

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

Accident Reports.

20 November 1900

BoT Report into Accident at

Headfield Junction.

(4 Pages).

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
8, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.,  
December 31st, 1900.

SIR, I HAVE the honour to report for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 30th November, 1900, the result of my inquiry into the cause of the collision which occurred on the 20th November at Headfield Junction on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the engine of the 6.52 p.m. passenger train from Wakefield to Dewsbury collided with an empty waggon which had run out of the Carriage and Waggon Repairing Shops Siding situated at Headfield Junction, and which had fouled the Wakefield to Dewsbury down line at the outlet points to the sidings. No passengers complained of injuries.

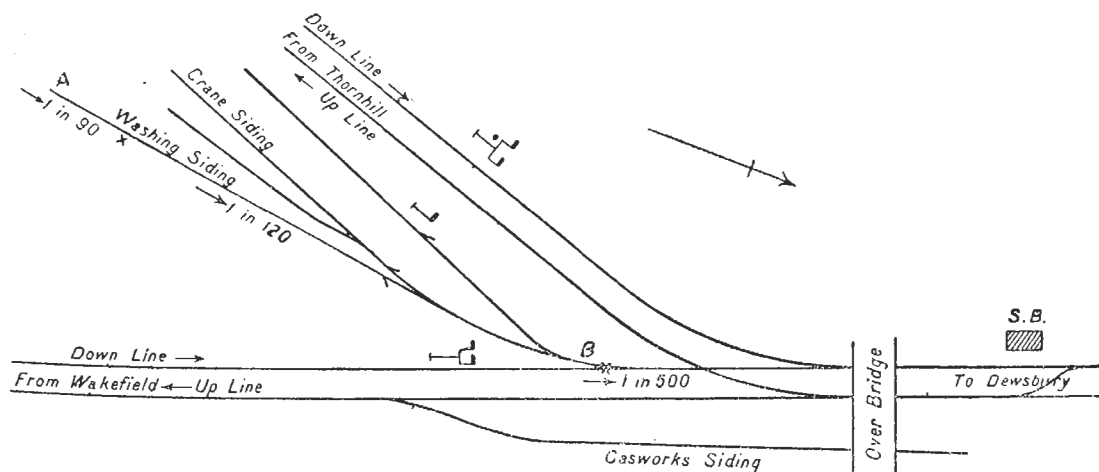
The train consisted of a four-wheels-coupled bogie tank engine, running bogie first, with automatic vacuum brakes on the four driving wheels, a six-wheeled brake-van, two third-class carriages, two composites, and a six-wheeled third van in the order named, with vacuum brakes on all the carriage wheels and on the four outside wheels of the two vans.

The engine was only slightly damaged, and after being brought to a stand continued its journey. No carriages were derailed. The empty truck was knocked clear of the Wakefield to Dewsbury line and was badly damaged, its debris fouling the up Thornhill to Dewsbury line adjoining.

The accident occurred at 7.9 p.m.

*Description.*

Headfield Junction near which the accident occurred is the double junction formed by the lines from Wakefield and Thornhill to Dewsbury, the lines at their junction running approximately south to north.



A. Position of truck when detached.  
B. Point of Collision.

In the angle formed by the down Wakefield to Dewsbury and up Thornhill to Dewsbury lines are some carriage and waggon repairing shops with several sidings, but all unite and have a common outlet in a single siding line with trailing points to the down Wakefield to Dewsbury line.

Thirty-six yards back from the fouling point of the single siding line and the down Wakefield to Dewsbury line these sidings have converged into three lines, and here are situated the three trap points to the sidings, all worked on the same lever in the signal cabin. Just behind these trap points is the outlet signal for the sidings, situated between the up Thornhill to Dewsbury line and the siding nearest to that up line.

The signal cabin for the junction is situated on the west side of the down Thornhill to Dewsbury line, and is 94 yards from the points of the siding connection above mentioned and 118 yards from their fouling point with the Wakefield to Dewsbury down line.

Owing to a bridge situated only 30 yards to the south of the signal cabin, the fouling point of the siding line and the down Wakefield to Dewsbury line is not visible from the cabin, but the trap points can be seen.

### *Evidence.*

*F. W. Driver*, signalman, states: I have been in the service for six years, and have been a signalman for three years, having been in Headfield Junction box since last June. On November 30th I booked on duty at 12.0 noon to work until 10.0 p.m. The carriage and waggon shops pilot had been shunting in and out of the shops sidings since about 1.50 p.m. At 7.6 p.m. I received "Is line clear" signal from Dewsbury East Junction cabin for the 6.52 p.m. passenger train from Wakefield to Dewsbury. As at that time I had the sidings signal off for the pilot, I did not accept the passenger train immediately, but looked to see where the pilot engine was. I saw that it was well inside the signal, and I then placed the sidings signal to danger and opened the trap points, and acknowledged the "Is line clear" signal at 7.7 p.m. I received "Train entering section" signal at 7.7, and it arrived and came to a stand with the guard's van just past my box at 7.9, having come into collision with an empty waggon, which had run out of the sidings unnoticed shortly before. The engine appeared to have knocked the waggon clear of the Wakefield-Dewsbury line which the train was running on, but the débris of the waggon fouled the Dewsbury to Thornhill line. I heard the crash, and after the train had come to a stand I sent the "obstruction danger" signal in all directions. The guard came to my box and said he had put fog signals on the rails to protect the train. I sent for Mr. Whitton, the stationmaster at Dewsbury, and then went down to examine the line. At 7.14 p.m. I received the "Is line clear" signal for a passenger train from Thornhill to Dewsbury, but I did not acknowledge it. I told the signalman at West Junction on the telephone to keep the train back at Thornhill, where I believe it was shunted, as the train was cancelled to me at 7.23. When I looked to see that the pilot engine was clear inside, before I took off my signals for the passenger train, I could not see the empty waggon which had run out through the traps. There was no light at this point. If there had been a light at this point I might have seen the waggon while it was running down the siding, but I could not have seen it at the fouling point where the collision occurred, as the road over-bridge, just south of my cabin, obstructs the view of the actual fouling point, though I can see anything at the traps.

*H. Firth*, shunter, states: I am a shunter and relief guard stationed at Dewsbury. I have been in the service for four years, and have been a shunter since July, 1899. On November 20th I signed on duty at 6.0 a.m. and signed off at 9.30 a.m. I again signed on at 1.0 p.m., and on account of the accident I did not finish work on this night until 11.50 p.m. I should have been relieved at 9.30 p.m. in the ordinary course. We commenced shunting at the carriage shops at Dewsbury Junction at about 1.50 p.m., and went on shunting repaired waggons, &c., in and out of the shops, getting them in readiness to take away. At about 7.0 p.m. I wished to get a low-sided waggon, which was labelled for Newton Heath, out of the washing siding, and to do this I had to draw out nine low-sided waggons which were standing in front of it. I unhooked the waggon I

wanted from the nine, dropped its brake as it was not secured to the waggons behind it, and drew out the nine empty waggons. I did not pin down the brake of the Newton Heath waggon, as I thought by dropping the brake the waggon would be held. When closing up to the waggons in the washing siding with the engine, the buffers were compressed, and I think now that when we drew away from the loose waggon the stretching of the buffers started it and that it must have followed us very slowly down. Immediately after I had uncoupled I gave the driver a signal to draw ahead so that I could put the nine waggons in the Crane road, and I walked down with them, and directly they were over the points I threw over the dummy and brought them back into that road. I walked up with the waggons on the opposite side to the Washing siding, or I might have seen the loose waggon following, although if it had not got near the fouling point it would even then have been hidden by the waggons which were standing on the two intervening roads. I, however, did not notice the waggon, and after we had placed the nine waggons in the Crane road I coupled them up to the other waggons standing there and went on lifting the brakes of the waggons in the Crane road in order that they would be ready for me when I returned from the gas works siding, where I intended to take the single empty waggon. While I was doing this I heard a crash and found that a collision had occurred. I went down and helped the guard to protect the road with fog signals. When we closed up to the waggons in the washing siding my brake was at the far end, but not against the buffer stops, and we closed up to the brake and did not touch the buffers. There was nothing between my brake and the buffers which could have started the waggon. My van brake was hard on, and there were some brakes down on the ten waggons attached to it, but I cannot say how many. I was quite aware that this loose waggon was on a falling gradient, but never thought for a moment that it would not be held by dropping the brake. The night was wet, and the wheels and brake block were greasy. I did not notice that the waggon had only a single brake block on one wheel. It was about five minutes since the pilot engine last came into the sidings before the collision occurred.

*W. Lockwood Sharp*, acting driver, states: I have been in the service for 13 years, and have been working as extra driver for the last 6 years. On the 19th of November I signed off duty at 4 p.m., and I signed on duty on the 20th, the date of the mishap, at 2.30 p.m., expecting to finish about 7.0 p.m. I relieved the driver of the Dewsbury Junction shops pilot at 3.35 p.m., and was engaged shunting waggons in and out of the shops sidings. Just after 7.0 p.m. I backed my engine into the Washing siding and drew out nine waggons, but did not come against the waggons at all sharply, simply buffering them up. We then put the nine waggons in the Crane road, and we were standing there when the shunter called out, "Did you hear that crash?" It was about five minutes after I came back into the Crane siding when the collision occurred. Shortly afterwards I went down and found that

a passenger train had run into a waggon. I put some fog signals on the branch line from Thornhill to Dewsbury. I can give no reason for the waggon running out by itself. My engine was a six-coupled tender engine with hand-brake on the six tender wheels.

*Radcliffe Dodd*, acting fireman, states: I have been in the service five years, and have acted as fireman on occasions for the last two years. On the day previous to the mishap, 19th November, I was working with driver Sharp, and on the day of the accident, 20th November, I signed on duty and worked the same hours as he did. I have heard the driver's statement read, and I have nothing to add to his evidence, which I corroborate.

*Enos Garside*, driver, states: I have been in the service for about 32 years, and have been a driver since 1879. On the day previous to the accident I signed off duty at 10.15 p.m., and on the day of the mishap I signed on duty at 4.5 p.m., expecting to finish about midnight. I was working the 6.52 p.m. train from Wakefield to Dewsbury, and on approaching Dewsbury East Junction the distant signal was on. I shut off steam and was running slowly up, when the home signal for East Junction and the distant signal for Headfield Junction, which is on the same post, were lowered. On rounding the curve I put steam on again, and almost immediately came into collision with some obstruction which was foul of the line just by the points leading into the shops sidings. It was quite dark at the time and inclined to be misty, and I did not see the obstruction, which I found afterwards to be an empty waggon, until I hit it. I at once shut off steam and applied the brake, and we came to a stand about 100 yards from the point of collision. I was running 25 to 30 miles an hour when the collision occurred. My engine was a four-wheels-coupled bogie tank, with vacuum brakes on the four driving wheels, and we were running bogie first. The buffer plate of the coal bunker was slightly damaged; the corner of the buffer plank had caught almost the centre of the waggon with a glancing blow, lifting and throwing the waggon clear of the line I was on. No wheels of the engine or train left the rails.

*Samuel Hamilton*, fireman, states: I have been in the service nine-and-a-half years, and have been a booked fireman for the last 12 months. I signed off on 20th at 4.30 a.m., and booked on

again at 4.5 p.m., and expected to finish at 12 midnight. I did not see the obstruction until after the accident, and have nothing to add to my driver's statement.

*C. F. Noble*, guard, states: I have been in the service since 1874, and have been a guard for 17 years. I booked off on 19th November at 11.45 p.m., and on 20th November I booked on duty at 1.10 p.m. to work until 11.40 p.m., and I was working the 6.52 p.m. train from Wakefield to Dewsbury. Everything went right until we were approaching Headfield Junction, and just as we were passing the points from the carriage shops I felt a very slight jerk, and my train came to a stand with the rear van about 30 yards beyond the signal box. I noticed some of the passengers had their heads out of the windows, but no one complained. I then went back to the carriage sidings and saw that my train had collided with a track, which was then lying on the up Thornhill road. I then went back to the signalman and told him to block the roads. After I had placed fog signals down at each home signal I went back to the train, and we proceeded forward to Dewsbury at 7.29 p.m. There would be about 30 passengers in the train, and I was in the rear van. When I looked for the cause of the accident I found that low-sided waggon No. 991 had been foul of the main line, and had been lifted clear of our road, but foul of the up branch line to Thornhill. My train was formed as follows:—

Engine No. 43,  
Van No. 140, six-wheeled,  
3rd No. 418, four-wheeled,  
3rd No. 1,398, four-wheeled,  
Compo. No. 279, four-wheeled,  
Compo. No. 555, four-wheeled,  
3rd Van No. 2,060, six-wheeled,

with vacuum brakes on all the carriage wheels and on four outside wheels of the vans.

*Mr. Tasker*, foreman at the carriage shops, states: I examined waggon No. 991 the day previous to the accident and found the brake in good order. This waggon is only braked on one wheel and is fitted with a wooden brake block. The night of the accident was mizzly, and rails and wheels were greasy. On such a night the wooden blocks will not bite unless pinned down. The waggon had been newly lifted and journals thoroughly cleaned, new brasses put in, and oiled on the morning of the 20th.

### Conclusion.

This slight collision was due to an error of judgment on the part of shunter Firth, who left a single waggon in a siding with falling gradients of 1 in 90 and 1 in 120 uncoupled to any other waggons, and with the brake handle not pinned down.

Shunter Firth was in charge of marshalling some repaired waggons in the carriage and waggon sidings, and at about 7 p.m., desiring to get a single low-sided waggon out of the Washing siding into the Gas Works siding, had uncoupled it from nine others that were in front of it in the Washing siding, but only dropped its brake, and did not pin down the brake handle. He then drew the nine waggons out of the Washing siding by the pilot engine clear of the points, the safety catch points necessarily being closed, and then backed them up another siding adjoining, known as the Crane siding. The traps for this siding and those of the Washing siding are worked by the same lever in the signal cabin, and so while backing the nine waggons up the Crane siding the traps for the Washing siding were still closed.

The single truck had just been lifted and its journals thoroughly cleaned, and new brasses fitted that day, and so was in perfect running order, and was fitted with only a single wood brake block to one wheel. The evening was slightly wet, and rails and brake

block were very greasy, and no doubt the springing of the buffers which had been compressed when the engine set back on to the nine waggons just gave the single truck sufficient impetus to move slowly down the siding, when the engine and nine trucks started away from it. The truck was standing when detached on a falling gradient of 1 in 90, and 12 yards nearer the outlet siding the gradient changes to 1 in 120 to close by the fouling point, where it becomes 1 in 500. The distance the truck ran was just under 150 yards.

Just after the engine and nine trucks had gone back into the Crane siding, the signalman at 7.6 p.m. received "Is line clear" signal for the 6.52 p.m. Wakefield to Dewsbury passenger train, and after ascertaining that the engine was well inside the sidings signal, he placed that signal to danger, opened the trap points for the sidings, and accepted the passenger train at 7.7 p.m. But by this time the single truck must have got through the trap points of the Washing siding, and it apparently came to a stand fouling the main line just at the points leading into the carriage sidings.

A minute or so later the passenger train ran into the truck, the engine striking it a glancing blow and knocking it clear of the down Wakefield-Dewsbury line on to the up Thornhill to Dewsbury line adjoining.

The shunter on going back with the nine waggons into the Crane road walked on the side of them away from the Washing sidings and so did not notice the single waggon moving, nor did the driver or fireman of the shunting engine, who no doubt were looking to the work they were immediately concerned with. It being quite dark at the time it was impossible for the signalman to see the single waggon moving down the siding, and as he ascertained that the engine was inside the sidings signal before accepting the passenger train, I do not consider any blame rests on him for the collision.

In view, however, of the fact that the fouling point of the sidings and main line is not visible from the signal cabin, the Company should, I consider, give instructions that after shunting operations of any kind, the signalman should always receive a message from the shunter or person in charge that everything is secure in the sidings and that the running lines are clear, before lowering his signals for the main lines, in order that Rule 62 (b) of the General Rule Book may be strictly carried out.

The Assistant Secretary,  
Railway Department,  
Board of Trade.

I have, &c.,  
E. DRUITT,  
Major, R.E.

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Printed copies of the above Report were sent the Company on the 9th February, 1901.

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## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade (Railway Department),  
8, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, London, S.W.,  
December 15th, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the Order of the 1st December, the result of my enquiry into the causes of the collision which occurred on the 28th November, near Brighouse East Cabin, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the 3.32 a.m. up passenger train from Normanton to Halifax ran into the brake van and 21 waggons that had broken away from the 8.50 p.m. goods train from Goole to Sowerby Junction, and which had been left standing on the up main line with the brake van 405 yards from Brighouse East signal-box.

There was only one passenger in the Normanton to Halifax train, and he was uninjured, but the driver and fireman of this train were somewhat badly shaken.

The Halifax train consisted of a four-wheels-coupled tender-engine with leading bogie running chimney first, a third half van, a bogie composite, a bogie third, a bogie third van, a North-Eastern Company's open fish truck, and two brake vans. The engine was fitted with the automatic vacuum brake on the four driving wheels and six tender wheels, and with a hand brake on all six tender wheels. All the carriage wheels were braked except the middle pair of the leading van and those of the fish truck. The latter was fitted with a train pipe.