

# The Johnsons of Pear Tree Cottage



Frederick and Hannah Johnson outside Pear Tree Cottage [Family collection]

In 1911 the inhabitants of Pear Tree Cottage were Frederick Johnson and his wife Hannah. They were both aged 50 and Frederick worked on the Trentham Estate as a blacksmith.

Also living with them was their son Frederick James aged 27 and his wife of a year, Mary Emily aged 36. Frederick James worked as a railway guard for the North Staffordshire Railway Company. By 1912 they were living in their own home across the road at the Station Cottages, close to Trentham Park Station, with their baby son Wilfred George,

On 31<sup>st</sup> October 1912 an accident occurred at Etruria, when the young Frederick was hit by a train and died of his injuries. Following the inquest on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1912, the Sentinel newspaper carried a vivid account of the accident. On 9<sup>th</sup> November, under the terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act 1906, Mary Emily agreed compensation to the sum of one hundred and ninety nine pounds and seventeen shillings, on behalf of herself and her son. This was confirmed in a letter of 19<sup>th</sup> November 1912, but, as she had no other income, she was forced to leave the railway company's house that they lived in. Another fact, of which she may not have been aware at that time, was that she was expecting another baby, a girl.

Mary Emily then went into service and her two children were forced to go to St Christopher's Railway Home in Derby. This had been established in January 1875 as the Railway Servants' Orphanage. It was intended for the children of railway workers who had lost their lives in the performance of their duty. Their mother kept in touch with them during their stay, but they never lived together again as a family.

Wilfred left the orphanage when he was in his teens and came back to Stoke on Trent. The North Staffs Railway Company gave him a job as a maintenance fitter at Etruria, which was near to where his father had been killed. He lived in lodgings and married a nanny who was in service in Barlaston Old Road, having met her at Trentham Gardens. They had a son called Ivan. Ivan and his wife Susan also had a son, who now lives in Trentham with his family.

## A GOODS GUARD'S TRAGIC DEATH.

### Funeral of the Late Mr. Frederick Johnson at Trentham.

One of the most impressive funerals seen for many years in Trentham took place on Tuesday, when the remains of goods guard Frederick Johnson, son of Mr. Frederick Johnson, of Trentham, was laid to rest. The deceased, who, as already reported in the "Sentinel," was knocked down while on duty by a light engine, near Etruria, on Thursday, October 25th, was very popular with his workmates and neighbours, and many attended the funeral to show their deep sympathy. A special coach was added to the three o'clock train to Trentham Park Station, and conveyed a company of 63 guards and goods-porters, together with Inspector Hand, and Foremen H. Habberfield, R. Habberfield, Ball, Tinsley, and Lawton. Most of the officials and workmen on the Trentham estate were also present to show their sympathy with the father, Mr. Frederick Johnson, who for many years has been blacksmith on the estate.

The coffin was borne by guards, fellow-workmen of the deceased, as was also a second hand bier laden with wreaths. The company of guards preceded the coffin as pall-bearers, and lined the path from the main gates to the mausoleum, where the service was read by the Venerable Archdeacon Graham (Vicar of Trentham) and the Rev. C. E. Cope (Vicar of Christ Church, Stone).

Among the many beautiful floral tributes of affection and sympathy were noticed those from "Father and mother," "Wife and child," "Archdeacon Graham," "Fellow workers, Longport and Tunstall," "Fellow-workers, Stoke-on-Trent" (2), "His neighbours," "Aunt Jenny and cousins," "Mr. and Mrs. Leeson and family," "George Charles and Ernest (cousins)," "Tom and Ada," "Mr. and Mrs. Evans," "Mr. and Mrs. Dawe," "Mr. and Mrs. Haughton," "Millicent Moseley," "Mrs. Rennall and Mrs. Smith," "M. and T. Thomson," "Mr. and Mrs. Furnival," and "Mr. and Mrs. Hand."



Frederick James Johnson [Family collection]

## THE FATAL ACCIDENT TO A. N. S. GUARD.

### Inquest at the Infirmary.

Mr. H. W. Adams held an inquest to-day (Saturday) at the North Staffordshire Infirmary on the body of Frederick James Johnson, a goods guard, in the service of the North Staffordshire Railway Company. The deceased met with an accident while at his employment shortly after five o'clock on Thursday from the effects of which he died at the Infirmary the same day.

Johnson was in charge of a goods train from Eggington to Chatterley, and he stopped the train half-way between Etruria Station and the Grange Junction, in order to detach a dozen waggons. The deceased had uncoupled with a shunting pole, and he was in the six-foot way when a light engine crossing from the direction of Etruria passed, knocking the deceased down, and injuring him in such a way as to cause death.

The body was identified by Frederick Johnson, the father, who said deceased was 28 years of age, and lived in a cottage near the Post Office, Trentham.

Detective Inspector Armstrong, in the service of the railway company, produced a plan of the spot where the disaster happened.

Thomas Hemmings, yard foreman, stationed at Etruria, stated that at five minutes past five o'clock on Thursday morning a goods train of about 43 waggons had been drawn up on the down goods line near the main down line at Etruria. As the train was brought to a standstill, witness was near the engine. Deceased walked towards him in the six-foot way. Having hooked-off witness asked deceased to bring the detached waggons on the down side. Deceased gave the signal to the driver, and walked with the waggons. In a few minutes witness noticed the down-way line signal off, and looked to see what was coming. He saw a light engine coming from the direction of Etruria. When the light engine had passed some fifteen yards witness heard something rattling. He had gone not more than two steps forward to see what the noise meant when he observed the deceased rolling over on his back. Deceased was between the down main line and the down goods line, his head being in the direction of the goods line. Witness thought the deceased in walking down the six-foot way went too near the passing engine and was caught by it. Deceased was a careful man.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

**Frederick James,**

The Beloved Husband of Mary Emily Johnson,

Near to the Post Office, Trentham,

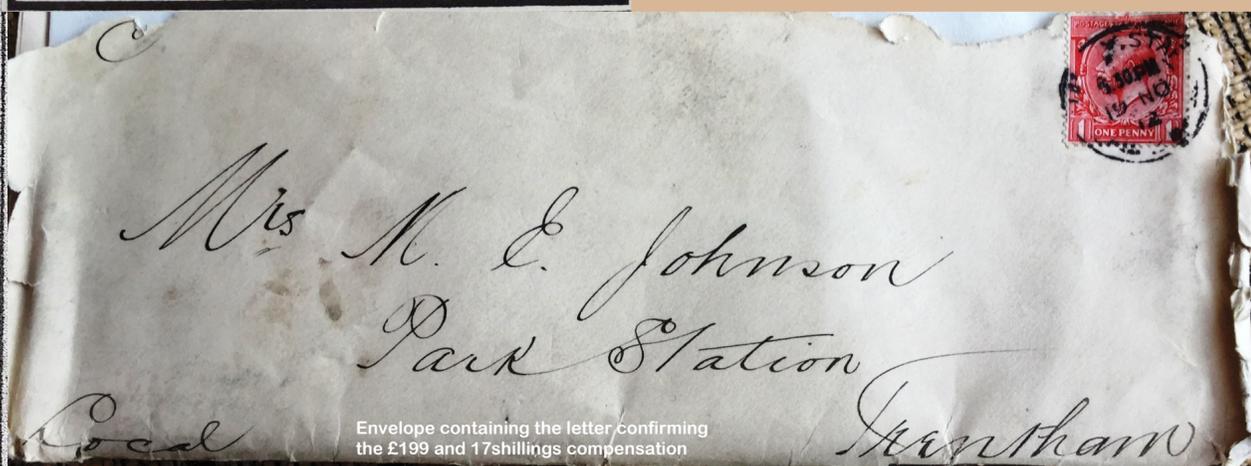
WHO DIED OCTOBER 31<sup>st</sup>, 1912,

Aged 28 Years.

Sharp was the blow, and quick I fell,  
I had not time to say farewell  
Weep not for me, nor sorrow make  
But love each other for my sake.

With calmly reverential joy, O let us all our lives employ,  
In setting forth Thy love, And raise in death our triumph higher,  
And sing with all the heavenly choir, That endless song above.

"One of the most impressive funerals seen for many years in Trentham... the coffin was borne by guards, fellow workmen of the deceased, as was a second hand bier laden with wreaths. The company of guards preceded the coffin as pall bearers and lined the path from the main gates to the mausoleum"



Envelope containing the letter confirming the £199 and 17shillings compensation