

George Valentine Sharp (aka 'Sharpy')



This is Sharpy's cottage alongside the former LMS track, just beyond the cutting looking towards Killay. The little boy in the picture is Sharpy's grandson, Gerry. The cottage was very close to the railway line – you can see the ballast.

George Valentine Sharp was the ganger or platelayer, looking after the track. He was a Welsh-speaking cockney who had learned it from his wife who came from the Llandeilo area. She was killed by a train on the line just before the line closed. Their water was collected from a small well near the cutting. Any remains of the cottage are now hidden by nature but its position can be seen on the map below.

An interview with Brenda Davies, a resident of Dunvant, revealed: 'Sharpy attended Ebenezer Chapel in Dunvant as a non member'.

Peter Mathews remembers: Sharpy, the ganger, was involved in the loading of timber onto trains. 'One Sunday we pushed a rail bogie to Killay station to bring down a 40 gallon drum of diesel or

oil. The barrel was loaded in the centre and four of us, including Sharpy, standing like sentinels, free-wheeled back to the site. It was quite hair-raising reaching a fair speed. Sharpy as brakesman let it go a bit.'



Eddie Hughes, a one-time resident of Blackpill, tells a sad story about Mrs Sharp:

'I've been told that there used to be a cottage somewhere between the Railway Inn and the house next to the line where a woman called Mrs Sharp lived, I think. Might be wrong on the name, I'm afraid. Well, she used to walk from her cottage to my nan's house most nights for a cuppa along the tracks, but she knew the train times well so she was never at risk of seeing a train. The last train of the day would go up through Clyne at 21:20 and Mrs Richards would always stay at my nan's until after the train had passed and then make her way home, knowing it was safe. This went on for years, so I'm told, but one night, for some strange reason, she decided to leave early and unfortunately she was fatally hit by the train.'

He also tells a story about the cottage at the end of the caravan park at Blackpill where his grandparents and parents lived:

'Well, my mum swears by that house at the end of the caravan park being haunted. One of the strange things that happened when my mum was home alone one night with the dog was footsteps across the ceiling as if someone was upstairs, and she says that at the bottom of the

stairs there used to be a door that was always shut. The footprints came down the stairs and stopped at the bottom without coming through the door, the dog was going completely mental, but she swears there was no one else in the house at the time.

