McPHERSON, Neil 14 July 1921

Tuesday, 22 November 2016
1:45 PM

Designation	Accident Location	Accident Due to
Guard	North Fremantle	Fall from train

Neil McPherson was 56 years of age when he was fatally knocked from his train into the Swan River after being struck by a timber stanchion on the North Fremantle railway bridge. Neil's body was not recovered until the following morning. Neil lived at Subiaco with his wife Amelia (Amelia survived Neil by 52 years and died in 1969 at the age of 96.) and he is interred at Karrakatta Cemetery (PRESBYTERIAN/EA/0109).

SHOCKING RAILWAY ACCIDENT.
The North Fremantle railway bridge was the scene ot a shocking accident on Thursday evening of last week, when a middle-aged man, named Neil McPherson, a guard on a passenger train from Perth, was flung into the river as a result of a carriage door, which he had opened, coming into contact with a portion of the bridge. The door was torn from its hinges and disappeared into the river. Judging by the force with which the man was flung from the train it is considered that the consequences would almost certainly be fatal if he happened to strike the woodwork of the bridge McPherson, it was learned, was a married man who has served many years in the department. A son arrived in the city from Merredin on Thursday evening.

It appears that two guards, McPherson and W. J. P. Lambe, were in charge of the 7.40 passenger train from Perth. It was the usual custom to employ two guards on this train to remove the milk for the various suburban stations. Shortly after the train had piled out from North Fremantle station McPherson left the van at the rear of the train and walked along the footboard towards the second class compartment adjacent to the van. Railway officials are at a loss to understand the reason for his action, unless it was to check tickets. This however, was hardly likely as it is not the custom to check tickets on the Perth-Fremantle line, while a train is in motion. Not noticing, apparently that the, train was about ,to pass between, the trestles of the North Fremantle bridge which do not permit a carriage door to be opened. McPherson turned the handle, and was about to enter the carriage when the door struck the trestles and was instantly wrenched from its hinges and disappeared from view, carrying the unfortunate guard with it. A Mrs. Davis, who, it is understood, was the only person occupying the compartment called: "Stop the train; stop the train." The other guard, Lambe, hearing a crash, glanced through the window of the van, and was just in time to see his mate disappear. The train which was travelling about 20 miles an hour, was brought to a standstill at the other end of the bridge but after a brief stop continued the journey to Fremantle. The night stationmaster (Mr- H. H. Phillips) immédiately telephoned the local police, and Sergeant Cassidy with several assistants hurried to the scene of the accident. A thorough search of the bridge was commenced, and about twenty yards from the spot where the guard is supposed to have fallen his cap was discovered and in between the stanchions, a portion of the carriage door was found suspended. Nothing was seen to suggest that the man had struck the bridge. A strong northwest wind was blowing and the current was running inwards, so it is just possible that the guard would be carried up the river. Up to a late hour no trace of McPherson, had been found, and the search will be resumed at daylight.

Source: *Trove/Western Mail (Perth) Thursday 21 July 1921 Page 33.*

FREMANTLE RAILWAY FATALITY.
GUARD'S BODY FOUND.

The body of Neil MacPherson, the guard who was swept into the river from the running board of a train last Thursday evening was recovered from the river yesterday morning, sergeant Foulkes, of the North Fremantle police, received a telephone message from the Mount Lyell chemical works, stating that, a man named Harold White had seen a body floating in the river north of the works. The body, which was found to be that of the missing guard,. was floating 15 feet from the bank, and Sergeant Foulkes and Constable McEwan recovered it and conveyed it to the morgue.

The District Coroner, Mr. L. A. G. Walter. R.M., viewed the body yesterday evening and Frederick William Beale gave evidence of identification. The body was intact, on the left side of the head there was an open wound about three inches long and just above that were two smaller abrasions. The right hand corner of the mouth showed signs of violent contact with some hard body. In the clothes a number of personal effects, including two £5 notes were found, together with various articles necessary to the deceased in his position as guard. The inquiry was adjourned sine die.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Friday 22 July 1921 Page 6.*

FAMILY NOTICES

McPHERSON.On July 14 1921, accidentally killed on North Fremantle Bridge, Neil the dearly loved husband of Amelia and father of Bill, Ina. Donald, Malcolm and Colin McPherson of 12 Union Street, Subiaco, oldest son of the late Donald and Isabella McPherson, brother of Mrs. Robert McKee, Mrs. Hunniken, and Jack and the late Charles and Teenie McPherson, aged 56 years.

Source: *Trove/The West Australian (Perth) Friday 22 July 1921 Page 1.*