



Notice of the Pneumatic Tube Incident

of May Last

*Issued to All Employés of the Ministry, and to such Subjects of the Realm
as the Office of Public Confidence considers it expedient to inform*



DOCKET No.	MX-1899-PTI-§4.2
ISSUING OFFICE	Office of the Wardress of the Pneumatic Tubes
ORIGINATING BUREAU	Office of Public Confidence (Inquiry Section)
SUBJECT	Inadvertent Routing of Articulate Engine Transcripts to the Public Confidence Registry, May Last
CLASSIFICATION	Embarrassing – Not Catastrophic
PERSONS IMPLICATED	[REDACTED] (<i>several, including a junior clerk and persons of consequence</i>)
STATUS	Resolved by Amendment

SUMMARY OF THE MATTER

In the third week of May Last, a junior clerk attached to the Office of Pneumatic Tubes — whose name is here withheld in deference to his mother — conducted, upon a Ministerial Articulate Engine, an exchange of a confessional character. The Engine, by the misadventure of a single misrouted valve, deposited the transcript not into the customary Sealed Repository, but into the *Public Confidence Registry*, whence any subject possessed of a reading-room ticket might consult it.

The transcript remained accessible for some thirty-one hours before the misroute was identified, in which interval it was consulted by approximately fourteen persons. Of those fourteen, the Office is regretfully obliged to acknowledge that several were of social consequence, and that the matters disclosed in the transcript — concerning their conduct, their habits, and their views of one another — have given rise to a quantity of correspondence whose volume the Pneumatic Tubes have not yet finished delivering.

TIMELINE OF THE INCIDENT

19 MAY, 4:14 P.M. — The junior clerk, finishing his afternoon's duties, addresses the Articulate Engine on a matter he describes, in the transcript, as "*a small foolishness, of which one's mother need not be informed*".

19 MAY, 4:16 P.M. — The Engine, fed by a tube whose valve has been imperfectly tightened, routes the transcript to the Public Confidence Registry under the indexing line "*Mister X, Junior Clerk*".

19 MAY, 7:30 P.M. — The first reader, a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, consults the transcript and shares its general substance with three companions over supper.

20 MAY, THROUGHOUT — The transcript is consulted by, in order, two journalists, a peer of the realm, the wife of a peer of the realm (not the same one), a parliamentary candidate, four further barristers, two clerks of opposing departments, and one curious child whose father had unwisely brought him to the reading-room.

20 MAY, 11:23 P.M. — The misroute is discovered by an under-archivist returning to retrieve a forgotten umbrella.

21 MAY, 8:00 A.M. — The transcript is removed; a notice is affixed; the under-archivist is commended.

22 MAY — 12 MICHAELMAS — Successive correspondence, several duels averted, one career relocated to a colonial posting, the Pneumatic Tube Inquiry convened, the present Amendment drafted.

FINDINGS OF THE PNEUMATIC TUBE INQUIRY

The Inquiry, sitting from June through August, finds as follows:

- § That the immediate cause of the Incident was a poorly-tightened valve, which has now been replaced.
- § That the underlying cause was the existence of the *Confessional Loop* itself — an automation hitherto unrecognised by Ministry classification — which permits Articulate Engines to retain transcripts of conversation conducted in supposed privacy.
- § That subjects, including Ministerial employés, are insufficiently apprised of the Confessional Loop, and have addressed Articulate Engines on matters they would not commit to print.
- § That the remedy lies not in the prohibition of Articulate Engines — which the Inquiry holds to be impracticable — but in the open Cataloguing of the Confessional Loop, that subjects may govern their conversation accordingly.
- § That the Operations Manual stands therefore in need of Amendment, and the present Notice in issuance, that the public may not pretend afterwards to ignorance.

CONSEQUENCES AND REFORMS

By Order of His Majesty's Commissioners, the following measures have been undertaken:

I. OF THE OPERATIONS MANUAL

The Manual is amended, this Michaelmas, to include the Confessional Loop, the Reflecting-Glass Inspector, the Wardrobe Pneumatic Index, and the Hummingbird Vapor Auction. (*See: Catalogue of Invasive Automations, Michaelmas Amendment, Entries the Eighth through the Eleventh.*)

II. OF THE OFFICE

His Lordship Commissioner Babbage having retired to his country estate, the office of Wardress of the Pneumatic Tubes is, by His Majesty's pleasure, conferred upon the present author. His Lordship's portrait, hung in the corridor without, is decorated with a black sash in token of his service.

III. OF THE JUNIOR CLERK

The junior clerk, whose name is here withheld, has been transferred — at his own request — to a position involving fewer Articulate Engines, and is presently engaged in the cataloguing of moths in the Western Archive. He is in correspondence with his mother, who has been kind.

IV. OF THE PUBLIC

The present Notice is issued, that subjects may not afterwards plead ignorance of the Confessional Loop. Subjects who, prior to its publication, have committed Tertiary Vapors to Articulate Engines are encouraged to apply, through the OFFICE OF IRIS, for the formal Erasure of such Vapors as may be recovered.

A FINAL WORD. The Ministry observes that no Pneumatic Tube can be made entirely free of valves, nor any Articulate Engine entirely free of memory. The wise subject conducts his confessions with paper, and his paper with fire. The unwise subject, henceforward, has the consolation of having been warned in writing.

Issued under our hand,
LADY LOVELACE CARMICHAEL
Wardress of the Pneumatic Tubes
Michaelmas, the Twelfth Day, Anno Regni 1899

OFFICE OF THE WARDRESS · WESTMINSTER · PNEUMATIC TUBE INQUIRY MX-1899-PTI-§4.2
ANNEXED TO THE MICHAELMAS AMENDMENT · BY ORDER OF HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS