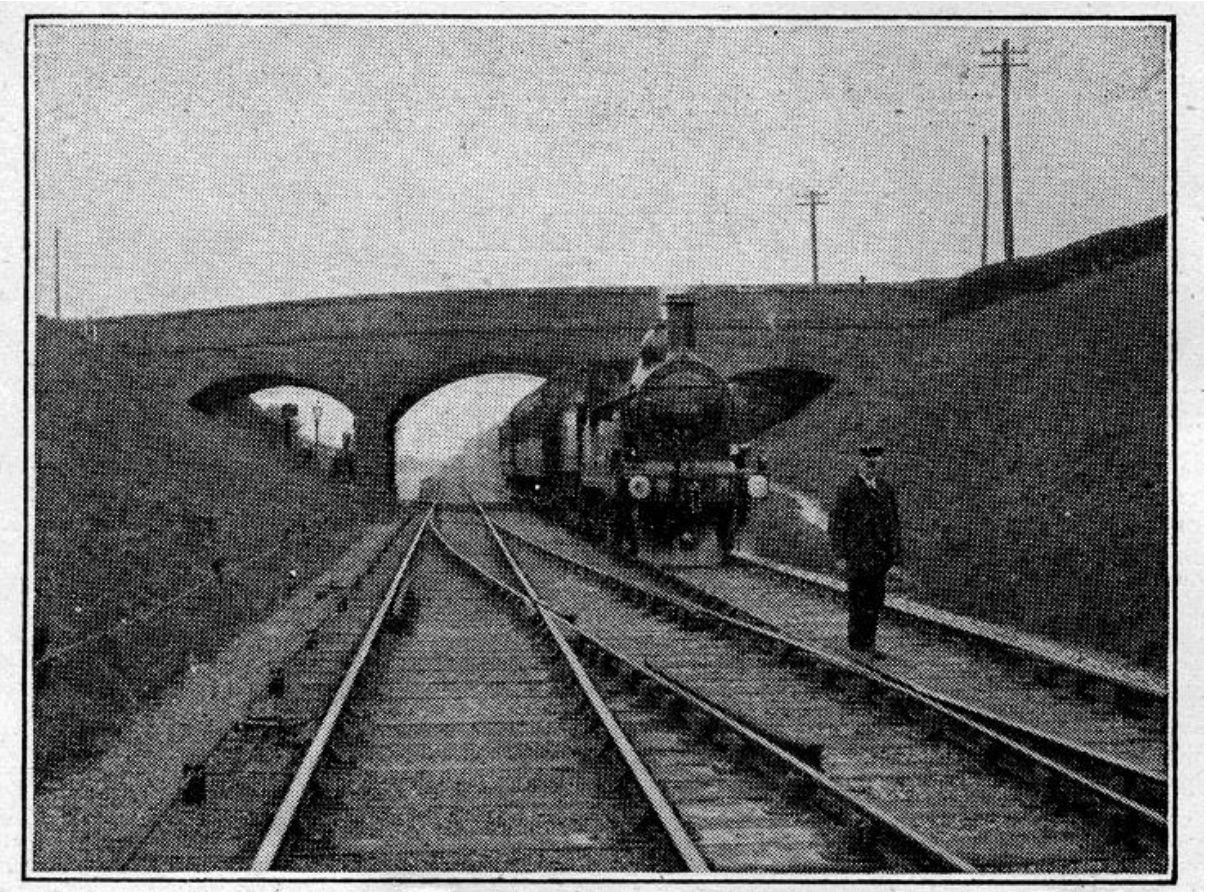
# Railway Work, Life & Death:

# Trades Union Records – Fatal compensation



Obviously dangerous.

Transcriber's Handbook
*Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine*, 'Transcription Tuesday' 2019

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

RAILWAY MUSEUM

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

# Railway Work, Life & Death: Transcription Tuesday Handbook

*Firstly, thanks for your help in this project – it is greatly appreciated and we're thrilled that you're going to join us on 5 February to find out more about our British and Irish Edwardian railway ancestors.*

*Your work builds upon the existing 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project, which covers the years 1911-15 and is now extending up to 1939. Together, these projects will help people with an interest in the past, our railway heritage and family history, and will make the information found within the trades union accident records much more accessible.*

*Happy transcribing!*

*31/01/2019*

The *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* team
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## Contents

*Page* *Item*

2 General background

3 How to do the work

7 Where can I get help?

9 The spreadsheet – general guidance

10 Particular issues to watch for

12 The spreadsheet – column by column

*Page* *Appendix*
16 1: Annotated example page
17 2: Ethics and data protection

## General background

At the birth of the mainline railway era, in the 1830s, public concern grew over passenger accidents, so the state intervened to introduce some safeguards. Worker safety, however, remained largely unregulated until the 20th century. As a result, it was a major issue for the railway trades unions, including the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS – later the National Union of Railwaymen, and now the RMT). As well as lobbying the state and private railway companies for improvements, they were involved in representing their members' interests, whether through compensation or legal action. These details were recorded in the volume that is the focus of our 'Transcription Tuesday' work.

The first part of the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project looked at staff accidents, 1911-15. With the hard work of National Railway Museum (NRM) volunteers, it produced a spreadsheet of over 3,900 individuals and their accidents, freely available from our project website: www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk Since then we've been working on a number of extensions, including with The National Archives and the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick (MRC).

From the first 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project we have gained better understanding of working practices on British and Irish railways at around the time of the First World War, along with some appreciation of the accidents that employees suffered. However, many people have expressed an interest in a longer-term picture, and in knowing more about what happened following an accident.

This is a good cue for the next stage of the project – and, with your help, we hope to be able to document what happened *after* an accident, so far as ASRS members were concerned. We have digitised and made available records relating to accidents in 1908.

We hope that your work here will continue to open up access to this information, by transcribing details into a spreadsheet which will then be made freely available to interested researchers. This will mean people will not need to visit the MRC unless they wish to view the original volume.

This is a small part of the project extension we're currently working on with the MRC, which will bring in a wider variety of data, from the 1870s to the 1920s. That work is currently being carried out in person at the MRC, but we're looking to carry on the 'Transcription Tuesday' work online. **We're always looking for volunteers, so if you enjoy this work, please let us know that you're interested (railwayworkeraccidents@gmail.com).**

Further background, including a wealth of images, is available from the NRM's online exhibition about railway safety: https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/caution-railway-safety-1913

The project has been through a process of ethical review, and received a favourable ethical opinion – please see Appendix 2 for further details if you're interested.

**We do recognise that the project deals with distressing circumstances, so would ask that you enter into it knowing this and pause if you are affected by what you uncover.**

At the same time, it is important to remember that the people named in the volume were affected in often very serious ways, and to treat the details with respect.

## How to do the work

Everything needed for the transcription is available from our website: www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk//transcription-tuesday/

We're using a 'Google Spreadsheet' – effectively an online version of Excel, available to all with the link.[1] What we'd like you to do is extract the information from the images of the original volume, according to the headings in the spreadsheet (detailed later in this guide) and enter it into the spreadsheet.

On the website you will find a spreadsheet, containing 5 tabs at the bottom of the browser window: each of these tabs corresponds to 1 page of the original volume. Once all the pages in the spreadsheet are completed we'll de-activate the link, so do keep working through the list until all the pages are finished!

**1)** You'll be able to open (or download) the images of the original document via the links found in the first column of the spreadsheet.

**Important: When you download an image and start to work on it, please could you select & highlight in blue the cell containing the link?**

This will indicate to everyone else that the image is already being worked on, so we won't end up with lots of duplicated work. If you see a cell highlighted in blue, you will know someone else is transcribing it, so please use the tabs at the bottom of the browser window to find the next available image.
.

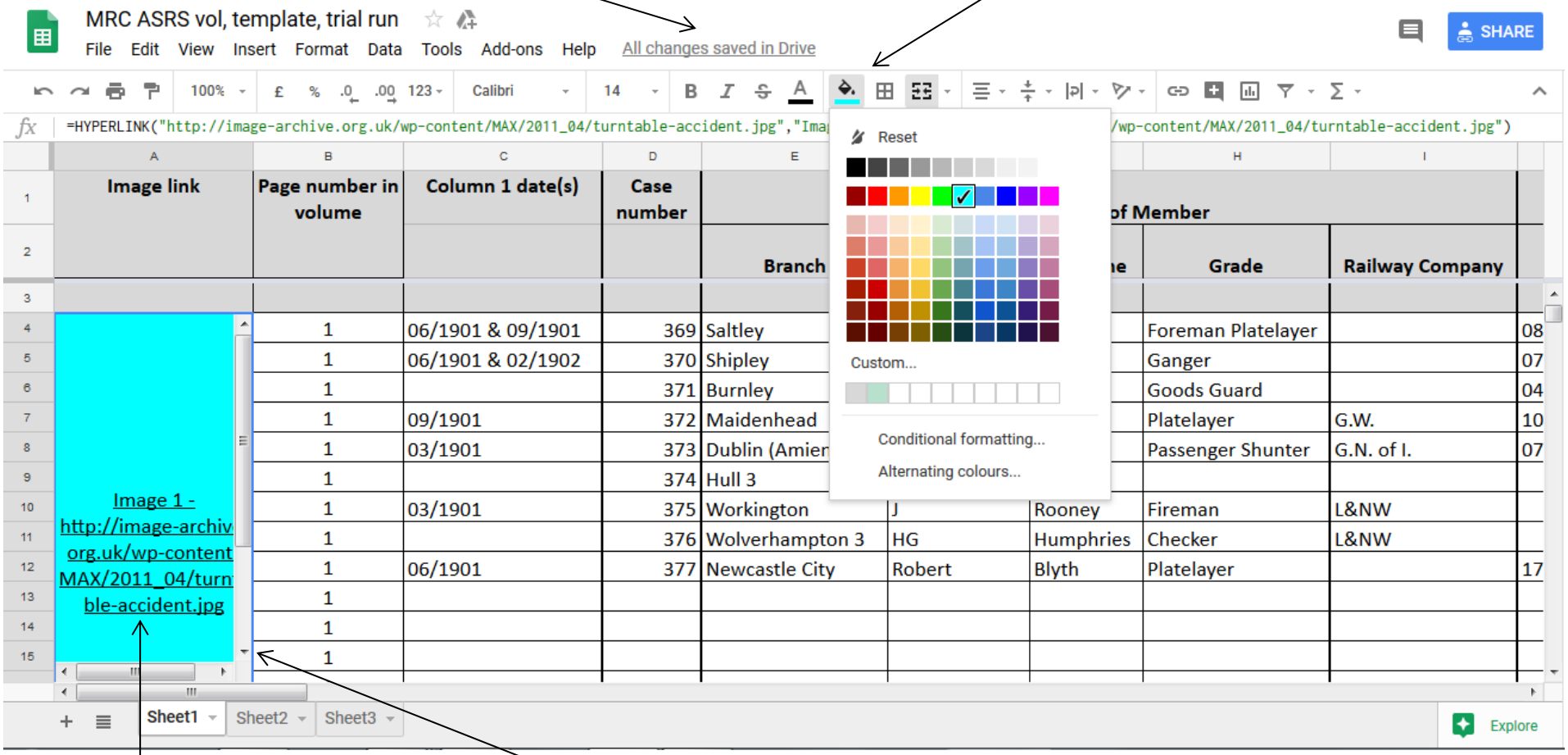
To highlight a cell when you have downloaded an image:
- select the cell
- on the tool bar, click on the 'Fill colour' icon
- select the light blue colour

An example is given below, taken from a demonstration spreadsheet (from the earlier part of the 'Transcription Tuesday' work, though the principles/ actions are the same in this case).

[1] Please note that none of your contact or personal details will be visible to any other contributors.

Indicator that your work has been saved.

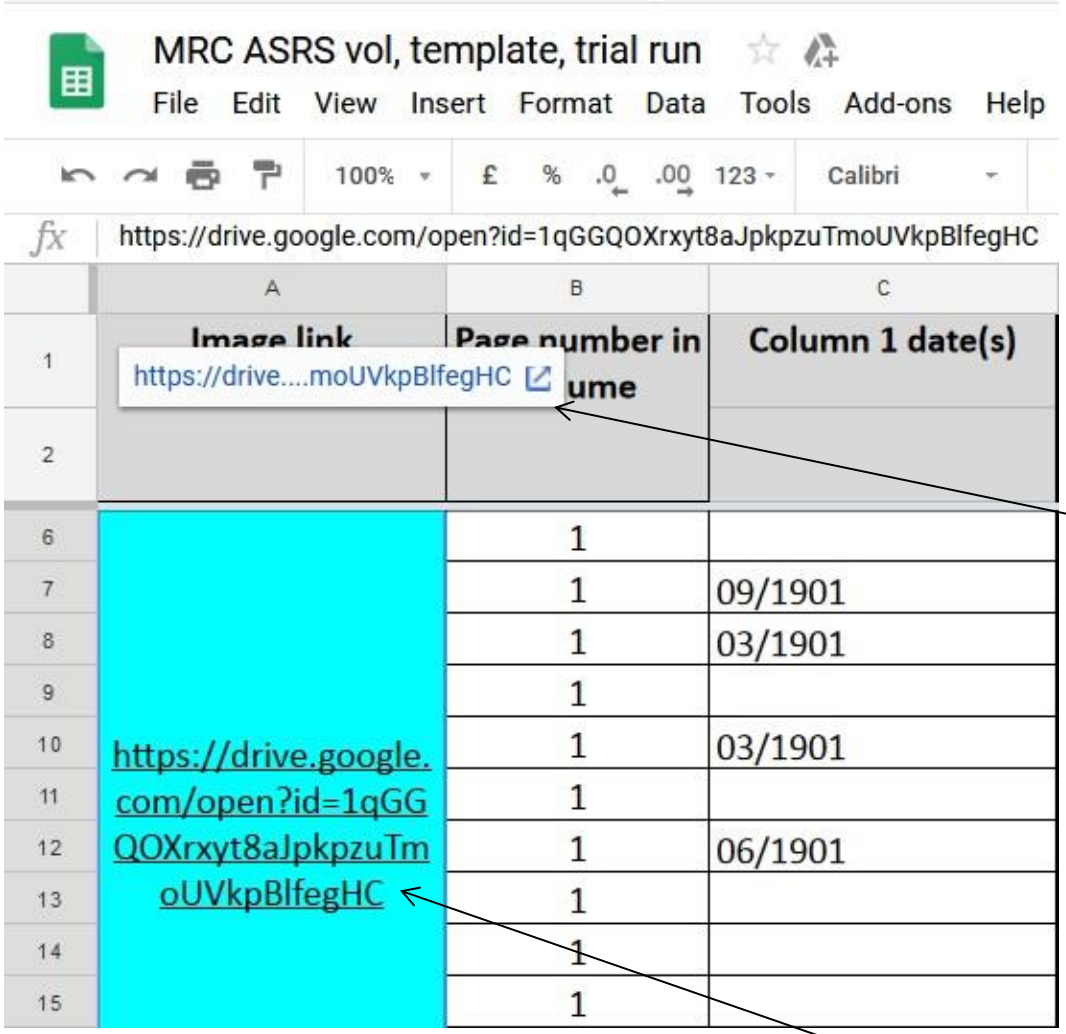
Fill colour icon & menu; blue fill colour chosen, shown by the tick.




Link to the 1st image – see below on how to access. (This link is an example only!)

Cell highlighted (in this case a merged cell) indicated by the blue outline.

To access the images:




Dialogue box appears when you hover the mouse pointer over the link to the image.

To access the image, click anywhere in this box.

The image should open as a new tab. You can save it from here or work between 2 tabs, as suits you.

If you'd like to open the image in a new window, please hold down the 'shift' key when you click the link.

Link to the 1st image – if you hover your mouse pointer over the link, the dialogue box indicated above will appear.

(NB: if for some reason the dialogue box doesn't appear, please copy & paste the link into the address bar of your browser.)

**2)** Once you've accessed the image, please could you work through the cases detailed on the page?

Each image is of a single page from the original document. In the spreadsheet we have tried to allow space for the maximum number of entries that might be found on a page of the original volume.

We've followed the layout of the original as far as possible in the spreadsheet, so working from left to right you should find details in the image and be able to enter them in the spreadsheet.

We've detailed the columns fully in the section below, including where we've made a few changes to make the data more useful to researchers.

Note: If you find a page with more cases recorded than we've allowed rows for, please could you add the extra rows into the spreadsheet, to enable you to include the additional cases?

*You can do this by:*
*- selecting a row in the spreadsheet;*
*- clicking on the 'Insert' tab on the toolbar at the top of the sheet;*
*- choosing either 'Row above' or 'Row below', as relevant.*

Note: The spreadsheet will save your work for you – you will not have to do anything. There's an indicator when work has been saved towards the top of the screen; we've shown it in the image on the previous page. When you are finished transcribing for the day, we'd recommend waiting a moment before closing the window, to give the system the chance to catch up!

**3)** Once you've finished a page, please could you highlight the cell with the image link with a red fill (following the same process noted above to do it)? This will let us & everyone know that the page is complete.

If you're happy to do another page, many thanks: please simply close the image file (leaving the spreadsheet open), find the next available page, and start over again!

Please be aware – it is possible to delete work by accident! Sadly we can't alter this, so please be as careful as possible when entering details.

There is an 'undo' button, but this is only if absolutely necessary – much better to be careful in the first place.

## I have a question. Where do I get help?

The *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* and 'Railway Work, Life & Death' teams will between them try to help if you need assistance!

* If you have questions ahead of 'Transcription Tuesday', in the first instance please contact *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* – details will be available on their website.

* On the day, you can email *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* (staffed during UK working hours) or the 'Railway Work, Life & Death' project account (which we'll try to keep an eye on outside working hours as well, though do remember that we will need to sleep at some point!): railwayworkeraccidents@gmail.com

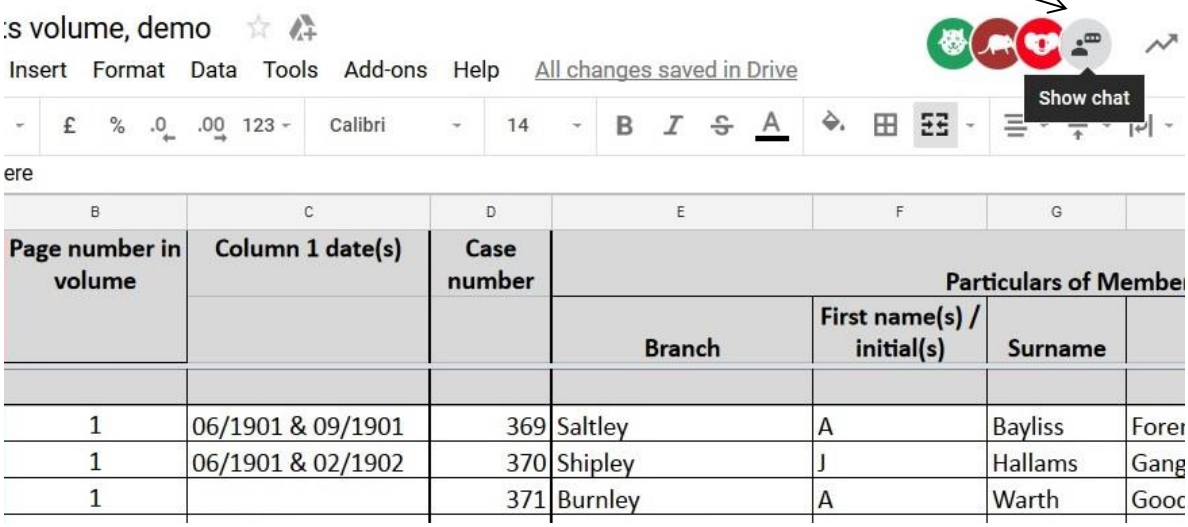
* Whilst you're transcribing, you might find it easier and quicker to use the 'chat' function in the Google Spreadsheet. We will be keeping an eye on it as frequently as possible during the day; though we may not be able to get back to you instantly, we will do our best to reply as quickly as possible. The comments will remain in the chat even if you close the chat window, so we will be able to deal with them even after a little while.

Do bear in mind that comments here are visible to everyone!

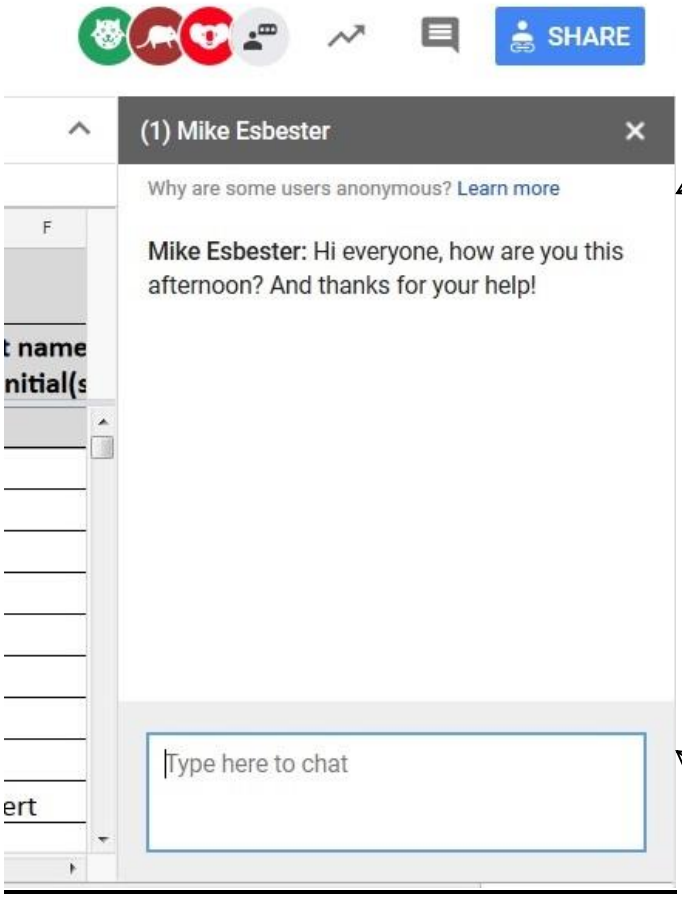
You can use it as follows:

Hover your mouse pointer over the grey circle containing the icon of a person and a speech bubble.

'Show chat' will appear. Click on this to get to the chat.




| B | C | D | E | F | G | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Page number in volume | Column 1 date(s) | Case number | Particulars of Membe | | | |
| | | | Branch | First name(s) / initial(s) | Surname | |
| 1 | 06/1901 & 09/1901 | 369 | Saltley | A | Bayliss | Fore |
| 1 | 06/1901 & 02/1902 | 370 | Shipley | J | Hallams | Gang |
| 1 | | 371 | Burnley | A | Warth | Gooc |




A dialogue box will open, looking something like this.

In this example my name appears – this is because I am an administrator on the account and so that you know who you’re talking to!

If you post a message, your name will **not** appear.

You can add your question, comment or message here. When you are finished, press enter/ return on your keyboard and your message will be posted.

After you have typed your message, you can close the chat dialogue box, using the ‘x’ in the top right corner. When you reopen the chat function the message will still be there – it isn’t deleted. However, if there have been lots of other messages in between your post and when you re-check, you may need to scroll through the conversation/ messages.

If you’re on Twitter, follow us (@RWLDproject) and on the day we’ll be Tweeting updates and news as regularly as possible.

## The spreadsheet – general guidance

The spreadsheet contains multiple columns; we have detailed these below, including advice to ensure standard transcription across all involved. However, some general points are worth noting here:

Please don't alter the formatting of any of the cells! This will help us to ensure consistency, especially when it comes to examining the material in detail.

If there are any items you have entered but about which you are uncertain, please highlight the cell with a yellow fill and we will look at it. We've included a column at the end of the sheet for 'Transcriber Observations', so if there's anything you want to alert us to, please include it here.

In the tables, you might see the 'information portion' of the data (e.g. a name, date, etc) followed by a series of ellipses: these were included to make it easier to read the table, by following the dots to the next data item in the next column. In your transcription please don't include these ellipses.

To ensure consistency with our existing datasets, please could you follow the standards below:

* dates:
dd/mm/yyyy - e.g. 14/01/2019 for 14 January 2019
In the original dates might appear in the format 'Feb. 10, '18'
– this would be 10/02/1918.

* personal names:
uppercase initials with no space or full stops;
uppercase on the first letter of the surname only
e.g. JJ Hornby

* railway company names:
Please use 'and' instead of '&';
Please include the word 'Railway' if it appears in the formal title of the company, even if it is not written in the original volume (e.g. 'Mid' would be 'Midland Railway');
Please don't include 'company' as part of the title.

In this period there were around 120 railway companies (making a drop-down menu impractical). If you have questions about the company name, you can find a useful list online, at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_railway_companies_involved_in_the_1923_grouping

Railway jobs/ grade:
In some cases we're asking you to include the job title of the railway employee. If you're having difficulty interpreting what the role might be, then the websites below may help:

http://www.census1891.com/occupations.php
http://www.doot.spub.co.uk/

National boundaries:
In some cases we're asking you to include details of the nation where the accident occurred. The date of the volume covers the period in which the whole of the island of Ireland was a part of the UK. As a result, locations on the island of Ireland require careful handling. There are therefore 2 categories:

Ireland: covering what is now Ireland, across the whole period
Ireland (now Northern Ireland): covering locations in what we now know as Northern Ireland, before partition

There is also a space for you to add any remarks you might wish to include – observations or links to other cases you're aware of, for example.

You will find a 'worked example' in Appendix 1, below, showing an extract from the original document (annotated to show where the information is found).

**Please note that it will not always be possible to complete all of the columns for all of the tables – we've provided all variables we might see, to ensure that all of the data is captured where it appears.** If the information for a column isn't present in the document you're looking at, simply leave that column blank (i.e. no need to say 'no entry' or similar).

## Some particular matters to be aware of

In general, we're particularly interested in any mentions of the relationships between the trade unions and the railway companies or the state. So, it might be that the unions complained to the Board of Trade about something in particular (e.g. long hours of work, poor lighting in goods yards), and this was noted in the discussion as it had a bearing on the accident. This is helpful because it tells us a bit more about how active the union was in working with or through the state (or company) officials.

Responding to trades union pressure, the state passed the 1900 Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act. This made a number of changes, but also mandated the use of a number of technologies intended to reduce worker accidents. Comments about these technologies sometimes appear in the accident records, so please watch out for this. Technologies included brake levers on both sides of wagons (either-side brakes), labels provided on both sides of wagons, conditions associated with tow roping to move wagons, provision of steam brakes on engines, lighting of areas where shunting took place, covering point rods and signal

wires, marking of fouling points, protection of gauge glasses in loco cabs and protection for permanent way men.

If you spot any mention of safety education, ‘safety propaganda’, the ‘Safety Movement’ or ‘Safety First’, do please make a note of it. This was a safety campaign started by the railway companies in 1913, using photos and posters, amongst other things, to show ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ ways of carrying out railway work.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with one of us.

*Hopefully this guide should have given you some background about the project, as well as shown you some of the key things you’ll be doing. Many thanks to you again for your help so far – and please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.*

*v.1, 31/01/2019*

## The spreadsheet – column by column

**A: Image link:**

This will take you to an image of a page in the original volume. If the cell is highlighted in blue, it means someone is already working on that image, so please use the spreadsheet tabs, towards the bottom of the screen, to find the next available image.

(The cell in the spreadsheet has been merged so that it covers the maximum 43 rows per page that we're expecting to see in any given page of the original. If you need to add further rows, please see p.6, above, for further advice.)

If the cell is highlighted in red, it means the page has been completed.

**B: Page no.**

We have already added the page number found on the original document, so nothing more for you to do here. This will allow others to view the original should they so wish.

**C: Branch**

The trade union branch to which the member belonged. Please include what you see in the original, including any numbers (as large locations often had more than one union branch).

There may be some abbreviations (e.g. 'Weston-s-M' for 'Weston-super-Mare'; 'Ham'rsmith 1' for 'Hammersmith 1'; 'Kentish T. 1' for 'Kentish Town 1'). If you are confident you know what the abbreviation stands for, please include the full name; otherwise, please include the abbreviated version.

**D: First name(s)/ Initial(s) & E: Surname**

Please give one casualty per row, and give as full a name as possible (though sometimes only initials might be given) across the two columns. If there are multiple casualties (which sometimes happens in the earlier text-based reports), please include each name on a different row; you can copy and paste the common details into other columns to save time.

Please note the formatting information given above in 'general guidance'.

**F: Sex - *NB new column, not found in original***

Most of the time casualties were men, a nature of the types of work and relative dangers to which male and female railway workers were exposed, and that the union didn't admit female members until 1915 (due to the First World War), as a temporary measure.

As a result of this, please assume that unless otherwise noted, the worker was male.

This is presented as a drop-down menu, with two choices.

**G: Grade**

The grade of railway worker – i.e. their job title/ role.

This might be given in the original as an abbreviation (e.g. 'Gd Guard' – Goods guard). If you're happy that you know what the original 'translates' as, please give the full name. If you're not sure, please replicate what appears in the original.

**H: Railway company**

If you can, please include the company name in full. The company name may be given as initials (e.g. 'LNW' or 'L&NW' for London and North Western Railway).

If you've identified that you have a company named but you're not sure from the abbreviation which company it is, please include the abbreviated version as it appears in the original.

Please see the note under 'general guidance' for advice on identifying company names.

**I: Date of accident/ death**

Please enter in the format 'dd/mm/yyyy': e.g. 08/01/1901.

**J: Year - *NB new column, not found in original***

Please enter only the year in which accident occurred. This is designed to help researchers sort the data.

**K: Age**

Where this information is provided in the original, please include it here.

**L: Cause of death**

Please enter this as it appears in the original, under the 'How accident happened & nature of injuries' column in the original.

**M: Other people mentioned - *NB new column, not found in original***

The report might mention people not injured in the accident (e.g. other workers involved). Please include their names here, formatted as per the advice about names given above. Where another railway worker is mentioned, please include their grade (if known), in the format: 'First name/

initial Surname (grade)' e.g. 'Thomas Coupland (Sub ganger); George Rhodes (platelayer)'.

**N: Location of incident**

This seems only to be given in the text entries, rather than the tables. Please include it if it appears.

Sometimes this will be precise; sometimes it will be given as 'between' two stations, or 'near' a location. Please try to follow the original, but as far as possible laid out as in the following examples, so that the physical place comes first:

'Major place, location'

e.g. Birmingham, Lawley Street, Carriage sidings
e.g. Dublin, Amiens Street Station

'Major place, near'

e.g. Maidenhead, near

between two locations: 'place 1 – place 2'

e.g. Barrow Hill – Staveley

In addition, you may find some abbreviations – a few common ones are given here, but if there others you don't know, please follow the original and flag it for our attention:

| | |
|---|---|
| Gds. Yd.: | goods yard |
| Jct.: | Junction |
| Stn.: | Station |
| Whse.: | Warehouse |

**O: County - *NB new column, not found in original***

If possible to identify the county in which the accident took place, ideally according to the contemporary boundaries, please include it here. In terms of finding the relevant county, a Google search is a helpful starting point; if needs be, including the modern county location is fine.

If no location is given, then please leave this column blank.

**P: Country - *NB new column, not found in original***

Please select from the drop-down list. If need be, use the slider bar to show further categories initially off-screen.

If no location is given, then please leave this column blank.

**Q-S: Compensation**

3 columns for the pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d) awarded to dependents following an accident.

**T: Description/ Comments**

Where details of the accidents are given in prose, it might be helpful to add further detail from the original in this column. This might be a full transcription, or a summary explanation – as you see fit.

If the claim was declined (e.g. it might appear as 'not entitled' or 'not on duty'), please enter it here.

**U: Transcriber's notes - *NB new column, not found in original***

A space for any observations you might have.

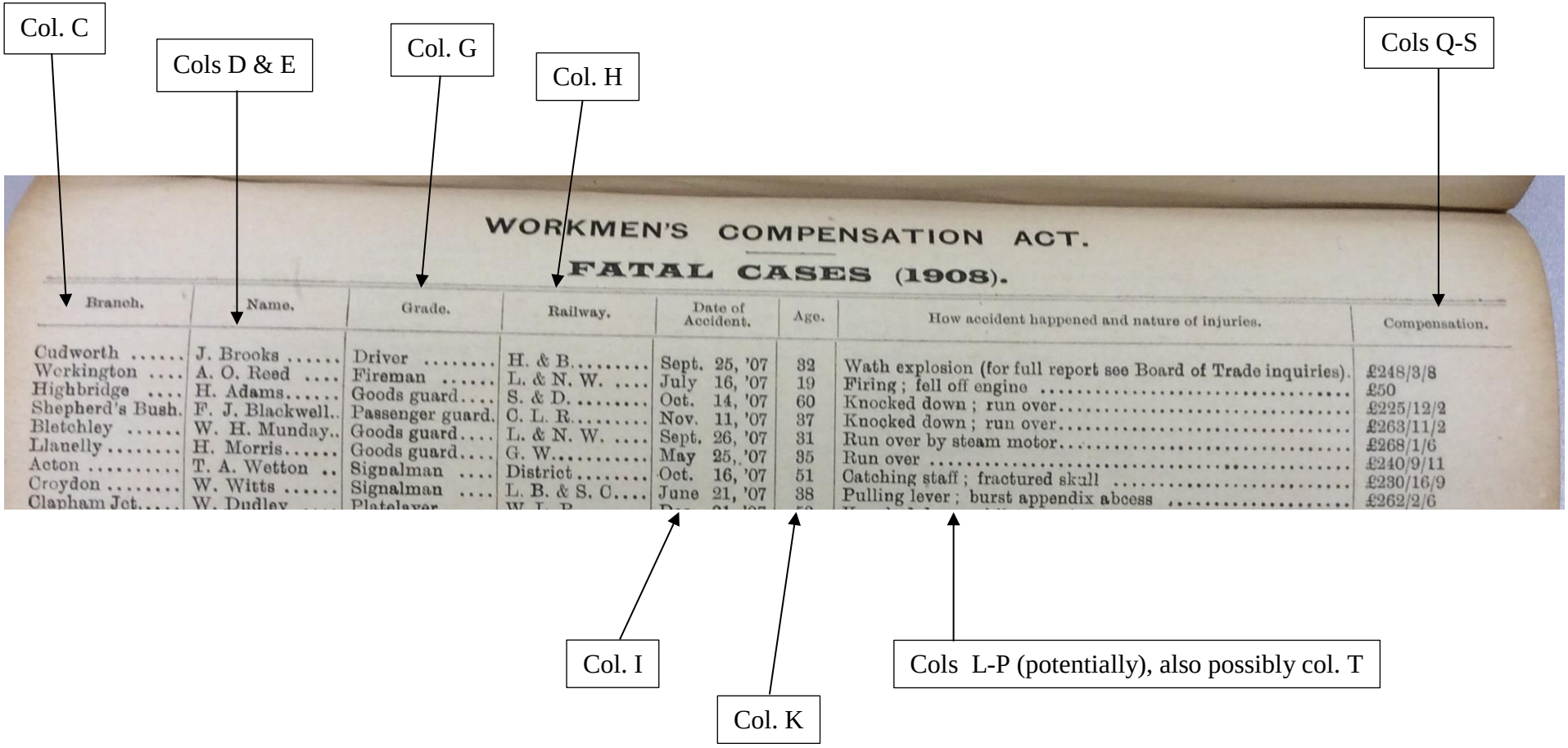
**V: Transcriber username - *NB new column, not found in original***

This one is for our benefit, as we'd be keen to find out how many people get involved in the 'Transcription Tuesday' event. This is purely voluntary, so if you don't want to include a username here, that's fine. However, if you do, please create a username unique to you and which you can use throughout your transcription with us.

We'd recommend something that doesn't involve personal information, as it will be publicly visible. Please do not enter a username that you use for any online services!

**Appendix 1: Fatal compensation case – example**

Excerpt from p.9




WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT.

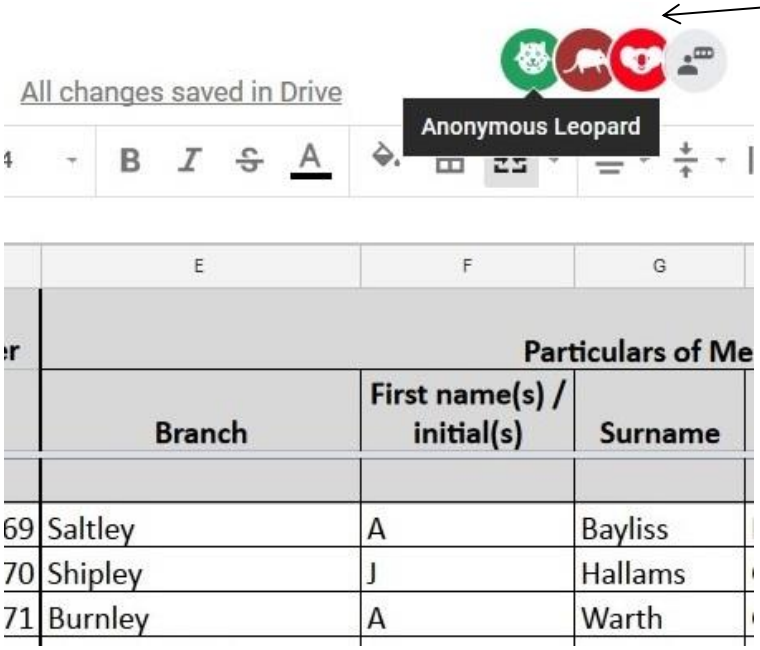
FATAL CASES (1908).

| Branch. | Name. | Grade. | Railway. | Date of Accident. | Age. | How accident happened and nature of injuries. | Compensation. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cudworth ..... | J. Brooks ..... | Driver ..... | H. & B..... | Sept. 25, '07 | 32 | Wath explosion (for full report see Board of Trade inquiries). | £248/3/8 |
| Workington .... | A. O. Reed .... | Fireman ..... | L. & N. W. .... | July 16, '07 | 19 | Firing; fell off engine ..... | £50 |
| Highbridge .... | H. Adams..... | Goods guard.... | S. & D. ..... | Oct. 14, '07 | 60 | Knocked down; run over..... | £225/12/2 |
| Shepherd's Bush. | F. J. Blackwell.. | Passenger guard. | C. L. R..... | Nov. 11, '07 | 37 | Knocked down; run over..... | £263/11/2 |
| Bletchley ..... | W. H. Munday.. | Goods guard.... | L. & N. W. .... | Sept. 26, '07 | 31 | Run over by steam motor..... | £268/1/6 |
| Llanelly ..... | H. Morris..... | Goods guard.... | G. W..... | May 25, '07 | 35 | Run over ..... | £240/9/11 |
| Acton ..... | T. A. Wetton .. | Signalman .... | District ..... | Oct. 16, '07 | 51 | Catching staff; fractured skull ..... | £230/16/9 |
| Croydon ..... | W. Witts ..... | Signalman .... | L. B. & S. C.... | June 21, '07 | 38 | Pulling lever; burst appendix abcess ..... | £262/2/6 |
| Clapham Jct..... | W. Dudley ..... | Platelayer | W. L. R. | | | | |

## Appendix 2: Notes about data protection and ethics

As the project touches upon personal data, albeit historical, it is important that we have considered the implications of our work, both ethical and in terms of any data protection duties, past or present.

So far as you are concerned, we do not collect or have access to any information about you that is considered (in law) to be 'personal data'. When you access the Google Spreadsheet, you do so anonymously:




Each transcriber will automatically be allocated an icon, appearing along the top of the Spreadsheet when you & others are logged in.

As you can see here, this is all the detail that appears if you hover over or select a user.

We have asked you – on a purely voluntary basis – to provide a username. As noted, this is purely so we can work out how many people contributed. We recommend you choose a unique username, not necessarily with any personal details (e.g. initials of your name – though if you choose to use this, that's fine provided you know that everyone will be able to see this).

In relation to the people featured in the volume, they are now all believed dead, and so there is no legal duty in relation to data protection – particularly as the information is already publicly available, at the MRC. Advice about this was sought from the University of Portsmouth's Information Disclosure and Complaints Manager, who has confirmed the grounds under which we are making use of the data.

The project as a whole has been through an extensive process of ethical opinion (what used to be called ethical review) at the University of Portsmouth, in all cases being given a favourable ethical opinion. Issues touched upon included data protection and the potentially sensitive or distressing nature of the information. The specific ethical opinion reference number relevant to this work is FHSS 2018-079.