

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

22 June 1877

BoT Report into Accident at
Wellfield Road, Preston.

(2 Pages).

knocked off the rails came to a stand with the rest of the train about 90 yards from the place where it struck the wagon. The driver of the passenger-train did not observe that the wagon was off the rails and running towards the line upon which he was travelling, until he was about 30 yards from it, and he had only time to reverse his engine before it struck the wagon. The marks on the left side of the western point rail, and on the chairs at the east side of the points which lead to the siding, indicate plainly that the left or west side wheel of the wagon of the goods train (which was the leading wagon as it was being shunted into the siding) struck the point and got at the wrong side of it. Having done so, and being probably followed by the other wheels, this wagon was pushed off between the rails of the up main line and the rails of the siding. Whether the next wagon followed the leading wagon, or was subsequently pulled off by the wagon in front of it, is not quite so clear, nor does this signify; but it is evident that the third wagon and the rest of the train ran along the proper rails into the siding where it was intended that the whole of the wagons should have been placed. The points in question are falling points for all main line trains, but became facing points for the shunting operations which were being performed with the goods train. They are 128 yards from the cabin where the signalman who works them is stationed. The points are loaded so as to lay right for the main line,

are interlocked with the signals, and are pulled over for the siding by the signalman by means of a lever-handle and a strong twisted wire. It seems evident that they had not been pulled quite home to the stock rail when the goods train was shunted back through them, but that they afterwards got into their proper place, either by the shaking they received by the goods wagon passing through them, or by the signalman in the cabin pressing the lever further down. I do not think the latter occurred, as the signalman at the time was engaged with the down passenger train, and he appears to have had no reason to think that he had not put the points thoroughly right before the goods train was called back. The under-guard who was on duty with the goods train, and who gave the signal for the train to be called back, was standing about 20 yards from the points when they were altered, and this man thought that they had been pulled into their proper position when he gave the signal for the train to be set back. He then went away to some other siding points in the yard, which required to be held by him, to put the wagons into their proper berth.

I have, &c.,

F. H. RICH,
Colonel, R.E.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 7th September.

PRESTON AND WYRE RAILWAY.

SIR, *Manchester, 10th August 1877.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in the Order of the 28th June, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 22nd June at Wellfield Road junction, near Maudlands station, Preston, on the Preston and Wyre Railway.

In this case the van of the 11.15 a.m. Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's goods train from Kirkham to Maudlands, while standing (together with some other waggon) on the main line at Wellfield Road junction, was run into by a Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's special goods train from Fleetwood to Accrington.

No personal injuries were sustained.

In the 11.15 a.m. train the break van and two empty coal waggons next it were badly damaged. In the special train the engine was slightly damaged.

The up line at Wellfield Road junction is protected by a home and distant signal, the distant signal being half a mile from the home signal and visible to an approaching driver for about 400 yards. The view of the line near the home signal is much obstructed by a curve and buildings, and the van of the 11.15 a.m. train, which was standing 680 yards inside the distant signal, was visible to the driver of the special train for only about 140 yards. The line is nearly level.

The block system was not in force upon the Preston and Wyre Railway when this collision occurred, but it was to be commenced on the 13th instant.

The evidence is as follows:—

1. *Richard Ward*, 15 years goods guard in the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's service.—I left Kirkham about 11.25 a.m. with a through train consisting of engine, tender, 46 empty, two loaded waggons, and a van. We arrived at Wellfield Road junction at 11.55, and the engine was there detached from the train, and attached to another train which had to be brought out of the siding to make room for my train.

Both trains were united and were drawn forward, and the van was cut off about 200 yards from the home signal, and my train was then backed into the siding from which the other train had been drawn. The engine then backed the train which had been taken out of the siding along the main line, and 20 waggons were kicked off towards the van, but stopped about a wagon's length from it. These waggons had just about got to a stand when the collision occurred. I heard the break whistle distinctly given just before. I did not see the collision myself, being at the front of the train. The time was about 12.15 p.m. I saw that the distant signal was properly at danger, and also the home signal. Both main lines were blocked. I asked the driver of the special train what he had been about, and he said he did not know that a train was standing there. He appeared none the worse for liquor.

2. *William Fitherington*, driver 6 months with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company, fireman 5 or 6 years, 10 years altogether connected with engines.—I have been used to running on the Preston and Wyre line off and on for 18 months. I commenced work at Accrington at 6 a.m., went to Burnley, and thence to Fleetwood, and started back at 11.40 with a train consisting of engine, tender, 12 loaded waggons of china clay, and a van with a guard in it, for Accrington through Preston station. I got a clear run through Lea Road, and on approaching the Wellfield Road distant signal I found it at danger. I had shut off steam before sighting the distant signal, my speed at the time having been 20 miles an hour. On finding the distant signal against me the fireman slightly applied his break, and I was prepared to stop at the home signal, and had no idea anything was standing outside the home signal till I caught sight of the van of a goods train, which the new cabin had previously hidden. I then reversed, gave the engine steam and whistled for the guard's break, and got the speed reduced to perhaps 10 miles an hour on striking the van. A shower of rain had just before fallen, which made the rails slippery. We neither of us jumped off, nor were we

hurt. I knew that the line was not worked on the block system.

3. *James Reynard*, fireman 3 years.—On approaching Wellfield Road steam was shut off 300 or 400 yards from the distant signal, speed being at the time about 25 miles an hour. We saw the signal a little further on, showing danger. On seeing this I applied my break, not very hard, not expecting to meet with anything standing between the distant and home signals, and never having seen anything standing there before in the 12 or 15 times I have traversed the road. On catching sight of the van I put sand down, and the driver reversed and put on steam, and we struck the van at a speed of perhaps 10 miles an hour. I did not jump off.

4. *Henry Ratcliffe*, guard 11 years.—I started from Fleetwood for Accrington with a train of 12 waggons (loaded with china clay) and a break van. Our speed on approaching Wellfield Road distant signal was 15 miles an hour. I saw that the signal was at danger, and I put my break on, but had not got it hard on on passing the distant signal; but it was hard on before the driver whistled for it just before the collision. I thought he was running too fast on approaching Wellfield Road. I did not feel the collision much in the van; the

speed when it occurred was, I think, about 12 miles an hour.

This collision occurred in consequence of the injudicious speed at which the driver of the special train approached and passed the distant signal of a busy junction, which signal was at danger against him. The fact of the view of the line near the home signal being much obstructed should have made the driver all the more cautious in approaching the junction.

Considering the important passenger traffic which passes over this line, it is most essential that additional siding accommodation should be provided at Wellfield Road junction, and that the exchange of goods traffic should not have to take place on the main lines.

It is satisfactory to learn that block system working will shortly be commenced on this part of the line.

I observed that the signalman in Wellfield Road cabin was unable to see either the up home or up distant signals. If the position of these cannot be altered so as to bring them within view, they should be electrically repeated.

I have, &c.,

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

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Major-General, R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Lancashire and Yorkshire and the Preston and Wyre Railway Companies on the 7th September.

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(*Railway Department,*)
30th August 1877.

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in the Order of the 21st instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the accident that occurred on the 17th instant in Bo-peep tunnel, on the South-eastern Railway.

The guard of the 5.5 p.m. London, Brighton, and South Coast train from Hastings to London was killed by looking out of his van and striking his head against the projecting observatory of the brake van of one of the Brighton Company's down trains, which passed the up train in the tunnel.

Bo-peep tunnel is situated between Warrior Square (St. Leonard's) station on the South-eastern Railway, and the West Marina station, St. Leonard's, of the Brighton Company. The Brighton Company's trains run over this section of the line. The tunnel is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long. It commences at the west end of Warrior Square station yard, and extends to a place about 30 yards east of the junction where the Brighton line to Lewes diverges from the South-eastern line to Battle and Tunbridge. This part of the line was opened for passenger traffic in the year 1851. The tunnel in question is of a parabolic form. It is about 28 ft. 6 in. wide at the level of the rails, and about 24 ft. wide at the level of the carriage windows. In the year 1860 a part of the tunnel, about 240 yards from the western end, showed signs of giving way, and it was lined with a ring of 9-inch brickwork for a distance of about 50 yards.

This reduced the size of this part of the tunnel at the level of the rails to about 21 ft. 10 in., and it is only 19 ft. 11 in. wide at one place. The distance between the outer rail and the side of the tunnel was thus reduced to about 2 ft. 6 in. on the one side, and 2 ft. 7 in. on the other, and the interval between the up and down lines of rail, for this length is only 4 ft. 4 in. to 4 ft. 7 in. wide. It was here that the guard unfortunately met his death on the 17th inst. He was travelling in the brake van next the engine, and must have been looking out on the side next the

down line, as the marks of his hair were left on the side light or observatory of the leading van of the down train; blood and brains were found on the observatory of the brake van at the tail of the down train, and a piece of his skull went into the window of this last brake van, which was open at the time.

It is supposed that the unfortunate man was looking out for the junction signals at the west end of the tunnel, or that he was alarmed by the engine-driver of the down train whistling as he entered the tunnel.

The up train consisted of an engine and tender and brake van (in which the unfortunate man who was killed was travelling), and five coaches. The brake van of this train was provided with a roof observatory, but not with side observatories.

The down train consisted of an engine and tender, six coaches, two brakes together, with the assistant guard in one, seven coaches, and then the rear brake with the guard in charge.

The trains were made up in the order in which the vehicles are given.

Both the guards in the down train heard blows at the sides of their vans as they passed the up train, and at first they thought that the noise was occasioned by their having left their doors open when leaving West Marina station, where the down trains run to the platform on the up side of the line, but on examining their vans with a lamp they found their doors were closed all right. On reaching Warrior Square station and examining their side observatories they found the marks of a man's head on them.

The station inspector with the foreman of bricklayers then went back through the tunnel, and on reaching the place described as having been narrowed by the lining, they found a part of the unfortunate man's skull and brains in the interval between the up and down lines.

When the up train passed the London, Brighton, and South Coast signal cabin at the east end of the West Marina station yard, the pointsman on duty observed the guard's head and arms hanging down out of his van window, and bespattered with blood. He called the station-master's attention by means of his signal bell to something being the matter, and the dead