

150 Years of Helensburgh's Railway - Chronology

1845 - Caledonian and Dumbartonshire (sic) Junction Railway was proposed and authorised the following year. A branch to Helensburgh was included.

1850 - Caledonian and Dumbartonshire Junction Railway opened, but because of financial problems only between Bowling and Balloch, with no branch to Helensburgh. Passengers travelled from Glasgow to Bowling by ship. This company was sometimes known just as the Dumbartonshire Railway - see its first advertisements.

1855 - Glasgow, Dumbarton and Helensburgh Railway Company authorised by Parliament, in two parts:
1. From junction near Cowlares with the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway (which started at Queen Street high-level) via Maryhill to join the Caledonian and Dumbartonshire Railway at its terminus at Bowling.
2. From junction with Caledonian and Dumbartonshire Railway at Dalreoch to Helensburgh.

The total contract cost of both parts was £240,000. Engineer was Neil Robson and contractor John Barr & Co. However, when the prospectus for the Company was issued, the share capital to be raised had risen to £260,000. Its provisional Committee included Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, William Colquhoun of Rosdhu House, Colin Campbell of Camis Easkan, John Stewart of Cardross the Villa, Walter Buchanan of Shandon and William Drysdale of Helensburgh.

1857 - Line built to Helensburgh with single track from Dalreoch, although sufficient land was bought for double track.

1858, 28 May – Line opened for goods traffic to Helensburgh. From the outset the line was operated by the Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway Company.

1858, 17 June – Line opened for passenger traffic to Helensburgh. Because of a dispute over station access charges, for the first month trains ran from Buchanan Street station in Glasgow instead of from Queen Street. The original station in Helensburgh was said to have been at George Street although plans show that the line had authority to go to the present site.

1862 - Glasgow, Dumbarton & Helensburgh Railway Company taken over by the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway Company.

1863 - Helensburgh station said to have been moved to its present site from George Street.

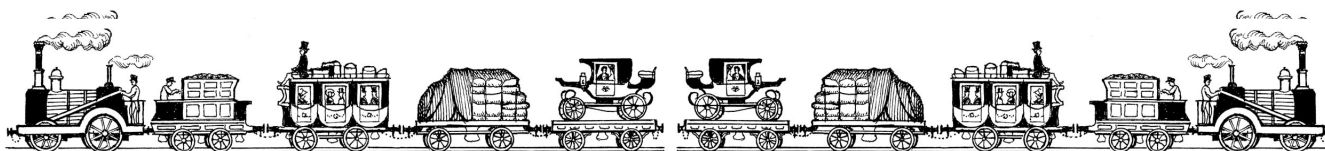
1865 - Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway Company taken over by North British Railway Company.

1866 - North British started steamer services from Helensburgh and stopped them the same year.

1869 - North British resumed steamer services from Helensburgh.

1872 onwards – There was a dispute over extending the railway line through Helensburgh town centre to the pier. Opponents believed that this would make parts of the town into "a dirty coaling place" and they eventually won the day in Parliament.

1879 - North British given powers to build a pier and station at Craigendoran.



1882, 15th May - Craigendoran Pier and station opened and the railway was diverted from its previous inland route at Craigendoran.

1886 - Glasgow City & District Railway opened. Helensburgh services now ran through Glasgow Queen Street Low Level station.

1894 - West Highland Railway opened from Craigendoran junction to Fort William.

1896 - Dalreoch tunnel doubled at cost of £40,000. This was the last section of the line from Dalreoch to Helensburgh to be doubled, other sections had been doubled earlier at various times.

1898 – A station was authorized at Ardoch (between Cardross and Dalreoch), provided that 23 feus for substantial houses were taken up. The station was never built.

1899 – The present Helensburgh Central station building was erected.

1923 – The North British Railway Company became part of the London and North Eastern Railway following the 1921 Railways Act.

1941 – The Faslane branch from the West Highland Line was opened to serve the military port which had been built because of the Government's fears of the vulnerability to German bombing of more southerly ports. As a consequence, extra sidings were laid at Craigendoran junction and Ardmore.

1948 - Nationalisation of railways followed the 1947 Transport Act.

1953 - Helensburgh station renamed Helensburgh Central.

About 1955 – The goods station at Helensburgh Central was closed and other sidings were closed in stages over the years. The supermarket was built on the site in 1985 and the Medical Centre in 1996.

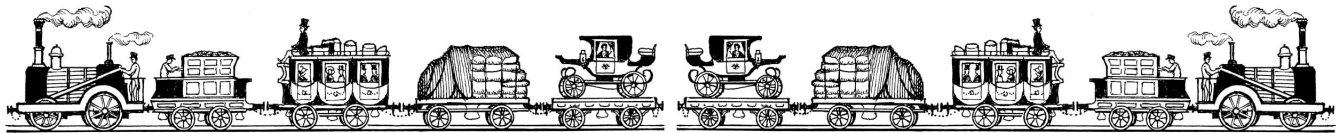
1959 - Electric train service introduced (first mainline electric service in Scotland) but was withdrawn after a few months because of technical problems (transformer explosions) and steam trains reintroduced.

1961, September - Electric train services reintroduced.

1964 - Withdrawal of local services on West Highland Line (known locally as the "Wee Arrochar") for which northbound services started at Craigendoran Pier platform. Local goods services also ended about this time, and so sidings at Craigendoran, Ardmore and Cardross all disappeared.

1972 - Withdrawal of steamer services from Craigendoran Pier resulted in the closure of the Pier platform and lines at Craigendoran station and the demolition of the Craigendoran station buildings.

1984 - line singled from the east of Craigendoran Bay to Helensburgh Central.



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