

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

3 November 1871

BoT Report into Accident at
Accrington.

(1 Page).

steps for stopping the passenger train. The blame rests entirely upon the driver, a man of experience.

The collision could not have occurred had the traffic been worked on the absolute block system, by which a greater amount can be safely worked than on any other system.

This company is nearly at the head of the list of

those paying large dividends, but it is exceedingly slow in introducing improvements that will provide for the public safety and convenience,

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

I am, &c.,
W. YOLLAND,
Col., R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
30th November 1871.*

SIR,

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 9th inst., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision which occurred on the 3rd inst. at Accrington station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway between a passenger train and an engine to which it was about to be attached.

Two passengers are returned as having been slightly shaken.

At Accrington station (the junction of lines from Manchester, Preston, and Colne), situated at the foot of a steep incline of 1 in 39 on the line from Manchester, a train is made up for Preston and Liverpool, consisting of portions of trains from Manchester and Colne due at Accrington at 6.23 and 6.25 respectively, the combined train being due to leave at 6.38. The engine which takes the train from Accrington to Preston, &c. generally travels light from Colne, following the train due at Accrington at 6.25, and if it arrives at Accrington in good time proceeds at once into the siding in which the combined train is afterwards made up, the portions from Manchester and Colne being allowed to drop down by gravity against it; the engine then pushes the train out of the siding till it clears the junction points, when it starts forward on its journey. If however, as more frequently happens, the light engine is late in reaching Accrington, and the two portions of the train are already in the siding, they are drawn out of the siding by a pilot engine, the light engine joining the train on the main line, and at once proceeding with it on its journey. It should be mentioned that the siding joins the main line some distance up the incline of 1 in 39.

On the evening in question the light engine which was to take the 6.38 p.m. down train to Preston &c., did not reach Accrington till about 6.45 p.m., its train consisting (in the order in which it was to travel to Preston) of two carriages and a break van (for Preston), a carriage, a break van, and two carriages (for Liverpool), seven vehicles in all, the break vans being coupled to the two carriages next to them with continuous breaks. Immediately before the train left the siding it was joined by two guards only just arrived at Accrington with an up train from Preston &c., the guard of the Preston portion being considered in charge of the train. On the arrival of the train-engine

the driver of the pilot engine, which had joined the Liverpool end of the train, was directed by the inspector to draw it out on the main line, and he accordingly did so by permission of the junction signalman, who stopped him as soon as the tail of the train had cleared the siding points some 10 or 12 yards, and at the same time gave a green light to the driver of the train-engine, which was standing on the main line, as a permission for him to back up to his train. Directly the pilot engine stopped the fireman unhooked the train without any previous communication with the guards, and the carriages at once moved down the incline meeting the train engine in slow motion towards them, the driver of the latter having observed them coming, and having nearly stopped his engine before the collision took place, after the carriages had run down about a train's length.

Both guards of the train knew nothing of the collision till it occurred, and both declare that they thought the train-engine was pushing them out of the siding and that therefore there was no need for them to use their breaks.

Nothing left the rails, and there appears to have been no damage whatever sustained by either carriages or engines.

This collision was caused by an unsafe mode of working, as the driver of the pilot engine ought not to have allowed it to have been unhooked from the train until he had either been informed by signal from the guard in charge that the breaks were applied, or had made sure that the train-engine had joined the other end of the train.

It was certainly the duty of the guard in charge of the train to have, before starting, made himself aware whether the train-engine was or was not attached, and, however hurried he may have been in joining his train, he is to blame for having neglected to do this.

Since the collision occurred an order has been issued (stated to have been in existence previously, but lost sight of) that the pilot engine is never to be unhooked from the tail of the train until the train-engine has joined it in front. This order, if enforced, will no doubt prevent the recurrence of a similar collision.

I am glad to be able to report that Accrington is now supplied with interlocked signal apparatus.

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

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department,
Board of Trade,*

SIR,

17th November 1871.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 9th inst., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the collision, which occurred on the 6th inst. at Blackburn station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, between two passenger trains.

Two passengers are returned as having been slightly injured.

At about 8.45 a.m. on the 6th inst., a passenger train, consisting of engine, tender, three carriages, and a van, coupled together with continuous breaks, was standing at the west end of Blackburn station ready to depart to Chorley and Wigan, so soon as a train due

from Chatburn at 8.40 should have arrived on the same line of rails and have transferred any passengers it might have. In approaching Blackburn station from the east the line descends very slightly, and is then level through the station. The station master, who was on the platform, noticed the Chatburn train enter the east end of the station at very little more than walking pace. Instead, however, of its stopping as usual, and as he expected it to do on the present occasion, with the engine a few yards off the tail of the Wigan train, it ran into it at a very low speed. The morning was clear and dry.

The driver of the Chatburn train, a man of 12 years service as such, started from Chatburn five or six minutes late, with a train consisting of engine and tender, van and five carriages, coupled together with Fay's continuous breaks, those of the last carriage but