR HERALD

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Railway Anniversary Celebrated

On Thursday the First of April this week the Craigcorrie & Dunalistair Railway Company celebrated its 25th anniversary with much pomp and ceremony. The previous Tuesday the coasting vessel 'Renfrew Lass' had docked, carrying as a deck load from Oban a small railway locomotive belonging to the Craig & Mertonford Railway Company operating in Craigshire.



The locomotive, named 'Colin' and painted an attractive shade of green, had been sent to attend the celebrations, together with a small delegation led by the Honourable Colin Craig, son of the CMR's Chairman, Lord Craig. Having been steamed on board the ship, the engine carefully proceeded ashore across a temporary bridge, cheered by a number of spectators amongst whom were such notables as Lord Dunalistair and the Honourable Colin Craig. James McPherson of 3, High St., played lively tunes on the pipes at His Lordship's special request to enliven the occasion.

Amidst cheers of a crowd having assembled on the platform, the train drew away, accompanied by the skirl of McPherson's pipes which could be heard long after the train's departure.



The train paused briefly at Rae Bridge before continuing to the grandeur of Glenclachan, where the Company's guests were treated to the most famed scenic spectacle West of Oban, the Glenclachan Gorge. Having continued across the Moor towards Inverlochan and Craigcorrie, the train returned to Rae Bridge at 3 p.m.

Here Lord Dunalistair addressed the Guests and the Works staff, praising the service the Railway had performed in improving the region's prosperity during the past 25 years, particularly by allowing the Inverlochan Colliery to be extended, providing a livelihood for many local inhabitants. The celebrations were completed by a banquet at the Macdonald Arms Hotel near the Station, with all the Officers of the Railway (excepting those who could not be spared from duty) present. The Shed staff were given the rest of the day off, and there were various festivities in Rae Bridge village, so a good day was had by all.



Having arrived safely ashore, the locomotive was run across temporary rails connected to the Harbour siding, and after inspection and being declared fit for the journey it proceeded towards the Railway's works at Rae Bridge, drawing a Craig & Mertonford Railway wagon with replacement parts.



The landing ceremony narrowly escaped being disrupted by Calum Doonwatter showing up with a sign reading 'Down with Railways'. Luckily PC Hendrie, vigilant as always, was able to prevent a disturbance and turned Calum away from the scene. It appeared that one of his sheep was recently involved in an accident on the line below his cottage at Kinlochastair, the poor animal being hit by the down 'Dunalistair Mail' (see elsewhere in this edition).



On the day of the celebration, the Railway Company operated a special train for guests of the Company, starting from Dunalistair at 11 o'clock in the morning, after short speeches by Lord Dunalistair and the Honourable Colin Craig, and official Company photographs having been made.

The train was headed by the Company's locomotive 'Inveraray' and piloted by the visiting Craig & Mertonford locomotive. Both engines were highly polished, Mr Angus McPhwat of Craig, Senior Driver of the CMR, being in charge of the CMR locomotive, and the C&D Company's locomotive being driven by his namesake Mr Angus MacNab of Rae Bridge. Apart from a first class carriage having been provided for the Boards of the Railway Company and the Craigcorrie Colliery Company, the CMR wagon had been fitted with seats to be used as an Observation Carriage, also carrying James McPherson playing the pipes.

Disaster Averted

On the 25th of March the down 'Dunalistair Mail' train, running down Kinlochastair Bank, narrowly escaped being derailed by a sheep having strayed on to the railway line. Luckily the train, consisting of a locomotive and four carriages, stayed on the rails because of a strong application of the brakes by the driver, Mr Donald MacDonald of Craigcorrie. The animal miraculously escaped alive, albeit cleanly shorn from nose to tail by the locomotive. Inquiry proved it was the property of Calum Doonwatter, a crofter and sheep farmer living nearby. Mr Doonwatter, who had left open a gate, is liable to be fined 10 shillings for carelessness and trespassing on the Railway's property. The case is due to appear before the Magistrate on April 15th.

Shipping Movements

Arrived

March 30: From Oban the ss. 'Renfrew Lass', of Gourock, carrying 20 tons of concrete, one railway locomotive, a wagon and various equipment, and three passengers.

April 1: From the Netherlands, by way of the Caledonian Canal, the pleasure yacht 'Shipshape', of Leiden, whose skipper, a certain Mr Polet, is an incurable railway buff.

Sailed

April 2: To Mallaig, the Steam Tug 'Flora M', Captain Macdonald.



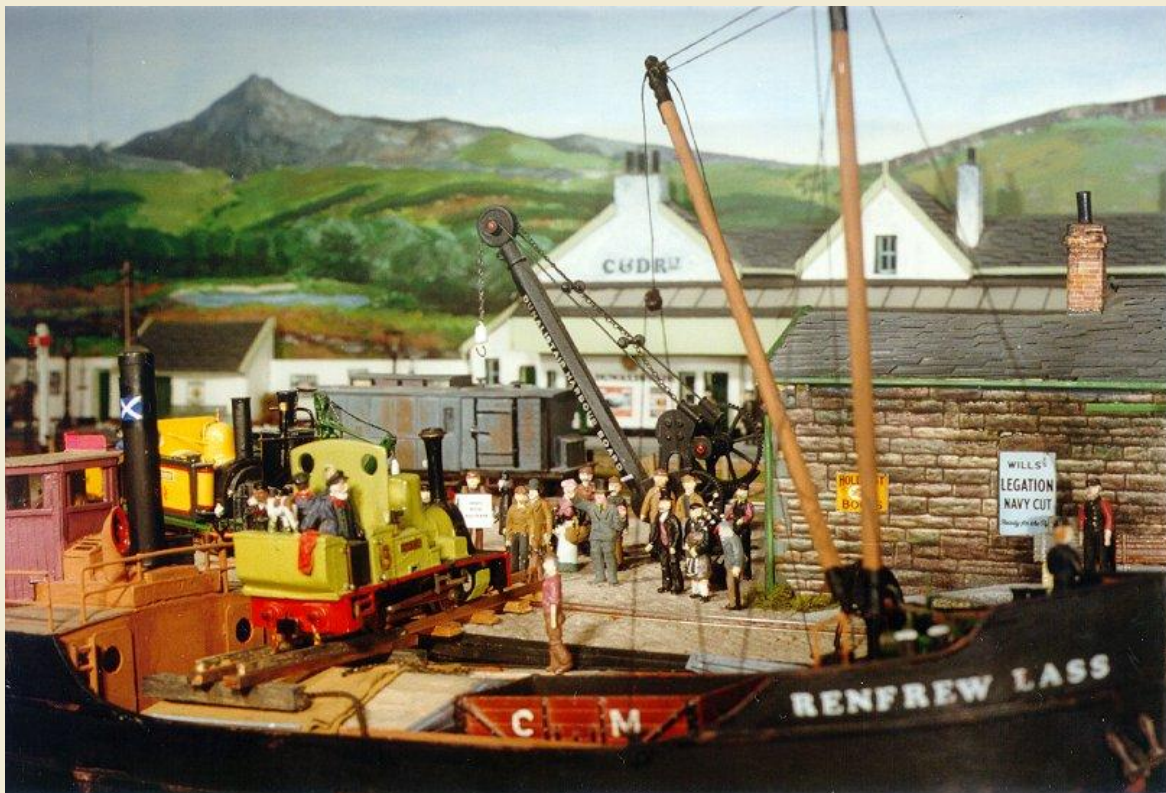
Advertisement

The Editor and Printers of the Dunalistair Herald extend their congratulations to the Railway Company, hoping it may continue to serve the Public for many years to come.

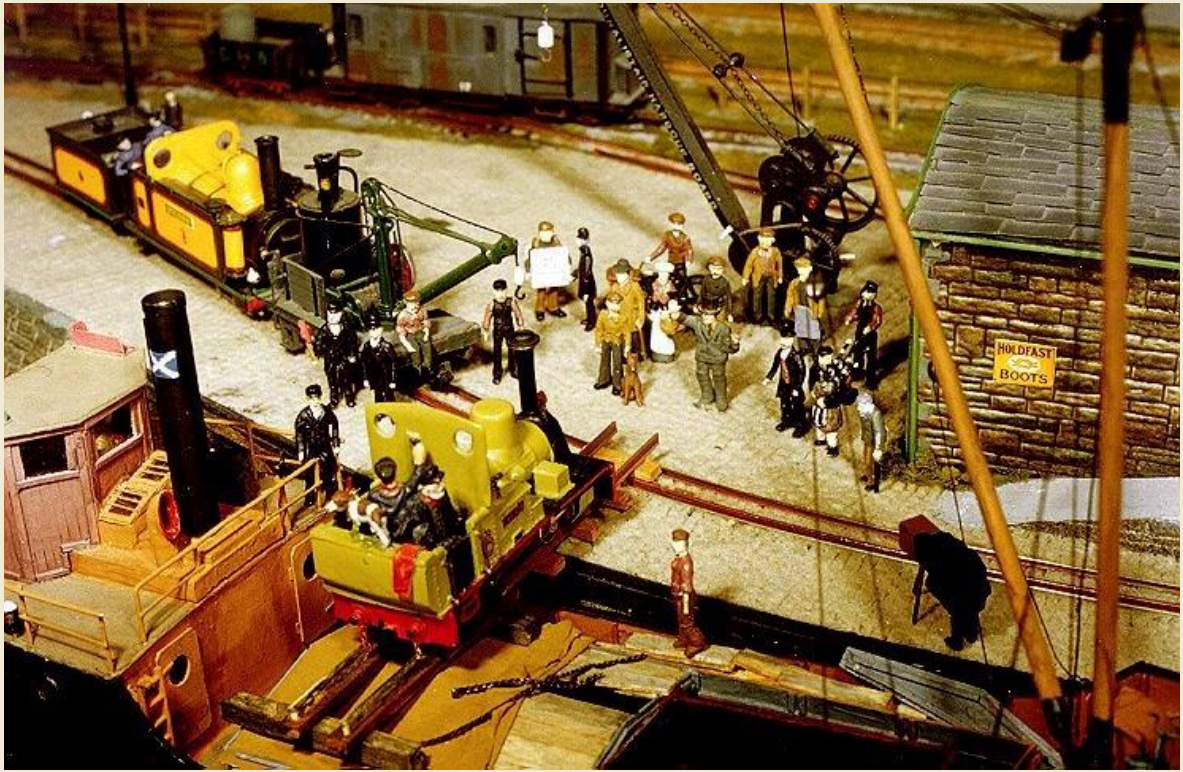
Author's note:

In the course of my correspondence with P.D.Hancock of Edinburgh, many years ago, he suggested sending one of his Craig & Mertonford locomotives to work over the Craigcorrie & Dunalistair Railway for a time. In due course, 'Colin', a neat little conversion of an Arnold N gauge loco and one of the later CMR locos, arrived in the mail, together with a CMR wagon and one or two other items. The CMR loco looked especially nice at the head of a short train of C&DR four-wheelers and worked a shuttle service for some months, with the end couplings of the train converted to standard 009 pattern.

From one thing came another: as the C&DR was around the 25 year mark at that time, and in view of the early influence of P.D.Hancock's work on the C&DR, I thought it was a good idea to stage a 'CDR25' celebration in which 'Colin' could play a prominent role. So it was supposed that the CMR sent a locomotive and a small delegation to attend the celebrations, by way of the North British Railway from Craig to Oban, and on to Dunalistair by sea. A few figures were converted, my (then) newly-built steam coaster was set up with the CMR stock as a deck load and a photo session was started, culminating in the assembly of a special train which actually traversed the complete C&DR main line, making occasional photo stops. Finally, a newspaper article in the 'Dunalistair Herald' was faked, describing the festivities. Madness? Perhaps it is, but what better way to introduce a light-hearted note into our hobby?

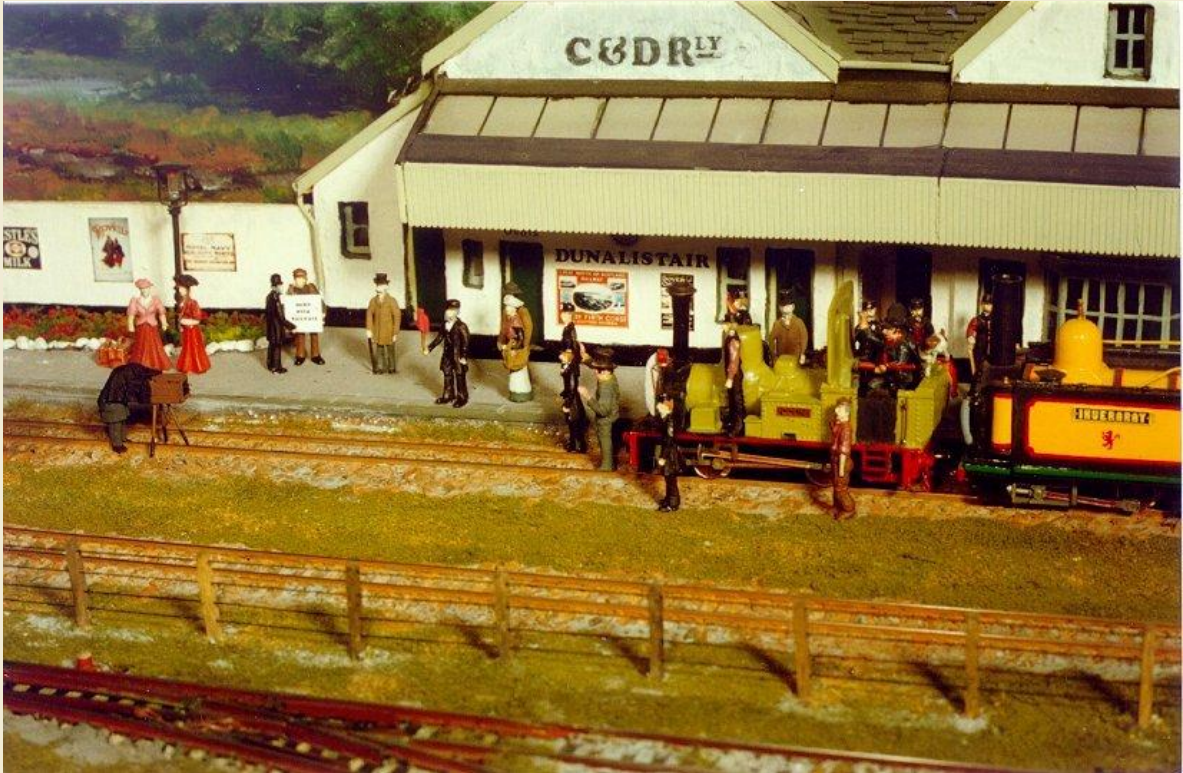


Colin and the CMR wagon arriving at Dunalistair, in the ss Renfrew Lass

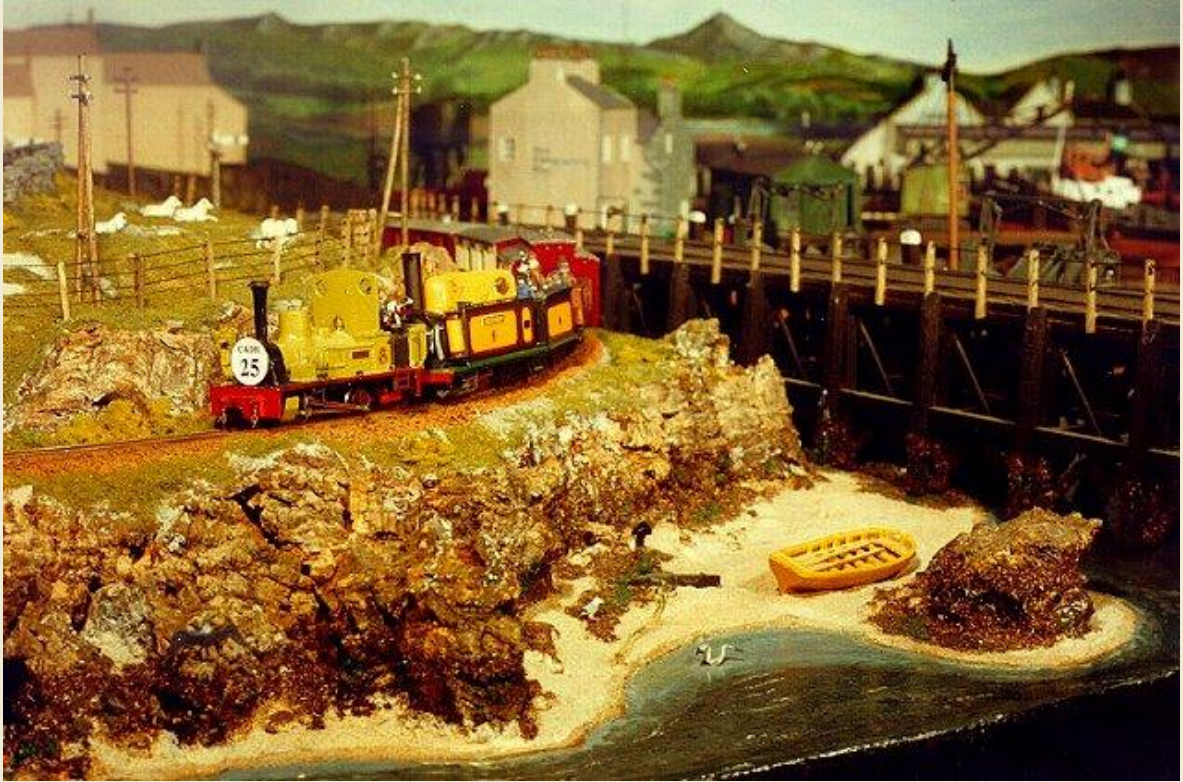


Colin being run ashore over temporary track. *Inveraray* and steam crane in attendance.

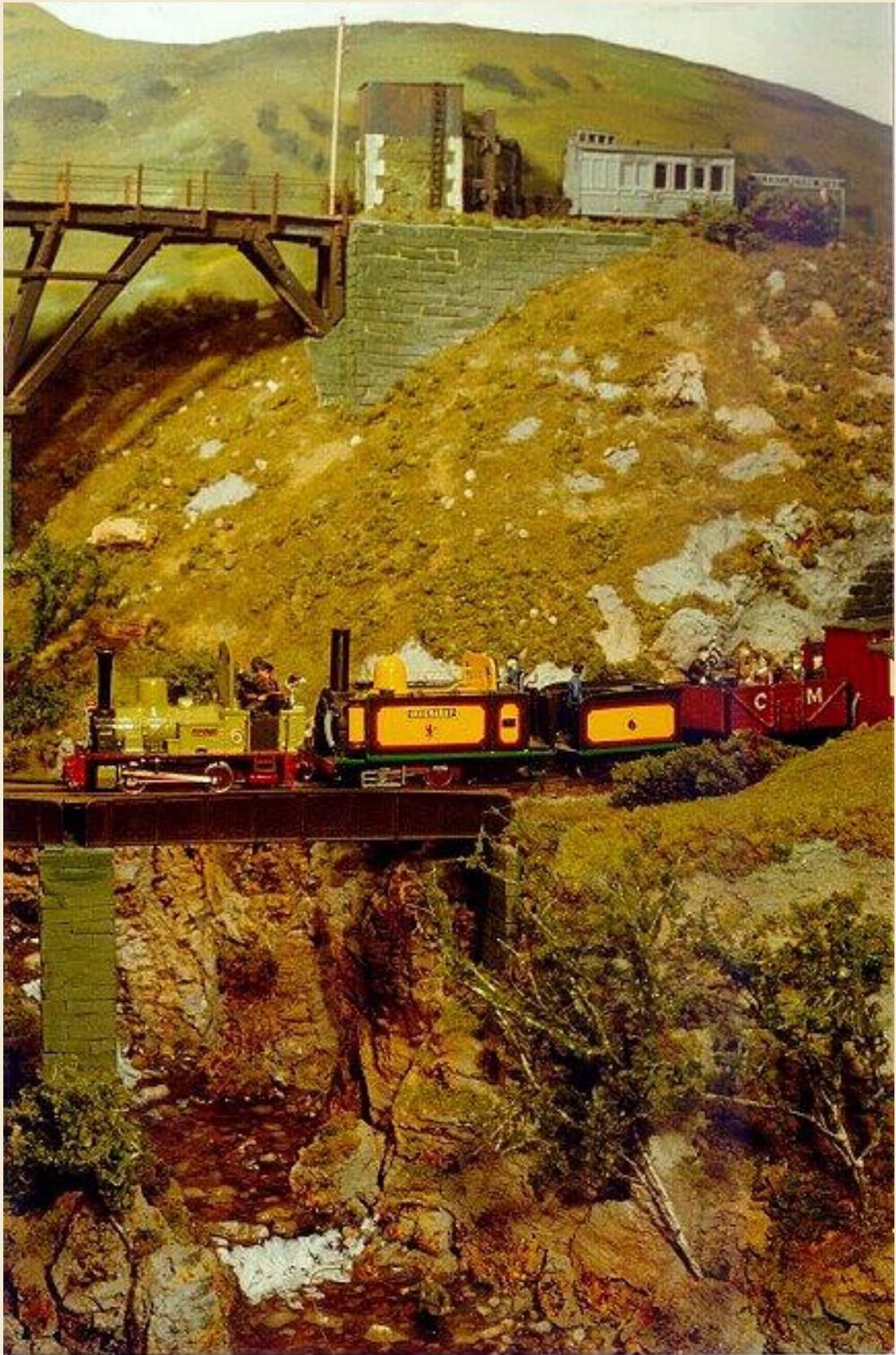
The Honourable Colin Craig, in top hat, directing the work.



The festive train being photographed before departure.



The festive train *en route*.





State portrait of *Colin* on the lower bridge in the Gorge.