

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

27 March 1874

BoT Report into Accident at
Brighouse.

(2 Pages).

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

Sir, *Abergavenny, 20th April 1874.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 17th 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 10th ultimo at Radley station of the Great Western Railway.

The passenger train, which is due to leave Oxford at 8.15 p.m. for Didcot, ran into a goods train that was standing at Radley station.

Five passengers and the guard of the passenger train are reported to have been hurt.

On the day in question, the goods train which is due to leave Wolverhampton at 8.50 a.m. for Didcot started at its proper time. It was timed to stop at all stations, and it reached Radley at 8.13 p.m., arriving there about 38 minutes late, in consequence of its having been delayed between Banbury and Oxford.

The goods train consisted of an engine and tender, 11 waggons, and a break-van, with a guard at the tail of the train. It was stopped at the Didcot end of Radley station as one waggon had to be left in the sidings there, and eight empty waggons had to be taken out of the sidings, so as to be taken on with the goods train.

Radley station is protected by distant and home signals which are well placed and interlocked with the points at the station. The signals and points are worked by a signalman who is stationed in a raised cabin, which is placed at the Didcot end of the down-line platform. The up home-signal is at the Oxford end of the station, and is about 250 yards from the signalman's cabin. The up distant-signal is 765 yards from the up home-signal, and it can be seen by an engine-driver of an up train for about 500 yards before he reaches it. The gradient of the railway is 1 in 600 falling towards Didcot. The break-van at the tail of the goods train was standing

close to the Radley signal-cabin while the shunting was being done, on the evening in question. The station signals were placed at danger, and the engine of the goods train, after completing its work in the sidings, was being driven towards its train when the passenger train from Oxford arrived, ran through Radley station and struck the goods train which was standing at the Didcot end. The passenger train consisted of a tank-engine, a break-van, three carriages and a second break-van, with a guard at the tail of the train. It was timed to stop at Radley.

Two goods-waggons and the break-van at the tail of the goods train were knocked off the rails and broken up by the collision. The leading wheels of the engine of the passenger train were also thrown off the rails, and the engine was slightly damaged, but no vehicles of the passenger train left the rails.

The accident was caused by the neglect of the engine-driver of the passenger train, who appears to have approached Radley station without observing that the signals were at danger, and to have been driving at such speed that he could not stop his train at the station platform, as he should have done if there had been no obstruction on the line. This man had only been a driver for a short time, but he was well acquainted with the railway. He has been dismissed from the company's service and was not present at the inquiry.

The fireman of the passenger train did not notice the signals until after the train had passed the distant-signal, but the guard of the train did observe that they were at danger, and he stated that he applied his break before the train reached the distant-signal, but it did not take effect in consequence of some snow that had fallen.

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

I have, &c.,
F. H. RICH,
Colonel R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 14th May.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade,
(Railway Department),
21st April 1874.*

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 10th instant, the result of my inquiry into the accident which occurred on the 27th ultimo at Brighouse station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this instance as the 10.15 a.m. local passenger train from Brighouse to Halifax was starting from a siding at Brighouse station part of it left the rails at a catch-point.

Two passengers were slightly shaken, and the steps broken off one of the carriages.

The points and signals at Brighouse station are concentrated and interlocked in a raised cabin situated at the up end of the down platform, and the siding catch-point at which the accident happened is at the down end of the down platform, 210 yards from the cabin, from which both it and the trailing points at the junction of the crossing from the siding to the down line are worked by rod. There is also an interlocked starting signal for giving permission to trains to leave the siding. As it is difficult for the signalman to see when the tail of a train is clear of the points, it is customary for him to receive a signal to that effect from the porter on duty.

The 10.15 a.m. train consisted on the day in question of engine, tender, and four vehicles, the three rear ones being coupled together with continuous breaks in charge of a guard in a break compartment in the rear vehicle. The driver states that his engine was about 10 yards from the catch-point, and that before starting he noticed that this point was perfectly closed and the siding signal turned off; that after his engine and tender and the first carriage had passed the point he felt a jerk and on looking round and seeing some wheels off the rails he stopped as soon as possible; that he noticed that the siding signal was still turned off, and that on going to the point he found it properly closed; that he observed the heel-chair was a little loose and thought that this might have caused the accident, by allowing the toe of the point to spring.

The guard of the train was sorting luggage when they started and did not observe whether the starting signal was turned off or not. He felt a jerk, and the train stopped before the hind wheels of the rear carriage had passed the catch-point. He then got out and noticed that the siding signal was turned off, and the catch-point perfectly closed.

The state of things after the accident was found to be as follows: engine and tender on the rails; the front wheels of the first carriage on the rails, rear wheels off; all the wheels of the second carriage off the rails; the third and fourth carriages on the rails,

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the hind wheels of the fourth not having passed the catch-point. No couplings gave way. The first mark observed was on the inside of a right-hand chair, 9 yards from the catch-point, after which the heads of three fish bolts were stripped. No other damage was done to the permanent way, and the safety point was uninjured.

The station master was standing on the platform opposite the catch-point when the train started, just previously to which he says that he noticed that the point was close and the siding-signal lowered; that he was watching the train and saw the hind wheels of the first carriage drop off the rails just by the point-heel; that he examined the point as soon as possible and found it uninjured and completely closed; that he tried the gauge and found it all right, and that a carriage inspector shortly after examined the wheels of the carriages and pronounced them all right.

The foreman platelayer arrived at the spot two minutes after the accident. He could not account for its occurrence, but acknowledges to have afterwards tightened up the heel-chair a little.

The signalman on duty had been three years at Brighouse and in the present cabin since it was opened about 18 months since. He states that at 10.16 he closed the siding catch-point and turned off the starting-signal for the Halifax train, which started at once; that he was then engaged with a train on the up line and on looking round saw that part of the Halifax train was off the rails; that he had noticed no previous jar in the safety point signal-lever, which he had not touched since he had pulled it over; he also stated that a goods train was waiting to follow the Halifax train.

This accident most probably occurred from one of three causes:—First, the signalman may have put the starting-signal to danger and shifted the safety point between the front and hind wheels of the first carriage, which has a wheel base of 14 feet, and then finding he had made a mistake, have again changed

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 14th May.

the position of the point between the hind wheels of the second carriage and the front wheels of the third; the slow motion of the train at the time made it quite possible for him to have done this, and as a goods train was waiting to follow the passenger train it is likely he was in a hurry to get his road ready for the former.

Secondly. The catch-point may not have been quite closed when the train started, and although the wheels of the engine and tender and the front wheels of the first carriage may have passed in safety, the left rear wheel of this carriage and the left front and rear wheels of the second carriage may, from the speed, which was of course accelerating, have impinged more closely than the previous wheels on the left rail, and have thus made their way through a slight opening between the catch-point and the stock rail, though it is then difficult to account for the wheels of the two last carriages having kept the rails. The locking when I inspected it was in very good order, and notwithstanding the long distance (210 yards) between the cabin and the catch-point, I found that the point lever could not without great force be pulled into its notch if the point was kept open so much as an inch.

Thirdly. It is possible that the left front wheel of the first carriage may, owing to the looseness of the point-heel, have caused the toe of the point to spring open sufficiently to permit the passage through the opening of the three following left wheels, though on this theory it is again difficult to account for the two last carriages having kept the rails.

To whichever of these causes the accident is to be assigned, I recommend that the catch-point should either be removed (which as the siding is used only for passenger trains might safely be done) or be provided with a locking-bar.

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

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

LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

Sir,

Birmingham, 10th April 1874.

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 29th January, 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 23rd January near the Perry Barr station on the London and North-Western Railway.

In this case the 4.20 p.m. goods train from Dudley for Birmingham came into collision with the 7.20 p.m. passenger train from Wolverhampton for Birmingham, via Walsall, 220 yards within the distant-signal on the west of Perry Barr station. Seven passengers complained of injury. No servants of the Company were injured.

Description.

The Perry Barr station is approached from the west on a falling gradient of 1 in 330 for half a mile to the point of collision, and the line curves to the left. The distant-signal on the west is 862 yards from the home-signal, which is at the east end of the station-platform. Between the above distant-signal and the station there is a small cabin for the accommodation of a signalman in charge of a coal-yard near it. There is another distant-signal worked from this cabin, 985 yards from it, and 445 yards beyond the station distant-signal. The coal-yard distant-signal is only used when trains are shunting in or out of the coal-yard. About 1,380 yards from the station, and 519 yards from the station distant-signal, there is a bridge over the line, and it is only in passing under this bridge that an engine-driver approaching the station from the west catches sight of the distant-signal.

Evidence.

The goods train in question left Dudley at 6 p.m., 1 hour and 40 minutes late, and Bescot at 8.20 p.m., 2 hours and 50 minutes late. It consisted of an engine and tender, two loaded goods-waggons, 19 loaded mineral-waggons, two empty waggons, and a break-van. The engine-driver was passing under the bridge on the west of the Perry Barr station at a speed of about 25 miles an hour. He noticed from that bridge, as soon as he came in sight of the distant-signal from the Perry Barr station, that it was at "danger." He at once shut off his steam, told his fireman to apply the tender-break, and whistled for the guard's break. It was a fine moonlight night, and there had been a little rain half an hour previously. Between the bridge and the distant-signal, and about 140 yards from the signal, the engine-driver came under the guard of a previous train, and he passed over one fog-signal near to where the guard was standing. Fifty or sixty yards before he reached the guard and the fog-signal he reversed his engine, but he did not sand the rails because he could not get to the sand-box without passing along the framing of the engine, and there was no time to do so. He saw the lights at the tail of the passenger-train soon after he passed the guard, and he had reduced his speed to four miles an hour by the time he came into collision with it. He believes he could have brought his train to a stand in 30 or 40 yards more.

The fireman asserts that he applied the break, and got it tightly on soon after passing under the bridge; and he confirms the statement of the engine-driver, to the effect that they did what they could to stop