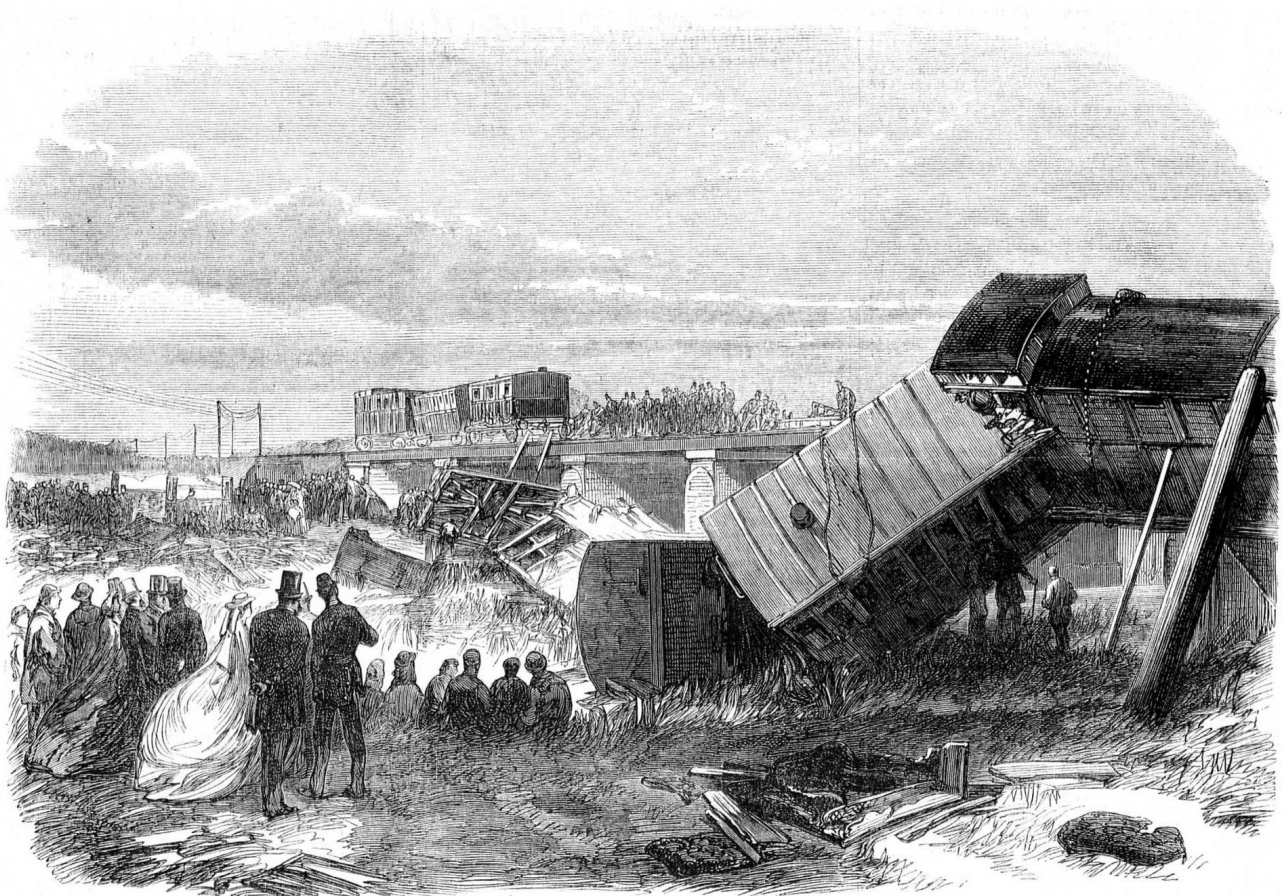


Railways are not just a means of transport. They are a tool of destiny. They bring people together. They rip people apart – sometimes literally. They are logic and chance, rationality and romance, often at the same time. They typified two-thirds of the 19th century and gave their name to an age. They embrace all contrasts: the express that stops nowhere and the slow train that stops everywhere.

Hop aboard, and come along for the ride! The flag's being waved, the whistle's sounding! You don't want to be left behind!



Rail crash at Staplehurst, Kent, 3.13pm 9th June 1865. Charles Dickens, with Ellen Ternan, his mistress, and her mother, was on the Folkestone to London boat train. Though none of them were physically harmed, the stress of the incident, in which ten passengers were killed and forty injured, many of whom he helped and tended, caused Dickens to lose his voice for a fortnight, and made him subsequently avoid train-travel whenever possible. He died five years to the day after the accident.