

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

Accident Reports.

17 July 1869

BoT Report into Accident at  
Lostock Hall Junction.

(2 Pages).

possible that the lamp of the signalman, as he walked towards the goods train, may have been seen from the goods train, or that the driver and guard of the goods train may have seen some other white light from the direction of the signal cabin which they understood to give them permission to leave the siding.

There is some excuse for all of these men in the general laxity of discipline consequent upon their working under the disadvantage of a rule which it was hardly possible to carry out, and upon the absence of other appliances necessary for safety. The remedy which is required with a view to the proper working of these sidings for the future is obvious, in the ad-

dition of a siding signal, worked by a wire from the signal cabin; and this siding signal should be interlocked with the main line signals and with stop-blocks or safety points on the sidings. These various servants of the company would thus be prevented from causing such an accident, and the signalman would be unable, even to lower his siding signal, or to make it possible for an engine to leave the siding when his signals were lowered for the passage of a train along the main line.

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

I have, &c.,  
H. W. TYLER.

A copy of the above report was sent to the company on the 13th January 1870.

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*Board of Trade  
(Railway Department),  
Whitehall, 7th August 1869.*

SIR,

IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 16th ult., I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into an accident which occurred on the 9th ult., in consequence of a portion of a train belonging to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company leaving the rails at Springwood junction, the joint property of the London and North Western and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies, but maintained by the former company.

No passengers or servants of the company are stated to have been injured in consequence of this accident.

Springwood junction is situated in an open space between two tunnels, and is about a quarter of a mile from Huddersfield station. At it a Lancashire and Yorkshire line to Holmfirth and Sheffield leaves the London and North Western line from Huddersfield to Manchester. The signals and points at this junction are interlocked. As the 12.18 p.m. train from Huddersfield to Holmfirth, consisting of an engine and tender, (running tender first,) four carriages and a wagon, was approaching the junction at a speed of about 20 miles an hour, the fireman, who was looking to see if the facing points were right, perceived, when about 15 yards from them, that the left-hand switch, instead of being open, was close against the standard rail, the right-hand switch being also close to its rail. He immediately shouted to his driver to "hold on." Upon this the latter shut off steam, and had got his engine partly reversed, when, from the increasing tightness of the gauge between the switches, it and the tender mounted, and left the rails, running on for about 50 yards before stopping. The first carriage also left the rails, but the remainder of the train did not do so. The feed pipes were broken, the tender framing injured, and there was slight damage done to some of the carriage buffers. In the permanent way nine chairs were broken; one switch and one rail were bent.

The cause of the left facing switch not working was

A copy of the report was sent to the London and North Western and Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Companies on the 21st August 1869.

## LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

*1, Whitehall, S.W.,  
25th August 1869.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry, ordered by your minute of the 21st ultimo, into the circumstances attending a collision between an excursion train and a goods train, which occurred at Lostock Hall junction (near Preston) on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway on the 17th ultimo. Three passengers are returned as having been injured

as follows:—On the morning of the 9th, the foreman of platelayers had taken out two old switch connecting rods, for the purpose of replacing them by new ones of better construction; one of the new ones was, however, too short, and he left the switches connected with only one new rod, sending the other to the forge, to be lengthened. He secured the ends of the rods in the usual way, by passing "cotters" or keys through holes made for the purpose, but opened out the slit of the one at the left switch further than was necessary, and, without being aware of it, must have fractured one of its jaws. This was done at about a quarter to 12. At 12 o'clock the pointsman pulled the switches over for a goods train to Holmfirth to pass through them, which it did all right. He then restored them to their normal position, (*i. e.* right for the line to Manchester,) and they were shortly afterwards passed over by a train to Manchester. The passage of these two trains must have shaken out the disabled cotter, (which was found after the accident lying under the switch with its jaw broken off,) and the pointsman accordingly lost control over the left switch, and did not move it when he pulled over the lever in his cabin preparatory to lowering the signals for the train which met with the accident. He states that he felt no difference of weight in the pull of the lever, and that in consequence of steam hanging about the mouth of the tunnel he could not see the points at this time from his cabin, which is raised up high, and is not opposite to the points.

The accident, therefore, occurred from the incautious act of the foreman of platelayers in crippling the cotter of the connecting rod, and thus allowing it to work out. He is also to be blamed for not having left in one of the old connecting rods until the second new one was ready for fixing, as facing points should never be left dependent upon only one connecting rod.

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

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

by the collision, but their injuries are believed not to be of a serious nature. The fireman and one of the guards of the excursion train were also somewhat hurt.

Lostock Hall junction is near Preston on the main line from Preston to Liverpool, and is connected by a short branch, 1,000 yards long, with the main line from Blackburn to Preston, the junction of this branch and the latter line being called Bamber Bridge junction. The two main lines unite about 1,000 yards

from these junctions, and then form one line into Preston.

The branch line between Lostock Hall and Bamber Bridge junctions is not much used for passenger traffic, except for excursion trains from Blackburn, &c., not passing through Preston, but goods trains frequently run over it.

The line from Blackburn descends for some three miles at 1 in 100 to Bamber Bridge station, about 700 yards from the junction; it then falls at 1 in 300 from the station to rather more than half way between the two junctions, and then at 1 in 220 to Lostock Hall junction.

The latter junction is supplied with the usual signals, the distant signal towards Bamber Bridge being 500 yards off, and well visible to an approaching train. Bamber Bridge junction and station have also proper signals well placed for being seen. There is a curve on the branch between the two junctions which prevents a train standing near the Lostock Hall end being seen from an engine approaching from Blackburn until after Bamber Bridge junction has been passed some little distance.

At about 9.8 a.m. on the morning of the 17th ultimo, a pick-up goods train, consisting of engine and tender, 8 full, 20 empty waggons, and a break van, which had left Blackburn for Lostock Hall goods yard at 8.45 a.m. (half an hour late), was stopped at Lostock Hall junction until the express train from Preston to Liverpool, then almost due, should have passed. The goods engine came to a stand on the branch 10 or 12 yards short of the junction, the distant signal which had been lowered for it to pass having been again put to danger to protect it. The train had been at a stand three or four minutes when its driver heard the engine of an excursion train (which he knew was following him) whistle for the breaks, and judging from what he heard and saw that it was likely to pitch into his train, he drew ahead, and had just got through the junction when the collision occurred. The Lostock Hall junction signalman put his Preston signal to danger just in time to stop an engine (which as it happened was before the express) from running into the goods train, and thus averted a second collision. The excursion train in question had left Sowerby Bridge for Liverpool at 7.17 a.m. (a few minutes late), made up as follows: a six-wheel coupled engine and four-wheeled tender, two carriages and a single break van, four carriages, two carriages and a van with Newhall's patent breaks, 13 carriages, and finally two carriages and a van with Fay's patent breaks, making 26 vehicles in all, with three guards and seven breaks, exclusive of the tender break. The driver had been only nine months regularly employed as such, but had been fireman and occasional driver for six or seven years previously. The head guard of the train had had seven years' service in that capacity, but the other two were porters acting occasionally as guards. The train had stopped at Accrington and Blackburn, but had received no caution of a goods train being in front at either place. At Blessington, about six miles from Lostock, the driver had been shown a green flag (implying train ahead between five and ten minutes), but this was not repeated either at Hoghton or at Bamber Bridge station or junction, though the excursion train must in all probability have been gaining on the goods train. The driver states that he had shut off steam at the top of the long incline of 1 in 100, and passed Bamber Bridge junction (where the signals had been taken off on his whistling) at a speed of 16 to 18 miles an hour (the speed is, however, estimated as 30 miles an hour by the Bamber Bridge junction signalman and the station master). On passing Bamber Bridge station, the driver states that he whistled for the Lostock Hall junction signals, and that finding neither distant signal nor semaphore was lowered, he whistled for the breaks just after passing Bamber Bridge junction, his fireman at the same time applying his tender break; that finding

his speed very little reduced he reversed, and put steam against his engine just as he reached the distant signal post, and caught sight of the goods train in front of him, and that he had reduced the speed to about 10 or 12 miles an hour, when the collision took place at 10 or 11 minutes past 9. Both he and his fireman jumped off; the latter fell down, and was hurt. The effect of the collision on the goods train was to drive the van, which had become detached from the remainder of the train when the driver moved ahead, into the tail of the train, and to knock it and the six last waggons off the line, the van and five last waggons being a good deal damaged. The engine of the passenger train left the rails with all its wheels, and had its buffer plank and feed pipes broken, but was able to be removed on its own wheels; the three front carriages also left the rails with all their wheels. No couplings gave way. The guard, who was in the third carriage, was thrown down, and had his leg hurt.

In contradiction to the driver and fireman of the passenger train, and also to other evidence, the three guards of the train all state that the Lostock Hall junction distant signal was *off* as they approached and passed it. Two of them acknowledge that they heard the driver whistle for the breaks between Bamber Bridge junction and the distant signal, and they all declare that they got their breaks applied between the junction and distant signal post, between which latter point and the vans of the goods train there must have been an interval of nearly 300 yards. I can only therefore regard their statement as to the distant signal being *off* as untrue, and made to cover their want of promptitude in applying the powerful breaks they had at hand, and which, if applied promptly, would, I have little doubt, have almost if not quite have prevented the collision.

But while censuring the guards for want of promptitude in applying their breaks, and also for making what I cannot but look upon as a false statement concerning the signal, the driver of the train must be regarded as principally to blame for causing this accident. There is no doubt that he was running down a long sharp gradient, ending in a junction, at a pace which quite took the management of the train out of his own control, and one far exceeding that laid down by the rules of the company for excursion trains, viz., 20 miles an hour. At the same time it is almost unreasonable to expect that a driver, knowing that his train is provided with means for stopping it within a very short distance, should not to a certain extent depend on those means; and this accident tends to show how desirable is the invention of some simple method by which the control of continuous breaks should be placed in the hands of the man who is held responsible for the safe conduct of the train.

Had the rule of the company, as to the exhibition of a caution signal for ten minutes after the passage of a train, been attended to at Bamber Bridge station and junction, the accident might not have occurred; but so long as the keeping of train registers is not enforced this rule must be more or less a dead letter.

This accident adds another to the list of those which would in all probability have been avoided had the block telegraph system been in force.

The position of the Lostock Hall junction distant signal towards Blackburn would be much improved by removing it further off; indeed the same signal might serve for it and the Bamber Bridge junction signal.

The signals and points at the junctions alluded to in this report are not worked upon the locking system.

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

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

A copy of the above report was sent to the company on the 10th September 1869.