

# ECCLES STATION NEWS

DECEMBER 2014

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

**To all our readers**



*WITH BEST WISHES FROM FRECCLES.*

## NEWS

**Retail sales at Britain's biggest and busiest stations have grown** for the tenth quarter in a row, highlighting the changing habits of Britain's modern consumers. Like-for-like sales at Network Rail's 18 managed stations for July to September 2014 jumped by 6.23% compared to the same period in 2013, and in stark contrast to high street sales, which fell by 0.05% according to the British Retail Consortium. London Waterloo and **Liverpool Lime Street** were the two best performing Network Rail managed stations, recording 18.73% and 14.10% sales growth respectively, with Birmingham New Street third at 12.23%. Some other stations figures are Charring Cross (11.58%), Glasgow (10.76%), Edinburgh (5.43%) and Manchester (4.95%).

**Specialist food and gift brands are growing significantly** as part of the station retail mix, with like-for-like sales increases of 18.08% and 14.58%. **Pubs and Bars also grew by 11.94%** compared to this time last year.

*On 28<sup>th</sup> November, Transport Minister Baroness Kramer confirmed the allocation of **£16 million of government funding to electrify the Windermere branch line**. The 10 mile line, which runs between Oxenholme Lake District station on the West Coast Main Line and Windermere station in the National Park, will be upgraded to allow electric trains to run on the route. Once completed, the line will form part of a direct electrified route between key destinations in the region, including Kendal, Burneside and Staveley, **and Manchester**.*

On the previous day the government announced that the **East Coast Franchise would be let from March 2015 to Inter City Railways**, which is a consortium of Stagecoach and Virgin. See our article for fuller details.

*From December 2014 there is **increased seating capacity on Arriva Trains Wales services along the North Wales coast into Manchester**. ESN believes that the trains will be locomotive hauled stock which is now rare enough to prompt the following instructions for passengers from Arriva:*

*“The train that will be used to provide these extra seats is different to those that usually run along this route and does not have electrically operated push-button doors. Passengers are advised that when boarding or exiting a train with manually operated doors, please use the exterior door handle, once the train is stationary at the station platform and the Conductor has unlocked the doors. On exit, this will involve pulling down the door window to gain access to the exterior door handle. If you are last to board / exit the train, please close the door behind you. **Please ask the Conductor for assistance where required.**”*

**The forecourt area at Eccles Station is now completed.** Eccles has an attractive, fitting top end to Church Street. There is an area for Smiths Restaurant to put out tables (weather permitting). Photos JERayner.



**A regular reader has written in:**

*Dear Editor,*

*I hate to sound like a trainspotter but the 9 class 185 you mention going to Chiltern Rail in FRECCLES are actually Class 170s; these are the 2 carriage units used by TPI on the Hull line: so says Wikipaedia under its Class 170 entry. They say that 9 170s were due to be transferred to Chiltern next year but they then go to say that according to GMPTE this had now been rescinded by DOT.*

*Yours sincerely*

*JS*

**Editor's reply:**

It is a pleasure to hear from one of our customers; even one who perhaps, clad in an anorak, stands for hours at the end of station platforms. We felt that this was worth looking into. A recent edition of Rail magazine confirms what our correspondent says: **it is the 170s that are to transfer to Chiltern, not the 185s.** (Or has Rail read "Wikipaedia" too?) However, according to the article the transfer is still to go ahead.

So we were wrong in part and also we stated that Angel trains were the providers of 185 units when in fact it is Eversholt that leases them to Trans Pennine Express. We apologise to readers for the misinformation which is obviously a fault on the part of a junior member of the reporting staff.

*Metrolink's new service between Cornbrook and Manchester Airport opened without hitch at the beginning of November. The journey takes just under 60 minutes. This might seem slow, but it is not intended to be a fast city to airport route, a job done by the railway - it is aimed at linking Wythenshawe area with the City centre and the airport employment area.*

*That said the total travel time from Eccles was under 90 minutes, changing at Cornbrook and this compares well with the time taken by rail because of the time needed to cross from Victoria to Piccadilly to change trains.*



A tram comes of the siding at Cornbrook ready to head to the airport on the opening day of regular services (left).

Below the tram platforms at the airport. Photos J E Rayner.



Piecemeal bits of work are taking place to **repair the crumbling brickwork and platform edges** at Eccles Station. A small work compound has been established under the steps to the Liverpool platform. This follows about 50 years of neglect and is part of the increased cost of running an improving railway rather than a decaying one. *Photos by JERayner.*



## Northern Rail Christmas and New Year Travel Summary 2014/2015



Christmas Eve	Normal midweek service with an early close
Christmas Day	No service
Boxing Day	No service
Saturday 27 December	Some early morning cancellations, then a normal Saturday service
Sunday 28 December	Normal Sunday service subject to engineering work
Monday 29 December	Normal midweek service subject to engineering work
Tuesday 30 December	Normal midweek service subject to engineering work
New Years Eve	Normal midweek service with an early close subject to engineering work.
New Years Day	Some early morning cancellations, then a normal service except that some lines in the north east will not run
Friday 2 January	Normal midweek service subject to engineering work

## LEISURE ON LINE.

A reminder of The Sensory War 1914 – 2014 at Manchester City Art Gallery until Sunday 22 February 2015. Admission is FREE, and with GMT and winter weather what about a Sunday afternoon visit when the trains run to Oxford Road station? The cafe does a decent (not cheap) lunch anyway.

See <http://www.manchestergalleries.org/whats-on/exhibitions/index.php-itemID=121.html>

It is worth considering a train ride to Liverpool Lime Street over the festive season for a chance to visit the various attractions there. For suggestions see:

<http://www.freccles.org.uk/pdf/Railway%20trips%2038.pdf>

<http://www.freccles.org.uk/pdf/Railway%20trips%2051.pdf>

<http://www.freccles.org.uk/pdf/Railway%20trips%2052.pdf>

<http://www.freccles.org.uk/pdf/Railway%20trips%2089.pdf>

## ARTICLES

### *East Coast Franchise.*

At the request of the Department of Transport, early in 2014 **Passengerfocus** carried out an online survey into what passengers wanted of an East Coast franchise. There were 667 responses and the data was used to provide useful information to help bidders better understand passengers using these services. What users most wanted included better value for money, more seats available, more frequent trains, better punctuality and to be kept properly informed when there are delays. If you wish to see the results then click the link below to download the data:

<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/publications/passengers-feedback-about-intercity-east-coast>

On 27<sup>th</sup> November, Patrick McLoughlin announced to the House of Commons that the award for the franchise was to go to Inter City Railways Limited, a joint venture between Stagecoach Transport Holdings Limited and Virgin

Holdings Limited. This new franchise will run for 8 years from 1 March 2015 to 31 March 2023 with a possible further extension of 1 year. ESN believes that financially the group is 90% Stagecoach and 10% Virgin and their involvement with other routes north from London may attract the interest of Competition Commission.



According to the press releases there will be benefits for passengers:

- 23 new services from London to key destinations, with 75 more station calls a day
- plans for new direct links to Huddersfield, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Dewsbury and Thornaby
- proposals for more trains to London from Bradford, Edinburgh, Harrogate, Leeds, Lincoln, Newcastle, Shipley, Stirling, and York
- 3,100 extra seats for the morning peak time by 2020
- across the entire train fleet there will be 12,200 additional seats – a 50% increase
- 65 state of the art Intercity Express trains brought into passenger service from 2018, totalling 500 new carriages
- journey times from London to Leeds reduced by 14 minutes, and from London to Edinburgh by 13 minutes
- a £140 million investment package to improve trains and stations.

It is worth taking a look at the [individual station benefits](#) on the interactive map.



Inter City Railways will pay the government around £3.3 billion to operate the franchise. Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin said, "We are putting passengers at the heart of the service. I believe Stagecoach and Virgin will not only deliver for customers but also for the British taxpayer."

Martin Griffiths, Chief Executive of Stagecoach Group stated that over the 8-year franchise, Inter City Railways will invest £140 million to bring extra benefits for passengers, including:

- complete refurbishment of the existing train fleet
- better wi-fi connections and onboard catering on the new Intercity Express train fleet
- improved ticket offices and 170 new ticket vending machines
- over 500 new car parking spaces
- 411 additional cycle spaces and new secure cycle facilities
- a customer and community improvement fund
- a training fund for new apprenticeships, internships and staff development.

From 2018, Inter City Railways will take delivery of the new Intercity Express trains, to be assembled at Hitachi's factory in Newton Aycliffe, County Durham. By 2020 all of the 65 modern high-speed electric trains will be in service and will replace 39 existing trains. Inter City Railways has also given a commitment to reduce all long-distance standard anytime fares by 10%. This could save passengers travelling from Edinburgh to London around £15 on those journeys. The operator will also develop its own website, smartphone and tablet apps that will make door-to-door travel easier for customers, including planning journeys and buying tickets.

In contrast to the optimism of the above material the Rail Maritime and Transport General Secretary, Mick Cash, seems to see nothing positive at all, expressing views in an intemperate press release:

"It is a national disgrace and an act of utter betrayal that the government has confirmed that it is bulldozing ahead with the re-privatisation of the East Coast Main Line despite all the figures showing that the current public sector operator is handing over a billion pounds back to the British people while delivering huge improvements in service and customer satisfaction. It is simply ludicrous to even contemplate re-privatisation when not only have there been

two previous private sector failures on the East Coast route but when the public-sector rescue operation has been such a stunning success. This is pure industrial vandalism by a rotten government hell bent on wrecking successful public services in the name of private greed.

"While domestic public ownership puts money back into the coffers that can be reinvested in our railways the private operators suck out colossal sums in subsidies and profits - that's what privatisation means. The decision to hand this profitable and successful public rail operation back to the vultures from Virgin/Stagecoach is based purely on hard-right political ideology and RMT is committed to continuing the fight to block this betrayal right up to polling day and beyond."

### ***Transport for Eccles (III).***

Our previous articles looked at infrastructure provision for roads and buses. This article goes on to examine the bus services provided around Eccles.

Buses are public transport reliant on mass patronage to be effective. They cannot be tailored precisely to the needs or desires of individuals as that would be too expensive. Therefore they are timetabled to balance between operating costs and public demand, which in turn requires compromises from the individual patrons to fit in with the set timetable, i.e. buses are less demand-responsive than personal transport. Local transport authorities take on the role of agents to procure some uneconomic services where there is still a modest want or need for such services. Democratic requirements vie with finances in making such judgements: community values vie with liberalism.

Eccles is not served directly by any express bus routes. These are often direct competitors to the railway and it is necessary to connect with them in Central Manchester or at Salford Crescent just as with using the train, so no more consideration will be given to these.

With timetabled public transport we face many complications in looking at the quality of provision: What day? What time? From what starting point? How much? How reliable? What backup is needed? How long? Direct or connecting

service? ESN's reporters are not after PhD's in Transport Studies and presumably the reader does not wish to wait three years for the next instalment, so there will be some element of 'back of a fag packet' reckoning in the what follows. 10.00 to 10.59 on weekday mornings will be the standard period examined because it is 'averageish' - not rush hour or Sunday or evenings.

During this hour Eccles is served by 11 routes:

Service	Frequency per hour per direction	Destinations
10	5	Brookhouse. Manchester.
22	2	Stockport. Bolton.
33	4	Worsley. Manchester.
67	4	Manchester. Irlam/Cadishead
68	2	Trafford Centre. Bolton.
100	4 (one to Warrington)	Trafford Centre. Manchester.
110	3	Trafford Centre. Manchester.
41	3	Eccles. Manchester. Sale????
61/62	2 (just one of each)	Eccles circular
66	1	Eccles. Clifton.
484	1	Prestwich.

Most of these are bi-directional. A few such as 41, 61, 62, 66 and 484 are daytime only, and do not run in Sundays. The 33 extends to Wigan in the evenings and on Sundays. There is a 63 evenings only.

There appears to be good provision along the A57 to Manchester (10, 33), along Eccles Old Road (67, 100, 41) and particularly good provision to Hope Hospital and the Trafford Centre (22, 68, 100, 110). In contrast there is no

longer a service to Flixton and Altrincham; little provision for bus travel to work in Trafford Park, and no buses to Tyldesley, Leigh or Atherton which used to be served by rail from Eccles Station. A significant local gap in services is that Winton and Monton lack buses that go along the Eccles Old Road to pass the two schools, Pendleton Shopping City, Salford Crescent station and Salford University.

Apart from these latter cases there is quite a good network of services provided. ESN would note that reliability is not always what passengers would want.

To find out more about **FRECCLES** or to make contact see our **website:** [www.freccles.org](http://www.freccles.org) or e mail us at [info@freccles.org.uk](mailto:info@freccles.org.uk)

