

The
VIRTUAL MUSEUM
of the
LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

Accident Reports.

18 August 1873

BoT Report into Accident at
Newtown Siding, Miles Platting.

(3 Pages).

and points of this loop line are worked by signalmen, who are stationed in raised cabins that are placed opposite to the north and south junctions. The loop line, which is a single line about a quarter of a mile long, is worked on the block telegraph principle.

On the day in question, the 10 a.m. passenger train from Colne to Preston consisted of an engine and tender, a horse-box, a guard's van, with a guard and three coaches. It left Colne at its proper time, and after stopping at the two intermediate stations, it reached the loop line junction at the north side of Burnley station at 10.15 a.m.

The distant-signal was at danger as the train approached, but it was lowered as soon as the engine-driver whistled for it.

This man stated that he gave one long whistle, to let the signalman at the Burnley north junction know that he wanted to go on to the platform loop line. He affirmed that the junction home-signal for the loop line was lowered, but that when the passenger train was about 70 or 80 yards from the north junction, the home-signal for the loop line was put up to danger, and the junction home-signal for the main line was lowered. The passenger train was running at a speed of 7 or 8 miles an hour at the time. As soon as the engine-driver perceived that his train was running on to the main line, instead of going on to the loop line, he reversed his engine, whistled for the guard's breaks, and the fireman applied the tender-break, but the train was not stopped before it struck some empty goods waggons that were standing on the main line, inside the junction and clear of the loop line.

The speed of the passenger train had been checked to about 3 or 4 miles an hour at the time of the

collision. No vehicles of either train were damaged or left the rails.

The signalman on duty stated that he forgot to alter the points for the passenger train. The normal position of these junction points is to stand right for the main line, and it is not practicable to lower the signal for the loop line while the points are right for the main line.

The main and loop line signals are fixed one above the other on the same post; and the engine-driver of the passenger train, who was a spare engine-driver, and who was in the habit of driving goods trains, which always pass Burnley station on the main line, as well as passenger trains, that always pass the station on the loop line, does not appear to have observed that the main line signal was lowered for him instead of the passenger or loop line signal, which was the signal that he wanted.

The accident was caused by the signalman on duty at Burnley north junction, not placing the points and signals right for the passenger train before it arrived, and by the engine-driver of the passenger train failing to observe that the points were wrong, and that the wrong signal was given to him.

The signalman candidly confessed his mistake. He has since left the company's service, but the engine-driver endeavoured to excuse himself, by stating that the signals were changed at the last moment.

I do not think that this was the case.

I have, &c.,
The Secretary, F. H. BICH,
(Railway Department), Colonel, R.E.
Board of Trade.

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Company on the 14th February.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

SIR,
Manchester, 29th August 1873.
 IN compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 23rd instant, I have the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances which attended the collision that occurred on the 18th instant at the Newtown siding on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

In this case a train of empty carriages was being shunted across the down main line from Manchester to Miles Platting, when it was run into by the 3.50 p.m. passenger train from the Victoria station, Manchester, for Leeds. A first-class carriage was smashed to pieces, and several other carriages in the empty carriage-train were more or less damaged. The engine and tender of the passenger train, as well as all the vehicles of that train, remained on the rails. No damage was done to the passenger train, except the fracture of a buffer-plank of the engine. No person was injured.

The Newtown sidings are about half a mile from the Victoria station at Manchester, and are situated on a steep incline between that station and Miles Platting. There is a signal-cabin at half a mile from the Victoria station, and opposite to it there is a through-crossing, with slip-points connecting the Newtown sidings with the up and down main lines.

The Newtown signal-cabin, which is No. 2 block-cabin from the Victoria station, has within the last six months been fitted up by Messrs. Saxby and Farmer with locking-apparatus, and with their latest improvements. The cabin is also supplied with Mr. Preece's telegraph-apparatus, and this portion of railway is worked on the block system. For the protection of the cross-over road, there are a home-signal, 50 yards from the cabin, and a distant-signal,

about 530 yards from the south of the cabin. The gradient being so steep, the telegraph-instruments are used, and the block system is in force, to No. 3 block cabin only, but the ordinary signals are relied upon, without the assistance of the block-telegraph apparatus, towards No. 1 cabin, when the through-crossing is employed. As the through-crossing fouls the down main line inside of the home-signal, it is considered that without infringing the rules of the block system a train may be allowed to shunt from the sidings across the down main line to the up main line, opposite to the signal-cabin; and it is believed to be the less necessary to use the block instruments in this case because the Newtown cabin is approached from the Victoria station on a rising gradient, as already stated, of 1 in 50. The distant-signal is well seen by an engine-driver leaving the Victoria station, but the home-signal for the Newtown cabin is not well seen by an approaching engine-driver. The arm is partially obscured by telegraph-wires, posts, carriers, and conductors, which obstruct the view of it even on a clear day.

The 3.50 p.m. passenger train left the Victoria station at 4.8 p.m., 18 minutes late, on the day in question, consisting of engine and tender, eight passenger carriages, two break-vans, a horse-box, a carriage-truck, and a pilot engine and tender, which was assisting by pushing it up the incline. This train had been delayed in starting, in consequence of the late arrival from Liverpool of a through train which was due to precede it to Leeds. When it left the Victoria station the engine-driver found the distant-signal from the Newton sidings cabin at caution, to which only that signal is lowered. He states he had no occasion to whistle for it because he found it at caution the moment he sighted it. He also

observed the home-signal "of No. 1" cabin at caution, by which he knew that line clear had been given from No. 2 to No. 1 cabin on the telegraph-instrument. The engine-driver states that he passed the distant-signal, he thinks, at a speed of 20 to 25 miles an hour; that, believing the line to be clear, he proceeded at that speed towards the home-signal; and that when he was within 130 yards of the home-signal he noticed some carriages being shunted across the line on which he was travelling. He at once shut off his steam, reversed his engine, and whistled for the guard's break; and the speed of the train was thus reduced from 25 to 3 or 4 miles an hour before his engine came into collision with one of the carriages of the empty-carriage train.

The two guards of the train and the engine-driver of the pilot-engine corroborate the evidence of the engine-driver of the train in stating that the distant-signal was at caution as they approached it, and as they passed it; and the driver of the assisting engine further says that he looked back after he had passed it, and saw when he was 30 yards beyond it that it was still at caution. None of these men saw the home-signal at danger before the collision occurred. The guards state that they heard the whistle from the engine, and immediately commenced to apply their breaks, but the head guard was not able to get his break on before the collision occurred. The driver of the pilot-engine does not believe that the speed was greater than 7, or at all events than 10 miles an hour, when the train passed the distant-signal. He had his steam applied, and was pushing the train up the gradient, when he heard the whistle from the leading engine. He then shut his regulator-handle, and applied his break, and had dropped behind the train and brought his engine to a stand, before the collision. After the collision the train rebounded about a yard and a half and came against his engine. The under-guard of this train states that he has previously observed the distant-signal to be at caution from the Newtown cabin when the home-signal has been at danger, and that he has before been stopped in consequence of shunting at the Newtown cabin after passing the distant-signal at caution, since May last. The driver of the pilot-engine was unable to see, as he mounted the incline, whether the home-signal at the Newtown cabin was at danger or not.

The engine-driver of the empty-carriage train left the Victoria station at 3.40 p.m. for the Newtown sidings, to fetch his train of empty carriages from that siding, in order to take it to the Victoria station, and to get it ready to start for Blackpool at 4.25 p.m. He reached the Newtown sidings at about 3.45 p.m. He crossed the down main line into No. 1 siding. His carriages were there attached to his engine, and he waited in that position until a few minutes past 4 o'clock. He then whistled twice, to ask the signalman to allow him to cross towards the up main line. In answer to those whistles the signalman lowered the fixed signal applying to the sidings. The empty carriage train was drawn out, and it was only when the engine-driver had reached the up main line, and while his carriages were across the down main line, that he observed the approach of the train for Leeds from the Victoria station. He saw that it was useless to attempt to put back his carriages into the siding; and he therefore applied his steam to draw them forward, if possible, out of the way of the approaching passenger train; but the engine of the latter train struck the carriage next behind the tender of his engine and destroyed the second carriage behind the tender. This engine-driver did not see the condition of the home-signal applying to the down main line, excepting for two or three minutes before he left the siding. He then noticed that it was at danger; and, indeed, this signal must necessarily have been at danger before the siding points could be opened, and the siding signal lowered to allow the empty-carriage train to foul the down main line. This engine-driver had not attained a speed of more than three or four miles an hour before

the collision occurred. He was somewhat delayed in leaving the siding, in consequence of the continuous breaks on his train having been applied; and it was only when these breaks had been taken off that he was able to start his train from the sidings.

The inspector in charge of the Newtown sidings was walking from the Victoria station towards the Newtown cabin, and had nearly reached that cabin when the collision occurred. When within 40 yards of the cabin he heard a train coming up the bank behind him, and, judging from the sound, that it was approaching at considerable speed he turned round to look at it. He saw at the same moment that the empty-carriage train was coming out of the siding, and, fearing that the passenger train might not be pulled up in time to avoid a collision, he blew his pocket-whistle, and, turning round, he pointed up to the signal and motioned to the driver of the passenger train to bring his train to a stand. He could not at first obtain the attention of the engine-driver of the passenger train, who appeared to be doing something to his engine. When he did attract his attention he saw him shut his steam off and whistle for the breaks, and do what he could to pull up when about 30 yards from the home-signal. The inspector could not see the condition of the distant-signal, but he noticed that the home-signal was at danger as he walked up the bank, and when he was 150 yards from it.

The signalman who was on duty in the Newtown cabin, states that he had last used his distant-signal for an empty engine from Victoria going towards Miles Platting, and that he had returned his distant-signal to danger as soon as that engine had passed it, five minutes before the London and North-Western train was signalled from No. 1 cabin; and he is quite certain that he had not again lowered his distant-signal from the time of the passage of this empty engine, until the collision occurred. The engine of the empty-carriage train left the Victoria station before the empty engine above referred to, and was standing in the siding when the empty engine passed the cabin for Miles Platting. The engine-driver of the empty-carriage train had been about a quarter of an hour in the siding before, in answer to his whistle, he pulled over the points and turned off the disc-signal to allow him to come out of the siding with the empty carriages; and previously to so altering the points and the signal the signalman had blocked back to No. 3 cabin; according to the regulations. He had already taken the disc-signal off when he received notice on his telegraph-instrument of the approach of the passenger train from Victoria, and of its passing No. 1 cabin; and a minute or a minute and a half later the driver of the empty-carriage train commenced to move out of the siding. He does not believe that the passenger driver looked at the home-signal until he was within 20 yards of it, because it was then only he noticed that he shut off his steam and whistled for the breaks, and he seemed only to do so just before the collision occurred.

The signalman in No. 1 cabin, at the bottom of the incline, and just outside the Victoria station, received notice at 4.5 p.m. on his telegraph-instrument of the approach of the train from the London and North-Western end of the Victoria station towards his cabin. He then gave "be ready" to No. 2, and he received "line clear" in reply from No. 2 cabin. He next lowered his distant and his home signals for the train to pass by his cabin at 4.6 p.m. He did not notice the condition of the distant-signal from the Newtown, or No. 2, cabin when the train passed him, or before the train had passed that signal. It appears that this distant-signal is generally kept at caution, excepting when there is either a train in the telegraph section or a train about to leave the sidings and to foul the down main line.

The Newtown cabin signalman explains that he kept it at danger on this occasion after the passage of the empty engine above referred to, because he knew that before long the empty-carriage train would have to leave the sidings for the Victoria station.

The evidence in this case is conflicting, as between the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's signalman on the one hand and the servants of the London and North-Western Company with the passenger train on the other hand. The evidence was given fairly in both cases, and it is difficult to determine with absolute certainty on which side the truth lies; but, under all the circumstances of the case, I am inclined to believe that the servants of the company with the London and North-Western train found the distant-signal at caution as they passed it, and that it was turned to danger while they were ascending the bank towards the Newtown cabin. The signalman did not know when he prepared to allow the empty-carriage train to leave the siding that the passenger train was about so soon to start from the Victoria station; and he may no doubt have thought that his distant-signal was turned to danger before that train passed it; but I hardly think his statement that it was kept at danger for five minutes previously can be correct.

In any case, the engine-driver of the London and North-Western Company did not keep a sufficiently good look out in approaching the Newtown cabin. If he had done so he would have had no difficulty, on a rising gradient of 1 in 50, in bringing his train to a stand short of the empty-carriage train, and in thus avoiding a collision.

It is desirable that in the course of future working the distant-signal from the Newtown cabin should be kept habitually at danger, and only lowered when it is necessary to allow an engine or a train to pass, and when the line is clear for it to do so; and it is also desirable that the position of the home-signal from that cabin should be somewhat improved, that it may be more clearly visible to an approaching engine-driver.

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

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

Printed copies of the above report were sent to the Lancashire and Yorkshire and London and North-western Railway Companies on the 23rd September.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Sir, *Preston, 4th November 1873.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Board of Trade, in compliance with the instructions contained in your minute of the 22nd September, the result of my inquiry into the circumstances connected with the collision between a passenger train and a goods train which occurred on the 17th September at Gregson Lane siding, near Hoghton Station, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

No personal injuries appear to have been sustained in consequence of this collision.

Gregson Lane siding is situated between Bamber Bridge junction and Hoghton stations, from which it is distant $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 mile respectively; Preston on the one side being distant $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles and Blackburn on the other $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The line falls from Hoghton to Bamber Bridge and thence to near Preston on a gradient of 1 in 100.

The points and signal levers at Gregson Lane siding have recently been concentrated and interlocked in a raised cabin, but the down distant-signal (that towards Hoghton) has been placed, though the gradient is falling at the rate of 1 in 100, only 600 yards from the home-signal. There is in clear weather a fair view of this signal.

On the morning of the day in question, which was somewhat misty and rainy, a special goods train from Liverpool to Blackburn, consisting of a six-coupled engine and tender, 29 loaded waggons, and a van, after having been detained at Bamber Bridge junction to allow two up passenger trains to pass, was imprudently allowed by the signalman to leave directly after the second of the two had passed, although a third fast up passenger train was due in 10 minutes. The goods train approached Gregson Lane siding at a slow pace at 9.26, the engine, on account of the slippery state of the rails, being hardly master of its load, and having taken about $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes in travelling up the $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Bamber Bridge junction. Close behind the goods train was the 9.10 a.m. fast train from Preston to Blackburn which had overtaken it on the bank, and the signalman at the siding—although a fast down train from Blackburn to Liverpool was now due but not in sight or hearing—thought the best thing he could do was to stop the goods train and set it across on to the down line out of the way of the up passenger train, the sidings at

Gregson Lane not being long enough to put the goods train into. He accordingly told the driver as he passed his cabin that he was to stop and set back, then put to danger his down-signals, (the up-signals were already on), and as soon as the tail of the goods train had cleared the points of the cross-over road (30 yards above the cabin) he opened these points and the train set slowly back through them; the greater part of the train had reached the down line when the down passenger train from Blackburn came up, and its engine struck the goods train between the second and third waggons from its proper front. It upset these two waggons, which were a good deal damaged, and a third waggon had its axle bent.

The down passenger train, which was in charge of a driver of 19 years' service, consisted of a four-coupled engine and tender, six coaches, and two break-vans, each of the latter and the two adjacent coaches being coupled together with continuous breaks. It started from Blackburn at 9.19, three minutes late, having next to stop at Bamber Bridge, eight miles from Blackburn, the running time allowed being about 12 minutes, requiring an average speed of 40 miles an hour. The driver states that he was approaching the Gregson Lane distant-signal with steam shut off at a speed of at least 40 miles an hour, but on account of the morning being somewhat thick he did not see it till within 100 yards of it or rather more and then found it at danger, it being very rare to find it so; that he at once whistled both for the signal and the guards breaks and had his tender-break applied; that he reversed his engine on catching sight of the goods train on the crossing and applied reverse steam; that the speed was reduced on collision to four or five miles an hour; that he and his fireman jumped off just before it occurred and kept their feet.

The fireman acknowledges the distant-signal having been seen at danger for a distance of at least 500 yards, otherwise his evidence agrees with that of the driver.

The head guard in the front van states that when he first saw the distant-signal, about 500 yards off, it was clear, but that it was put to danger when the engine was about 100 yards from it; that seeing this he at once applied his break and had it hard on as he passed the signal, but that it was some little time