

The  
**VIRTUAL MUSEUM**  
of the  
**LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY**

Accident Reports.

29 August 1850

BoT Report into Accident at  
Marsden.

(2 Pages).

Appendix No. 39. occurred on the Haddington branch of the North British Railway on the 14th October, and to request you to call the particular attention of the Directors to his remarks on the apparent necessity of strengthening the permanent way.

## ACCIDENTS.

North British  
Railway.

*The Secretary of the  
North British Railway Company.*

I have, &c.,

J. L. A. SIMMONS,  
Capt. Royal Engineers.

*The North British Railway Company, 24, St. Andrew's-square,  
Edinburgh, November 18, 1850.*

SIR,

I AM desired by the Directors of this Company to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, enclosing report by the Inspecting Officer as to the Haddington branch accident, and to say that the suggestion as to strengthening the permanent way will be duly attended to. Indeed, as may be gathered from the report, the matter had already occupied their attention.

I have, &c.,

*Capt. Simmons, R.E.,  
Office of Commissioners of Railways, Whitehall, London.*

J. NAIRNE.

Appendix No. 40.

East Lancashire  
Railway.

## APPENDIX No. 40.

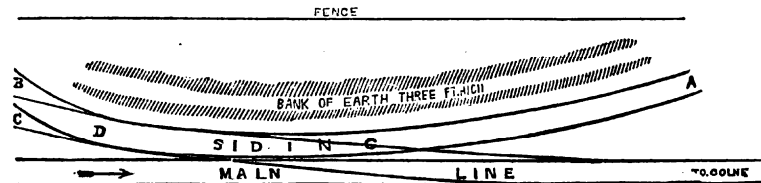
## EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR,

August 31, 1850.

I HAVE to report, for the information of the Commissioners of Railways, that yesterday morning, whilst inspecting the Burnley branch of the East Lancashire Railway, Mr. Eborall, the manager, informed me that a serious accident had taken place on the previous day (the 29th inst.), through a collision between the morning express-train and a goods-waggon at the Marsden station, between Burnley and Colne, from the effects of which a passenger had died; and he requested me to visit the spot, and learn the particulars connected with it.

It appears that on the morning of the 29th instant, the porter at the Marsden station was unwell and absent from duty, and that the gate-keeper from a level crossing adjoining the station had taken his place. This man is a pensioner from Chelsea Hospital, and had held the situation of gate-keeper for nine months. He was occupied about the station from 9 o'clock A.M., and happened to observe that a quantity of skips (wicker baskets for cotton) required to be loaded on a waggon; and although he received no instructions on the subject from the station-master, being desirous of making himself useful, he went to fetch a waggon from a number that were standing in a siding, rather more than 200 yards from the Marsden station, on the side towards Colne, a little beyond the point marked A in the accompanying sketch. The waggon required for the skips was the second one in the row, and had to be removed into the siding C (*vide* sketch); and in order to take it there it was requisite, in the



first place, to move the leading waggon into the other branch of the siding marked B. To effect this, it was necessary to pass a place where the siding runs within nine inches of the main line.

The morning express-train, which ought to leave Burnley at 9.45 A.M. for Colne, happened to be one or two minutes late on that day. It was drawn by an ordinary passenger-engine, and consisted of a guards-van next the engine, followed by a first-class carriage, a second-class carriage, and two composite carriages, and the train contained several passengers. At the time when the train was due, the station-master went out of his office, and, seeing that the line was all clear, went in again. The gate-keeper, in the mean time, not recollecting that the express-train was due, commenced moving the leading goods-waggon above mentioned, and brought it to the point marked D in the sketch, which he accomplished without difficulty, as the siding is inclined for a short distance from A towards D. At this moment the whistle of the express-train sounded. The station-master went out again on to the platform, and, observing the position of the waggon, made signals with his arms for the train to stop, upon seeing which the engine-driver instantly reversed his engine, and caused the breaks to be applied. There was not, however, sufficient space to stop the train and prevent a collision; but the speed is stated to have been checked to about 14 miles per hour when the collision took place. The buffer of the engine struck the side of the waggon, which was turned round and thrown against the side of the tender, breaking the latter's spring, and knocking a hole in it. The waggon then struck the guard's van, which it threw off the line on its side, as well as the three

following carriages. The last carriage scarcely left the line; and the engine and tender, having broken away from the rest of the train, were not thrown off the line. The passenger who was killed was in the second-class carriage, and died in the night, apparently from internal injuries he received.

This accident was clearly owing, immediately, to the anxiety of the gate-keeper, who had assumed the porter's duty, to make himself useful, and to his want of observation in moving the waggon when the express-train was due—the time of arrival of which he must have known, as he had been a gate-keeper at the level crossing adjoining the station for nine months.

But I am of opinion that the accident would never have occurred had the siding been placed at a sufficient distance from the main line. The waggon which was struck was not being pushed on to the main line, but only from one portion of the siding to another; and as there is ample space between the main line and the fence for the siding to be placed at the usual distance of six feet from the main line, and that the bank of earth adjoining the fence is only about three feet high, the expense of placing the siding parallel to, and at a proper distance from the main line would be quite inconsiderable compared with the evil the present unnecessary arrangement has caused.

*Capt. Simmons, R.E.,*  
 *&c. &c.*

I have, &c.,  
 DOUGLAS GALTON,  
*Lieut. Royal Engineers.*

*Office of Commissioners of Railways, Whitehall,*  
*September 3, 1850.*

SIR,

I HAVE to inform you that the Commissioners have received a report from their Inspecting Officer of the accident which occurred at the Marsden station on the 29th ultimo, caused by an express-train coming into collision with a goods-waggon which was being moved along a siding.

From the Report it appears that a siding had been so placed that a waggon, standing in or being moved along it, might obstruct the traffic on the main line; and that a gate-keeper, acting as porter in the absence of the man regularly employed in that capacity at the station, was moving a waggon on this siding, and that whilst so doing the train arriving struck the waggon, and the carriages attached to the train were thrown off the line.

It appears that the accident, although in some measure due to the want of observation on the part of the acting porter, who ought to have known that the train was due, and might have observed that the siding was so close to the main line as to render the moving of a waggon along it dangerous to the traffic upon the line, was mainly to be attributed to the improper position of a siding, the rails of which are reported to have approached within nine inches of the main line.

Had the siding been connected with the main line, it is not improbable that the porter might have remembered that the train was due, and have desisted from moving the waggon, or, at any rate, he might not have done so without putting on a signal to stop an approaching train; but the siding not being connected with the main line, a want of observation might very naturally have induced him to move the waggon along the siding.

I am to request, therefore, that you will call these remarks to the attention of the Directors, and to express a hope on the part of the Commissioners that they will cause this and any other sidings on the East Lancashire Railway, which may be similarly placed so as to cause risk to trains by their proximity to the main lines, to be re-arranged, and placed at the usual distance from the main lines of rails.

*The Secretary of the East Lancashire Railway,*  
 *&c. &c.*

I have, &c.,  
 J. L. A. SIMMONS,  
*Copt. Royal Engineers.*

#### APPENDIX No. 41.

#### MANCHESTER, SHEFFIELD, AND LINCOLNSHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR,

*May 2, 1850.*

THE Commissioners having directed me to inquire into the circumstances connected with the fall of a cast-iron girder bridge on the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway, near Gainsborough, I have the honour now to inform you that I arrived there on Tuesday, the 30th ultimo. I was met by Mr. Fowler, the chief engineer, and Mr. Potter, the resident engineer; Mr. Ibbotson, the engineer, under whose superintendence the bridge was constructed, was absent. I requested he might be in attendance next morning.

The accompanying sketch of the cross section of the bridge shows the disposition of the girders, and the dimensions of the several parts. The span of the bridge, which is a square one, is 35 feet over the Spital-road, close to the town of Gainsborough; the bridge is close to the points leading into the goods-siding, which renders it necessary for all goods-trains to cross the bridge before they can be shunted into the siding. It was under this operation that the bridge failed. The tender of the engine had just cleared the bridge when the failure occurred; both girders of the down-line giving way, the engine went down chimney-end foremost, leaving the

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Appendix No. 40.

ACCIDENTS.

East Lancashire  
 Railway.

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Manchester,  
 Sheffield, and  
 Lincolnshire  
 Railway.