

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

20 March 1875

BoT Report into Accident at the
Wellington Viaduct, Accrington.

(2 Pages).

ran forward into the siding. He followed the engine with his van and carriages, and passed it in the ordinary manner; and when he was passing the engine-shed, which is about 360 yards from the point where the engine left him, and 240 yards from the end of the branch line, he found that there was something wrong with his break which he didn't understand. It appeared to him as if, when he had worked it the whole length of the screw, the lever below was bound against iron. He took it off again, and tried to re-apply it, but with the same result. He applied sand to the rails, but the break did not seem to take any effect. He got outside, and along his break-van, and endeavoured to get into the carriage next behind his van, with a view to applying the break in this carriage, but he was unable to get into the carriage; and he then jumped from his van, and struck against a pillar on the platform, and hurt his hand, which prevented him from doing anything further. The van and carriages then ran forward against the buffer-stops, at a speed of about five miles an hour.

This guard had been for 11 years doing the same duty with the same train. Ten years ago the engine was detached from the train further from the station, and when the speed was greater; but during the last nine years the mode of working has always been the same. He has been, altogether, 20 years in the company's service, and receives an excellent character from the superintendent. He asked the station-master to get into the van and examine the break after the accident, and it was then found that the lever was jammed against an iron nut.

Henry Smith, 21 years an engine-driver in the service of the Great-Western Company, and 13 years previously with the London-and-North-Western Company, left Oswestry punctually on the afternoon in question with his train. He was travelling at the usual speed when the engine was detached by the guard at the entrance to the Gobowen station. He brought his engine to a stand in the siding, and saw the van and carriages pass him at the usual speed. He was not aware of anything unusual having occurred, until, on running down afterwards to the station, he was informed that the van and carriages had come into collision with the buffer-stops.

Josiah Horton, the foreman of the Carriage-Department, Coleham, states that the break-van in question, No. 68, was brought there for repairs on the 13th April, and was sent out for working, after being repaired, on the morning of the 16th April. It had been lifted, and the wheels turned up, and new break-blocks fitted, and certain small repairs were made to the body of it. He was sure that the break was working properly when the break-van left Coleham, and to all appearance there was play enough in the lever.

William Cotgreave, the wagon-examiner at Gobowen and Oswestry, examined the break-van No. 68 on the 17th April, on its arrival at Oswestry. He found it all right. There is no difference with the break as it is, and the break as it came from Coleham, excepting that the crank works a little nearer to the nut. He has been about 18 years performing the same duty at Gobowen and Oswestry.

The station-master at Gobowen, George Bain, has been acting in that capacity there for four years. He did not see the train come into Gobowen on the day in question, but he tried the break-van immediately after the accident, and it appeared to him that the front-blocks did not properly reach the wheels when the screw was expended in applying the break. There has been no difference in the working of the trains from Oswestry into the Gobowen station whilst he has been station-master.

Robert Edwards, a porter at the Gobowen station, saw the train in question approaching the station, and walked along the platform towards it. He was standing near the buffer-stops when the van struck them. The guard would be about 15 or 20 yards from the buffer-stops when he jumped out. He saw him, through the door of the van, working the break, just before he jumped out.

This accident has occurred, apparently, in consequence of the guard not applying his break sufficiently soon after his engine was detached from his train, and finding, when he did apply it, that it did not act quite as well as he expected. He is, as already explained, a man of excellent character; and he was intending no doubt to do his duty properly, as he had done it on so many previous occasions; but the mode, as above described, of working the branch trains into the Gobowen station is by no means a satisfactory one. It is always safer to allow passenger-trains to run into a station in charge of the engine-drivers, and with the engines in front of them, than to allow the engines to be detached whilst the trains are in motion, and then to turn the engines in one direction and the carriages in another direction, through facing-points. This mode of working has, however, been carried on for many years at Gobowen, and apparently without any previous accident. It has been adopted from the want of means of getting the engine round the carriages at the branch-line platform. I recommend that such means be now provided, and I may add that it is the more necessary that the engines should run into the station in front of the carriages because there are four sets of unlocked facing-points on the entrance to the station.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the company on the 17th June.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR,

Manchester, 27th May 1875.

In compliance with the instructions contained in the Order of the 23rd March, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my enquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision that occurred on the 20th March, at the Wellington viaduct, near the Accrington station, on the Lancashire-and-Yorkshire Railway.

In this case an engine, a tender, a break-van, and eight waggons, having been taken up from Accrington to the Baxenden Colliery-siding; the break-van was turned on to the down-line. The guard, who was holding a pair of points, trusted to a waggon-inspector of the Colliery Company to jump, after holding another pair of points, into the van, to apply the break, and to bring it to a stand. But the waggon-inspector fail-

ing to do so, the van ran down a gradient of 1 in 40 for about a mile and three-quarters, and came into collision at high speed with the 8.50 a.m. passenger-train from Manchester, which was standing at the ticket-platform outside the Accrington station. A break-van and carriage of the passenger-train were very much damaged, and nine passengers complained of injury.

At the Baxenden Colliery there are two sidings, nearly on the level, connected at the south end with the two main-lines of the Lancashire-and-Yorkshire Railway; with the up-line directly by a through-crossing, and with the down-line by means of slip-points, affording also a means of crossing between the two main-lines.

There is no signalman in charge, but, when work

has to be performed in connection with these sidings, a signalman is ordinarily sent from the Baxenden station, 500 yards from the Colliery-siding. There are distant-signals in each direction, but no home-signals; and the points, which are worked from the ground, are not interlocked with the signals. The gradient on the main-line is, as above stated, 1 in 40, falling towards Accrington.

Thomas Walmsley, who was at the time of this accident a goods-guard in the employment of the Lancashire-and-Yorkshire Company, came up from Accrington to the Baxenden Colliery-sidings with an engine, a tender, a break-van, and eight waggons. After clearing the points leading to the sidings, he applied the break, and detached his break-van; and then, looking at his watch, he found it was 9.50, and a down-train was due. He allowed that train to pass, and turned the signals to danger. He released the break of his van, and held the points of the up-line; and he asked the waggon-inspector of the colliery, first to hold the slip-points leading to the down-line, and then to jump into the van, and apply the break, when he found it was clear of the slip-points. He saw the waggon-inspector jump into the van, after it had cleared the points, and endeavour to apply the break; but he (the waggon-inspector) turned the break-handle in the wrong direction, and, on finding that the van was gaining speed, and the break did

not appear to take effect upon it, he jumped out, and left the van to run down to Accrington.

His object in placing the break-van on the down-line was, that the engine might first push the waggons into the siding, might next rejoin the break-van, and might then push it along the down-line to Accrington. This was the second time that the goods-guard had come to these sidings in charge of a train. There was no signalman on the spot at the time. It appears that the break-van rushed down at a great speed to Accrington station; and that the servants of the Company at the station hardly saw it before it struck the passenger-train.

The remedies which are required to prevent similar accidents from occurring are obvious. A signal-cabin is required, from which the points and signals may be worked by a regular signalman, and in which the levers for working them may be interlocked with one another; and it is further necessary to construct additional siding-accommodation, so that all shunting-operations may be carried on without obstruction to, or interfering with, the passenger-lines, especially as those passenger-lines are, as already explained, on a gradient of 1 in 40, falling towards Accrington.

I have, &c.,

H. W. TYLOR.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the company on the 17th June.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Manchester, 27th May 1875.*

Sir,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in the Order of the 10th 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 6th ultimo, on the Clifton and Manchester section of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, the 1.5 p.m. passenger train from Bolton for Manchester overtook, and came into collision with, the 11.20 a.m. goods-train from Blackburn for Manchester, whilst following it on the same line of rails, between the Brindle-Heath signal-cabin and the Pendleton station signal-cabin. The buffer-beam of the passenger-engine was broken; and one waggon of the goods-train was broken up, and another waggon was damaged. Nine passengers complained of injury, and the guard of the goods-train was also injured.

The two signal-cabins above referred to are, respectively, the Pendleton cabin $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and the Brindle-Heath cabin about three miles, from Manchester. The line between them is worked, with Preece's instruments, on the block system; and there are the usual miniature semaphores, discs, and switches, in the cabins. The Pendleton station is protected by a distant-signal 800 yards from it, and a home-signal at the east end of the platform, both worked from the signal-cabin, which is at the east end of the station. The distant-signal only, and a foot-bridge over the line, about 150 yards within it, need be referred to on this occasion.

The gradient is 1 in 544 for a mile and a half, falling towards Pendleton. There is a curve of 40 chains radius, on which the line runs round a canal.

The passenger-train consisted of an engine and tender, eight passenger-carriages, and two break-vans; and the whole of the carriages were fitted up with continuous breaks.

Evidence.

The engine-driver, John Cartwright, started from Bolton at 1.8 p.m., three minutes late, stopping at all stations, and leaving Clifton junction about 1.30 p.m.

He found the road clear for him up to and past the Brindle-Heath signal-cabin. The first warning which he received was from the distant-signal worked from the Pendleton cabin, which was at danger. He passed that signal at a speed of 15 to 20 miles an hour. He had shut his steam off 200 yards before he reached it. He whistled for the signal, but did not whistle for the breaks until he had passed it. He had gone from 60 to 100 yards past the signal, and was passing under a foot-bridge, over the line, when he saw the goods-train in front of him. He then whistled for the guards-breaks, and did what he could to check his speed; and he might, he thinks, have been going six or eight miles an hour when his engine struck the van of the goods-train; he did not sooner obey the distant-signal, but tried to whistle it off, believing the line to be clear, because the block-system was in force between the two cabins.

The fireman, James Worsley, saw that the signals at the Brindle-Heath cabin were lowered for the train to pass on towards Pendleton, and he also saw that the Pendleton distant-signal was at danger. After passing that signal at danger, and when the train got to the turn of the bridge, his mate shouted to him "Whoa!" He put the break on when he saw the goods-train in front. He never thought anything was in front in the block, although the distant-signal was at danger.

The head-guard, William Taylor, was riding in a break-van near the middle of the train. He saw the Pendleton distant-signal at danger, and he applied his break before he reached it, sooner than he would have done under other circumstances, because it was raining, and he thought the break-blocks would not act so readily. He turned it on just as he was passing the distant-signal, but he did not put it tight on. In going under the foot-bridge on the east of the distant-signal, he put his break tight on, because he heard the engine-driver whistling for it. He did not put his break tight on when he first saw the distant-signal at danger, because he thought he was going at such a speed it would be easy to pull up at the station-platform. He understood the line to be clear to the next block-cabin, and therefore did not apply his break hard at the distant-signal.

The under-guard, Frederick Allington, was riding in a break-van, also near the middle of the train. The