

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

Accident Reports.

1 January 1873

BoT Report into Accident at  
Rainford Junction.

(1 Page).

carriage back on to its proper line of rails, was deeply marked and bent from the strain that it had subjected to, and one of the three connecting rods of the points of the siding was broken.

The piece of rail that broke off had been partly broken for some time previous to the accident, and when the rail was taken out a similar defect was found at the other end of it. The defects in the rail were exactly above the sleepers next to the joint sleepers; these cracks in the rail were caused by the sleepers that supported the rail at these places being much smaller than the joint sleepers, and not supporting the rail as well as the joint sleepers. The latter were 12 inches  $\times$  6 inches. The sleeper under that part of the rail that broke was only 6 inches  $\times$  6 inches, and the timber was half rotten, so that it could not be well packed up at the end.

The cracks in the rail could not have been detected by the ganger in walking the length.

The Great Southern and Western Railway Company are renewing large portions of their permanent way. There are many decayed sleepers in the old parts of the line which should be taken out and

removed. The sleepers vary very much in size. Those with 6-inch bearing surface must sink much quicker than the sleepers that have 12-inch bearing surface. The difference in the size of the sleepers must render it much more difficult for the platelayers to maintain the road in a safe state for working the traffic; when the sleepers with narrow bearing surfaces work down into the ballast, the rail must frequently be slightly suspended and subject to an unfair proportion of breaking strain, which will probably first crack, and subsequently break the old rail.

I would recommend that the rails should be carefully examined. Any cracks would be detected by the application of a little oil, and it is very desirable that all small and defective sleepers should be taken out and replaced with new ones. The sleepers that are now being used by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company of Ireland are uniform in size and of proper scantling.

I have, &c.,  
The Secretary,  
(Railway Department),  
Board of Trade.

F. H. RICH,  
Lieut.-Col. R.F.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the company on the 27th February.

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Sir, *Manchester, 24th January 1873.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 3rd instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on the 1st instant at Rainford junction station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

The lines from St. Helen's, and from Ormskirk, join the line from Wigan to Liverpool at Rainford junction station.

A goods train and a passenger train, each of which were being pushed back, came into collision at a slow speed at the station platform. Several passengers have complained of being shaken, but their injuries are believed to be slight.

On the day in question a goods train, which consisted of an engine and tender, 15 loaded, 16 empty waggons, and a break-van, arrived from Normanton at Rainford junction station at 4.40 p.m.

Four waggons were to be left at Rainford junction station. After shunting these waggons on to the St. Helen's branch, the driver of the goods train took his engine and train on to the Ormskirk branch, so as to allow a passenger train from Wigan to pass towards Liverpool. While the goods train was standing on the down line of the Ormskirk branch, a train from Ormskirk and a train from Liverpool arrived at Rainford junction station. Two waggons of cattle, which formed part of the train from Ormskirk, were to be attached to the train from Liverpool, so as to be taken on by that train. The engine of the train from Ormskirk was uncoupled, and shunted on to the up line from Liverpool, to enable this to be done, and the train from Liverpool, which was standing with the engine at the Rainford junction cabin, was then ordered to be set back against the train from Ormskirk, so that the two waggons with cattle might be hooked on to it. While the passenger train from Liverpool was being pushed back, the goods train, which had been standing on the Ormskirk branch down line, until the line was clear for it to go to Liverpool, was pushed back at the same moment. The driver of this goods train thought that he might follow the passenger train, for which he had been shunted on to the Ormskirk branch, and which had then gone away towards Liverpool.

There are slip points between the down line from

Liverpool to Ormskirk and the up line from Ormskirk to Liverpool, which serve as catch points, to turn runaway vehicles on to their proper line at this junction. The goods train, which was being backed, was directed by these slip points on to the up line from Liverpool, on which the Liverpool train was being backed, and the vehicles at the tail of each of these trains came into collision, before they could be stopped. No injury was done to either train, nor were any of the vehicles knocked off the rails.

The drivers of both trains became aware of their danger (from several people at the station holding up red lights) before the trains met, and the speed of both trains was therefore very slow.

The goods train from Normanton was intended to have remained on the branch until all the passenger trains had left Rainford junction station, but the driver of the Normanton goods train, who was an extra driver, and not well acquainted with the station, fancied that he had seen a hand signal to call him back, whereas it was evident that no such signal was given to him.

The signals and points at Rainford junction station are worked from a raised cabin; but are not interlocked. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Company have given instructions for some time past for the junction to be re-arranged, and for the whole of the signals and points to be interlocked; but they have not been able to get the work done. The firms that have been in the habit of doing this work being fully engaged.

It appears to me that the only means of preventing accidents like the present, is for the guard of the train, that is shunted on to a branch, to go to the signal cabin after he has made his train secure and take the pointsman's instructions for what he is to do, and communicate them to his engine-driver before the latter is allowed to move from where he had been placed. If there is proper accommodation and sufficient refuge sidings are provided for goods trains (instead of these trains being necessarily shunted on to passenger lines for want of proper accommodation) and the whole are interlocked and worked from the signal cabin, these accidents cannot occur.

I have, &c.,  
The Secretary,  
(Railway Department),  
Board of Trade.

F. H. RICH,  
Lieut.-Col. R.F.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the company on the 22nd February.