

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

8 February 1875

BoT Report into Accident at
Middleton.

(1 Page).

together in the order given. The guard's van and coaches were all fitted with continuous breaks. The passenger train left Royton at its proper time, and arrived at Lower Moor sidings about its proper time. The tender, engine, guard's van, and the leading passenger carriage, as well as the pilot-engine, were thrown off the rails by the collision.

The engine-driver and fireman of the passenger train stated that the Lower Moor up distant-signal was at all right at the time that they passed it, and that they could not see the home-signal, in consequence of its being hidden by the waggons that were in the sidings adjacent.

The guard of the passenger train stated that he looked for the signals, but could not see them, owing to the dense fog.

The distant-signal, when examined after the accident, was found to be at danger.

If the statement of the signalman on duty, who affirmed that he had placed the distant-signal at danger previous to allowing the pilot-engine and van to shunt, and the statement of the driver of

the passenger train, who affirmed that the signal was at all right when he passed it, are both correct, the up distant-signal must have been placed at danger after the passenger train had passed it.

The accident was caused by the signalman at Lower Moor siding junction allowing the pilot-engine to shunt across the passenger lines during a dense fog, at the time that the passenger train was due, without his having taken sufficient measures to protect the shunting operation, which he should not have allowed to take place until after the passenger train had passed his station.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company have erected a new signal-cabin at Lower Moor sidings, and have provided new signals of an improved kind since this accident occurred. The interlocking arrangement between these new signals and the points is very nearly completed.

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

F. H. RICH,
Colonel R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 16th April.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Mr. Middleton, 19th March 1875.

In compliance with your Order, dated the 12th ultimo, 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 collision that occurred on the 8th ultimo at Middleton station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Four passengers are reported to have been hurt.

Middleton station is a terminal station with dead ends to both the up and down lines. At the time of the accident the railway between the Middleton junction and Middleton station, a distance of about one mile, was so crowded with traffic that the company were using one line for storing goods, and using the other as a single line. A pilot-man or conductor was employed to pilot all trains over the single line.

On the day in question the 9.25 a.m. train from Manchester reached Middleton junction station about its proper time. The train from Bury was approaching the junction station at the time, and the inspector in charge during the absence of the station-master, who was sick, detained the train to Middleton to see if there were any passengers in the train from Bury for Middleton. As soon as the Bury train stopped, and he found that there were no passengers for Middleton, he gave the order and whistled for the driver of the Middleton train to start. This man did so, without receiving any signal from the guard in charge of his train or from the pilot-man, who should have gone with him on the engine. The pilot-man and guard were standing on the platform close to the van at the tail of the Middleton train. They observed the passenger train move, but they were under the impression that it was only drawing up a little further, and were not aware that the driver was proceeding to Middleton until it was too late for them to overtake the train and get into the van.

The passenger train (which consisted of a tank-engine, four carriages, and a van, coupled together with continuous breaks) proceeded to Middleton without any person being in the guard's van, but the engine-driver was not aware that he had left

the guard and pilot-man on the platform. The train was stopped at the entrance to Middleton station, and, according to the usual custom, the fireman uncoupled the engine. The driver then ran the engine forward to get it out of the way, and he left the train on the main line. As soon as the engine has got clear out of the road it is customary for the guard to allow the train to run down the incline into the station by the force of gravity, and to use the breaks for stopping the train when it gets into the station. As the driver was running the engine across from the line upon which he had arrived, so as to get it out of the way, he observed the passenger carriages running towards him; he gave his engine steam to prevent the carriages overtaking his engine, and he whistled to alarm the guard, as he thought the train had followed him too closely. The train ran past him and ran into a carriage and a waggon which were standing in the station on the same line of rails. No vehicles were knocked off the rails, and the only damage to the passenger train was one cross-bar broken, and the body of a third-class carriage was slightly shifted on its frame.

According to the company's rules the conductor or pilot-man should have travelled on the engine from Middleton junction to Middleton station. It appears, however, that this man had been in the constant habit of riding in the guard's van instead of travelling on the engine. The inspector in charge of Middleton junction station, the engine-driver, the guard of the Middleton passenger train and the pilot are all to blame for having allowed this very necessary precaution to be continually disregarded, and the accident was the consequence of the very loose system in which their duties were performed.

The practice of allowing a passenger train to run down an incline into a station without an engine in attendance with a certain amount of danger, and should not be continued.

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

F. H. RICH,
Colonel R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 12th April.