

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

3 August 1872

BoT Report into Accident at
Agecroft Junction.

(2 Pages).

driving, and he had not returned to the bank engine when the passenger train left Accrington station. He returned to the bank engine immediately after getting his tools, and started in pursuit as soon as he could, but he did not get up to the passenger train till the latter had come to a stand, and the bank engine ran into the passenger train at a speed of four or five miles an hour. No damage was done to the stock. The driver of the front engine of the passenger train was trying to start at the moment that the bank engine came up, and the passenger train went forward on its journey as soon as the bank engine reached it. Neither of the engine-drivers appear to have been aware that there was anything the matter until they stopped at Baxenden, which is the next station to Accrington, when several of the passengers complained of being shaken.

The system of pushing trains up inclines with bank engines at the tail must always be attended with more or less danger, more particularly so, when the

bank engine has to overtake the trains while they are moving on the railway.

Accrington is a one-sided station, which serves the railways to Manchester, Preston, and Coine. Trains from these places are timed to meet at Accrington, and there is no means of placing the bank engine at the tail of the Manchester train before it leaves the platform.

In consequence of Accrington being a one-sided station, from whence railways diverge in three directions, all trains, except the trains to Manchester, are required to back into the station through facing points, or to back out of it through facing points. These operations, as well as banking up trains, must always be attended with danger.

I have, &c.

F. H. RICE,

Lieut.-Col. R.E.

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

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
14th August 1872.

Sir,

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 5th inst., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on the 3rd inst. at the junction with Agecroft sidings on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

A coal train that was leaving the sidings and going towards Manchester met the express train that is due to leave Manchester at 11.30 a.m. for Blackburn.

Four passengers were killed, two were dangerously injured, and ten others were more or less hurt.

Agecroft sidings are situated about a mile and a third to the north-west of Pendleton station. The junction of the sidings with the passenger lines is protected by home and distant signals that are worked from a cabin, which is situated opposite to the junction. The distant signal towards Manchester is placed about 540 yards to the south-east of the junction, and this signal can be seen for a distance of 329 yards by a driver who is approaching from that side.

The home signal cannot be seen for more than 260 yards before it is reached, by an engine-driver coming from the east, in consequence of a bridge over the railway that interferes with the view.

The railway has been undermined with coal workings, so that the home signals and cabin have sunk about five feet below their proper level, and the view of the home signal has thus been interfered with.

On the day in question a coal train that consisted of an engine and tender, four waggons of coal, and a break van, arrived from Clifton Hall, and was put into Agecroft sidings for the purpose of attaching six more waggons of coals that were to be taken on.

The coal train was kept about 35 minutes in the sidings, as there were so many trains passing on the railway, that the signalman on duty at the siding junction cabin could not allow it to come out. The signalman at last told the engine-driver that he was to be ready to follow the passenger train from Fleetwood to Manchester, which had just been telegraphed as having left Clifton junction.

As soon as the passenger train passed Agecroft cabin, the signalman put up his home and distant signals to danger, and gave a green flag hand signal to the driver of the coal train, to notify to him, that he was to bring his train out of the sidings and follow the train from Fleetwood. As the engine-driver of the coal train reached the passenger lines he observed the express train from Manchester running towards him at full speed. The engine of the express train was

only about 180 yards from the engine of the coal train at the time.

The express consisted of an engine and tender, a horse box, a third-class, a composite, two thirds, a composite, a first, a second-class carriage, and a break-van, coupled together in the order in which they are given. The guard in charge was travelling in the break-van, and the five coaches in front of the van were coupled to it with continuous breaks.

The engine-drivers of both trains appear to have noticed their danger at the same time, and the signalman, who also saw it, gave the driver of the coal train a signal to stop, and called to him to go back. The driver of the coal train succeeded in reducing the speed of his train from four to one mile an hour, and the engine-driver of the express train had reduced the speed of his train to about 20 miles an hour, when the collision occurred.

Both engines were thrown off the rails and much damaged. The engine of the coal train was turned partly round and some waggons were broken. The two front carriages of the passenger train were broken and some of the others were damaged.

The engine-driver of the coal train jumped off just before the collision. The fireman remained on the engine and was hurt. The driver and fireman of the express train were also hurt.

This melancholy accident appears to have been caused by the signalman on duty at Agecroft sidings, who did not wait a sufficient time, after placing his signals at danger, before he called to the driver of the coal train to leave the sidings.

This signalman, who appears to have been anxious to do his duty, should have satisfied himself that no train was approaching his station before he allowed the coal train to leave the sidings.

According to his own statement, he only put up his main-line signals about one minute before he called to the driver of the coal train to bring his train out of the siding. The express train must have been close to the distant signal at this time, and there appears to be no doubt that the engine-driver of the express train had got inside the distant signal before it was placed at danger.

If the view of the home signal had not been obstructed by the bridge, the engine-driver of the express would probably have been warned of his danger in sufficient time to stop his train, but he could not do so after he reached the over-bridge.

The up train from Fleetwood passed the down express at the distant signal, and possibly may have prevented the signalman at Agecroft from noticing that the express train was approaching. The signalman appears to have forgotten that the express was due. If he had allowed it to pass, the railway would have

been free of trains for 12 or 14 minutes, during which time he might have sent the coal train on its journey in safety.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company have been engaged for some time past in putting up new signals, new locking machinery, and telegraph instruments on the line between Manchester and Bolton.

When they are completed, and when the block telegraph system is efficiently worked, many accidents will be prevented.

It was given in evidence at the inquiry that the

points of a catch siding at Aggcroft were continually kept chained in the wrong direction, and that the inspection of the signals had not been efficiently performed.

This neglect should be rectified at once, and the whole of the sidings should be controlled with catch points locked with the main-line signals as soon as possible.

I have, &c.,

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

F. H. RICH,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Sir, *Manchester, 3rd October 1872.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on the 21st August at Seaforth station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

An engine, which was proceeding from Liverpool to Southport, ran into a passenger train that was standing at Seaforth station.

Several passengers in the train, and the engine-driver and fireman of the engine that ran into the passenger train, were shaken.

The passenger train, which is due to leave Liverpool for Crosby at 12 o'clock, did not start till 12.3 p.m., as the road was not clear, and the signals were not lowered till that time. The empty engine that was returning to Southport left Liverpool station about five minutes after the passenger train. The latter stopped at all stations; and the empty engine followed within sight of the passenger train. There are five stations between Liverpool and Seaforth, which are only about four miles apart. The empty engine passed the several station distant-signals while they were at danger, and the engine-driver received caution signals from the several signalmen at the home-signals.

The passenger train consisted of an engine and tender, four third, three first, a second-class carriage, and a break van with a guard at the tail of the train.

The four coaches next to the guard's van were coupled to it with continuous breaks.

The moment after the passenger train came to a stand at Seaforth station it was run into by the empty engine.

The end of the guard's van was broken, the break was knocked out of gear, and the buffers of the passenger carriage next to it were broken, but no vehicle left the rails.

The guard was knocked down in his van, and a lady who was travelling in the second-class carriage next to the van was taken out from under the seat of the carriage in an insensible state.

The distant-signal and the station-signal at Seaforth were at danger when the empty engine passed them; and the passenger train could be seen for a considerable distance by the driver of the empty engine if he had been looking out.

This man was not a regular driver, but he had served for some time as an extra driver, and he had been about 20 years in the Company's service. The collision was caused by his gross carelessness. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company have very properly dismissed him, and proceeded against him. I did not see the man, as he is now on bail to stand his trial for the offence.

I have, &c.,

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

F. H. RICH,
Lt.-Col. R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
Whitehall, 25th October, 1872.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 13th ultimo, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 11th ultimo, at the Exchange station, Liverpool, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, from a passenger train entering the station at too high a speed and running into a horse-box and some trucks standing on one of the platform lines.

One passenger had his leg hurt and forehead bruised, and two others were shaken.

The train in question left Preston for Liverpool at 8.26 a.m., six minutes late, consisting of a four-wheeled coupled engine and tender, horse-box, a set of three carriages, coupled with continuous breaks, a third class carriage, a milk truck and fish truck, seven vehicles in all.

The driver was a man of twelve years service as such, and had been accustomed to run in and out of Liverpool for the last 17 years. The guard of the train had been 15 months employed as guard, and as acting guard for the previous 7 years.

The train stopped at Rufford, Burscough junction, and Ormskirk without overrunning the platform at either place. At Ormskirk the horse-box was taken

off, and seven carriages attached in front, so that the train now consisted of 13 vehicles, with the same amount of available break power as before; viz., that applied to three vehicles. Six stations were stopped at between Ormskirk and Liverpool, and at none of these did the train overrun the platform. On approaching Liverpool from Sandhills (a mile from the Exchange station), there is a rising gradient of 1 in 100, terminating in a reverse curve about 300 yards from the buffer-stops at the end of the Exchange station, and it is customary for drivers, if the signals are off for them to enter the station, to keep steam on their engines till they are through this curve. The guards generally apply their breaks at about the end of the platform, some 200 yards from the buffer-stops.

On the present occasion the guard states that thinking the speed was higher than usual, when nearing the station, he applied his break about 50 yards sooner than he was in the habit of doing, and that the driver kept his steam on somewhat beyond the usual point: that the engine came into collision, at a speed of five or six miles an hour, with a horse-box, which, together with seven other vehicles, was standing on one of the arrival lines, the last of the eight vehicles, another horse-box, being close to the buffer-stops.

No damage whatever was sustained by the passenger train, but the horse-box next the buffer-stops was injured, and the buffer stops themselves, which were it was stated somewhat decayed, were partially destroyed.