

## 'RAILWAY CHILDREN' HEROES OF THE HOUR!



Photograph showing the heroic actions of the 'Railway Children'.

### By Gerald Hornby

A train avoided what would have been a calamitous collision with an unexpected landslide yesterday afternoon due to the heroic efforts of three children, known locally as the 'Railway Children.'

The landslide occurred at around 13:50 in the vicinity of Broadleaves Farm (200 yards away from the where the train line enters a tunnel.) As yet, the cause is unknown, however, it is believed that the soil around tree roots may have been loosened by the recent, persistent heavy rain, and as a result, trees, rocks and a large quantity of rock swept down the embankment and onto the railway track. One other possibility is that the landslide was caused by a minor earthquake as the trigger, yet this would appear to be highly unlikely.

What is beyond doubt is that without the courageous (and ingenious, on-the-spot) thinking of three children, the 11:29 train to Rushby would have ploughed straight into the landslide debris and derailed, resulting in untold damage and casualties to the crew and passengers on board. Fortunately, this series of events did not occur as the children had the good sense to alert the train driver just in time by standing firm on the railway track and waving 'red flags'. The flags in question were actually made of strips of the girls' red petticoats torn off and were attached to the branches of tree saplings.

Speaking to the train driver after the incident, he said, "Hell's bells gov'nr! 'Ere I were, giving the engine full throttle, then the nex' thing

*I see are three young'uns on the track ahead waving red flags. Of course, I slammed on the brakes just in the nick of time! It wer' a mighty fright but they're all bloomin' saviours, I tell you. They deserve the king's shiniest medal!"*

It is understood that the three children – named Roberta, Peter and Phyllis Smithson – were witnesses to the actual landslide as they were foraging for wild cherries close to the rocky face of the cliff out of which the railway tunnel is built. We have been informed by local sources that the children are residing with their mother at 'Three Chimneys' cottage after moving up from London for reasons unknown. Aside from these three, there were no other witnesses to the landslide and consequently, they took it upon themselves to act in the brave and selfless manner that they did. Eldest child, Roberta, stated, "Begging your pardon, sir, we simply did what any decent, right-minded individual would do. I do hope that the dear train driver is alright. He must have had an awful fright!"

Work has already commenced to clear the landslide from the line but for the foreseeable future, it shall remain closed. As for the 'Railway Children' they have been invited to a celebration tea with the station master and have been rewarded with a model train each.