

ECCLES STATION

NEWS

AUGUST 2015

NEWS

On Thursday 16 Jul 2015 **Sir Peter Hendy CBE joined Network Rail as chairman**. He said: "Network Rail has a critical role in the railway industry and the whole British economy, by facilitating economic growth and enabling job creation." Mr Hendy will be based at Network Rail's head office at Euston. He will work four days a week on a salary of £500,000.



Prior to joining Network Rail, Sir Peter Hendy CBE had been Commissioner of Transport for London (TfL) since 2006, having previously served since 2001 as TfL's Managing Director of Surface Transport. Before that he was a Deputy Director UK Bus for FirstGroup and previously Managing Director of CentreWest London Buses. He started his transport career in 1975 as London Transport Graduate Trainee.

*On the 21st July Network Rail announced that **two bridges are to be rebuilt** as part of the electrification of the railway **between Manchester and Stalybridge**. This is despite the "pause" in such projects as a response to increasing costs and time delays. To electrify the line the bridges have to be rebuilt to increase*

the clearance underneath to accommodate overhead lines which will power trains. The two bridges are:

Granville Street:

- *A road closure at the bridge itself will be required from Monday 27 July 2015 until 23 December 2015.*
- *A temporary footbridge will be constructed in advance of the closure to maintain pedestrian access. This temporary bridge will also be used to carry the diverted utility pipes and cables from within the bridge.*
- *The main work to demolish and reconstruct the bridge will take place over two weekends when the railway will be closed: 12.30am on Saturday 12 September 2015 until 5.05am on Monday 14 September 2015 to demolish the bridge; 12.30am Saturday 19 September until 5.05am on Monday 21 September 2015 to build the new bridge.*

Mossley Road:

- *A road closure at the bridge itself will be required from Monday 27 July 2015 until Wednesday 23 December 2015.*
- *The main work to demolish and reconstruct the bridge will take place over the course of three weekends when the railway will be closed: 12.01am on 12 September until 6.10am on 14 September 2015 to demolish the bridge; 12.01am on 26 September until 6.10am on 28 September and 12.01am on 3 October until 6.10am on 5 October 2015 to rebuild the new bridge.*

The tunnel boring machine started to arrive at the Kearsley end of Farnworth Tunnels over the weekend (18/19 July) and was assembled over the following week. The machine, which will bore a new large diameter 270m railway tunnel at Farnworth, has been officially named 'Fillie'. Paris Bate (10), from St Gregory's school in Farnworth, won a competition to name the machine and suggested the name Fillie as there were once stables on the land which is now the compound for the project. Children from two local primary schools, St John's and St Gregory's, were asked to design a safety poster and suggest a name for the machine.

*Work also started on 17th July to upgrade the line between Clitheroe and Manchester. Network Rail will be installing **an additional track near Darwen Station** which will improve service frequency and reliability between Blackburn and Bolton. On this route, the work will enable two trains per hour throughout the day by 2017. These improvements are funded by the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.*

*As a result there will be no trains between Blackburn and Bolton from **Friday 17 July until Monday 24 August 2015**. A bus replacement service will operate between Blackburn and Bolton. Passengers from Manchester area can use the train service from Victoria via Burnley to reach Blackburn and Clitheroe.*



Association of Community Rail Partnerships

COMMUNITY STATIONS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Salary £26,539 pa for 37 hours/week

ACoRP is seeking an experienced person to take forward and develop the concept of community stations in England.

The purpose of the post is to develop the Community Stations Project, which is a way of finding new uses for redundant railway premises, linking the railway with the community, revitalising stations, adding value to the rail services and station facilities and enabling community groups to offer a wide range of social benefits to their communities. This an exciting and challenging opportunity for dynamic, confident and self-motivated applicants, used to dealing with people and organisations at all levels.

Reporting to the Operations Manager, you will ideally have some experience of working in the transport and voluntary sectors, together with planning and management of community buildings. Flexibility is important too as the position will involve travel and out of hours working.

This is a full-time position, initially for one year.

If you think you might be the person we are looking for please visit our website to download a job pack or contact us at the email below for further information and an application form.

Closing date for applications is **10 August 2015**
Interviews will be held on **25 August 2015** in Huddersfield.

www.acorp.uk.com

recruitment@acorp.uk.com

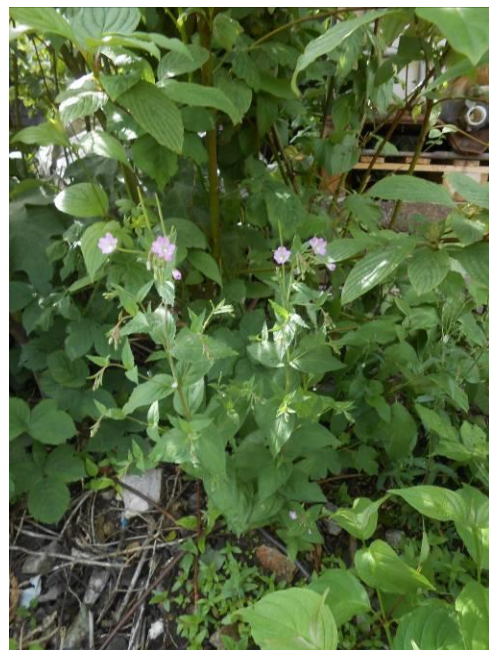
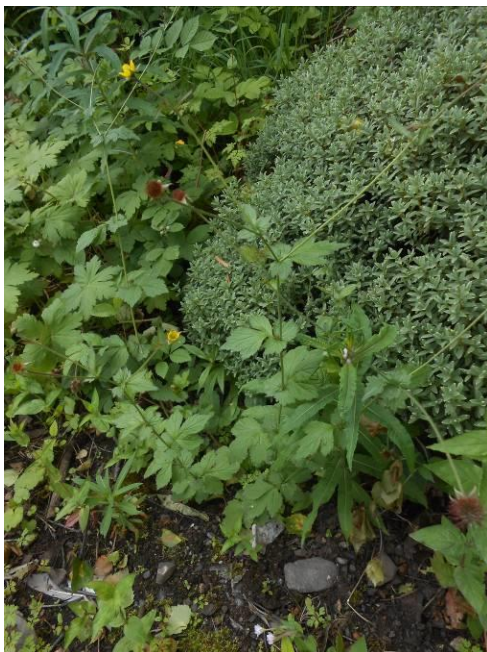
01484 548926

Part of the formal station garden.

Photo: JER



The Freccles gardening group now has a watering rota for the railway station and the first three weeks are allocated up to Saturday 15th August. During these weeks each duty person can decide for themselves when, what and how often they water according to weather conditions -rainfall, temperature etc. ESN is sure that extra volunteers would be welcome so if you are interested contact Freccles via the details given at the end of the newsletter.



Here are three pictures of recent interlopers on the Liverpool platform. If any reader can identify the plants please do e mail us.

Photos JER



On 8th July it was announced that the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT) had called off the strike that would have affected travellers on Northern Rail's trains. The threatened action was about the Role of the Guard and Driver Controlled Operation, and the indirect employment of ticket checking staff via an agency. 38% of the RMT's 1,892 Northern members who were balloted had voted for strike action.

Northern Rail took legal advice on the dispute and shared it with the RMT. This advice was that the Role of the Guard and Driver Controlled Operation, are a matter for the next Northern franchise which starts in April 2016. Therefore, the dispute was unlawful as these two items were not within the control of the current Northern management team.

The ballot also contained issues relating to employing staff (via a contract with STM) to reduce ticketless travel and collect more revenue. Northern says, "This contract provides an additional resource working on revenue collection: no-one has lost their job since STM started work with us. In fact we are creating more jobs. This week, for example, 12 people started work as on-board Revenue Protection Assistants in Manchester. They are employed on Northern terms and conditions."

ARTICLES

Transport for Eccles (IX).

Last month ESN looked at the platform provision at Eccles station, and concluded that they were more than adequate for current levels of traffic, but in need of a number of improvements to make this match a Metrolink stop. It will do no harm to iterate these here:

Lack of a level surface leads to significant puddles on the Manchester platform.

Lack of passenger help and emergency point.

Lack of real time train information screens.

Lack of tannoy announcements.

Lack of CCTV supervision of platforms.

Vegetation sprouting from brickwork.

Damp problem with poster cases on platform 2 (Liverpool platform) which ESN erroneously called platform one in the last article.

Need for tidying of currently untamed garden area on Liverpool platform so it presents a better appearance in winter.

Action to stop fly tipping onto the above area.

All of these are needed to match up to Metrolink provision but the second to fourth points are particularly important and these are supposed to be installed and operating by the time this newsletter is published.



At this point you may wish to look at the Network Rail reference: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/SME/html/NRE_ECC/plan.html?rtnloc=ECC . Here is a diagram of the station and its facilities. It is quite out of date but does contrast with the improved state we now have.

What has not improved is that the platforms are only accessible by long metal staircases with handrails, each with five flights of steps. This denies platform access not just to those in wheelchairs but to anyone who is not fully mobile. For example those on crutches or with breathing difficulties could find these staircases forbidding. A solution to this problem is long overdue but it is worthwhile looking at why it has not yet happened.



Firstly, railway stations were made exempt from access requirements under the disabilities discrimination acts when government panicked at the thought of the amount of money they would have to invest in the railway's roughly 2000 stations. Instead an annual fund was set up (roughly £100,000,000? pa) to provide slow progress towards complete access. This money is allocated to stations on passenger number basis, so Eccles is still a long way down the list! The cost of making the platforms fully accessible at Eccles is in the region of £1,000,000 or more. Why should it cost so much?

The provision of ramps would be difficult at Eccles. The drop is about 18ft and the maximum gradient for a disabled access ramp is 1 in 25. Hence a single ramp would be about 450 feet long. Adding some landings to break the descent would give a ramp the full length of the platforms. The ramp would

need to have three 150 ft slopes with two intermediate fold-back landings. This is fine for a station on an embankment or at the bottom of a wide cutting where the earth or rock slopes can accommodate it but at Eccles these ramps would occupy almost the full width of the platforms for nearly a third of the length and that would mean removing the stanchions for the overhead line equipment (only just installed!).

The narrow confines of the station and size of drop therefore dictate a lift for each platform as the answer. Each lift would require a lift tower in the order of 30 feet in height and a basement excavated into the platform. Staircase access must be maintained, so the staircases would need to be re-engineered in some way. Perhaps the lift towers could be located to the platform face side of each top landing with door access there. At platform level there would have to be another set of doors at right angles to debouch passengers onto the platform. A short barrier would be required along the platform edge near the lift doors. An alternative would be to build another bridge across the platforms for the lifts' towers with an access from the side entry running by Smith's Restaurant.

Up at street level the forecourt is greatly improved (recently). A new station booking office has been provided and the area planned and landscaped with the help of a grant from Eccles Community Committee (should this be acknowledged in some way?). A ramp provides access to the building from the motorway side. The planters are maintained by Smith's Restaurant and Freccles members near the railway station entrance and those near the footbridge by Incredible Edible (Salford). One part of the planter area provides an attractive outdoor seating area for Smith's Restaurant customers.



There is one each of disabled parking and staff parking. Three car parking spaces are for 20mins with no return within 40mins, and there is room to drop

off passengers and leave immediately in the centre. The secure bicycle shed also opened recently, and is part of a TfGM scheme.



The new station building is a portakabin really but has brick tiles on to blend with local architecture. It looks much better than functional! There is a small well lit and heated booking hall entered through an automatic door. Unfortunately there is no arrivals/departure screen in this hall. A leaflet/timetable rack is provided to the left of a good size accessible ticket window. The ticket clerk has computer access to train timetables, train running information, the full range of tickets, their availability, and also seat reservations. Passengers can pay by cash, cheque with card, or else credit/debit cards with pin. Behind the scenes are the staff comfort facilities required by EU work regulations. The whole building is protected by burglar alarms. The building is only manned until 13.30 on Monday to Saturday (inc). Outside these times passengers will be able to purchase tickets on the train or at Victoria station.

Overall there are still many improvements needed, but one must recognise that significant progress has been made so far by a combination of Network Rail, TfGM, the franchisee and volunteer activity, and the station improvements complement other environmental improvements around the town centre. The station and its appurtenances are rather an expensive investment to be underutilised.

'The Bolton Line'

Readers will be aware that significant engineering works are taking place on 'The Bolton Line' with the line completely closed at weekends. These works are in preparation for the installation of Overhead Line Equipment (OLE) and are continuing despite the 'pause' in electrification projects announced by the Department for Transport (DfT). ESN editorial team thought the topic would yield an article of interest to readers.

There used to be three lines from Manchester to Bolton. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway could run trains from the Victoria terminus platforms via Whitefield, Radcliffe and Darcy Lever. This line closed in 1970. The London & North Western Railway used to run trains from Manchester Exchange or Oxford Road to Eccles, Monton, Worsley, Walkden Low Level, Farnworth Plodder Lane (where there was an engine shed), and Bolton Great Moor Street. Through carriages from Bolton to London Euston were run on this route. It was known as The Plodder Lane Line and was closed in 1954, but the line, stations and signalling remained until the 1960s.

The term TBL now refers to the former Lancashire and Yorkshire Line from Manchester Victoria to Bolton Trinity Street station which was opened on 29th May 1838, and which survived the years of the axe. This line and on to Blackburn was one of the busiest routes for goods in the UK yet surprisingly remained double track. However passing loops were provided at Kearsley and Pepper Hill, a goods relief line crossed from Agecroft towards Brindle Heath, and traffic from Preston could be diverted on a 'Bolton Bypass' line between Adlington and Daisy Hill on the Wigan line to Manchester.

TBL leaves Manchester Victoria passing the new Greengate development area on the site of the former Exchange Station through Salford (now with the suffix Central) station adjacent to the recently excavated site of the New Bailey prison. It curves to the North West to pass under Oldfield Road. This bridge has been reconstructed to provide greater height for the OLE and was the subject of a photo snippet in a previous issue of ESN. The line then passes below the retaining wall of what was the canal wharf area of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal. There is an aggregate siding to the left. Just before Windsor Bridge there used to be sorting sidings on the left and a line plunged steeply down into a tunnel to Manchester Docks. The line then passes through the relatively recent Salford Crescent Station, where the line joins from Oxford Road and line to Wigan diverges. On the right is the Salford University Campus followed by

the red and cream brick 1914 Salford Electricity Works (municipal) on Frederick Road, and the now invisible site of Pendleton Station (not Pendleton Broad Street). Here immediately on the right is the first glimpse of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal filled with rubble and tree grown.

The railway passes the site of Agecroft Engine Shed, and Agecroft Colliery (now an industrial estate) on the left, towards Clifton Junction with the canal still at its side. A view of the Irwell Vale now opens up. On the right are the new Agecroft Jail and a view across to Prestwich area. On the left are waste tips and where the 'Black Harry' line used to emerge from Patricroft. This area was the site of Pendlebury Colliery. On the right an area of empty railway land is the site of a small L&Y power station (and its coal sidings) that generated electricity for the Victoria, Bury & Tottington third rail system.

The line from Patricroft used to pass under Clifton Junction station to join the line to Bury at Molyneaux Junction. Clifton is no longer a junction but the site of the other two platforms where the line diverged north across the Irwell Valley to Bury can be made out as a curve of trees. This was the site of the 'Battle of Clifton Junction' in 1849.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Lancashire_Railway_1844%E2%80%939359)

The line now clings to the west side of the Irwell Valley on Pepper Hill and will do so until Farnworth. The steep-ish valley side was the site of many small collieries (and evidence of mining can be seen on the farmland to the left just before Kearsley). Below is the Pilkington Tile Works which used to produce the decorative and now highly prized 'lustreware' pottery. The M60 ring road passes above the line.

As the train approaches Kearsley one can catch a glimpse on the right of the old clock tower and pack horse bridge in Ringley Village and ahead of that the spire of the church at Prestolee. This is an interesting little area to visit. When the leaves are off the trees it is possible to get a glimpse of Kearsley Mill to the left of this. The mill dates from 1906 and was the first to distribute power to the rooms by electricity generated on site. On the other side of the line just before the station are some new houses on a former coal exchange sidings with the colliery lines to Boothstown, Astley and Worsley. The line enters a cutting at Kearsley and then passes through the Farnworth Tunnels which are subject of the next article. The line emerges at Farnworth station which has changed names many times. There are some old footbridges that cross the line

at the back of Farnworth, and as the train passes the old grammar school playing field St John's Church can be glimpsed.

At Moses Gate there are two slow lines to Bolton. On the left there is a glimpse of Horrockses Mill and what was the goods yard for Bolton; then Beehive no1 and no2 mills. Bolton engine shed was a little further on. On the right were sorting sidings and now some new buildings by the line.



The train comes into Bolton under Orlando Street bridge which is being rebuilt to accommodate the OLE. Bolton Trinity Street was built by digging a great hole in the centre of the town leaving short truncated side streets above. The brickwork colour is typical of a Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway station and the station boasted much segregation in its waiting rooms: first class or second class for ladies or gentlemen! The upper floor on the left is still offices and training rooms for the railway.



Clammerclough.

A considerable amount of civil engineering work is needed on TBL to make it suitable for OLE. The largest project is the re-boring of one of the tunnels between Kearsley and Farnworth stations. It is possible to see some of this work by a train ride between Victoria and Bolton or by not unpleasant stroll from Kearsley to Moses Gate. This article describes that route. The local stations on TBL are closed during all this work so it is necessary to use the no 22 bus to Ringley Road, Kearsley.

Descend Ringley Road, go under the massive stone bridge and then turn immediately left. Follow a narrow path up through the vegetation towards the railway line. This little wooded path follows the edge of the railway tracks above the playing fields and park below. The path comes to a gate for crossing the line but the boarded crossing has gone and a new bridge (38A) has been built. This work is for safety reasons as the electric trains will be quieter and it is hoped to raise the line speed to 90mph.

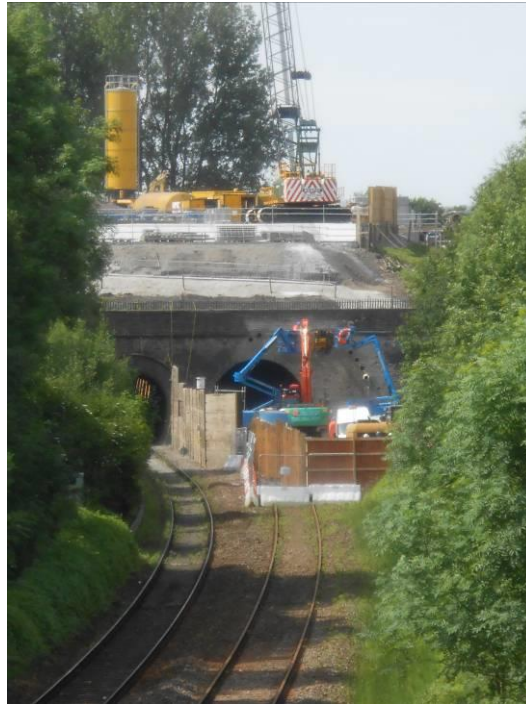




Looking down from the bridge one can see the points introduced to allow single line working while one of the two tunnels is re-bored.



Looking towards Farnworth the tunnel entrances and work compound can be seen. A rough road has been built across the land above the tunnel and the ring of drilled holes in the brickwork marks out the considerable circumference for the new tunnel. At the time of this picture the tunnel is being filled from above with 9000 tonnes of concrete foam for the boring machine (Lillie) to work against.



At publication date Lillie has been installed and has disappeared into the hillside. Spoil will be ejected from this end of the tunnel and driven over the top in lorries.

The path from the other side of the footbridge becomes a rough road uphill (the start of Church Road, Farnworth) away from the track. This area is Clammerclough where once there was a small colliery. Pass a lovely little row of cottages with remarkably high house numbers! A very large work compound has been constructed to the right on top of the Clammerclough Tunnels as they used to be called.



This entrance is for the staff only. All the heavy goods road traffic (spoil out, boring machine and fuel in, concrete tunnel rings in) gains access to the

tunnels from the Farnworth end via a slip road constructed for the purpose of the project. On the photo below a blue lorry is parked on the slip road.



Go right along Clammerclough Road or Gerrard Street to walk along Bridge Street parallel to Farnworth Railway station. Take a look from one of the footbridges over the railway. The station has disappeared and is being rebuilt with the platforms on a different alignment.



The next photograph shows why. The tracks will have to be slewed to the left (East) to go through the new tunnel, leaving the old smaller tunnel out of use.



Follow Darley Street up to Farnworth town centre and turn right along the main road to Moses Gate. You pass the town hall and library with Gladstone Park on the left. The railway passes under the junction of Bolton Road and Egerton Street (part of the Chorlton, Barton and Moses Gate turnpike road.)

As you can see on this photo land-slip is contributing to the problems at this bridge. The glass microscope slides have already broken.



Below the bridge you can see the instruction on the retaining wall. This seems to indicate that the track will be lowered at this point to create more clearance for the OLE.



Crossing the road to the other side of the bridge you come to where Moses Gate Station used to be- it has completely vanished! Both platforms have been removed. This would fit with lowering of the tracks under the bridge as the old platforms would be too high relative to the track height.



In other news.....

FRECCLES members recently attended a presentation about ***Digital Salford: Opening the City's photo album***. This is a Heritage Lottery Funded project that is asking for present and former Salford residents/visitors/workers to make their old photographs of Salford available to all. They are also asking what photos of Salford you would like them to digitise and the reasons why. Go to www.salford.photos for information and details of how to get involved.

The joint FRECCLES/FrOPS Heritage Group has started a world tour of Eccles for their **photo display to commemorate and celebrate James Nasmyth and Patricroft**.

This year sees the 75th anniversary of Nasmyth's Bridgewater Foundry works becoming the ROF (in 1940) and the 120th anniversary of the opening of the "new" Patricroft engine sheds.

Tour dates: (T-shirts not available ☹)

Saturday 1st August to Friday 11th September Eccles Gateway/Library

Saturday 12th September for one "night" only! Eccles Town Hall

FRECCLES will also be celebrating their 10th birthday at this event, do come along and join us if you can.

(This event is part of National Heritage Open Days Weekend. <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/directory/freccles-and-frops-celebrate-nasymths-works-and-patricroft-sheds>)

Saturday 17th October to Saturday 14th November Eccles Community Gallery

Eccles Station News welcomes feedback from readers. Please do not hesitate to send in your own views, photos or snippets of news to the e-mail address below.



FRECCLES

info@freccles.org.uk tel: 0161-789 5016

Visit our website: www.freccles.org.uk

