

THE RAILWAY CONNECTION at Cathays Cemetery



The Friends of Cathays Cemetery



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1 Richard Evans (1833-1912)

PLOT M 1770



Richard Evans, who was born at Caerphilly on April 13th 1833, went to Cardiff at the age of 14, and afterwards became engaged under the Rhymney Railway Company. He was connected with the latter even before Cornelius Lundie, and had, therefore, viewed very closely the developments of the whole of the smaller South Wales lines. At the time he was appointed manager for the Barry Company in 1888, Evans occupied a prominent post on the Rhymney Railway. In taking charge of Barry, he had an experience which ranked as unique in connection with railways and docks, and there was no question of creating new traffic. Trade was assured as soon as the line was opened. So successful were his efforts, however, that in the first year over 3,000,000 tons of coal were conveyed over the railway, and shipped at the docks. Since that time the record of the company had been one of very great progress, and extensions have taken place both at the docks and in the railway system, including the Vale of Glamorgan and Rhymney branches, the deep water lock, No. 2 Dock, and many provisions, which have made the company appear as one of the most

progressive in the UK. Evans' genial and courteous manner won him many friends both in business and in private life, and he was greatly esteemed. He was promoted to the position of Managing Director in May 1889 and retired in March 1905.

After a successful career, Richard Evans died on January 12th 1912, aged 78 and is buried in plot M1770. At the time he was living in Highfield Park Road, Barry. As seen on the gravestone his wife, Annie pre-deceased Richard, dying at the age of only 33 on September 22nd 1870.

Barry Dock & Railway Company

The Barry Railway Company was a railway and docks company in South Wales, first incorporated as the Barry Dock and Railway Company in 1884. It arose out of frustration among Rhondda coalowners at congestion and high charges at Cardiff Docks as well the monopoly held by the Taff Vale Railway in transporting coal from the Rhondda. In addition, the Taff Vale did not have the required capacity for the mineral traffic using the route, leading to lengthy delays in getting to Cardiff.

On 20 December 1888 the line between Barry Dock and Cogan was opened to traffic, although this was only a light local passenger service. The dock too was beginning to be ready, and water was admitted to it on 29 June 1889, followed by a formal and ceremonial opening on 18 July 1889. On that day the main line railway from Trehafod and Treforest was also opened to mineral trains.

The first dock, with its modern loading equipment, was immediately successful and minerals carried increased year on year, so that by 1910 it had overtaken Cardiff as the largest export point of South Wales coal. Later the Railway built costly branches to connect to the Rhymney and Brecon & Merthyr Railways.

The company had been incorporated under the name of Barry Dock and Railway Company. It transpired that the precedence of the word "dock" placed the shares in a different category that was disadvantageous, and it was decided to change the company name to The Barry Railway Company. This was approved in Act of Parliament

of 5 August 1891.

Although chiefly a mineral railway, it ran a suburban passenger service from Barry to Cardiff. After 1918 the South Wales coal industry declined and the Barry Railway suffered accordingly. After the grouping of the railways in 1922 the Great Western Railway sought rationalisation, and the main line of the Barry Railway, which duplicated the ex-Taff Vale main line between Trefforest and Trehafod, was closed between those two stations. The line from Barry to Cogan, near Penarth, is in use at the present day carrying a busy passenger service.

2 Charles Lafayette Hunter (1839-1902)

PLOT L 1184

Charles Lafayette Hunter was born at Tredegar, Monmouthshire, on 29th October 1839, and was the son of the late Mr. Charles Hunter, estate agent to the old Tredegar Iron and Coal Co., who was for many years High Constable of Tredegar.

He was educated at Long Ashton School, near Bristol, and in 1853 was apprenticed to the Tredegar Iron Co. as a mechanical engineer. He made such rapid progress in his profession that in 1860 they appointed him their chief engineer, and locomotive superintendent of their Sirhowy Railway (a line which was subsequently taken over by the London and North Western Railway Co., and which is still known as the Sirhowy Branch).

Sirhowy Railway

The Sirhowy Tramroad was a plateway built to convey the products of ironworks at Tredegar to Newport, South Wales. It opened in 1805 between Tredegar and Nine Mile Point, a location west of Risca, from where the Monmouthshire Canal Company operated a tramroad to Newport. The Sirhowy Tramroad was operated at first by horse traction, but early locomotives were used, and a passenger service was

operated.

In 1860 the Sirhowy Railway was incorporated to modernise the tramroad; it followed a similar alignment but with several modifications, and opened in 1863, between Tredegar and Nine Mile Point. A short extension northward to Nantybwlch, joining the Merthyr, Tredegar and Abergavenny Railway, was opened shortly afterwards. The Sirhowy Railway was acquired by the London and North Western Railway, for which it formed a useful route to access Newport Docks.

The dominant traffic on the line was minerals: at first iron ore and later coal; the Great Western Railway used the lower part of the line for the trunk haulage of coal from Aberdare.

With the decline of the traditional mineral industries and the loss of local general traffic, the line closed in 1960.

In 1869 he was further promoted to the position of works manager, retaining the engineering responsibilities as heretofore, and continued in those positions until the Works were purchased by a new company in 1874, when he resigned. He was also on several of the local public authorities during his residence in Tredegar.

In 1875 he moved to Cardiff where he started in practice as a consulting engineer, and continued in this till 1882, when he became Chief Mechanical Engineer to the Trustees of the late Marquis of Bute, Bute Docks, Cardiff (the title so far as the Docks were concerned being at a later period changed to that of the Cardiff Railway Co.); and in 1889 he succeeded the late Mr. John McConnochie as Chief Engineer, which position he retained till he died. During his twenty years' connection with the Bute Docks he carried out many important engineering works, among which may be mentioned the equipment of the Roath Dock, the modernising of the coaling tips etc. at the East Dock, the construction of several large grain, meat chilling, and cold storage warehouses and numerous other works, and was responsible for the design of the system of shipping coal known as the Lewis and Hunter System in use at the Roath Dock, Cardiff, which has proved so great a success and a great acquisition to the port.

At the time of his death he was joint engineer with Mr. George N. Abernethy for the construction of the New South Dock, which is nearing completion at Cardiff.

His death took place at his residence in Penarth, near Cardiff, on 8th February 1902, in his sixty-third year.

Cardiff Railway

From 1839 the Trustees of the Marquis of Bute, operated a large dock operation in Cardiff, the "Bute Docks". This was very successful, but was overwhelmed by the huge volume of coal exported through Cardiff. At the same time it was seen that railway companies, especially the Taff Vale Railway (TVR), were making money conveying the coal to the docks.

The Bute Docks company decided to build a railway from Pontypridd to their dock; they obtained Parliamentary authority for part of the route in 1898, and changed the company name to the Cardiff Railway. To be successful, they needed to make a junction with their main rival, the TVR, at Treforest. A single mineral train traversed the junction in 1909 but legal challenges prevented any further use. The Cardiff Railway had built an expensive railway line that failed to connect with the collieries beyond Pontypridd. The company became part of the Great Western Railway (as did the TVR) in 1923.

A low-key passenger service was operated, and a colliery at Nantgarw was served until 1952. The passenger service was cut back to Coryton in 1931 and continues to operate today.

3 John Canty (1842-1884)

PLOT M 757



Inscription: In Loving Memory of John Canty 1884 age 42. Late locomotive superintendent on the Rhymney Railway. Died February 22nd 1884. Aged 42 grave No 757M. In Loving Memory of Mary Ann Peddle who died May 11th 1873. Aged 60 years. Also Mary Ann Johanna granddaughter of the above and dearly beloved Daughter of John & Sophia Canty who died August 14th 1873 aged 11 years. Also Herbert Ewart Son of the aforesaid. Died August 17th 1874 Aged 8 months. Also, William Cannings Canty, Eldest son of the Aforesaid. Born March 15th 1864, died June 4th 1882.

Rhymney Railway

The Rhymney Railway was a railway company in South Wales, founded to transport minerals and materials to and from collieries and ironworks in the Rhymney Valley of South Wales, and to docks in Cardiff. It

opened a main line in 1858, and a limited passenger service was operated in addition.

The first line was dependent on the co-operation of the Taff Vale Railway for part of the transit, and this relationship was uneasy; the Rhymney Railway built an independent line to Cardiff in 1871. Better relations were created with the London and North Western Railway, and later the Great Western Railway, and two important joint lines with the GWR were built: the Taff Bargoed line (1876) and the Quakers Yard and Merthyr Joint line (1882).

Although the Rhymney Railway network was never large, it was remarkably profitable, and paid excellent dividends for most of its life. Dependent on mineral traffic for its own success, it declined in the 1970s, but the main line from Rhymney to Cardiff remains in heavy use as a local passenger line.

4 Henry Hawks (1876-1904)

PLOT J 189

5 William Murphy (1885-1904)

PLOT R 2740

6 Thomas Parry (1876-1904)

PLOT A 1276

Boiler burst on the Rhymney Railway

Nine-year old saddle tank engine No 97 suffered a boiler explosion on the night of 20/21 April 1909. The safety valve supposedly set at 145lb had been re-assembled incorrectly after maintenance, and was as a result locked down tight. The driver took the locomotive out with a short train at 11.45pm and stopped at Crwys Road, Cardiff because the pressure gauge was firm against the stop at 200lb and he could not get either of the injectors to work. He uncoupled the wagons there and returned to Cardiff East Docks, where he went to the office to report the problem.

Whilst the driver was in the office, the boiler exploded, throwing the boiler barrel over 50 yards and killing three men, Thomas Parry (35), foreman shunter who had been employed by the company for about ten years, of 65, Coburn Street; Harry Hawkes (28), a fireman who had been employed about six years by the company, of Caerphilly Street; and William Murphy (17), a cleaner who had been in the employ of the company for about sixteen weeks, of 15, Windsor Road. Parry was scalded all over his skull was fractured, his left arm torn off, and his clothes blown away. Hawkes was blown to pieces, and Murphy had the top of his head blown off. The locomotive was scrapped as a result. At the inquest the Jury thought that the mishap was purely accidental, and held no one culpably to blame.

7 Cornelius Lundie (1818-1908)

PLOT M 1917

Cornelius Lundie was born in Kelso in May 1818 and died in Cardiff on 12th February 1908. He attended science classes at Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities and in 1832 began to work for Charles Atherton on the Broomielaw Bridge in Glasgow. In 1836 he took charge of the Clarence Railway in County Durham and then worked in New South Wales from 1839 to 1847. Following work for Thomas Brassey, he was appointed as Traffic Manager of the Blyth & Tyne Railway from 1855 to 1861 when he joined the Rhymney Railway shortly after its inception. He became the (Marshall) Traffic Manager & Engineer of the Rhymney Railway until 1904 holding this post for 42 years and dictating the trend of Rhymney locomotive design. Lundie designed the outside-frames saddle tanks which came synonymous with the early railway, the first batch of which were supplied by Sharp Stewart in 1872. Further batches followed and these locomotives ably coped with the expanding heavy coal and mineral traffic until the First World War.

Lundie was a rigid disciplinarian, a skilled negotiator, and a practical man. When he retired from the management at the end of 1904, a grateful Board elected him a director and he went on working and living for the Rhymney Railway almost up to the day he died, 12th February 1908, at the age of 93.

Latterly his Assistant in charge of locomotives was Richard Jenkins who was appointed Superintendent upon Lundie's retirement, but he in turn was replaced by C.T. Hurry Riches.

8 William Marsh (1839-1901)

PLOT B 864

Mr William Marsh was employed by Messrs Topham, Jones, and Railton on the new South Dock, Cardiff as foreman mechanic. Marsh was an old employee of Thomas A. Walker (1828-1889), a renown civil engineering contractor, and worked with him through several of his large contracts, the Severn Tunnel, the Swansea Docks, and the Manchester Ship Canal. He had been employed by the contractors of the new South Dock for the last seven years of his life, and was one of their most valued employees.



Marsh was buried on Saturday 9th November 1901 at the New Cemetery Cardiff. The funeral was a very large one and was followed from the deceased's house, "The Huts", by 17 coaches conveying his relations, some of his old

personal friends, and representatives of both the contractors and engineer's staff on the new South Dock contract. There were many wreaths, showing the esteem he was held in by his many friends. The funeral was met at the Cemetery by about 250 people.

9 James Brown (-1893)

PLOT J 345

James Brann (sic BROWN), auctioneer, Scott-street, Cardiff, who leaves a wife and family, died at Pontypridd Railway Disaster of 1893.

10 Annie Williams (-1893)

PLOT S 455

The interment of the little girl Annie Williams, of 34, Coburn-street, Cathays, who was instantly killed in the railway disaster at Treforest, took place on Wednesday afternoon, at the New Cemetery, amid many manifestations of sympathy on the part of the neighbours. The circumstances surrounding this case are very sad, the mother of the deceased child and her son, a boy of tender years, being so severely injured in the accident that they are still detained at the Cardiff Infirmary.

South Wales Daily News 17th August 1893

Pontypridd Railway Disaster 1893

RAILWAY DISASTER IN TAFF VALE. TWELVE KILLED AND SIXTY INJURED.

A terrible accident occurred on the evening of the 12th August 1893 on the Taff Vale Railway, three miles from Pontypridd. Twelve lives were lost and serious injury done to a large number of people. The 4:30 train for Cardiff was proceeding along a sharp curve near Llantrissant Junction, when several carriages came off the line and were overturned down a

steep embankment near Treforest station. The train was full, as many were returning from their week's or fortnight's work. Besides these there were three carriages belonging to the Cambrian Railway full of holiday travellers. It was noticed that the train was going at a very high speed to make up for some delay at Pontypridd. At one side of the line the hill rises to a considerable height, while at the other side the embankment slopes down for some 50 metres. Some of those in the train had just realised that something unusual was about to happen, when the first six carriages left the line and rolled down the embankment, turning over in the fall. The locomotive remained on the rails, so that the coupling must have either broken or become detached. Three carriages next after the Cambrian Company's also left the line and fell down the embankment, and others left the rails, but did not fall. The first of the carriages which left the rails, but did not go down the slope, rushed to the side next the hillside. The carriages that fell down the embankment were broken to splinters, some of them being left with their wheels in the air, and the passengers buried beneath the wreck were so firmly fixed that they could not be extricated until help arrived from the adjacent Treforest station.

William Brace, the South Wales representative of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, was a passenger in the train, and had a marvellous escape. When interviewed by a Press Association representative he said "I looked into the Cambrian carriages when the train was at Pontypridd and saw that they were full up, so I had to go on till I came to a vacant place in one of the middle carriages. Had the first carriages been only partially filled I should undoubtedly have got into one of them. After we left Treforest, and perhaps half a mile this side of the station, and the train going at tremendous speed-we were travelling quite as fast as if we were in an express train-one of the party in the same compartment as myself said in an alarmed manner, I believe this train is going off the line. In a moment we felt that the train was off the metals, and I then realised that we were being carried along towards the, edge of the embankment. I made frantic efforts to get out of the carriage on the opposite side, but found that the door on that side was locked. We came to a standstill, and when I sprang out I saw that the first three or four carriages had gone down the embankment and were lying in a confused mass of wreckage at the bottom, the wheels of some being up in the air, and the poor unfortunate passengers buried beneath the ruins. There were clouds of dust, and the whole scene was one of the most terrible and indescribable, confusion. I never in my life witnessed a scene so appalling, and I trust I never may again. The air was rent with the shrieks of despair of women

and children."

The following is the list of those who were fatally injured, and whose remains were taken to Pontypridd: William Jones, a ganger, Blaenant, who left a widow and several children; John Davies, a smith, of Ferndale; William Williams, 25, single, smith, of Ferndale; T. W. Shopland, 27, Whitechurch, near Cardiff; Mary Williams, an excursionist from Bootle, North Wales; W. A. Williams, solicitor, employed as chief clerk by W. Spickett, solicitor, Pontypridd, and residing near Llantrissant, who leaves a wife and two children; David Davies, butter merchant, Ystrad, married, f& r children; William Attewell, 25, hawker, whose family, consisting of a wife and six children, are encamped on Whitchurch-common; and James Brann (sic BROWN), auctioneer, Scott-street, Cardiff, who leaves a wife and family. These, with deaths at Cardiff, brought the number of fatalities to 12.

A little baby, aged 17 months, whose mother was killed, was found alive surrounded by wreckage and biscuits, as if the mother was in the act of feeding the child when the accident happened. The child was tenderly picked up, and to stop its cries some of the biscuits were given to it by a bystander, in return for which the infant smiled upon its newly-found friends.

Volunteers for the work of rescue were easily obtained, and when the carriages were half turned over, there were scores of volunteers went under. So daring were they, that a number of them were seriously injured, and one man named William Jones met his death, for while scores of people were helping him to turn over one of the wrecked carriages he failed to leave in time, the overturning carriage caught him and crushed him so that in a few moments he succumbed to his injuries.

Amongst some extraordinary escapes was that of Evan Weekes, a cabowner of Pontypridd, who was in a carriage which was smashed to pieces. He states that, noticing the terrible jolting of the carriage, he gave himself up for lost, and the next minute the carriage was bounding down the steep embankment. What occurred then he does not know, but he found himself actually sitting almost unhurt upon a portion of a carriage about half-way down the embankment. He was dazed by the shock, and could not realise that he was alive when he saw that the carriage in which he had ridden was lying in pieces all around him.

11 Edward Edwards (1836-1912)

PLOT L 2171

Inscription on Gravestone: Edward Edwards, Secretary Taff Vale Railway, died 5th December 1912 aged 78. Zipporah Wade, his wife, died 23rd December 1917 aged 79. Winifred Mary, youngest daughter of above, died 12 June 1934.

Taff Vale Railway

The Taff Vale Railway was a standard gauge railway in South Wales, built to serve the iron and coal industries around Merthyr, and to connect them with docks in Cardiff. It was opened in stages in 1840 and 1841.

In the railway's first years, the coal mining industries expanded considerably, and the Taff Vale Railway soon opened branches in the Rhondda valleys and the Cynon Valley, and the conveyance of coal for export and for transport away from South Wales began to dominate. The docks in Cardiff and the approach railway became extremely congested, and alternatives were sought, and competing railway companies were encouraged to enter the trade.

Further branch lines were built, and the Company used "motor cars" (steam railway passenger coaches) from 1903 to encourage local passenger travel.

From 1923 the Taff Vale Railway was a constituent of the new Great Western Railway at the "Grouping" of the railways, imposing its own character on the larger organisation. The decline in the coal and iron industries took its toll on the mainstay of the network, but passenger trains operate at the present day on most of the main line sections.

12 George Fisher (1810-1891)

PLOT L 839/L 867

George Fisher's early years were spent at Aberystwyth, where he was engaged under Richard Page, who had the control of Cardigan Bay, and superintended the construction of the harbour and pier works at Aberystwyth. Fisher came to Cardiff from Aberystwyth in 1840, as assistant to George Bush (c.1810-41), engineer of the Taff Vale Railway Company. Some few years afterwards he left the TVR for a short period, during which he managed the Dynas Powis Collieries, the property of Walter Coffin. He rejoined the Taff Vale Railway Company as general locomotive superintendent (1869-73), and ultimately became general manager. The traffic receipts for the half year ending June 30, 1841. amounted to £14,964, whilst the traffic in 1891, notwithstanding the opening of the Barry line, reached about £15,000 per week, and during Fisher's management had totalled £20,000 in one week. On the death of W. D. Bushell, in 1883, Fisher became resident director and deputy-chairman of the company, a position which he occupied till his death in 1891, aged 81.

13 George Gould (-1911)

PLOT S 3327

George Gould was living in Treherbert Street, Cardiff and was the guard on the mineral train involved in the Hopkinstown Railway Disaster of 1911. He received injuries and was taken to Cardiff Infirmary. He later died of internal injuries. His funeral was attended by hundreds of mourners. He left a widow and three daughters. His grave is unmarked.

Hopkinstown Railway Disaster 1911

On Monday 23rd January 1911, a collision between a passenger train and coal train on the Taff Vale Railway line at Hopkinstown, outside Pontypridd in Wales, resulted in the loss of eleven (twelve according to the official report) lives. The accident, also known as the Hopkinstown rail disaster or the Coke Ovens collision, occurred at 9:48am, when the

09:10 from Treherbert to Cardiff passenger train heading towards Pontypridd railway station, carrying roughly 100 people on board, rounded the bend at Gyfeillion Lower signal box with a clear signal ahead. The train collided with a stationary coal train that was using the same line. The impact caused the underframe of the lead carriage to rise up and pierce through the carriage directly behind it.

On 24th January a preliminary hearing was conducted at the New Inn Hotel in Pontypridd, where interviews and witness statements were taken. On the following Thursday a coroner's inquest was opened at Pontypridd Police Court. The inquest heard conflicting reports from signalman Hutchings of the Gyfeillion Lower and signalman Quick of the Rhondda Cutting Junction, the other signal box in control of the stretch of line where the accident took place. Due to lack of definite evidence an open verdict was returned; though the fireman of the coal train was censured for not alerting the signal box of the stationary train's position as he was required under Rule 55.

The Board of Trade enquiry, subsequent to the inquest, concluded that Hutchings had not, in fact, given the "Train Entering Section" signal for the coal train after Quick had accepted it, and Quick had subsequently accepted the passenger train, having forgotten that he had accepted the coal train earlier. Hutchings was also criticised for not replacing his signals to "Danger" as soon as he was aware of the conflict - if he had done so, the driver of the passenger train would have had approximately 30 seconds to observe the danger signal, and, even if he had been unable to stop the train, its speed would have been greatly reduced and the collision much less severe. A contributory factor was the use of two-position block instruments, which did not have distinct "Line Blocked" and "Line Clear" indications. If a three-position instrument had been used, Hutchings would not have offered the passenger train forward (and Quick would not have accepted it) while the instrument was still showing "Line Clear" for the coal train.

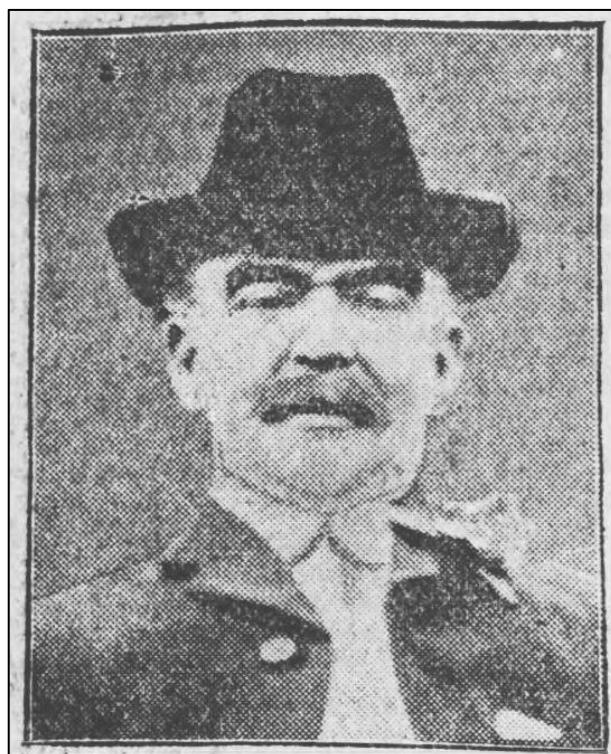
14 John Howell Hosgood (1860-1910)

PLOT L 1856

Hosgood was born Cardiff in October 1860; he became the Chief draughtsman to the Taff Vale Railway, and was then appointed Locomotive and Hydraulic Engineer to the Barry Docks and Railway Company, a position which he filled for over 18 years, during which time he designed locomotives and rolling-stock for the railway, laid out pumping-stations and plant, hydraulic coal-tips and other works. He left in July 1905, by which time most of the locomotive stock was complete. He died in Cardiff on 28th January 1910.

15 Oscar Hurford (1848-1926)

PLOT M 1283



At the Quintin's Lodge of Freemasons in Cowbridge in 1882 Oscar Hurford was elected as master of the Lodge.

Oscar joined the TVR on May 12th 1867. He was Stationmaster at the Taff Vale station at Cowbridge for over 18 years, and was promoted to the charge of Walnut Tree station in September 1893. He was further promoted in June 1899 to stationmaster at Pontypridd. A station where 600 trains passed a day, 4 million passengers a year and 20 million tons of goods and minerals. Overall Oscar spent 40 years in the employ of the Taff Vale Railway.

He married Sarah and had a daughter, Maud Adelina, who sadly died at the age of 6 months on October 16th 1885.

His eldest son, Sidney G Hurford died at the age of 33 in 1907 following an operation at Cardiff Infirmary. He left a widow and three children.

Sarah, his wife, was buried in Cathays Cemetery on September 20th 1902. Oscar lived until 1926 and lies beside Sarah.

16 Edward Kenway (1816-1867)

PLOT M 1877

Secretary to the Taff Vale Railway.

17 Frederick Marwood (1827-1879)

PLOT L 720

Secretary to the Taff Vale Railway.

18 Thomas McMullen (1804-1892)

PLOT L 881

Thomas McMullin was TVR Station Manager at Station Terrace & Newport Road, in Crockherbtown, Cardiff. He married Jane, who lies with him in Cathays Cemetery. She was buried on 8th April 1882 aged 78 when they lived In Edward Street.

19 Patrick Ratican (-1878)

PLOT D 428

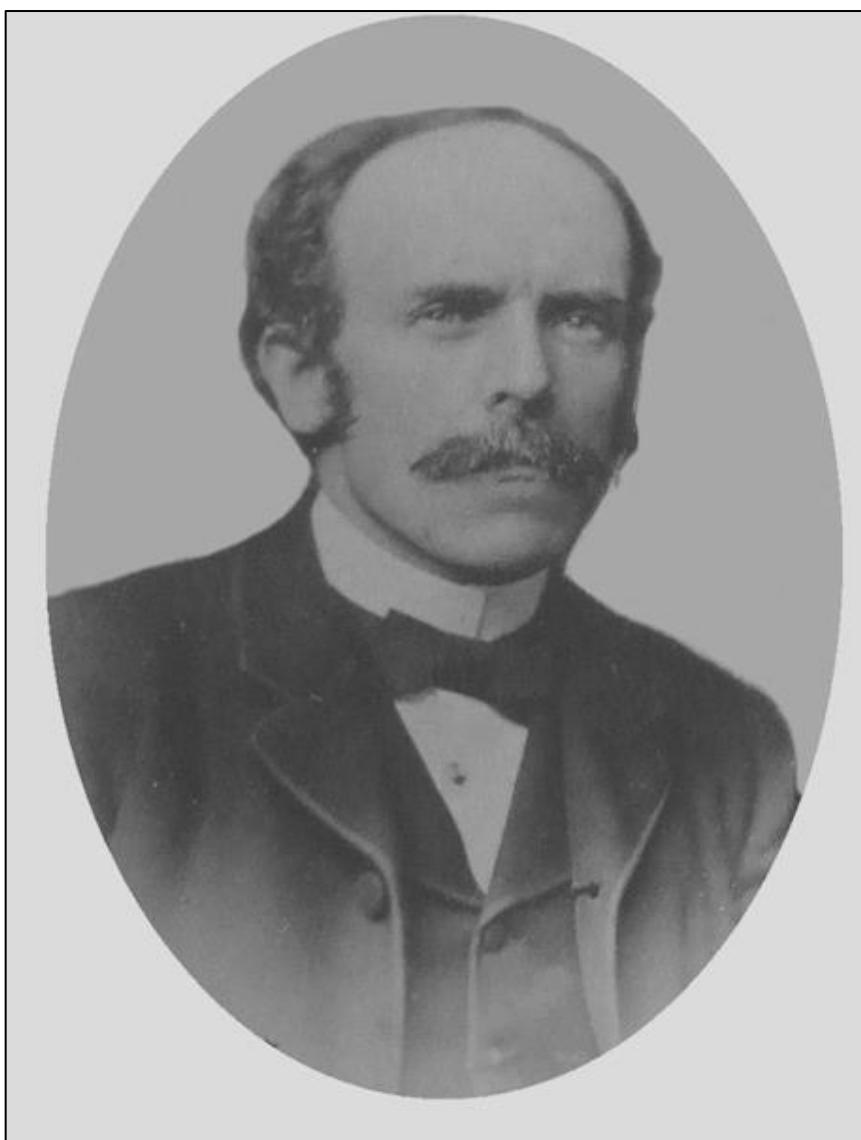
Patrick Ratican came from Pontypridd but was injured in the Hopkinstown Railway Disaster of 1878 and taken to Cardiff Infirmary. His occupation was Tinsman. He was buried in Cathays Cemetery on 23rd October 1878.

Hopkinstown Railway Disaster 1878

On Saturday 19th October 1878, an accident occurred on the Taff Valley Railway near Pontypridd when an empty passenger train was reversed out into a train full of passengers from a siding in a deep cutting due to an error between a signalman and a train driver. 13 passengers were killed and many more seriously injured.

20 Tom Hurry Riches (1846-1911)

PLOT L 867



Courtesy : Glamorgan Archives

Tom Hurry Riches was born in Cardiff on 24th November 1846, the son of Charles Hurry Riches. He was educated at Trices' Academy, Cardiff. At the age of 17, he undertook an apprenticeship with the Taff Vale Railway, at their locomotive works under the Joseph Tomlinson. He spent five years in the shops and drawing office of the company. At the same time he studied Science and Art classes. In 1868 he gained a scholarship at the Royal School of Mines. On the completion of his apprenticeship, he went to see for a few months, serving as second engineer on the S.S. Camilla. On his return he attended the Royal School of Mines, winning the Science and Art and Whitworth scholarships.

After completing his education he joined the Bute Ironworks and the Bute Old Works as General Manager. He remained in this position for three years, designing and building many iron roofs and bridges, as well as assisting in the general supervision of the company's engines, machinery, steamers and dredgers.

In 1872 he returned to the Taff Vale Railway as chief locomotive foreman. The following year he was promoted to locomotive superintendent in succession to George Fisher, who followed Joseph Tomlinson. He was at the time the youngest locomotive superintendent in Britain. He retained this appointment until his death. During that time, the locomotive stock was doubled. His responsibility was also extended to include all carriage and wagon work, the hydraulic and dredging machinery, dock machinery and coaling appliances.

On the occasion of the disastrous flooding of the Tynewydd Colliery in 1877, Mr. Hurry Riches worked day and night at the task of unwatering the mines, with the result that many of the colliers were rescued after having been entombed for ten days. In recognition of the bravery he displayed on that occasion, he was subsequently presented with a piece of silver plate by the Lord Mayor of London at the Mansion House.

He became President of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1907. He was also a President of the Association of Locomotive, Carriage and Wagon Superintendents of the United Kingdom, and was a keen member of the South Wales Institute of Engineers.

For a short time he was a member of the Town Council of Cardiff, but after nine years he was unsuccessful in obtaining re-election. In view, however, of his valuable services to technical education, he was immediately co-opted,

being appointed Chairman of the Technical Committee of the County Borough of Cardiff, which position he held for twelve years.

He was a Justice of the Peace and Governor of the National Museum of Wales, of the Court of which he was a Member, and he was also a Member of Council of the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire.

During the last few years his health had prevented him from leading so active a life as before, and his death from heart failure occurred on 4th September 1911, in his sixty-fifth year.

South Wales Railway Network

