

PETER JOHN MARGARY, who was born on the 2nd of June, 1820, in Kensington, commenced his engineering career in 1838, when he was articled to Mr. William Gravatt¹ who at that time was Isambard K. Brunel's² chief assistant on the Bristol and Exeter Railway, the works of which had just been commenced. After the expiration of his articles Mr. Margary was appointed an assistant to Mr. William Froude³ who had succeeded Mr. Gravatt and had charge of the works of the eastern portion of the Bristol and Exeter Railway. On the commencement of the South Devon Railway Mr. Margary was given the charge of a portion of these works and assisted Mr. Brunel in carrying out on that railway the atmospheric system of traction, which, however, was only used for a brief period on the section between Exeter and Newton Abbot. Many engineering difficulties were encountered in the construction of the South Devon Railway, which is carried in many places under the cliffs and close to the coast-line, constant breaches and damage being caused by the inroads of the sea. These were successfully overcome, and it is interesting to note that in a report made in 1853 by Mr. Brunel to the Directors of the South Devon Railway upon a serious breach and slip which had occurred at a point on the line a short distance west of Dawlish, he said :—

“I cannot conclude my report on this occasion without referring to the skill and untiring energy displayed by your resident engineer, Mr. Margary, to whose prompt and judicious executions under emergencies involving considerable difficulties the Company and the public are indebted for a great reduction of the inconvenience caused by the accidents which have occurred. In the case of the slip at Breeches Rock particularly, a temporary wall was most skilfully and rapidly constructed, while exposed to the violence of the seas, in a manner which will serve as a most useful example in sea-works.”

Upon the decease of Mr. Brunel in 1859, Mr. Margary was appointed Chief Engineer of the South Devon Railway. He subsequently carried through Parliament the scheme for the extension of the Tavistock Railway to Launceston which was strenuously opposed, and also the branches to Moreton-Hampstead, Ashburton, and St. Ives in Cornwall. The whole of these lines he designed and successfully completed, though they involved works of great difficulty, requiring skill, ability and energy to overcome.

In 1868 Mr. Margary was appointed Chief Engineer to the Cornwall Railway Company, in addition to his duties on the South

¹ Minutes of Proceedings Inst. C.E., vol. xxvi. p. 565.

² *Ibid*, vol. xix. p. 169.

³ *Ibid*, vol. ix. p. 395.

Devon Railway, and its various branches. These appointments he continued to hold until the amalgamation of those lines with the Great Western Railway in the year 1876, when he was appointed Resident Engineer of the Western Division of that Company's system. That post included the charge of the Great Western Docks at Plymouth, where between 1878 and 1881 he carried out the construction of the West Wharf, the deepening of the entrance channel and the extension of the graving dock. He also at that time reconstructed the St. Pinnock and Moorswater Viaducts on the Cornwall Railway, a description of which he presented to the Institution.¹ Towards the latter end of 1891 Mr. Margary retired on a well-earned pension. His retirement was taken advantage of by upwards of 500 of his colleagues and assistants, to present him with a testimonial of their appreciation of his ability, and the respect and kindly feeling which they felt for him. This address was enclosed in a silver casket and was presented in the presence of a great number of his brother officials.

Mr. Margary did not long enjoy his well-earned repose, for he died in London of heart disease on the 29th of April, 1896. His death causes another breach in the ranks of those engineers who were brought up amongst the early surroundings of the great railway developments of fifty years ago. He was a man whose life was spent in assisting in no small measure in those developments, and his strong force of character and strict sense of duty, as well as his upright and conscientious conduct on all occasions, will long be remembered by those who were associated with him. He was elected an Associate on the 2nd of March, 1847, and was transferred to the class of Member on the 31st of January, 1860.

THOMAS MEIK, who was born on the 20th of January, 1812, at Duddingston, near Edinburgh, came of an old Perthshire family, at one time the owners of considerable property in the neighbourhood of Coupar Angus. He was educated at the High School and at the University of Edinburgh, from which he went for two years to a firm of millwrights named Moodie, and was then apprenticed for a similar period to Mr. John Steedman, engineer and contractor, at that time engaged in building the Hutcheson Bridge, Glasgow. On the conclusion of his apprenticeship he obtained,

¹ Minutes of Proceedings Inst. C.E., vol. lxi. p. 312.