

## SPONDON RAILWAY ACCIDENT VICTIMS

On Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1913 there occurred a serious collision on the Midland Railway at Bromford Bridge station near Birmingham. Normally only open on race days for the nearby race course the two controlling signal boxes had been specially opened this freezing and foggy day to allow the 09.55 a.m. Wolverhampton to Birmingham local passenger train to call to pick up a horse box. It was as this was departing the down loop platform line to re-join the down main line it was struck by the 10.10. a.m. Leicester to Birmingham express travelling on the down through line. Despite the express braking hard it smashed into the third carriage of the slow train severely damaging it and the fourth carriage and derailing others. There were three passenger fatalities, Mrs. Minnie Douglass aged 33 (but reported as 32) and her daughter Margaret aged 7, and Miss Helen Knight of Wishaw aged 61. There were also six seriously injured and many lesser casualties. Minnie Douglass and her daughter had been living in Sutton Coldfield for two years with husband George and two sons but the family hailed from Spondon. The Derby Daily Telegraph for 20th January 1913 carried this report of their funeral.

### BROMFORD BRIDGE ACCIDENT : Victims Buried at Spondon

There were many indications of sorrow on Saturday afternoon when Mrs. Douglass and her child were buried in the village cemetery. As already announced, Mrs. Douglass was the daughter of Mr. Henry Lather, whilst her husband is a son of Mr. D.G. Douglass, late headmaster of the parish schools, both families being well known and respected in the neighbourhood. The remains were met at Spondon Station about 12.30 p.m., and the cortege then proceeded to the Parish Church, where the first part of the burial service was conducted by the Rev. A. L. Browne, M.A., vicar. Appropriate music was played on the organ by Mr. F. E. Brighthouse. The mournful procession then wend its way to the cemetery where the committal portion of the service was performed by the vicar. There was a most touching scene when the coffins containing mother and daughter were lowered into the same grave, many of those present giving way to deep emotion. Both at the church and graveside were a large number of sympathisers, whilst nearly every blind in the village was drawn during the time of the sad ceremony. The coffin of the child was borne by six girls in the persons of the Misses. Dorothy Ward, Eva Cox, May Sinfoil, Alice Watts, Patty Soar, and Gladys Gadsby. The bearer of Mrs. Douglass's coffin were personal friends of Mr. George Douglass, in Messrs. T. Hampshire, F. Spendlove, Jos. Watts, J. Maddocks, W. Cope, and W. E. Walker-Smith. The coffins were of polished oak and bore the inscriptions "Minnie Douglass at rest January 13, 1913 aged 32 years" and "Margaret Douglass at rest January 13 1913 aged 7½ years".

The newspaper report then continued with a long list of mourners. For readers interested in finding out more about the accident the full eleven page report of the

Inquiry conducted by Major J. W. Pringle for the Board of Trade is available to view on the website [railwaysarchive.co.uk](http://railwaysarchive.co.uk)

*Paul Walpole, Member of Spondon Historical Society, November 2018*



Photo from Midland Railway Study Centre collection



Photo from Midland Railway Study Centre collection



Memorial Stone in Spondon Cemetery. Photo by Paul Walpole