

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

7 July 1877

BoT Report into Accident at
Manchester Victoria.

(3 Pages).

adjoining the platform, and my mate was at the Manchester junction, a platelayer being at the Liverpool home-signals; we communicated with each other by flag by day, and lamp by night. A train from Liverpool due at 7.40 p.m. had been admitted to No. 4 platform by the lowering of the proper signal by the platelayer. On discharging its passengers, the engine kicked the empty train through the cross-over road No. 31, and the carriages should then have gone on the up Liverpool line to stand there until the engine, after being turned, would get to the other end and back them on to No. 3 platform before starting for Liverpool at 8 o'clock. A platelayer shifted the points of the cross-over road while I had gone over to No. 1 platform to see that the points there were right for the incoming train from Manchester. About three or four minutes before this, I had seen facing-points No. 30 lying right for the up Liverpool line, but they must have been turned unknown to me while I was at No. 1 platform, as the empty carriages ran through them along the up Manchester line, and met the train coming in from Manchester at the crossing. These points, No. 30 had been last used about half an hour previously by an engine, and I had turned them myself right for the Liverpool line after it had passed through them. I did not see the carriages taking the wrong line till it was too late. I was going across to No. 1 platform when the signalman at Manchester junction told me a Manchester train was coming, and I said "all right," and went and set the road. The platelayer denied having meddled with points No. 30, and stated that he had only turned the two ends of cross-over road No. 31. There were other men at work close by at the time. I had told the shunters I was right for the empty train to set back. I am confident that I left points No. 30 right for the Liverpool line before crossing to No. 1 platform. I was fined 10s. for the mistake, but have left the service, believing I was not in fault.

2. *James Bond*, platelayer.—I was assisting the signalmen at Southport on the evening of the collision. Lewis told me to turn the cross-over-road points No. 31, after the arrival of the Liverpool train. I accordingly did so, first turning the far end, and then the end next the train, but I did not notice how No. 30 points were lying, and I am quite positive I did not touch these points. Before the carriages came through the cross-over road, Lewis shouted to me from near No. 30 points not to put back the points of the cross-over road, as he had some empty carriages to put into No. 4. I thought that the empty Liverpool train would go along the up Liverpool road, and I was standing in the 6-ft. space when it set back, and it had taken the wrong road before I was aware of it. There is only 10 ft. between the No. 30 and 31 points, but I did not happen to notice how the latter were lying, nor did I see anyone meddle with them. The lever handle of No. 30 was

near the platform end. Saxby and Farmer's men were not about at the time.

3. *Benjamin Tyldesley*, driver 19 years.—I was bringing in the 6.15 p.m. train from Manchester, and was running into Southport about one minute late, the signals being off. I had six coaches on the train, and I was not aware that the empty carriages were backing on the wrong line till I felt them strike the last coach but one. The engine was at that time close to the platform end, and Lewis was standing with a flag in his hand close to No. 23 points. My speed at the time was three or four miles an hour. We stopped as soon as we could with the tender break, not running more than three or four yards. The two rear vehicles were off the rails. Lewis said that No. 30 points were right for the Liverpool line when he left them.

4. *Thomas Hewitt*, guard 2½ years.—I was in charge of the 6.15 p.m. train from Manchester to Southport. It consisted of six coaches and a van, of which the three last were coupled to the van with Fay's continuous breaks. We were running into Southport, where the signals were right for us, one minute late. I had my break partly on, preparing to stop at the platform, when I saw the Liverpool empty train backing, but was not aware it was on the wrong line till it just grazed the carriage next but one to the van and struck the one next the van. The rear draw-bar of the carriage next the van was pulled out. Our speed at the time was four miles an hour, and that of the Liverpool carriages somewhat slower. I was cut over the eye and stunned. I was 14 days off duty, and still feel the effects. The collision occurred at 7.46.

This collision was caused by a set of facing-points having been left in a wrong position, most probably by ex-signalman Lewis, owing to which a train of empty carriages was turned across the path of the incoming train from Manchester.

The occurrence of this collision affords a conspicuous instance of the advantages of interlocking, both as regards safety and economy. As regards the safety, but for its temporary disuse, owing to the fire which had destroyed the signal cabin two days previously, this collision would have been prevented; and as regards economy, three men (and at certain periods of the day four men) had to be employed to do the work of one signalman.

The cabin was rebuilt and at work within a fortnight after the fire, and the lamp room has now been built (of iron) away from it.

I have, &c.

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

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Major-Gen. R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 30th August.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(*Railway Department,*)
18th August 1877.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in the Order of the 9th ult., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 7th ult., at Victoria station, Manchester, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case the 7.30 a.m. passenger train from Victoria station to Rochdale came into collision with the 7 a.m. passenger train from Rochdale to Victoria

station as the former was leaving and the latter was entering the station punctually at 7.30 a.m.

Twenty-seven passengers were injured, though none of the injuries are believed to be serious. The driver of the incoming train was also injured.

The only damage to rolling stock was to the buffer plank of the engine of the outgoing train.

The bays at the Yorkshire end of Victoria station are used indifferently for the arrival and departure of trains; each bay has its own arrival and departure signal properly interlocked with the points and with each other, and worked from cabin No. 1, at the entrance of the station. In the present case the

outgoing train was starting from No. 5 bay, and the incoming train entering No. 4 bay, the paths of the two trains crossing each other, and the collision occurring 30 yards outside the starting-signal from No. 5 bay.

The evidence is as follows:—

1. *Walter Allen*, signalman six years; 12 months in No. 1 cabin, Victoria station.—I came on duty at 6 a.m. for eight hours. The up Rochdale train was given on to me from No. 2 cabin at 7.29 a.m., and I at once set the road and lowered the signal for it to enter No. 4 bay. A pilot engine was blocking the road into No. 1 bay, the only bay which can be entered without crossing the outgoing line. When the times of an arriving and starting train are nearly the same, it is customary to give the preference to the train coming in, and not to stop it on the bank. I knew the down Rochdale train was standing in No. 5 bay, but it had not whistled to start when I lowered the signals for the incoming train, and the driver of the down train started without whistling, so far as I heard, (and I think I must have heard the whistle if it had been given,) nor had the electric starting bell been rung from the platform. I saw the train starting when the incoming train was on the slip-to-bay points, and I ran to the window and called several times to the driver of the outgoing train to set back, which he tried to do, but he could not stop before the two engines met buffer to buffer. The engine of the out-going train had stopped, and the speed of the incoming one was very slow when they met. The signal for the incoming train was still off when the collision occurred, as I had been occupied in trying to stop the trains, and had not had time to put it to danger. The driver of the outgoing train made no reply when I asked him why he had started with the signal against him. He looked pale. It is not the custom for trains to leave any bay by hand signal without the fixed signals being lowered. The collision occurred about 7.31 a.m. I had never lowered the starting signal for the down Rochdale train on the morning in question. As a rule, the down train starts before the up train arrives, and the latter generally goes into the same bay which the outgoing train had occupied.

2. *William Milward*, driver 12 years.—I was in charge of engine No. 335, a tender-engine running tender first, attached to a train of seven vehicles forming the 7 a.m. train from Rochdale, due in Victoria at 7.30 a.m. I was running to time, and found the signals off for us to enter No. 4 bay at the station. I had got nearly opposite to the cabin before I observed the engine of the train leaving No. 5 bay. I had no time to do anything before the engines met buffer beam to buffer beam. My speed was four or five miles an hour. One pair of wheels of the tender was thrown off the road. I jumped off, and was injured in doing so. No damage was done. I asked the driver of the outgoing train how he came to run into us, and he said he had not seen us coming. It is not customary to start from the bays without getting the starting signals. The signal for No. 4 bay was not lowered till we were within about 100 yards of it. The starting signal is often taken off a minute or half a minute before the time of starting, but not so much as three or four minutes.

3. *James Buxton*, fireman about four years.—The signal was off for us to enter No. 4 bay on the morning of the collision, and it remained off till after we had passed it. We had got almost opposite to the cabin when we saw the steam of the engine leaving No. 5 bay. My break was on at the time, and my driver was only just able to give a whistle, when we both jumped off to the left. I was not hurt. Our speed was not more than three miles an hour. The other engine was almost at a stand.

4. *Thomas Pimblett*, guard seven years.—I was in charge of the 7.30 a.m. down train to Rochdale on the

7th July. It consisted of a tank engine, six passenger carriages, and three waggons of market produce at the tail of the train. There was a break compartment in the last passenger carriage, to which the whole of the other carriages were coupled with Fay's continuous breaks. I whistled and gave a hand signal to the driver punctually at 7.30 a.m., intimating to him that the train was ready to start, so far as the station work was concerned. I did not notice whether the starting-signal was lowered, nor is it part of my duty to see to this when I give the signal to the driver, which only relates to the train being ready to start. I had previously got an all right verbal signal from a platform inspector. The driver, whose engine was standing opposite to the signal, started at once upon receiving my whistle, whistling himself, I believe, before he did so, but almost directly afterwards he gave the break whistle, before he had gone more than two or three carriage lengths. I had no time to do anything before the collision occurred. The draw-bar hook of the carriage next the engine was broken off. The driver told me the pointsman said the starting signal was on against him, but he said he had seen it off at 7.29 a.m., but that he had not noticed it when he actually started a minute later. I did not see the signal myself at all.

5. *Thomas Barcroft*, fireman about three years.—I was with driver George Hughes on tank-engine No. 517 attached to the 7.30 a.m. down train for Rochdale. The engine was standing chimney first almost opposite the starting-signal from No. 5 bay. I saw the guard give a whistle and a starting hand-signal at 7.30 a.m. This means merely that the train is ready to start, but has nothing to do with the semaphore starting-signal. At 7.25 a.m., and again at 7.28 a.m., I had seen this signal standing at caution, but I did not notice it again before we started, when I was looking back along the train to see that it was all following. We had gone forward about two carriage lengths when the driver said "Wo," and I at once put on my break, and he reversed, and we had stopped, but had not got into backward motion, when the other engine met us on the crossing. The collision knocked us back about half an engine's length, and broke the coupling between us and the first carriage. We both of us remained on the engine, and were not hurt. Nothing passed between the signalman and myself, or the driver so far as I heard.

6. *George Hughes*, driver 28 years.—I was in charge of tank-engine No. 517 attached to the 7.30 a.m. down train for Rochdale on the 7th July. I was running chimney first, with the engine standing with the footplate opposite to the starting-signal, the pillar of the bridge intercepting its view. At 7.30 a.m. punctually I got a whistle and hand-signal from the guard to start. I had walked along the left-hand side of the train about a minute before this to see what load I had on, and noticed the starting-signal hanging right off for me to start as I was coming back to the engine. It is customary for this signal to be taken off some minutes before the train is due to leave, as there is no other train due in or out at this time except the up-train from Rochdale, and this, during the three years I have been constantly driving the outgoing train, has only come in before we have gone out about three times. I unfortunately started without again looking at the starting-signal, which must have been put to danger during the minute which elapsed between my seeing it and starting, I concluding it must have remained off. I had not gone more than a few yards when I saw the engine of the incoming train, and at once saw my mistake. I shut off steam, reversed, reapplied steam, whistled, and the fireman got to his break, and we had just stopped, but had not got into backward motion, when the collision occurred, the other engine moving very slowly. We neither of us jumped off. The end of the buffer beam was broken. No wheels left the rails in my train. I was last in a collision in 1853 at

Newton Heath, in a dense fog ; at that time there were no signals.

This collision occurred in consequence of the mistake of a very experienced driver, said to be one of the most careful on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, who started from No. 5 bay at Victoria station, when the starting-signal must have been at danger against him, as there is no doubt that the signal was lowered to admit the incoming train to No. 4 bay, and the interlocking prevented the two signals from being lowered at the same time. It is quite possible that the starting-signal may have been lowered a short time previously to the train starting, as declared both by the driver and fireman, and this is the more probable, as the train register clearly shows, that in the majority of instances the incoming train

is late, and the outgoing train starts before its arrival. If the signalman did reverse the starting-signal he should certainly have taken means to inform the driver that he had done so, as otherwise it was a proceeding very apt to mislead.

It is much to be regretted that only one of the five bays at Victoria station can be entered without blocking the road out of the other four. It seemed to me possible that by an alteration in some of the lines an improvement in this respect might be effected, and in the interests both of safety and of increased facilities for traffic it is most desirable that this, if practicable, should be accomplished.

I have, &c.,

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

C. S. HUTCHINSON,
Major-Gen., R.E.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 7th September.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Board of Trade,
(*Railway Department,*)
13, *Downing Street, London, S.W.,*
30th *September 1877.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in the order of the 16th ult., the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision which occurred on the 13th ult., at Heywood station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case, the 2.5 p.m. passenger train from Rochdale to Bolton, due at Heywood at 2.15 p.m., ran into the 9.20 a.m. goods train from Oakenshaw to Bury, due at Heywood at 1.5 p.m.

Twenty-seven passengers are reported to have been injured, but none of them seriously.

The guard of the passenger train had some ribs broken.

In the passenger train the tank of the tender was shifted.

In the goods train the break-van was damaged and a goods waggon broken up.

There are two signal-cabins 320 yards apart at the entrance to Heywood from Rochdale, one for the goods yard and the other for the passenger station. The only signal to which it is necessary particularly to refer is the goods yard down home-signal, 240 yards on the Rochdale side of the cabin, which signal also acts as the station down distant-signal. This signal is well seen, as is also the goods yard down distant-signal.

The line is nearly level, but curved.

The collision occurred 280 yards inside the goods yard down home-signal.

The traffic is worked upon the absolute block system, the next block station towards Rochdale being Castleton Junction North, three-quarters of a mile distant.

The evidence relating to the collision is as follows :

1. *David Butterworth*, signalman 2½ years, one year in the Heywood goods yard cabin.—I came on duty at 6 a.m. on the 13th August for 12 hours. The Oakenshaw goods train passed my cabin at 2.5, but the van remained in my sight, the engine having stopped at the station home signals. The van was about 300 yards inside my down home-signal, and I was therefore justified in giving "line clear" back to Castleton Junction North. At 2.11 I received the "Be ready" for the down passenger train, due at 2.15, and took it "on line" at 2.12, but kept my signals at danger. I also gave on the "Be ready" for this train to Heywood station cabin, in reply getting either one beat (acknowledgment), or six beats (block).

About 2.12, after the "Be ready" signal had been acknowledged by Heywood cabin, I received three beats on the mechanical gong on the outside of the cabin, requesting me to shunt the goods train on to the up line through a slip crossing 110 yards on the Castleton side of the cabin. I told the ground pointsman (who has also charge of a level crossing) to give back three beats in reply, meaning "all right." I then opened the slip points for the up line, and took my white flag, went to the top of the steps, and got ready for bringing the goods train back. The engine was shunting some waggons at this time, but the driver then rejoined his train and commenced setting back, I waving my white flag. He had moved back 15 or 20 yards when the collision occurred. I had not noticed the passenger train till I had got the goods train in motion, and then on turning round saw it running through the slip points, which it burst. I put the lever back before the whole of the train had passed through them, and then waved my arms to the driver, looking out of the window. It did not appear to me that any effort was being then made to pull the train up, nor until it got opposite the cabin. The speed up to this time was the same as usual for stopping at Heywood, and was not reduced very much before the collision. Supposing Heywood station cabin is keeping my down home-signal at danger, I should wave the driver on with a green flag, and should never use a white flag for the purpose unless my own home-signal wire was broken. This latter may have occurred perhaps six times in the year I have been there. Since the collision my mates have informed me that Inspector Stansfield (who has now left the service) had instructed them to allow a train to be shunted when a passenger train had been taken on line. This is, however, strictly contrary to block telegraph rules (issued April 29/77) 23, 26, and 32, and I have never been told myself to deviate from them. The slip points were not injured by the engine running through them. The collision occurred at 2.13 or 2.14. I am quite sure I waved my flag from the steps and not from the window, being afraid the passenger driver might see it. I did not speak to the driver of the passenger train after the collision. The "Be ready" for the up passenger train was received at 2.13 p.m.

2. *Joseph Mills*, signalman 17 months, nine months in Heywood station cabin.—I came on duty at 6 a.m. on the 13th August for 12 hours. I received the "Be ready" signal for the Oakenshaw goods train at 2.4, the "on line" signal at 2.6, and it arrived at 2.7. One shunt was made from the down line into a down line siding, and on the engine coming out I received the "Be ready" for the Rochdale passenger train at 2.13. I, therefore, rang the mechanical gong to the goods yard signalman to shunt the goods train across