

Highly Commended

Killed by Accident by Angus Kelly, Croy Primary

It had taken James a few hours to die.

Isabella was peeling potatoes in her small farm house kitchen while looking outside at the heavy rain. She was looking forward to her sixteen-year-old son James coming home for dinner with his co-workers. It was Friday 6th May 1898 and it was the last day of her son's first week at work. He was a railway labourer for the Highland Railway Company, helping to build the Nairn viaduct.

She had just finished preparing dinner when she heard a horse and cart coming up the grassy driveway. It came to a halt on the muddy ground just in front of the house. There was a knock at the door. She went to see who was there and when she opening it she saw one of the local policemen, Constable Kelly, standing there looking cold and wet.

"Mrs Campbell, is it?" he said in a low, gruff tone.

"Yes, come in, please." Isabella insisted.

The policeman walked in, water dripping from his waterproof jacket, like a leaking tap.

He walked through to the kitchen and sat on one of the small chairs at the table, with Isabella following swiftly behind him.

"Mrs Campbell," the policeman said, "today while working on the sixteenth of the twenty-eight arches, your son James was lifting a large piece of millers red sandstone that had come from Leanach quarry. He was lifting it with a hand crane up on the viaduct when the handle started swinging round violently out of control and struck him across the forehead."

Mrs Campbell went pale. "Oh God...is James alright?"

Constable Kelly swallowed hard. "I'm sorry Mrs Campbell. The Highland Railway staff took James to the doctor's house at Clava, but there was nothing he could do for him."

Mrs Campbell broke down on the cold kitchen floor. Constable Kelly rose to his feet, muttering "I'm sorry Mrs Campbell. We will get James's body home to Drumore."

Had young James Campbell lived six more months he would have seen the viaduct completed on November 1st 1898. But, on the evening of Friday 6th May, at Drumore Farm, everything was quiet and still.

MAN KILLED AT NAIRN VIADUCT

NARROW ESCAPE OF TWO OTHERS

On the 6th inst, an accident occurred at the Nairn Viaduct, which is in course of construction, whereby a young man names Campbell, son of Mr Campbell, grieve at Drumore, lost his life, and two others narrowly escaped serious injury. It seems that the unfortunate young man, along with two fellow-workmen, was engaged raising a heavy stone by means of a hand crane, when the crane got beyond their control, and the handle rapidly revolving, struck Campbell violently on the head before he could get clear. His skull was fractured, and he died a few hours later. The others were fortunate in getting clear away without injury. In the afternoon deceased's body was conveyed to his father's house at Drumore.

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