

The
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LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

18 November 1899

BoT Report into Accident at
Bradford, Mill Lane Junction.

(4 Pages).

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade (Railway Department),
8, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.,
December 8th, 1899.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 24th November, the result of my enquiry into the accident which occurred about 8.50 p.m. on the 18th November at Mill Lane Junction, near Bradford, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the 5.50 p.m. passenger train from Meltham to Bradford was, while standing at the down home signal at Mill Lane Junction, run into in rear by the 7.40 p.m. passenger train from Dewsbury to Bradford. The latter train was at the time travelling at a speed of only about four miles an hour, so the damage to rolling stock and permanent way was but slight, only two wheels being off the rails. The two guards, and a porter who was in the train, were slightly hurt, and eight passengers complained of injuries which they had received.

The Meltham train consisted of an engine, four third-class carriages, two composites, and two brake vans, one of the latter being next the engine and the other at the tail of the train. The engine was a six-wheels-coupled tank engine fitted with automatic vacuum and hand brakes, both working blocks on the six coupled wheels. The vehicles of the train were similarly fitted with the vacuum brake, 40 out of the 52 wheels having blocks working on them.

The Dewsbury train consisted of an engine, four third-class carriages, one first-class and two third half-vans. The engine was a four-wheels-coupled radial tank engine, fitted with automatic vacuum and hand brakes, both working blocks on the four coupled wheels. The train was similarly fitted with the vacuum brake, 36 wheels out of 46 having blocks working on them.

Details as to the damage to rolling stock are given in the Appendix, the damage to permanent way was practically nil.

Description.

Mill Lane Junction box, which is situated 622 yards from Bradford Station box, is the point at which the up and down passenger lines from Leeds and the up and down passenger lines from Heckmondwike unite, and from this point they run parallel to each other into Bradford, in a direction which is almost due north, the lines from Leeds being to the eastward of those from Heckmondwike. There are also up and down goods lines to the west of the Heckmondwike lines, so that there are altogether six lines in front of the box. This accident is however almost solely concerned with the down line from Heckmondwike, which is the line on which both the Meltham and Dewsbury trains were travelling. This line is the third from the box in order, whilst the down line from Leeds, which is also referred to in this report, is the fifth line from it.

The line at this point is quite straight, but it is on a falling gradient of 1 in 50 for down trains approaching Bradford.

Mill Lane Junction box is a block box, the adjoining box on the down side of it being Bradford A box, distant 622 yards from it, and the adjoining box on the up side being Coal Shoots box, distant 264 yards from it. The next box to the Coal Shoots box is Bowling Junction box at a distance of 1,016 yards from it.

The following distances which bear on this accident may be noted :—

	Yards.
From the Mill Lane Junction signal-box to Coal Shoots box	264
" " " " " down distant signal	415
" " " " " down home signal	76

On the day in question there was a dense fog, the intensity of which can be estimated from the fact that the driver of a train standing underneath the home signal could only just see it. Fogmen were out, and there was one stationed about 100 yards south of the Mill Lane Junction box, near the home signal.

The system known as "lock and block" is not in use on this line, but the usual block regulations are in force. Further, on account of the short distance intervening between

Coal Shoots box and Mill Lane box, the former is not permitted to acknowledge "Line clear" from Bowling Junction until "Train out of section" has been received from Mill Lane Junction for the previous train.

Evidence.

John Gray, driver, states: I have been in the service of the Company 18 years, during four of which I have been certified as a driver. I have been running into Bradford for about 10 years and know the line well. I came off duty on the 18th at 3.15 a.m., and came on duty again at 12.45 p.m. to work till 10 or 11 p.m. I took up the working of the 5.50 p.m. train ex Meltham at Lowmoor at about 8.43 p.m. My engine was a six-wheels-coupled tank engine, fitted with automatic vacuum brake and hand-brake, both working blocks on the six coupled wheels. The brake was in good working order. On arriving at Mill Lane Junction home signal it was on, so I brought my train to a standstill at it. It was very foggy at the time. My engine was just behind the home signal and I could just see the latter, but not the cabin. I sounded my whistle, but I did not send my fireman to the box as I was expecting to go on every minute. I know the rule on the subject, but it is not always adhered to. While we were standing at this signal we were run into from the rear by another train, and I estimate that we had been standing at the home signal just about four minutes when this occurred. The force of the collision broke the coupling between the engine and the next carriage, and both were driven forward a few yards. The engine had exploded one detonator just before coming to a stand at the home signal. I am quite certain that while I was standing at the home signal it did not come off. Coming into Bradford we are frequently stopped at that home signal for a short time, and at this point I have never sent my fireman into the box as I have never considered it necessary.

Henry Walker, fireman, states: I have been 16 years in the service of the Company, of which I have been fireman 10 years. On the 17th and 18th I worked the same hours as driver Gray. I have heard driver Gray's evidence read over to me and I corroborate it in every respect. I have myself never been sent into the box when my train was stopped at this point.

Ernest Hansen, porter, states: I have been in the service of the Company one-and-a-half years, during the whole of which I have been at intervals acting as guard between Lowmoor and Bradford. I came off duty at 6 a.m. on the 18th, and came on duty again at 7 p.m. to work till 6 a.m. on the 19th. I joined the 5.50 p.m. ex Meltham train at Lowmoor at 8.43 p.m. I remember our arriving at Meltham Junction and we stopped at the home signal. About three minutes after we had come to a standstill we were run into by another train and I was knocked insensible. I had previously looked out, but owing to the dense fog I could see nothing.

J. W. Berry, driver, states: I have been 30 years in the service of the Company, during 14 of which I have been driver. I came off duty on the 18th at 12.35 a.m. and came on again at 12 noon to work till 7.40 p.m. I know the lines in and out of Bradford well. On the 18th I was working the 7.40 p.m. passenger train Dewsbury to Bradford. On approaching Coal Shoots box the distant signal was on, so I approached the

home signal very cautiously, but just before reaching it the fogman told me that it was off, but that the distant for Mill Lane was on, so I continued to move forward slowly with the intention of pulling up at Mill Lane Junction home signal; but before reaching it I saw the tail lamps of a train four or five yards in front of me. I was keeping a careful look out, but the dense fog prevented my seeing it sooner. My hand-brake was rubbing at the time, and steam was off. I put on the vacuum brake at once; it acted very well, but I could not stop before we ran into the other train. I estimate that at the time of the collision we were travelling at about four or five miles an hour. I was not hurt, and neither my engine nor any of the carriages left the rails, but my engine was slightly damaged. My engine was a four-wheels-coupled radial tank engine, fitted with automatic vacuum and hand-brake, both working blocks on the four coupled wheels.

Arthur Newby, fireman, states: I have been nine years in the service of the Company, during two or three of which I have been acting as fireman. I worked the same hours as driver Berry on the 17th and 18th. I have heard my driver's evidence read and I corroborate it all. I was myself keeping a careful look out, and both the driver and myself saw the train in front of us at the same time, and I at once tightened my hand-brake.

Walter Brown, guard, states: I have been 17 years in the Company's service, and for four years and eight months I have been guard. I came off duty at 9.30 p.m. on the 17th. On the 18th I came on duty at 8 a.m. to work till 8.30 p.m.; this was longer than my booked hours, and was in consequence of another guard being ill. I was guard of the 7.40 p.m. passenger train ex Dewsbury, and rode in the rear van. My train consisted of engine, second half-van, first-class, third-class, third-class, bogie third, bogie third, third-class half-van, all being six-wheeled except the two bogies, which were eight-wheeled. All were fitted with automatic vacuum brake except the centre wheels of the six-wheeled carriages. We almost came to a standstill at Coal Shoots box signal, but continued slowly on, and I shortly afterwards felt the shock of a collision. I estimate that at the time of the collision we were going at about four or five miles an hour. I did not notice that the vacuum brake was put on before the collision; it had been previously acting well. I was knocked down and injured, and one passenger complained of being hurt. None of the vehicles of my train were off the line. I could not myself see any of the signals at Coal Shoots box.

James Dickinson, signalman, states: I have been 35 years in the service of the Company, during 26 of which I have been signalman, and for the last three years I have been in Coal Shoots box. On the 17th I came off duty at 10 p.m. and came on duty on the 18th at 2 p.m. to work till 10 p.m. At 8.44 p.m. I accepted the Meltham train from Bowling Junction; it was put on line at 8.47 p.m. and passed my box at 8.49 p.m. It

had been accepted by Mill Lane Junction at 8.44 p.m. I sent Mill Lane Junction the "Train entering section" signal for it at 8.49, and at 8.50 I received the "Train out of section" for it from Mill Lane Junction. I distinctly remember receiving the latter signal quite apart from the evidence of my book. At 8.50 p.m. Bowling Junction offered me the 7.40 p.m. Dewsbury-Bradford train and I accepted it. It was put on line at 8.52 p.m. and passed my box at 8.54 p.m. I had offered it to Mill Lane Junction at 8.50 p.m. and he accepted it at once, and at 8.54 p.m. I sent him the "Train entering section" signal for it. Both trains passed my box at a speed of about four miles an hour, and both came nearly to a standstill. The fog was very thick and I could not see more than a few yards in front of me. After the collision there were two carriages of the Dewsbury train which had not passed my box. The rule at my box is not to acknowledge the "Is line clear" from Bowling Junction unless I have "Train out of section" from Mill Lane Junction for the previous train.

John R. Holben, signalman, states: I have been in the service of the Company 25 years, during 22 of which I have been a signalman, and during the last six years I have been stationed at Mill Lane Junction box. I came off duty at 10 p.m. on the 17th and came on duty at 2 p.m. on the 18th to work till 10 p.m. At 8.45 p.m. I was offered and accepted the 5.50 p.m. ex Meltham train from Coal Shoots Junction box. It was given on line at 8.49 p.m., and the train booker booked it as having passed my box at 8.51 p.m. At 8.51 p.m. I sent the "Train out of section" signal for it to Coal Shoots box, and at the same time I sent "Train entering section" to Bradford A box. At 8.45 p.m. after accepting the train I pulled off my home signal for it. At 8.51 p.m., before sending the "Train out of section" signal I put the home signal on again. I am now aware that the train had never passed my box, and that it was standing at my home signal. The only explanation that I can give of my mistake is that there was a dense fog at the time and that at 8.51 p.m. a Great

Northern train passed my box on the down line from Leeds to Bradford, and I thought that both trains had passed my box simultaneously on the parallel lines. I felt quite confident that the Meltham train had passed, and I take the whole responsibility for the accident on my shoulders. There were fogmen out that evening, and there was one stationed a little more than 100 yards on the up side of my box. I might have shouted to him, but I did not consider that there was any necessity to do so, as I felt sure that the train had passed. I had heard no whistle from the direction of the home signal. Accordingly I accepted the ex Dewsbury train from Coal Shoots box, with the result that the accident occurred.

Arthur Smith, train booker, states: I have been three years in the service of the Company, during the last 10 months of which I have been in the Mill Lane Junction box. I came on duty on the 18th at 2.30 p.m. to work till 12 midnight. I remember signalman Holben giving "Line clear" for the 5.50 p.m. ex Meltham train on that day at 8.45 p.m. I did not see the train pass the box, but I heard Holben give "Train out of section" to Coal Shoots and then accept another train at 8.51 p.m., so I entered "Train out of section" in my book at that time. It is my usual practice to book in this manner, and I do not look for the trains passing myself.

James Poppleton, signalman, states: I have been 35 years in the service, during 34 of which I have been signalman. I have been 26 years in the Bradford A box. I came on duty on the 18th at 2 p.m. to work till 10 p.m. At 8.43 p.m. I received "Is line clear" signal from Mill Lane Junction for the 5.50 p.m. ex Meltham train, and accepted it at the same time. At 8.49 p.m. I received the "Train entering section" signal for this train from Mill Lane Junction. About three or four minutes later Mill Lane called me up on the telephone, and asked me whether the train had passed my box. I said "No," and he replied "Then I am afraid that there is a mess."

Conclusion.

The circumstances under which this accident occurred are clear.

The 5.50 p.m. Meltham-Bradford train passed Coal Shoots box at 8.49 p.m. at a low rate of speed and was brought to a standstill at Mill Lane Junction home signal owing to that signal being at danger. Signalman Holben, who was on duty in Mill Lane Junction box at the time, had at 8.45 p.m. given "Line clear" to Coal Shoots box for this train, and had at the same time pulled off his signals for it. At 8.49 p.m. Holben received from Coal Shoots box the "Train entering section" signal for it, and he admits that at 8.51 p.m., thinking that the train had passed his box, he sent to Coal Shoots box the "Train out of section" signal, and to Bradford A box the "Train entering section" signal, and at the same time put all his own signals to danger. As a matter of fact the train had at that time not passed his box at all, and Holben must have pulled on his home signal just in time to stop it at that point.

Holben freely acknowledges the above facts, and states in explanation that at 8.51 p.m. a Great Northern train passed his box on the Leeds to Bradford down line, which runs parallel to the line on which the Meltham-Bradford train was coming, and that owing to the dense fog which obtained at the time, he made the mistake of thinking that both trains had passed his box simultaneously on the two parallel lines. He states that he had no doubt whatsoever in his mind about the Meltham train having passed his box. He knew at the time that there was a fogman near his box, so that had he had the slightest doubt on the matter he could easily have ascertained from the fogman whether the train had really passed his box, but, as he had no doubt whatsoever on the subject, he took no steps in the matter. He accordingly at 8.51 p.m., after giving "Train out of section" for the Meltham train, gave "Line

clear" for the Dewsbury-Bradford train with the result that at about 8.55 p.m. the latter ran into the former while it was standing at the home signal.

The entries in Holben's book, and those in the two neighbouring boxes corroborate entirely Holben's statement, and there seems to be no reason for doubting the accuracy of it.

This accident was therefore entirely due to the mistake made by signalman Holben in thinking that two trains had passed his box simultaneously in the fog, running in the same direction on parallel lines, whilst as a matter of fact only one train had done so. Holben himself candidly admits that this is the case, and he accepts the whole responsibility for the accident.

No blame attaches to any other of the Company's servants.

The Assistant Secretary,
Railway Department, Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,

P. G. VON DONOP,
Lieut.-Col., R.F.

APPENDIX.

DAMAGE TO ROLLING STOCK.

Engine, No. 653.—Smoke box dented.	Third-class bogie, No. 232.—Buffers bent.
Third-class van, No. 709.—End broken, buffers bent.	Third-class brake.—Badly damaged and one pair of wheels off the rails.

Printed copies of the above Report were sent to the Company on the 4th January, 1900.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade (Railway Department),
8, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.,
January 2nd, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 7th December, 1899, the result of my enquiry into the collision which occurred about 9.15 a.m. on the 5th December, at Daisyfield Junction, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the 7.55 a.m. down passenger train from Blackpool to Todmorden, was, while passing through Daisyfield Junction, run into by the waggons of the 8 a.m. up goods train from Hellifield to Normanton, which had been allowed to remain standing on the up branch line whilst its engine left it for the purpose of running round.

One passenger had his thigh broken, and two others complained of injuries received.

The engine of the passenger train was slightly damaged, as were also the three leading vehicles of it; the train was divided between the second and third vehicles, and the latter was derailed. In the goods train the leading brake-van was considerably damaged, but none of the vehicles of this train were injured, nor were any of them off the line.

The passenger train consisted of an engine, tender, and the following carriages attached in the order given; a half-third van, a composite, a bogie third van, two composites, a bogie third, and a half-third van. The train was fitted with the automatic vacuum brake. The engine was a four-wheels-coupled bogie engine with a six-wheeled tender, fitted with automatic vacuum brakes. The brakes are reported to have been in excellent order.

The goods train consisted of an engine, tender, 11 trucks, and two brake-vans, one of the latter being at the front of the waggons, and one, a ten-ton brake, at the rear of the train, but there was only one guard who was in the rear brake-van. The engine of the goods train was a six-wheels-coupled tender engine fitted with automatic vacuum brake.

Details of damage to rolling stock are given in the appendix; that to the permanent-way was practically nil.