

ECCLES STATION

NEWS

APRIL 2012

The contents of this month's e issue are as follows:

News section,

Obituaries,

Articles.

After worrying that there would not be much content for this month's edition, news has flowed in at quite a rate, and the result has been pressure on space in the newsletter. Thus there will be no trip of the month section and the next article on connections at Piccadilly will not be until next month, and the knock on effects will alter what was planned for next month's

The Editor.

NEWS

Freccles members were out doing the garden on Sunday 1st April from 11.00.

New volunteers are always welcome so do come along to our next session at the same time on **Sunday 6th May** – you don't need any gardening knowledge - some of us pick litter from the platforms/steps and outside the station!



The garden has come a long way from when it was just a rubbish tip five or six years ago.

Eccles station garden yesterday.

Over the decades many millions of pounds have been spent on Bolton bus and rail stations without achieving integration of public transport in the town, but on 15th March planning permission was granted for a £48,000,000 project to build a new bus station in Bolton. This will be sited in the triangle of railway land at the Preston/Blackburn end of the station, and will have a bridge link direct into the railway station booking area. Taxis will be on the now disused Newport Street bus station. It should be a huge improvement in linking outlying areas of Bolton with the rail services

See: http://www.tfgm.com/content.cfm?subcategory_id=9004988

For a short while it looked as if **Eccles Station would end up with just another portakabin**, (albeit new and bigger) because of a weight restriction of 7.5 tonnes on the Church Street bridge. This would have been a blow to our aspirations for the top of Church Street as it would also have **invalidated the grant from Eccles Community Committee for forecourt improvements**.

So Freccles met with Stuart Molyneux, Group Engineer (Bridges) at Urban Vision, and Daniel Wride, Senior Project Officer at the Salford Sustainable Regeneration Directorate. They pointed to a survey of the bridge in 2002 by a structural engineer which gives 7.5 tonne as a vehicular weight limit only (and on only one part of the forecourt). **The limit for building purposes**, or any other widely spread loading, is **40 tonnes**. Therefore it should now be possible to provide an architecturally attractive building and a suitable focus for the top end of Church Street. Not bad after about forty years of low standards following an **arson attack**!

Electrification work on the line is progressing well and is being done at the quietest times. To allow this work buses are replacing the last two evening trains to Manchester and to Liverpool on Mondays to Thursdays. Normal services run on Friday and Saturday evenings. Trains are running as normal on Sundays now – and seem to be attracting a lot of passengers.

Major Work is underway to change the track layout at **Stalybridge station**. This is needed to cope with the anticipated growth in trains over the Pennines. Train services from Eccles to **Stalybridge will continue as normal**, except for the 10.36 which will terminate at Victoria. However until the work is completed in November passengers will have to **change at Victoria on all the return journeys.**



Work has already begun digging a bay platform out of platform 1 (The Bar and canopy are in the background).

Presumably this will replace the current bay which is on the other side of the station.

The work involves creating a new bay platform that trains from Victoria can run straight into and out of, without crossing all the tracks. The track past Platform 1 will be moved over a few feet and then the platform widened. A central through line might also be reintroduced.

On the other side the old goods lines will be removed. The platform will then be widened and made into an island platform 2 and 3 with through lines on both sides. There will be a complete renewal of the track layout, and the new signalling will bring the closure of Stalybridge signal box.

Freccles held a public meeting and AGM at the Eccles Gateway on Monday 26th of March. Nearly forty people were in attendance, including some Friends of Walkden, Patricroft and Hindley stations. Roy Chapman of Transport for Greater Manchester spoke briefly about the Northern Hub project. Then Anna Guinness and Jon Clee from Network Rail gave a presentation on electrification work on the Chat Moss Line.

At the brief AGM following the account were presented and accepted; Captain J Dawson was reappointed as auditor and the Chairman (David Yates), Secretary (Elizabeth Charnley), and Treasurer (Eoan Edwards), were re-elected unopposed.

Peter Aust has resigned as Chairman of the Friends of Walkden Station. Walkden South Councillor Iain Lindley has taken over until a permanent chairman can be found.

£20,000 has been gratefully received by FRECCLES from Eccles Community Committee as a sizeable and generous contribution to development works on the station forecourt area in association with the new station building.

There are a lot of engineering works on the Easter Sunday especially on the West Coast mainline so if you are travelling far afield over the Easter Weekend check out the rail engineering works before hand at:

http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/service_disruptions/indicator.html

Wilkinson stores have done much to help Freccles with the gardens at Eccles Station. They are now running a community sponsorship scheme called 'Local Stars'. This can provide sponsorship to a nominated member of the community. The categories for nominees are:

SPECIAL TALENTS *This covers sports, dance, music, Theatre, or Chance of a Lifetime.*

INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE *This is for people who have achieved against the odds.*

COMMUNITY HEROES *This covers those who have brought benefits to others, and devote time to helping out locally.*

In each case it is necessary to specify what the nominee, if chosen, will use the sponsorship for.

Forms are available in Wilkinson near the entrance on the square. Let's have some local people put forward!

Freccles' service development group is to **liaise with members of Friends of Patricroft Station in order to form a single rail user group**. The purpose will be to representing the interests of the two stations directly in written submissions and at various rail planning meetings. It is felt that Eccles and Patricroft are **sometimes overlooked, being the only two Greater Manchester stations on the line**. The group will be known as **The Bedford & Leigh Moss, Chat Moss and Barton Moss Rail Users Group** (B&LM, CM & BMRUG for short).

Progress of sorts has been achieved with Transport for Greater Manchester recognising that Eccles should have two trains per hour (Mon to Sat daytime) because over 100,000 passengers per annum use the station. Cost and timetabling difficulties still prevent the introduction of this second train in the general timetable structure. The next recast of the region's timetable following electrification will provide an opportunity. It is up to Freccles, Salford Council, and TFGM to make sure this is in the shopping list for those plans.

As part of the budget the chancellor announced that rail links are to be improved between Manchester and a number of northern towns and cities. Some seemed to be repeats (Leeds, Liverpool) where this is already expected but this time the list included Bradford and Sheffield. This is welcome if it goes ahead because the Calder Valley and the Hope Valley routes are in need of extra capacity.

It seems that steam locomotive 70013 'Oliver Cromwell' was due to visit Eccles from Manchester going on the loop between 22.51 and 23.31 on Saturday 24th March. Did anyone go to see this?

Salford Central, Manchester Oxford Road, Blackburn, Blackpool North, Ashton under Lyme, Hazel Grove and Eccles stations are to get Secure and safe cycling sheltered storage facilities with swipe card access. There will be provision for 50 bikes at Eccles station. In addition at Manchester Victoria and Bolton there will be cycle hire, cycle repairs and cycle sales at a dedicated facility adjacent to the stations as well as space for 200 bikes at each. The total cost of the project is £1.1million. For fuller details see: <http://www.northernrail.org.uk/news/6982>



The new plaque ready for installation at Stalybridge.

Photo J.E. Rayner

The restored **Stalybridge Station Buffet Bar** finally had its official opening at 16.00 on Friday 30th March. Baron Pendry of Stalybridge unveiled a commemorative plaque to add to the station collection. As former MP for the area, Tom Pendry has long been interested in the station, and was a mover to have the large station clock restored.

Tom Lucas of Network Rail makes sure the screws are tight as he prepares the plaque for the formal opening ceremony.

Photo J.E. Rayner



Apparently the rail replacement bus services have not always been up to scratch. FRECCLES has made representations about this and it is receiving managerial attention. Passengers who have difficulties can use the FixMyTransport website: <http://www.fixmytransport.com/>

This is also a link from the Freccles website. Please do use this site if there is a problem and add details about specific incidents. You can also use this site for problems with other forms of transport.

Do you fancy running a big railway? **Network Rail is looking for 15 volunteers from the public!**

The role as one of the new Public Members (there are 57 other members) would involve ensuring that the Board of Network Rail runs the railway safely and reliably whilst also achieving significant cost savings. The volunteers are expected to have **experience of high level corporate governance** and will serve for a term of three years, attending six meetings a year. If you fancy your chances find out more at www.nrpublicmembers.co.uk

OBITUARIES

ALAN PEGLER O.B.E

Alan Pegler was born on 16th April 1920 and lived in Nottinghamshire. His father, Francis, ran the Northern Rubber Company in Retford. He started to develop a love of trains and railways when his father took him to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924. He was captivated by one exhibit in particular – the new London and North Eastern Railway pacific locomotive No 4472 ‘Flying Scotsman’. Later on May 1st 1928 he saw it speed through Barnby Moor station with the first nonstop run of the Flying Scotsman express. This confirmed his obsession with the locomotive.

Pegler read Law at Cambridge but before graduation the war resulted in his joining the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm, flying dive bombers (and surviving a crash landing¹). Then he moved to the Royal Observer Corps followed by the RAF Photographic Recognition Department. After the War he took up his duties as a director at the family firm and became a Lloyd's underwriter and was thereby to become fairly wealthy.

In 1952 he visited the decaying Ffestiniog Railway in Wales with a friend and being mad or farsighted or both they decided to buy it and reopen it. Pegler put up the money and later donated his shareholding to The Ffestiniog Railway Trust. Thus he was a prime mover in what is now one of the premier tourist attractions of the U.K.

He was horrified to learn in 1963 that Britain was unwilling to preserve any of Sir Nigel Gresley's A3 pacific locomotives, so using funds from his 1961 retirement from Northern Rubber he purchased Flying Scotsman; restored it to LNER apple green livery and for the next six years used it to haul hundreds of special trains. In 1971 he shipped Flying Scotsman to America as part of a Buy British promotional tour of the USA and Canada backed by the Trade Department. The train tour was a popular success and covered over 15,000 miles taking in Boston, New York, Washington, Dallas, Wisconsin, Montreal, Toronto and San Francisco. However the high charges imposed by the American Railroads made it a financial disaster and Pegler was declared bankrupt. He worked his passage back to England and persuaded William McAlpine to buy the engine and ship it back to Britain in 1973. To pay off his debts Alan Pegler worked as a cruise ship lecturer. Later he was Henry VIII at Tower Hill banquets, an Orient Express train manager, and an Inter City train cruise commentator.

This modest, friendly man with the great mutton chop sideburns passed away on 18th March 2012 aged 91. By indulging his interests he brought great joy to millions. He leaves a son, and a daughter, and of course, Flying Scotsman and the Ffestiniog Railway.

PROFESSOR JAMES QUINN WILSON

James Q. Wilson, political scientist, was born on May 27, 1931. He died on March 2, 2012, aged 80.

It might seem odd that ESN runs an obituary about an unassuming academic, of whom few have heard, but in fact his work has touched the lives of many of us in the past few years.

He was one of the most distinguished academics in the USA serving as a professor at Harvard and UCLA, and as an adviser to several US presidents. His work was based on empirical observation and he was the co-author (with George Kelling) of the so-called "broken windows" approach to law enforcement, and helped the concept of "zero tolerance". They explained that official tolerance of supposedly trivial offences led to a rise in more serious offences. This work is well summed up in the following quotation: "If a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, the rest of the windows will soon be broken. Window breaking does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window breakers whereas others are populated by window lovers; rather one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares ..."

He also noticed in his work that a high jailing rate corresponds to a low crime rate and notes that this is not because prison reforms most offenders, but because they are constrained from their habitual criminality by incarceration. (One might think that this is obvious enough, and should not need a Harvard academic to point it out! However at the time it was new thinking, and there are still many working in the justice system who do not grasp the point).

This work influenced William Bratton whose period as Commissioner of New York police saw a dramatic fall in crime rates, and who is now advising the British Prime Minister. The idea that strong communities are to some degree self policing has also followed from this, inspiring many of the community initiatives of the last 15 years.

He loved the outdoor life and all aspects of the countryside – he regularly hiked with his wife who survives him. He has left a son and a daughter and a

vast corpus of work that will continue to affect the way society conducts itself in the future.

There is a large amount of material - you might wish to look at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Q._Wilson

<http://search.proquest.com/news/docview/926595084/135CE6760DEFED0F01/2?accountid=16898> (you will need your Eccles Library number to access this one.)

ARTICLES



2012 PRESTON GUILD YEAR

This month we have a lovely easy walk (except for the steps) south of the Centre of Preston. It is a railway history walk – but don't be put off as it is mainly parks and countryside. This month, before the leaves are on the trees, you will see more – on a hot summer's day you would welcome the shade on most of this walk

Alight at Preston Station. This is the London and North Western mainline station on the Euston to Glasgow route. *Notice across the through tracks the post and parcels platform. To the left of this a line drops down steeply by a wall*

to the docks. The platform buildings cleverly repeat a glazed arch pattern with interior walls and ceilings at varying locations to give a spread of room sizes. Note the Red Rose of Lancashire in the decorated metalwork.

Leave the station by the front entrance. Turn round to see the delightful little chateau that is the main building.

Re-enter the station and turn left over the bridge. Just before going out through the arch look left to see the great spire of the RC church of St Werburg between the main and Blackpool lines. Also take a look at platform 7. At the south end it curves away to the left and at the north end an old track bed goes into a tunnel in the same sort of direction. Both these lifted connections went into another Preston Station!

Go out through the arch and turn right downhill. This new building and car park are on the site of the East Lancashire Lines station (later part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway).

Follow the pavement with a zigzag then cross the road and car park heading towards the bridge. This is where the lines used to go out to Blackburn, then on to Burnley and Colne.

Go up the set of steps by the left of the bridge (Vicar's Bridge) and turn right over it. (Walk in step and you will note the resonance of the Bailey bridge as you cross.)

Go left then right through the gate to walk along the terrace in front of what used to be The Park Hotel. (If gates locked go round other side!). Miller Park is below you. Descend and go to the statue. This is of Edward Geoffrey Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby.

Descend the steps into the park and fork left towards the railway bridge. Go under it, then u-turn up the steps by the side of it (sorry about this!).

At the top turn left across the Ribble. Notice the main line railway bridges and in the other direction the bridge that you will come back over. Enjoy the pleasant walk along the top of the East Lancashire Railway embankment and note how wet the meadows below are.

The tarmac path drops down to a lane with a hedge. Go left along this lane and ascend the slight rise onto another embankment and go left along this back towards Preston. *This was the Lancaster Canal route: however there was no canal here as they were short of money to build a viaduct across this valley, so instead they built this good tram road to link the south and north parts of the canal.*

Cross the tramway bridge over the river and follow its route uphill through a grotto. Just before the Victorian belvedere, u-turn right and you come to a most splendid view of the Ribble Valley. *Notice the cannon from the siege of Sebastopol.* Ascend the steps. *The Italianate Victorian palace on your right is called Avenham Tower (1850) and was the home of Edwin Henry Booth, the founder of the grocery and supermarket chain.*

Go up more steps and walk along the parade. *Opposite you is the Harris School of Art – a fine classical building.* U-turn left down Avenham Colonnade and then u-turn right to proceed below the gardens of the houses. Proceed to a main junction of tarmac paths. *The goods tramway came up along here and presumably left the park between two big houses ahead to go through the centre off Preston to the canal basin.*

Go left to the Swiss chalet and then the Boer War Memorial. Then take a look in the lovely Japanese Garden opposite (*built very conveniently in the 1930s!*). Now, if you want the cafe, go down from the Japanese Garden to the modern pavilion by the river.

To finish the walk go past the half timbered Park Keeper's House, through the gates *under the thoughtfully ornate railway bridge* and you walk along a broad terrace past the Earl's statue. Turn right and go back onto the Park Hotel Terrace then over the Bailey bridge again, left down the steps and return to the railway station across the car park.

Tuesday, 30th December 1941.

A technical inquiry into the causes of the fatal railway accident at Eccles on the above date was undertaken at Eccles Town Hall by Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate.

The Railway Inspectorate had been set up in 1840 by the Board of Trade to improve the safety of railway operations. Before any railway could operate the inspectors had to approve of the permanent way; the locomotives and rolling stock; the signalling, and the rule books. The Inspectorate also automatically held official inquiries that looked in depth into any railway accident. The recommendations they made following these reports were not mandatory but were made public. The reports gradually led to significant accident reduction during operations and sometimes legislation too.

Officers of the Royal Engineers were appointed to act as railway inspectors. These officers would already have experience of complex rules; mechanical and or civil engineering; operational evaluation and dealing with men. Many would have direct experience of railways, either by working on the military railways dotted around the country at large War Department sites (such as Longmoor) or during the world wars.

Major G R S Wilson was chosen to inquire into the Eccles disaster. He was destined later to reach the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and also to become the Head of The Railway Inspectorate. He made use of material compiled by the railways' officers in the aftermath of the accident and he interviewed witnesses.

He presented his report to the Ministry Of War Transport on 9th April 1942. The report is typed using a traditional typewriter machine on poor quality wartime paper. However the content of the report is of the highest quality. It is meticulous, detailed and clear, or as Cliff Jones puts it in his work on this topic: 'The Accident Report is a masterpiece of thorough and sensitive investigation of the facts. Written in beautiful English, it takes one through the whole affair, step by step...' The report describes the accident and aftermath in general terms then describes verbally (this is probably partly due to the

limited capabilities of the reprographics available at the time) the geography and signalling of the line giving precise distances from Eccles platforms. Much of the narrative in the preceding articles is derived directly from the report so there is no need to repeat these aspects.

Major Wilson approached his task forensically dealing the construction of the carriages; stating that the locomotives, braking systems and signalling equipment were all in good order (and not therefore a cause of the crash) and that Acton's records in the signal register are clear and without alteration. He notes that Ashcroft (the fireman of the Pennington train) was seriously injured in the crash so could not be interviewed until a month later. It seems that Ashcroft could remember nothing after dropping the scoop, but Major Wilson notes that "On the other hand, examination of the engine after the collision did not show that water had been taken."

Of particular importance in the report is the examination of the fog signalling arrangements at Eccles. Major Wilson notes that Eccles had only nine of the twelve fog men needed to man six posts on alternate shifts, on account of the general manpower shortage caused by the war; that it was Parrington, Pantling and Patten that had no relief available - so their signals would not be covered when they took their 9 hours break; and that the booking on arrangements of Pantling and Patten were opposite according to whether they were reporting in normal working hours, or reporting from off duty – another potential source of confusion.

Major Wilson now had to draw his conclusions from a body of technical evidence and witness statements. He concluded that the main responsibility for the crash lay with Signalman Lowe, but that Driver Mountfield "... must, therefore, accept a considerable share of responsibility." These are baldly the results of the inquiry, but taken alone they do not do justice to the subtlety and skill of the report.

To draw such conclusions from conflicting material required a certain mastery of judging men and circumstances. Wilson assesses the characters and reliability of their witness statements and does not fail to record any mitigating circumstances. This is best illustrated by direct quotes from his report:

Of driver Mountfield:

“...his train should not have been permitted to approach the occupied junction, and he was thus placed in a false position by the failure of signalman Lowe to observe the important block regulation 4(e) (i).”

“...his evidence appears to have been directed to show that ...he was twice misled by the actions of others...”

“It may have been that he was entirely satisfied, after Ashcroft’s assurance at the distant, that he was running under clear signals, and he may thereafter have relaxed his attention... If this was the case....he was taking an unjustifiable risk in delegating his own responsibility... to his fireman, a man of no great capacity, and whose knowledge of the road was weak.”

“...his excuse for not crossing the footplate himself to observe the distant himself was unsatisfactory.”

“I feel that the speed at which he was running when he passed the distant cannot have been less than 40 m.p.h, which was hardly consistent with the proper observation of signals in a congested suburban area under the prevailing conditions.”

“Although he received some injury and was considerably shaken, he assisted with the rescue work for over an hour before he was taken to hospital.”

Of signalman Lowe:

“I consider, therefore, that Lowe is primarily responsible for the collision, which he frankly admitted.”

“I have no doubt that his misapprehension as to the fog men on duty after 7.00am was genuine. It probably arose from the somewhat similar names of Patten and Pantling ... also from the general uncertainty in his mind as to how the fog men reported in all the different circumstances.”

“I doubt that his reference to a man passing his box, and calling out, had any foundation in fact; but he was not otherwise untruthful, and may indeed have persuaded himself that this occurrence took place.”

"His careless omission to make use of...(the signal register) ... is all the more surprising in a signalman of his 30 years' experience and proved capabilities. He is 51 years of age and with an excellent record."

Of Acton (the signal clerk):

"Acton is quite free from blame, and was carrying out his duties with care and attention."

Of fog man Parrington:

"...appeared to be a straight-forward, if slow thinking, type of man...and I have no reason to think that he was not attending conscientiously to his simple duties. I consider that his account is more likely to represent the true facts than that of Mountfield..."

Having summed up the accident and the men's responses and responsibilities, Major Wilson's report then contains a section headed 'REMARKS'. Here he deals with technical matters of the rules, practices and technological innovations that could help prevent a future accident, a very important part of the job of the inquiry.

On rules and practices he says:

"...this accident would not have occurred but for the rare coincidence of the failure of two men in different positions acting independently of each other."

"... of the 12 men required to provide two reliefs for all the fog posts, there are only 9 available. This deficiency arises from the general shortage of staff in the Eccles district...only 75% of the basic strength of 52 which is maintained in normal times...and in the present circumstances must be accepted."

"It was unfortunate that, despite earlier local instructions, Patten stayed the full twelve hours on the preceding day and did not report again until 08.30...There may have been some looseness in the transmission of the instructions."

Then regarding technological improvements:

He suggests that the accident would have been prevented had there been an **automatic train control system** that gave an audible signal in the cab and a partial brake application if the signal was not at clear. However he recognises that its installation on all locomotives and provision of activators at all main line signals “would be a problem of considerable magnitude.” And that it should be achieved by a rolling programme of installation. He also suggests that Mountfield could not have missed the distant signal if it had been **a colour light signal at eye level on the driver’s side** of the line.

He closes with:

“I understand that all the distant signals ...are to be changed to colour light type, and re-sited to allow for the best possible view, as and when they become due for renewal...but all reasonable steps should be taken to accelerate the programme...in the Manchester area which is notorious for winter fog.”

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G.R.S. WILSON.

Major.

RAIL GROWTH CONTINUES

There has been a six percent rise in rail passenger journeys over the past twelve months when 1,400,000,000 passenger journeys were made. 18 years of almost uninterrupted growth from a trough of about 700,000,000 journeys in 1994 could make critics of privatisation of the railways pause for thought.

The biggest growth was in the bargain fares sector: off peak tickets showed a 9% rise, advance bookings were up 16% and railcard discount tickets rose 11%. This is good news for the railway's operations and finances as it means the emptier trains are filling up. According to ATOC there is a shift from car to train travel because it costs 38 pence per mile by car whereas the average rail fare is 20 pence per mile.

In the period fares brought in £6.6 billion and government subsidy was £4.6 billion – a subsidy rate of about 40%. It is the government's aim to reduce this to about 25% over the next few years and make passenger pay more towards investment in the network. However some observers fear that aggressive annual price rises of inflation plus 3% as proposed by the government could kill off the growth that is occurring. One is inclined wonder if it would not be better to keep to the old price formula of RPI +1% and let these impressive growth rates gradually reduce the subsidy needed.

Why not join freccles? It is only £5 a year and this contribution helps us to improve the gardens and tubs at the station as well as to campaign for a better station and services.

To find out more about **FRECCLES** or to make contact see our **website:** www.freccles.org or e mail us at info@freccles.org.uk

