

Extracts from the *Wanganui Herald*

Transcribed by Simon J. Golding, July 2009

31st July 1889

The Armagh Railway Accident. TERRIBLE SCENES.

Our cables last month gave but a little information about a railway accident which happened near Armagh, on June 12th, when the annual Methodist Sunday School picnic took place. As there are numbers of people in this district who came from the locality we extract the following particulars from an exchange.

The day being fine the excursionists, to the number of about 1200, assembled to travel to Warrenpoint, which charming watering place was the rendezvous agreed upon for the occasion. A special train was in readiness for their conveyance to that place. All the necessary preliminaries having been satisfactorily got through the steam horse snorted, and the train with its heavy freight of happy holiday-seekers, started on its way shortly after ten o'clock, the ordinary 10.35 train from Armagh leaving the station within a few minutes after that time. When the excursion train, which consisted of 15 carriages, drawn by one engine, had proceeded as far as Kilooney it was found that the engine was unable to draw the train over the hills. The officials in charge of the train then held a consultation as to what should be done, with the result that it was decided to leave a number of the carriages behind, to proceed to Hamiltons bawn, and then to return with the engine for the carriages that had been left behind. This appears to have been attempted. Five of the carriages were detached from the train, and were, as it was thought, securely spragged upon the line to prevent them moving. Hardly, however, had the train started when, to the horror of all the spectators, the detached carriages were seen to move and to commence to move slowly down the steep gradient to Armagh. Nothing could be done to stop the truant carriages, and the horror of the occupants and those who were spectators can be more easily imagined than described when it was seen that the carriages increased in speed at a terrible rate right in the teeth of the ordinary train which had just left Armagh Station. The occupants of the carriages were at once alive to the awful position which they occupied, but were 'powerless to do anything to save themselves, as the doors were locked, and, indeed, even if this had not been the case, the rate at which the carriages were travelling was such as to make escape from them a very dangerous, if not, indeed, fatal, operation.

The carriages rushed on to their fate, dashing with a terrible crash into the approaching train. The scene which then occurred, as described by an eye-witness, is one that will never be forgotten. Three carriages were completely telescoped, being smashed to pieces like matchwood, and scattered in all directions, while the powerful "engine lay on the side of the embankment, completely overturned. The shrieks and groans of the wounded and dying were most heartrending, and as those persons who had not been injured escaped from the carriages and began to search for their friends among the debris, the scene was one of an indescribably horrifying character. The intelligence of the terrible catastrophe was at once conveyed to Armagh, and in a very short space of time the inhabitants, who a few minutes before had been congratulating themselves upon the splendid

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weather which favoured the event, turned en masse, and proceeded with all haste to the scene of the disaster, many of them in a terrible state of anxiety for the safety of their children or other friends.

Very painful scenes were witnessed in this connection, and the grief of the large numbers who thronged the buildings was very great as they recognised among the ghastly array the mangled bodies of relatives who 'had left them that morning alive and well and full of joyfulness and good spirits. Under the circumstances it is very difficult to estimate correctly the number of the dead and injured, as many were taken to their homes by their friends, and it is very to obtain particulars with regard to them. With regard to the dead, however, it must be said that at the lowest calculation: there are about seventy, while it is even more difficult to compute the number of the wounded, as, in addition to those very, serious cases which were conveyed to the infirmary, many persons were taken to their homes and treated there.

The following is as complete list of the dead as it was possible to obtain:- Samuel Steele, petty sessions clerk, and two children; Mina Reilly, Abbey Street, niece : Minnie Boyd, Banbrook Hill; Agnes Hill, Jennis Row; a servant girl in Mr M'Kinny's, Scotch-street; Catherine Murray, Lower English-street; Eliza Johnston, Banbrook Hill; Margaret M'Clure, Jennis Row; Jane Thomas, English-street; Wm. Robt. M'Mullen, son of Rev Mr M'Mollen ; Wm Crozier, Market-street; Thomas Henderson, Barrack-street; Charles Neale, gatekeeper Lunatic Asylum; Mary Neal, his wife; William Walker; Minnie Edwards; David Edwards; James Cleeland, Railway-street; Margaret Cleeland, wife; Robert Cleeland, and Samuel Cleeland; sons; Margaret Patterson, Drumard; Margaret Steenson, Linenhall-street; Margaret Connolly, Manchester; Joseph M'Cann, Poor School Lane; Jane M'Cann, his wife; Robert Mitchell, English-street; Mary Mitchell, wife; Wm. Robert Mitchell, his son; Wm Whitworth Holland, Dublin-street; Margaret Gibson, Annagheramp; Mary Orr, Jane Orr, Ballynick, sisters; Minnie Murdock, English-street; Henry Jenkinson, Abbey-street; Mary Jenkinson, his wife; Margaret Anderson, Tullvarn; Sarah Conoll, Tullyloughran; Annie Edgar, Scotch-street; Margaret M'Veagh, Edward-street; Ellen Watt, Middleton, Tullycline; Mary Johnston, Market-street; Isabella M'Farland, Bethenia M'Farland, Barrack Hill, sisters; John Mallaghan, Charter's School Lane; Ann Bell, English-street; Robert John Irwin, Lunatic Asylum; Bertie Robinson, Charles Robinson, Scotch-street, brothers; William Burke, Market-street; Eugenia Simpson, Scotch-street; Ernest Logue, Police Row; Lizzie Sloan, Barrack Hill; William Scott, Drumanone; William Parks, Newry Road, Agnes Parks, his sister; Robert Warnock, Newry Road; William Latimer, Lunatic Asylum; Minnie Roundtree, Bellatree, sisters; Hettie Wolfe, Abbey-street; James Orr; a little girl named Mason; two children named Warnock; a man named Simpson. This is a very incomplete list of the dead, but I have given the names of all who had been identified by their friends.

The following is a list of the wounded who were taken to the infirmary and then detained, James Connolly, J. Vallyelly, David McKinly, James Hawthorne, Ed. Harrison, W. Geer, W. Twyman, Robt. Boyd, Thos. Mann, Wm Gallagher, Margaret Huston, Wm, M'Clean, Henry Hillock, Isaac Johnston, W. Hooks, Thos. Edwards, Moses Christie, Charles Cleeland, Mary Henderson, Mary Walker, Mary Steele; Ann Bleakley, Rebecca Macartney,

The Twyman Family: A One Name Study

<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/patriadomus/tons/index.html>

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Martha Barklie, Maggie Robinson, Sarah Mason, Evra M'Master, Mary Hamill, Mary Vallelly (Manchester), Maggie Boyd, Matilda Robinson, Margaret Macartney.

The terrible occurrence cast a gloom over the whole city, and the streets were filled by crowds who distributed here and there in knots, discussed the sad events of the day.

Business was entirely suspended and shutters were put up, while blinds were drawn, in respect to the dead. In the meantime the scene of the disaster was visited by large numbers, who watched with anxious interest the removal of the wreckage from the line and the search for further bodies. The place where the accident occurred is about two miles from the Armagh railway station, upon an embankment fully 100 feet high, and it is a miracle that the carriages were not precipitated over it, which would have had the result of making the occurrence even more terrible than it was. From Armagh, to Hamilston-bawn there is an ascent of 1 to 60, and it was along this incline that the carnages with their heavy burden, rushed to destruction. The immense engine had been entirely upset, and lay embedded in the side of the embankment, the massive ironworks being turned and twisted into the 'most fantastic shapes, which shows how terrible must have been the force of the concussion. The timber of the carriages was shattered and crushed like so much matchwood, and pieces were sent to great distances on each side of the embankment, hats, caps, and pieces of clothing being scattered here and there among the debris.

Subsequently the following railway servants were taken into custody, on the charge of having caused the accident by culpable negligence:- Joseph Elliot, clerk in the traffic manager's office; William Moorhead, assistant guard; Thomas Magrath, engine driver; and Henry Parkinson, fireman.