

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

6 November 1871

BoT Report into Accident at
Blackburn.

(2 Pages).

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.

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

I have &c.,
C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Lieut.-Col. R.E.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department,
Board of Trade,*

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 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, 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

one not being in working order, and the blocks of three of the other carriages, being, according to the guard, worn away too much to work properly. On this, as on a previous journey the same morning from Blackburn to Chatburn, all had gone right as regards Blackburn at the five intermediate stations. On approaching Blackburn the driver shut off steam at the east end of a tunnel 200 yards long, about 550 yards from the tail of the Wigan train, and on emerging from the tunnel saw this train standing in its ordinary position; the fireman applied the tender breaks as usual at the east end of the station. When within two or three carriage lengths of the van of the Wigan train the driver, finding the train was not stopping as it ought, gave the break whistle, reversed and had just time to apply contrary steam when his engine struck the van at a very low speed, not two miles an hour. Neither train sustained any damage whatever.

The guard states that he had his breaks on as usual when the train was entering the station at a walking pace, but that when about 20 yards from the van of the other train he became apprehensive that there would

be a collision, and screwed his break on as tight as he could at the same time that the driver reversed. It was only after the collision that he found out the defects in his breaks and reported them.

The carriage inspector at Blackburn, after the collision, marked off the last carriage but one as wanting new blocks, but did not agree with the guard as to the blocks of three other carriages being worn out.

The occurrence of this collision must be attributed to an error of judgment on the part of the driver and guard of the Chatburn train in overestimating their power of stopping on entering Blackburn station. This may have been partly due to a defective state of the continuous breaks, but had the state of these been as bad as the guard would make out, it would have surely made itself felt at some of the many previous stops the same morning.

I have, &c.

The Secretary
Railway Department,
Board of Trade.

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

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(Railway Department,)
Whitehall, 14th December 1871.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in obedience to your minute of the 22nd ultimo, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended an accident that occurred to a passenger train, at the entrance to the Bacup station on the East Lancashire section of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, on the 18th ultimo.

It is stated in the return from the company that one person was hurt.

The line between Rawtenstall and Bacup is rather more than four miles in length, and it is single throughout, with three intermediate stations and numerous sidings.

It was opened for traffic in the year 1848.

The station yard commences at the north-east end of a short tunnel under a turnpike road, where there is a pair of facing points with an indicator attached; the left road being the main line into the station, and the right road to a siding. The facing points are weighted to stand open for the main line, and they are fastened in this position by a hasp and a padlock, which is ordered to be kept locked. The line continues to rise on a steep incline of 1 in 74½ for about 12 chains, and thence to the end of the station, for about 15 chains further, the gradient is 1 in 200.

On the day in question, the 10h. 35m. a.m. train from Manchester to Bacup, consisted of an engine and tender, goods waggon, break van, 1st class, 2nd class, and 3rd class carriages, arranged in the order here written; and the driver states that the distant signal through the tunnel was off for him to enter the station yard, and the indicator at the facing points stood all right for him to go on the main line. He says he was travelling very slow, or about 10 miles an hour, and as he passed over the facing points he felt a bit of a jerk; he shut off the steam and whistled for the guards break, but the engine immediately dropped off the rails, and tumbled about so much, that he could not put on the tender break, and they ran about 43 yards from the facing points before the engine stopped, and then he went back to see what was amiss at the points.

The driver found the facing points unlocked, the clip or hasp was turned back, and the padlock was off altogether, and there was no key in it; and the points were very dry, white with frost, and did not look as if they had been oiled for a long time. He stated, that there was a fresh mark on the tongue of the right point rail, and this mark could be traced on the top of the right rail of the siding line, till it crossed to the outside of the main line right rail, where there still remained, when I visited Bacup, a deep indenta-

tion close to the heel of the right switch, and after that the engine ran on the ballast, between the two lines, but off the rails.

The foreman of platelayers was the first person who got to the spot after the accident occurred. He confirmed the driver's statement, and added that he found the points closed and right for the main line, and the carriages were still on the main line, on the Bacup side of the heel of the points; that the second connecting rod of the facing points was bent at the left side, and the right point rail was bent near the heel, and the heel chair under it was broken; that there was a slight mark at the back of the tongue of the right point rail, and a sharp mark on the outside of the right switch rail near the heel, caused by the grinding of the flange of the right wheel; after that the engine and tender got off the rails altogether, as well as the goods waggon, and the leading wheels of the break van were also drawn off the rails, while the trailing wheels were on the main line rails. A little farther on a piece of a rail, 4 feet 6 inches in length, had been broken out of the left rail of the siding line where the engine had crossed it.

The foreman of platelayers told me that he tried the points and found that they would stand open if allowed to close gently, but that they would not close of themselves, and that they were not kept in proper order. He thinks the engine only took the wrong line, and dragged the waggon and van after it. The accident occurred just before 12 o'clock.

Very little damage was done to the rolling stock. A buffer and the footboard of one of the carriages and an axle box of the waggon were broken.

It further appeared that about 10.5 a.m. the yardsman, who had to look after eight pairs of points in the yard, had to attend to a goods train, which had been backed into the siding, and the engine was unhooked and ran down the main line, and the yardsman then unlocked the padlock, held the points open for the engine to go into the siding at the lower end adjacent to the tunnel; that the engine then went into the siding and was hooked on to its train, and the yardsman held the slip points to enable the goods train to get away at about ¼ to 11 o'clock. The yardsman told me that it was then his duty to put on the hasp and lock the facing points right for a train to enter Bacup terminal station, and he believes he did lock them and took the key away.

The accident was clearly occasioned by the facing points not having been kept in proper order, so that they were not closed to either rails when the engine ran over and mounted them. If they had been kept in proper order, the absence of the padlock would not have signified; but the yardsman had evidently forgotten to replace the hasp and to put on the padlock and lock it.