

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

Accident Reports.

27 June 1857

BoT Report into Accident at  
Kirkby.

(3 Pages).

line, until it again joined the down line. It then pushed the train through the cross-over road to the departure platform, so that it might be ready to leave at 2.25 p.m., and remained standing in front of the train, but not connected to it, until just before the 2.25 p.m. up express train was ready to start.

It is not quite certain whether the engine stood clear of the points, or was standing over them. The engine-driver states that he stood four or five yards clear of them, and nearer to the departure platform.

The policeman on duty shifted the whole of the points, with one exception, to enable the above operation to be performed, and then he went to his dinner, but returned to the station by two o'clock. When the 2.25 p.m. train was ready to start, he went to the station-master and said, "Time is up, sir; we are all right;" and the latter, after asking the ticket collector if the tickets were all right, desired the guard to go on, and went into the booking office.

The up train on leaving the platform, it appears, took the cross-over road leading to the down line, and when it had got about 60 or 70 yards the driver discovered that he was on the wrong line, and shut his steam. He states that he then turned round and observed his fireman making or receiving a signal to some of the porters on the platform, and immediately afterwards he again turned round, and sounded the guard's whistle, and reversed his engine, while the fireman applied the break, and just as he was on the point of stopping, and had run about 28 yards past the facing points on the down line, or 185 yards from the facing points on the up line, the engine was struck by the tender of the engine of the 6.50 a.m. down parliamentary train on its way to the arrival platform, then travelling at from six to eight miles an hour. The effect of the collision considerably damaged the engine and tender of the parliamentary train, and, in a less degree, the engine of the 2.25 p.m. up train, and injured about twenty-three passengers in the two trains, none very seriously, and some very slightly.

There appears to be no doubt whatever that the policeman on duty omitted to shift the facing points on the up line, after the train had crossed over from the down line, and neglected to look to their state before he went and informed the station-master that all was right for the 2.25 p.m. up train to proceed. I did not see him, as he was given into custody on

the same day; brought before the magistrates assembled at Cheltenham in petty sessions on the following day (Saturday); was remanded till Monday, the 20th, when his case was fully heard, and he was sentenced to two months' imprisonment in Gloucester gaol, but without hard labour, in consequence of his good character. He had been employed for about seven months on this duty, having had five or six weeks' training with an experienced hand before he was placed in charge of the points. He is said to be about thirty years of age; had served in the Crimea, and wore the medal with four clasps.

The driver of the down parliamentary train states, that owing to a sharp curve in the line he did not see the up train advancing along the cross-over road until he was under the over bridge, which is about seventy yards from the spot at which the collision took place; that he immediately sounded the break whistle and reversed his engine, and his fireman applied the tender break; that he thinks he was travelling about twelve miles an hour when he first saw the other train, and that he had reduced his speed to somewhere about six miles an hour when the collision occurred. I am inclined to think the speed underestimated in both instances; but no blame can be attached to this engine-driver.

While it is probably certain that the policeman neglected his duty in not having set the facing points in their proper position, open to the up line, I cannot but think the driver of the 2.25 up train did not keep a sufficiently good look-out, or he would at once have seen that he was on the wrong road, and been enabled to stop clear of the down line; but the chief responsibility for the accident, in my opinion, rests on the company. There is not at the Cheltenham Station such an amount of traffic as to call for the use of this cross-over road, presenting facing points on both lines, and I think it should be taken out.

It also appears from the evidence that the trains between Gloucester and Cheltenham frequently travel tender foremost at a high rate of speed. Now, that which is not reckoned safe on the main line should not be permitted on this branch, although it is only between seven and eight miles in length.

I have, &c.

Captain Galton, R.E.  
&c. &c.

W. YOLLAND,  
Lt.-Colonel, R.E.

#### LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, August 12, 1857.*

SIR,

I AM directed by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to transmit to you, for the information of the directors of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, the inclosed copy of the report made by Captain Tyler, R.E., the inspecting officer appointed by their Lordships, to inquire into and report upon the circumstances which attended the collision at the Kirkby Station on the 27th of June last.

My Lords trust that the inspecting officer's remarks upon the desirableness of giving more precise notice of the running of excursion trains will receive the careful consideration of the directors, and that they will also take into consideration the inspecting officer's remarks upon the subject of working the railway by means of the electric telegraph.

I am, &c.

*The Secretary to the* DOUGLAS GALTON,  
*Lancashire and Yorkshire* Captain, R.E.  
*Railway Company.*

*Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
Whitehall, July 27, 1857.*

SIR,

In compliance with the instructions contained in your letter of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the

Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the accident, that occurred on the 27th ultimo, near the Kirkby Station of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Kirkby is a small station between Liverpool and Wigan, 7 miles from the former, and 12 from the latter; and it has for its protection a distant signal towards Liverpool, 250 yards from the passenger platform. The station itself is approached on a curve, and is not seen from any great distance beyond the signal, but the signal is visible, in clear weather, for upwards of 2,000 yards, along a gradient which rises from the direction of Liverpool at the rate of 1 in 312, and which extends for a mile from the station platform.

On the 27th ultimo, arrangements were made for running four excursion trains from Wigan to Liverpool, two of which were to stop at Kirkby, and two at Preston Road,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Liverpool, on the return journey, for the collection of the tickets. The first of these trains left Wigan at 5.30 a.m., arrived at Liverpool at 6.30, left Liverpool at 6.35 p.m., and reached Kirkby, on its return journey, at 6.50.

It contained about 1,100 passengers; and as there were three guards, besides the station-master and a boy, employed in collecting the tickets, ten minutes or a little more would probably have been sufficient for the purpose. But after it had been standing at

Kirkby for five minutes, according to the statement of the guard, or eight minutes, according to that of the station-master, it was run into by a heavy goods train which was following it from Liverpool; and upwards of two hundred of the excursionists were injured, a few severely, and the remainder principally with cuts and bruises. The carriages were but little damaged, and were all taken on to Bolton after the accident.

The excursion train consisted of an engine and tender, 29 carriages, and a van. It arrived at Kirkby at its proper time; it was duly protected by the distant signal; the tickets were being collected in obedience to the orders of the superintendent, and no blame can be attached to any one employed with it, or at the station.

The goods train was composed of an engine and tender, 40 loaded waggons, and two break vans, one next to the tender, and the other at the rear of the train. I have not had an opportunity of examining the driver, or the guard who was in charge of the first break van, of this train, because these two men have each been sentenced to a month's imprisonment for their share in the collision; but there seems to be no doubt from the evidence of others, that the driver admitted that the signal was at danger, and excused himself for not seeing it in sufficient time to enable him to stop his train, by saying that his pumps were not working well, and that he was engaged with his "pet taps;" and it appears that the guard was talking to the fireman on the foot-plate of the engine, instead of attending to his break in his van, which was next to the tender, when it was suddenly discovered that the Kirkby signal, some 300 yards, or less, ahead of them, was at danger.

The goods train then ran 238 yards past the distant signal before it came into collision with the tail of the excursion train. It is possible that if the first guard had been, as he ought to have been, in his break van, instead of upon the engine, when the signal was first seen to indicate danger, the train might even then have been stopped in time to avoid the collision; but it appears certain that the driver, fireman, and first guard of this train must have run about 1,700 yards in sight of this signal before they observed that it was against them; and it seems that they have been most justly punished for their negligence in not keeping a better look-out.

The driver is represented to have been a respectable, steady man, to have been fireman with the same goods train for two years, and driver of it for six weeks, and to have been employed at intervals as an occasional driver for two years. He was perfectly sober.

So far the case is a very simple one, and those who were immediately concerned in producing the accident have been brought to justice, and are stoning for their offences; but it becomes necessary to inquire further, how it was that when an excursion train was thus stopping at a road-side station, according to previous arrangement, at a particular time, a heavy goods train not due to stop at that station, was allowed to follow it so closely.

As frequently happens in such cases, there is a good deal of discrepancy as to the times at which these trains started from or passed the different stations on the road. The excursion train left Liverpool somewhere between 6.35 and 6.37, according to the statements of the station-inspector and the guard; but it is said by the inspector at Bootle Lane,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the Kirkby side of Liverpool, to have passed that station at 6.33, and to have been followed by the goods train at 6.44; and the goods train is stated by the fireman and guard to have started at 6.40. The two trains were recorded in a book at Preston Road Station,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Liverpool, as having passed at 6.40 and 6.50 respectively; and the station-master at Aintree, 5 miles from Liverpool, considered that ten minutes had elapsed after the passage of the excursion train, when he permitted the goods train to pass his station at 6.44. The excursion train reached Kirkby

at 6.47, according to the station-master, and according to the guard at 6.50, and the latter states that the collision occurred at 6.55 by his watch.

Putting together the times given by these different witnesses, the probable speed of the trains, and all the circumstances of the case, it would seem that the goods train must have left Bootle Lane five or six minutes after the excursion train passed that station, and that there never could have been much more than that interval between them up to the time of the collision.

The regulations of the company prescribe that the danger signal shall be shown for five, and the caution signal for ten minutes after the passage of every train, and it would appear that the goods train must have followed the excursion train within the latter interval; but the inspector at Bootle Lane, and the station-master at Preston Road, seem to have believed that the ten minutes had elapsed; and the Aintree station-master was of the same opinion, though he was at Kirkby, instead of Aintree, when the excursion train arrived. He returned to Aintree before the goods train passed that station, but he did not think it necessary to warn the driver, because he believed that ten minutes had elapsed after the passage of the excursion train, and because he knew that the signal at Kirkby had been turned to "danger" for its protection.

Thus it happened, that after the goods train left Bootle Lane, no caution or danger signal was exhibited to the driver until he approached Kirkby; and though I understand that there have been statements made, to the effect that the guard of the goods train was informed that the excursion train would stop at Kirkby, and that he informed the driver of the circumstance; yet the fireman states that they were not aware, as far as he knows, that it would do so, and it is difficult to believe that any of them could have known it, and could have been at the same time so regardless of the Kirkby signal.

A certain number of printed time bills were issued in the form of that which I now enclose, and distributed among certain of the company's servants, to inform them of the running of this and other excursion trains; but the driver, fireman, and guards of the goods train were not supplied with copies, as it is stated not to be the practice to furnish the servants of other trains with them, it being expected on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway that the drivers will always look out for special trains sent off without notice at any hour, and stopped on any required part of the line. The inspector who started the goods train from Bootle Lane had no copy of the excursion time bill; and he says that he was not aware that that particular train would stop at Kirkby for the collection of the tickets, though he knew that the seven o'clock train from Liverpool on the same day would stop there.

It would, however, be a wise precaution on the part of the company, if they were to cause the drivers to be supplied, as well as all the other servants of the company who may be concerned, with copies of all time bills of excursion trains which may be issued for the future; and it is exceedingly desirable that they should adopt the means which the electric telegraph places at their disposal, as a further precaution against such a lamentable occurrence as that which is now under consideration.

When 1,100 people are kept waiting at a station, in an extra-ordinary train, for their tickets to be collected, it becomes well worth while to adopt further measures for their safety than the mere turning on of one signal 240 yards in their rear, about which there may be a mistake or an omission, or which a driver may neglect to observe. Such signals are indispensable auxiliaries in the working of railways, but a great number of collisions have testified to the necessity that exists for the adoption of further precautions in addition to them in such cases as the present, and have abundantly proved that it is only by increasing precautions and multiplying means of safety that acci-

depts can, to the greatest extent, be prevented. The Lancashire and Yorkshire directors have not as yet made use of the telegraph in the working of their trains, excepting in certain tunnels; but carrying on, as they do, a vast amount of irregular excursion traffic, this accident must strongly point out, to them how much it is required.

The guard and driver of the goods train are immediately to blame for the occurrence of this particular accident; but so long as the directors of the company

neglect to make use of all the available means which are placed within their reach for the safety of their passengers, they cannot be considered as otherwise than responsible, to a considerable extent, for all accidents of this nature.

I have, &c.  
 H. W. TYLER,  
 Captain, R.E.  
 The Secretary,  
 Railway Department,  
 Board of Trade.

**LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.**

**ARRANGEMENT AND NOTICE OF SPECIAL TRAINS.**

Superintendent's Office, Victoria Station, Manchester, June 26th, 1857.

| Date.                  | School or Trip.  | Leave. | From                      | To            | Take up or set down Passengers at | Examine and Snip Tickets at | Return.        | Set down Passengers at | Examine and Collect Tickets. | No. of Passengers. | No. of Carriages. | Time of Arrival and Departure. |      |  | REMARKS. |
|------------------------|--|--------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------|--|----------|
|                        |  |        |                           |               |                                   |                             |                |                        |                              |                    |                   | A.M.                           | P.M. |  |          |
| SATURDAY.<br>June 27th | Pool Stock School  | 5 30   | Wigan                     | Liverpool     | -                                 | Preston Road.               | 6.35 same day. | -                      | Kirkby                       | 800                | 20                |                                |      |  |          |
| " "                    | " "  | 6 0    | Do.                       | Do.           | -                                 | Preston Road.               | 7.0 same day.  | -                      | Kirkby                       | 1000               | 25                |                                |      |  |          |
| " "                    | St. Patrick's School.  | 6 20   | Do.                       | Do.           | -                                 | Preston Road.               | 7.20 same day. | -                      | Preston Road.                | 1250               | 30                |                                |      |  |          |
| " "                    | " "  | 6 45   | Do.                       | Do.           | -                                 | Preston Road.               | 7.45 same day. | -                      | Preston Road.                | 1250               | 30                |                                |      |  |          |
| " "                    | Parish Ch., St. Thomas's Ch., and St. Catherine's Ch. Schls. | 6 30   | Do.                       | Blackpool     | -                                 | Lostock June.               | 7.10 same day. | -                      | Lostock June.                | 800                | 20                |                                |      |  |          |
| " "                    | Mr. Jennison's Trip.   | 8 0    | Orrell                    | Salford       | Wigan, Hindley, and Bolton        | Oldfield Road.              | 11.0 same day. | As in going.           | Moses Gate.                  | -                  | 20                |                                |      |  |          |
| " "                    | E. L. Co.'s Trip   | 8 30   | Bury (Via Ardwick Junct.) | Old Trafford. | -                                 | Miles Platting              | 8.0 same day.  | -                      | -                            | -                  | -                 |                                |      |  |          |

To Station Masters, Guards, Clerks in Charge, Pointsmen, and all those whom it may concern.

Keep your signals lighted, remain on duty, and be prepared for these and all special trains until they have passed home, and keep a good look-out for any extra trains, engines, &c., of which you may not receive advice. Enter this and all future advice notes in your order book, and after the trips are over return it to this office, entering in the columns above the times the trains left, arrived, or passed your Station, and writing across the face of it the date when you received it, and that it is duly entered. The speed of these trains not to exceed 20 miles per hour, not including stoppages.

It is expected that every Servant of this Company will fully understand this NOTICE, and act in accordance with it. All goods, cattle, mineral, or ballast trains, must give way for passenger trains so as not to detain or endanger them. (See Instruction Book, Rule 12, page 54.)

Mr.

Station.

HENRY BLACKMORE, SUPERINTENDENT.

**LONDON, BRIGHTON, AND SOUTH COAST RAILWAY.**

Railway Department, Board of Trade,  
 Whitehall, May 14, 1857.

SIR, In obedience to the instructions contained in your letter of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances attending the accident which occurred on the 1st instant to a passenger train at the London Terminus of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway.

About 160 yards from the east end of the Crystal Palace platform are a pair of self-acting facing points weighted to stand open for the straight road leading to this platform, and requiring to be held open for all trains passing off to the left towards the main line platform. These points are of the usual description, 12 feet long, with a single connecting rod. I enclose a trace showing the points and crossings at this spot.

It appears from the statements of various persons, servants of the London, Brighton and South Coast, and South Eastern Railway Companies, that, as the

Wandsworth passenger train, due at the London Bridge Terminus at 9.15 a.m., was passing over this pair of facing points, the engine was observed to mount the rails when about the heel of the points, and after passing the point rails, and running for about double its own length between the two lines of rail, it then got on to the left road leading to the main line platform.

The train consisted of a six-wheeled tank engine, four wheels coupled, running with the trailing wheels in front, and nine carriages of which the first was a third-class carriage with four compartments, a break being fixed in the first next to the engine, and the second was also a third class carriage.

These two third-class carriages (as well as the remainder of the train) were seen to take the straight road, and after they had passed over the points (the engine being at this moment not on the same line of road), as the train advanced the engine and the next carriage diverged from each other, and this leading carriage was in consequence dragged off the rails to