

The  
**VIRTUAL MUSEUM**  
of the  
**LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY**

Accident Reports.

17 August 1845

BoT Report into Accident at

Preston.

(2 Pages).

My Lords have reason to apprehend that this provision of the Act is not upon all occasions attended to; and as they consider it of importance that it should be strictly complied with, my Lords, in the event of similar omissions taking place hereafter, will feel it to be their duty to take such steps as may be necessary for enforcing the penalty on such omissions imposed by the Act.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary of the Brandling  
Junction Railway Company.

G. R. PORTER.

Appendix.

II.  
Returns of  
Accidents.  
1845.

Brandling Junction

SIR,

York, 16th September, 1845.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst., which was sent to Gateshead, and therefore only reached me last night.

The signals at the point where the collision took place have since been altered.

The time of starting fixed for the two trains cannot well be altered, as one is the mail; but the directors are glad to be able to state that this alteration will be unnecessary, as every exertion has been made since the accident to make the line double, and this will be completed in a few days.

The driver of the engine, most in fault, was summoned and fined 5*l.* by the Sunderland magistrates.

All accidents shall in future be at once reported to the Board of Trade.

I am, &c.,

G. R. Porter, Esq.,  
&c. &c.

J. CLOSE.

#### PRESTON AND WYRE RAILWAY.

Preston and Wyre.

MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,

Fleetwood, August 25th, 1845.

I have to report, that on Sunday morning, the 17th instant, a collision occurred between the trains of the Lancaster and Fleetwood Companies, at the level crossings at Preston, and which caused the upset of two waggons and the fracture of one person's leg. In order to elicit fully the circumstances, the case was placed in the hands of an eminent Preston solicitor, for the decision of the magistrates, and to place the evidence before your Board. Captain Coddington has now visited Fleetwood and Preston, and has collected the evidence. I regret to find that in this, as in another case reported to-day, that I ought to have written and informed you of the circumstances, and I must entreat your pardon for my unintentional neglect, assuring you that, for the future, no time shall be lost in writing to you, should accidents again occur on this line.

I have, &c.,

To the Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, London.

H. BAZETT JONES, Secretary.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, August 28th, 1845.

SIR,

I have the honour to report, that on the 24th instant I proceeded, according to your instructions, from Manchester to Fleetwood, for the purpose of inquiring whether an accident (a rumour of which had reached London before my departure on the 22nd) had actually occurred on the Preston and Wyre Railway, no report relative to it having been made to this Department.

On arriving at Fleetwood, I waited on Mr. Jones, the secretary of the Preston and Wyre Railway Company, and I learned from him that an accident, attended with personal injury, had occurred on the previous Sunday. I therefore instituted an inquiry into the circumstances, which are as follow:—

It has been the practice of the Preston and Wyre Company, during the present summer, and since the month of May last, to start a cheap train from Preston to Fleetwood every Sunday morning, at eight o'clock: this is taken advantage of by large numbers as an excursion, and every alternate Sunday, when the tide at Fleetwood is favourable for bathers, a very great number go down from Preston by it. Sunday the 17th was one of these favourable days, and a train was marshalled in the station at Preston, consisting of an engine, tender, and 21 carriages, and it is computed that it had at least 1000 passengers in it; its time for starting was 8 A.M., but from the numbers it could not be got ready, and it started five minutes after eight.

The station of the Preston and Wyre Company in Preston lies on the east side of the railway from Lancaster to Preston, and is crossed by it on the level, at an angle of about 60 degrees, not more than 130 yards in front.

Just after this excursion train for Fleetwood had started, and was in the act of passing over the level crossing, a train arrived from Lancaster at the same spot, and, notwithstanding the signals, was unable to stop in time, but ran into the other at the eighth and ninth waggons from the engine: these were upset, and the passengers, 80 or 90 in number, thrown out upon the ground; strange to say, they all got up again, clambered into other carriages, and after righting the waggons the train proceeded; and it was not till after their arrival at Fleetwood that it was discovered that one man had his thigh broken, the only injury that has become known to the Company. The engine of the Lancaster

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train was forced off the rails by the forward motion of the other train, and its crank axle strained. None of the passengers by that train (there were 270) were hurt.

This accident has arisen from two causes:—1st, from mismanagement on the part of the Preston and Wyre Company; and 2ndly, from the dangerous nature of that crossing, and the defective nature of the signals.

1st. It appears that the Lancaster train is a regular train, leaving that town at 6·50 A.M., and due at Preston 7·50; on that morning it was behind its time, and had not arrived at 8·5, when the Fleetwood train started. I can consider it nothing but gross mismanagement, which could start a large unwieldy train from the station in the face of an over-due train from the north, which every moment might be expected to bring upon them; where from their proximity to the station they could have acquired no speed, and the time necessary for the passage of their train over the crossing would be between two and three minutes.

In extenuation of this unaccountable proceeding, I was informed that the Preston and Wyre Company is of older existence than the Lancaster and Preston Company, and that it is the latter line which has caused the crossing, and that it is provided in their act of incorporation that the line of the Preston and Wyre Company is to be at all times open, while the Lancaster Company are bound to see that all is clear before they cross.

Admitting all this, I do not see that it mends the matter, and such a use I consider an abuse of the privilege.

2ndly. The dangerous nature of this crossing. On proceeding to the spot I found that the lines cross each other in a cutting; that, except at the actual crossing, neither line can see 100 yards of the other; that both the lines are on curves.

Standing at the crossing, and looking north towards Lancaster, there is a bridge 58 yards off, under the arch of which you see the line curve off to the right; the cutting is about 20 feet deep, and at the most salient part is a coal store with loaded waggons at it, which restricts the view to 320 yards. Looking east, a bank hides the station, which is only 130 yards off, and the line is not seen more than 50 yards. Looking west, towards Fleetwood, the view is entirely obstructed by a bridge at the distance of 230 yards; and looking south, the line winds through the town of Preston, and a train is first perceived by the steam between the houses.

The precautions adopted are, a signal-man at the point of crossing, who is provided with a white and a red flag, and a white and a red lamp—the former for the day, the latter at night. Should two trains approach together, he restrains one by the exhibition of his red flag, and passes the other with his white flag.

The engine drivers are ordered to whistle and proceed cautiously there.

The signal-man is on duty every day from 6 A.M. till 8½ P.M., and besides having four roads to watch, has two pairs of points to attend. There is no signal-post, or fixed signal of any kind.

It is obvious that, with the extremely limited view he has in any direction, and the many calls upon his attention, the risk of collision is very great.

In this instance, it appears that the Lancaster train did whistle, and the signal-man was at his post and heard him, but he was looking at the Fleetwood train coming out, and before he could turn round, get across the line, and show his flag, the mischief was done.

It is therefore absolutely necessary to the public safety that additional precautions should be taken at that crossing, and that the coal store and waggon siding which obstruct the view northwards should be removed. It would also be very desirable that more frequent intercommunication existed between the Companies, who appear to have acted entirely independent of each other. If such were the case, there would be no difficulty in so arranging the arrival and departure of their trains as to benefit themselves and afford security to the public.

I am, &c.,  
Major-General Pasley,  
&c. &c.

I am, &c.,  
J. CODDINGTON, Capt. R.E.,  
Assistant-Inspector of Railways.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, September 10th, 1845.

SIR,

I am directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to acquaint you, that having considered the report of the Assistant-Inspector of Railways, upon the accident which occurred on the 22nd ultimo, my Lords desire to intimate their opinion that sufficient provision is not made for the security of passengers at the crossing of the two lines where the present accident occurred; and that it is absolutely necessary to the public safety that additional precautions should be taken at the crossing, by means of fixed signal-posts, and otherwise, for the purpose of guarding against those collisions which the nature of the lines at that spot renders highly probable. With respect to the omission on the part of the Company to report the occurrence of this accident in the mode required by the Act of Parliament, my Lords beg to acknowledge the letter of explanation addressed to them by the secretary.

My Lords have reason to apprehend that this provision of the Act is not upon all occasions attended to; and as they consider it of importance that it should be strictly complied with, my Lords, in the event of similar omissions taking place hereafter, will feel it to be their duty to take such steps as may be necessary for enforcing the penalty on such omission imposed by the Act.

I have, &amp;c.,

To the Secretary of the Preston and Wyre  
Railway Company.

G. R. PORTER.