

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

Accident Reports.

26 April 1873

BoT Report into Accident at  
Middleton.

(1 Page).

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Sir,

*Dublin, 20th May 1873.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision that occurred on the 26th ultimo at Middleton station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Middleton is the terminal station of the branch line. The goods yard is at the south side of the line. There are two cross-over roads leading from the up main line into the goods yard, and both cross-over roads have slips on to the down line. One set of slips, which are those nearest to the platform, has facing points on the down line. There is also a cross-over road between the up and down main lines at the east end of the station platform; and there is a siding at the north side of the railway which leads to a ballast pit, and joins the up main line at the same place as one of the lines that leads to the goods yard. There are no station signals, but there is a distant signal which has a repeater, and this distant signal can be lowered to "all right" by one lever which is placed at the west end of the up platform, and by another lever which is placed near the junction of the sidings at the east end of the yard. All the points are worked separately by ground levers, and are in charge of the foreman shunter of the goods yard, who also works the distant signal for the protection of the station, when he is doing any shunting on the passenger line.

The foreman porter at the passenger station is charged with the working of this same distant signal for passenger trains. Either of these men can take off the distant signal, but it requires both of them to act together to put it on.

The railway from Middleton junction to the east end of Middleton station falls on a gradient of 1 in 90, and it is level at the station platform.

On the day in question a goods train, which consisted of a tank engine, 14 waggons of goods, and four waggons of coal, arrived at the east end of Middleton station yard about 12.40 p.m. There were two guards in charge of the train, which was brought to a stand at the east end of the station. The engine driver, under the instructions of the yard foreman, pushed back 14 waggons of his train on to the up line, along the cross-over road which is furthest from the station platform. The engine was then uncoupled from the train and ran into the ballast siding. Fourteen waggons of goods, which had been backed on the up line, were then allowed to run down the incline into the goods yard, and the four waggons of coal which were at the tail of the train, and which appear to have been detached while the train was standing on the down line, were then allowed to run along the down line, and were turned into the coal siding at the back of the station platform, through the facing points of the slip road. The engine-driver having then placed his engine in front of the 14 waggons of goods, he and the fireman went to get their dinners. The porters at the station were also engaged in getting their dinners at this time. About 10 minutes to 2 the foreman porter returned to the station and lowered the distant signal for the passenger

train, which is due at Middleton at 2 o'clock from Manchester. The passenger train, which consisted of a tank engine, three third, a first, a second, and a third-class carriage with a brake compartment and a guard at the tail of the train, arrived at its proper time. When the engine-driver was within an engine length of the slip points leading to the coal sidings, he observed that they were open for the sidings. He was running at a speed of about seven miles an hour at the time; the steam was shut off. He reversed and put on steam, and his fireman made an attempt to apply the tender brake, but the driver could not stop the train, and the engine ran against some 20 coal waggons which were standing in the sidings about three carriage lengths from the points. The waggon of coal which the engine struck was smashed to pieces and three other coal waggons were damaged. The leading wheels of the engine of the passenger train were thrown off the rails and the engine was slightly damaged. The bodies of all the passenger carriages were shifted on their frames, and the ends of three of them were driven in, but none of them left the rails. The engine-driver and fireman remained on their engine, and were not hurt. The guard of the passenger train, who was riding in the last vehicle, had two of his ribs broken, and was rather seriously hurt. Eight passengers have complained of being injured, but it is believed that none of them were seriously hurt.

The accident was caused by the yard foreman forgetting to place the points of the slip road right for the passenger line, after he had put the four waggons of coal into the coal siding. The lever handle that works these points is provided with a chain for the purpose of fastening the points right for the passenger line. This chain must have been unfastened to allow the coal waggons to get into the coal siding, and was not put back.

Accidents of the kind are certain to happen sooner or later, when the safety of the passenger line is left dependent upon the memory of a man, whose mind is occupied with the difficult and sometimes dangerous operations of sorting the goods trains, and shunting the various parts of them into the different sidings at stations.

The yard foreman has been a long time in the company's service, and bears an excellent character, but he no doubt omitted to set the points right from forgetfulness and not from any wilful neglect.

He is however very much to blame for not honestly confessing the truth about the matter, instead of trying to make it appear, that some boys who are in the habit of going to the coal yard to buy coal, had wilfully meddled with the points.

I recommend that proper signals should be supplied and fixed at Middleton station; that the points should be interlocked with the signals, and that the sidings should be controlled by blind sidings, the points of which should be interlocked with the main line signals and points. This will render accidents of the kind impossible.

I have, &amp;c.,

F. H. RICH,

Colonel R.E.

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the company on the 9th June.

## LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

Sir,

*Birmingham, 10th May 1873.*

In compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 26th March, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances con-

ected with the accident that occurred on the 19th of March at the New Street station, Birmingham, of the London and North-Western Railway.

A passenger train from Wolverhampton ran into a Midland train of empty carriages, which was standing