

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

26 December 1883

BoT Report into Accident at
Rochdale.

(3 Pages).

The consequence of the mistake was that the unattached engine remained standing for about five minutes at the signals of No. 1 cabin, where the driver expected to get the engine signal lowered for him to proceed through the station, but on hearing a train approaching he looked up at the main signals, saw one lowered, immediately gave his engine steam, and had just got into motion when the collision occurred.

The passenger train driver just after passing No. 2 cabin saw the home-signal taken off for him at No. 1 cabin, and also shortly after the distant-signal from the next cabin; he accordingly was proceeding forward at a speed of six or seven miles an hour, and at first mistook (he says) the light on the back of the tender of the unattached engine, for the low engine signal close to which the latter was standing, and did not realise what it was till he was almost close to it, too close to take any effectual means for stopping.

The driver of the unattached engine was unwise in not having whistled after standing two or three minutes at the signal. Had he done so he might have attracted the signalman's attention.

The necessity of this engine signal, and of the mode of working which gave rise to its adoption, will happily now soon cease, as the improvements at Victoria Station are fast advancing towards completion.

The Assistant Secretary,
(Railway Department,) Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,
C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Major-General, R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Lancashire and Yorkshire and London and North-Western Railway Companies on the 14th January.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade, (Railway Department,)
1, Whitehall, London, S.W.,
12th January 1884.

SIR,

I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 31st ultimo, the result of my inquiry into the causes of the collision which occurred on the 26th ultimo, at Rochdale station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, during a dense fog the 5.10 p.m. passenger train from Rochdale for Oldham, as it was starting from Rochdale station, came into collision (engine with engine) with the 4.15 p.m. passenger train from Middleton junction for Rochdale as the latter train was entering the station. Four passengers (one of them a Company's servant), all of whom were in the incoming train, complained of injury. The driver of the outgoing train was injured.

In the outgoing train,—which consisted of engine, tender, five coaches, and a horse-box, the five coaches being fitted with Fay's continuous break,—the buffer-beam of the engine was broken and the framing slightly damaged. The wheels of the horse-box were thrown off the rails, and the break carriage had a buffer broken. In the incoming train,—which consisted of a tank-engine (running chimney first and fitted with the automatic vacuum-break) and five coaches fitted with Fay's continuous break,—the buffer-plate of the engine was broken, the right-hand framing badly damaged, and the vacuum pipes broken.

Description.

The Oldham branch joins the main line at Facit junction about 350 yards on the down side of the down end of the platforms at Rochdale station, Facit junction cabin being nearly opposite the junction points. The bay generally used by the Oldham trains is at the down end of the station at the back of the up platform; the bay is entered by facing-points on the up main line, and is departed from by facing-points leading to a through crossing connexion with the down main line. The points and signals connected with the bay and the down end of the station are worked from the Goods Yard cabin, about 230 yards on the station side of Facit junction cabin. The points and signals at both cabins are properly interlocked. The only signals to which it is necessary here to refer are the Oldham branch up home-signal, worked from Facit junction cabin, situated about 105 yards on the down side of the junction, and the main line up home and distant signals, situated respectively 145 yards and 230

yards on the down side the Goods Yard cabin. The collision occurred at the crossing of the through line from the Oldham bay with the up main line at a point about 200 yards inside the main line up home-signal.

Block-working is in force between the Facit junction and Goods Yard cabins. No train is permitted to leave the bay for Oldham until a train arriving from Oldham has been first brought to a stand at the Goods Yard main line up home-signal.

Evidence.

1. *John Wallwork*, 16 years in the service, 13 years signalman, over nine years in Rochdale goods yard cabin, where I came on duty on the 26th at 2 p.m. to remain till 10 p.m. I work block between my cabin and Facit junction. At 5.19 p.m. I got the "Be ready" signal from Facit junction for the Middleton junction train due at 4.54, and I accepted the train at the same time. At 5.23 I took off my signals for the train to leave the bay for Oldham. At 5.22 the train from Middleton arrived at the home-signal, as I concluded by hearing two fog-signals explode; and concluding that the train had come to a stand there, I waited a minute, and then lowered my signal (a ground disc) for the outgoing train. I then saw, to my surprise, the train from Middleton junction passing the cabin at a slow walking speed. I called out "Wo!" to the driver, who was then only about 15 yards off, and then the next thing I heard was the collision. I then left my cabin, and went to the driver and asked him why he had passed my signals. He said the fogman told him to go on, as all was right. I then went back to my cabin. I had intended to turn the train into the bay as soon as the other train had cleared the bay. The collision occurred at 5.24 p.m. I could just see the train as it was passing the cabin, but I could not distinguish anyone in the train on account of the fog, which had come on thick about 4 o'clock. My distant-signal is 85 yards from the home-signals. It was the front portion of the train that I saw passing the cabin, and I think the first coach.
2. *James Riley*, 12 years in the service, three years driver.—I was in charge of the 5.10 train from Rochdale to Oldham on the 26th. The train consisted of engine and tender (running engine first), five coaches, and a horse-box (to be detached on the opposite side of the line). I had a hand-break applying to the tender wheels, and there was Fay's break on the train. In consequence of the train due at 4.54 being late owing to the fog, I was called upon to run an extra train to Oldham; and I had been in the bay a few minutes, when I whistled out for Oldham at 5.24 p.m. I got the signal at once and started, and I saw nothing of the other train till the two engines came into collision on the crossing. The fog was very thick; it was not possible to see more than five yards. My speed was about four miles an hour on the collision taking place. My engine stopped dead, and no wheels left the rails except those of the horse-box. My buffer-beam was broken and the framing bent. I was hurt on the side and head, and have been off duty in consequence. The driver of the incoming train told me he had been called on by the fogman. I could see the Facit junction down home-signals; this was nine minutes after the collision. I heard no shout from the signal-cabin, but my steam was blowing off at the time.
3. *John Wallis*, 16 years in the service, 3½ years guard.—I was in charge of the train which took the place of the 5.10 p.m. train Rochdale to Oldham on the 26th. It consisted of a break-carriage, a composite, three third-class, and a Manchester, Sheffield, and Lancashire Company's horse-box, with Fay's break applying to the five coaches. We started at 5.24, and just after starting the collision took me unawares. The speed was about four miles an hour. I was knocked about, but not injured. The horse-box left the rails with all its wheels, and the right van buffer was broken. The fog was very thick; it was not possible to see well above 10 or 15 yards. My train was pretty well loaded. A Company's servant in my van was injured in the eye.
4. *James Tattersall*, 20 years in the service, 11 years driver.—I started from Middleton junction with the 4.15 p.m. passenger train for Rochdale. My engine was a tank-engine running chimney first, and I had on five coaches; the engine was fitted with the automatic vacuum-break applying to six out of the eight wheels, the six front wheels being coupled and the trailing ones radial. The weight 48 tons. The train was fitted with Fay's break. We left at time, were about 10 minutes late from Mumps, and 13 or 14 minutes late at the intermediate cabin between Milnrow and Facit junction, and travelled slowly thence to Facit junction. We came to a stand for a moment at the Facit junction up home-signal; this I could not see, but the fogman called me on with his lamp, and shouted "All right; come on." I came on prepared to stop at the Goods Yard up home-signal. I ran over one fog-signal just after coming off the branch, and had just come to a stand when I met another fogman coming towards me on the left-hand side; and I said to him, "Are you right?" and he said, "Right; go on." This was before I came to the home-signal. He had his lamp in his hand, and showed me a white light. I could see the light shining from the home-signal, but could not tell what light it was showing. I then passed the signal-cabin, not going more than four or five miles an hour, and I heard nothing until my mate said to me (when I think I was two carriage-lengths past the cabin) that the pointsman was shouting. I then put the break on, and then directly came the collision, when my engine was nearly stopped. I did not feel the engine pass over No. 13 points. No wheels left the rails in my train. We were neither of us hurt. I saw the head lights of the other engine about two yards before we struck it. My buffer-plank was broken and the framing bent. I did not give the break whistle. I met the fog-signalman coming towards me from the home-signal.
5. *John J. Bridge*, seven years in the service, three years fireman.—I was on the right-hand side of the engine. On approaching Facit junction up home-signal we came to a stand, and the fogman said "Right," but I could not see the signal. We then went on and got up a speed of perhaps six miles an hour, expecting to have to stop at the Goods Yard home-signal. We ran over one fog-signal, and in consequence we had just come to a stand when my mate asked a fogman who was coming towards us on the left-hand side whether it was right, and I heard him say in reply "Right," and he asked him again and got the same answer. We then went on at about six miles an hour till I heard the pointsman shout, apparently from a little behind me, I could not tell what, but I took it for a shout to stop, and I told my mate, who shut the regulator and applied the vacuum-break, and I applied the hand-break, and almost as soon as this was done we saw the light of the other engine about two yards off, and the collision then occurred when we were almost at a stand. We ran from 10 to 15 yards after passing the fog-signal.
6. *William Hetherington*, 31 years in the service, 23 years guard.—I started from Middleton junction at 4.15 p.m., right time, on the 26th. I had five coaches coupled with Fay's break. I was in the rear break-

compartment. We lost 10 minutes at Mumps cabin A, 15 at Milnrow intermediate, and the other six minutes by slow running through the fog. We came to a dead stop before passing Facit junction; we then moved on again, passed over a fog-signal, when the train again came to a dead stop; it then again moved on till the collision occurred at a speed of about three miles an hour. It took me unawares; I had not felt the speed slacken just before it. I could see the junction signal-cabin as I passed, but I could not see the signal. I heard the fog-signalman at Facit junction say "Right." I did not hear the other fog-signalman say anything, but my head was then inside the van; I had been looking out before. My break was off when the collision occurred at 5.25. I was not much hurt. No damage was done to my train.

7. *Robert T. Kershaw*, 21 years in the service, platelayer all the time.—I began fog-signalling at No. 3 up home-signals at 3 p.m. on the 26th. I stationed myself about three or four yards from the signal-post, and placed fog-signals about 40 yards off. I remember the train coming in from Oldham at about 5.25. I had one fog-signal down at the time about 40 yards from the home-signal. I know the rule says two, and I can give no reason for disobeying it. I heard this signal explode, and I ran towards the train on the near side showing a red light, and said, "Dost know where't going to?" I don't think the driver saw me. He had been stopped, and kept going on at a nice walking speed. I did not attempt to shout to him again.

David Livesay was on the opposite side of the road, fog-signalling at the junction down-signal. I said to him, "Yon man's going yet." After the train had passed I put down two fog-signals. After the collision the driver told the station-master that there had been no fog-signal down, but he afterwards admitted that he had run over one. I showed my red light to the guard as the van passed, but I do not think he saw it.

8. *David Livesay*.—I was fog-signalling at the Facit junction down home-signals on the 26th. I heard the train from Oldham run over a fog-signal just before the collision. I did not hear Kershaw speak to the driver just after. I don't remember Kershaw speaking to me before the collision occurred, but I saw him going back towards the train with a red light after the fog-signal went off. I was at that time in the 6-foot. At a previous inquiry I stated that I was almost sure I saw Kershaw going back.

9. *Mr. Wrigley*, station-master at Rochdale.—After the collision I asked the driver, Tattersall, how it had occurred. He said that Kershaw had called him past the signal. I then called Kershaw and confronted him with Tattersall, and the latter again said that Kershaw was the man. Kershaw denied this, and said he had laid a fog-signal down, and had also given the driver a red hand-signal to stop him. The driver at first said neither was the case, but almost directly after said he had run over a fog-signal. Kershaw told me he had run out of fog-signals, and so had put down only one.

Conclusion.

This collision was caused by a misunderstanding between the driver of the train from Middleton junction and the fog-signalman attending to the Goods Yard cabin main line up home-signal. The driver acknowledges exploding a fog-signal about 35 yards before reaching this up-home signal, and states that he had in consequence stopped, but that just as he had done so he saw a fog-signalman coming towards him, who, in answer to his (the driver's) inquiry, "Are you right?" said, "Right; go on," and showed him a white light. Upon this he proceeded at a slow pace until, after he had passed the signal-cabin, his fireman told him the signalman was shouting. His engine was then almost foul of the crossing upon which the outgoing train was running, and it was almost or quite brought to a stand when the two engines met.

The fog-signalman denies having said to the driver, "Right; go on," or showed a white light, but, on the contrary, says that he asked him where he was going to and showed him a red light. He would not tell me why he had put down only one fog-signal instead of two, as the rule directs, but it is probable that he had exhausted his supply and had not gone to the cabin to get more.

Both driver and fog-signalman are in my opinion to blame, the former for not having made very sure of what the fog-signalman said before venturing to pass the home-signal, and the latter for not having run alongside of or jumped upon the engine so as to communicate further with the driver when he saw that he was either disregarding or misunderstanding what he said. He acknowledges that the engine was moving only at "a nice walking speed."

The Goods Yard cabin signalman would have acted more judiciously had he made quite sure that the incoming train had actually come to a stand, instead of concluding it had done so on hearing the fog-signal explode, before he allowed the outgoing train to leave the bay.

The driver of the outgoing train does not appear to deserve any blame; the fog was doubtless very thick, the limit of distinct vision being probably about 10 yards, and both engines must have been almost in collision before either driver could see the head lights of the other.

The position of the Goods Yard up distant-signal, only 85 yards from the home-signal, is not satisfactory. It should be moved further out, and made a lower arm on each of the up home-signal posts for Facit junction cabin.

The Assistant Secretary,
(Railway Department,) Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,
C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Major-General R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 8th February.