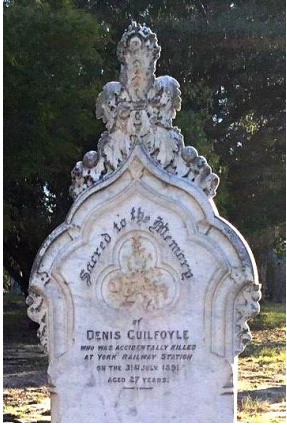


# The Streets of York

## Guilfoyle Street



**Denis Guilfoyle - Born 1864 County Clare, Ireland – Died 1891, York Railway Station.**

On Friday evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1891 the 6pm mail train was leaving York for Beverley when railway guard Denis Guilfoyle was seen climbing the steps to the top of the van. When the train reached Gwambygine Guilfoyle was nowhere to be seen. The driver and the guard searched the train and found a piece of cloth on the axle box of a carriage.

At the time it was against railway regulations for employees to move about on top of the carriages while the train was in motion but it was often done to adjust the trains lighting, though usually at Chidlow's Well or Spencer's Brook. The practice was considered particularly dangerous in York as there was guttering leading from the goods shed to the travelling tanks of the running shed, not high enough to allow a man to pass under while standing on top of the carriage.

The Station master's daughter later reported at the inquest into Guilfoyle's death, that she had seen him running along the tops of the carriages and had reported it to her father (James Hague) who had no means of stopping the train. The engine fitter reported that he had heard breaking glass and bumping while he was in the engine shed and found broken lamps on the line.

About 5 yards from the corner of the goods shed the body of Guilfoyle was found lying on the line between two lamps. He had been decapitated and his right foot was severed. It was concluded that he was moving down the carriages with a lamp in each hand and had slipped off due to the heavy dew or had come into contact with the guttering.

At the inquest the jury stated that the job of trimming and lighting the lamps should have been done while the train was sitting at the station, the guard should then have moved safely into the guards van. It was suggested that the guttering be removed and that there should be a means of stopping the trains after they left the York Station.

Guilfoyle was reported in papers as being genial and warm – hearted and of sober habits, performing many deeds of charity and was a staunch member of Star of the Sea Branch of the Hibernian Society.

He was buried in the Catholic Section of the East Perth Cemetery.