



ECCLES STATION



NEWS

DECEMBER 2015

The Editorial and Distribution teams of Eccles Station News send greetings and good wishes for the festive season to all our readers.

Our local history coverage is threatening to take over the Editor's life, and also be overtaken by events as ESN 'scoops' start to appear in the national press first! There is some Christmas reading in our book reviews. We continue our look at the Worsley area and find that local history becomes current news!

NEWS

Work is progressing on the construction of the new Ordsall Curve to the plan favoured by Network Rail (NR). This is following a decision in the high court by Mrs Justice Lang on October 14th to dismiss an application for judicial review of the decision making. The application was made by **Mark Whitby**, a former design consultant on the NR project and ex-President of the Institute of Civil Engineers (and supported by Historic England) on the basis that the line into the original Liverpool and Manchester terminus will be severed and original Stephenson bridge over the Irwell will be affected. The alternative option would have preserved these; given a better running configuration, and reduced journey times to Eccles from Victoria. However this would have been costlier and created two viaducts across an area of land that Salford City Council considers to be an important development site.

Of course, Eccles travellers will have ample opportunities to witness progress on the project!

A reminder to older readers that the **club55 tickets are still available**:

Arriva Trains Wales Club 55 offer of bargain fares. See

<http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/Club55/Buy/>

For First TransPennine Club 55 see <http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/train-destinations/attractions-offers/club-55/>

Mark Carne (one mathematical variable short of being Governor of the Bank of England) is the Chief Executive of Network Rail (NR). In a speech at the end of October he pointed out that most of the benefits of railway investment go to businesses, local authorities, and franchise operators rather than to NR. Therefore some of the investment funding should come from these groups as well as NR and HMG. He quoted the Oxford Parkway– Bicester – Marylebone services, which started on October 26th, as a good example of what can be done in this way. Chiltern Trains (a franchise with a very long term-20 years to go) have contributed £130 million to this project to cater for an estimated 250,000 return journeys per annum. This improvement also contributes to the re-establishment of the Oxford – Cambridge (Varsity) route where local authorities are prepared to put in tens of millions. So step forward contributors to improving the Liverpool to Hull and York route please!

See: <http://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/news/chiltern-railways-and-network-rail-open-groundbreaking-new-rail-line-connecting-oxford-and-london>

Local people of Peckham in London are hoping to establish a **linear park with footpath and cycleway** using an old coal siding along 900m of railway viaduct. The project which is still in its infancy would link Rye Lane with Queens Road, Peckham and plug a gap in an existing cycle route. See:

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/peckham-coal-line-ambitious-plans-for-londons-own-high-line-park-move-closer-with-funding-boost-a3098147.html>

*It looks as if construction is about to start on a **high speed vacuum tube railway** in California. The trains will run at the speed of sound in evacuated tubes and rather than being on wheels will be magnetically levitated to reduce friction. The train itself will contain a turbine compressor to take in air from the front and expel it at the rear. The concept is being called 'Hyperloop*

Transportation Technology’ and is being brought to fruition by a group of the same name.

For fuller details readers should refer to the following two references:

[*http://hyperlooptech.com/*](http://hyperlooptech.com/)

[*http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/quay-valley-solar-powered-self-sustaining-hyperloop-connected-city-future-1489641*](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/quay-valley-solar-powered-self-sustaining-hyperloop-connected-city-future-1489641)

*ESN takes the view that **such new technology might well be a great success**: it has to be tried to find out. However it will face the old transport problem of how well will it connect to current transport systems? It is reminiscent of ‘The Battle of the Gauges’*

Timetables change from Sunday 13th December so those travelling further afield should check their travel arrangements. Here is the link to the new timetable for Eccles station:

[*http://www.northernrail.org/travel/timetables/download/liverpool-manchester/15/1*](http://www.northernrail.org/travel/timetables/download/liverpool-manchester/15/1)

Christmas: Trains don’t run on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. They will stop running around 20.00 on Christmas Eve and start later than normal on 27 December.

New Year: Trains run on New Year’s Day but will stop running around 20.00 and start later than normal on 2 January.

*The new **Exchange Square** stop on the **Metrolink 2nd City Crossing** was due to have opened on Sunday 6th December subject to satisfactory results in commissioning tests. A junior ESN correspondent has seen the trams in action with the destination of ‘Shaw & Crompton’ from the stop. The correspondent also reports that the pedestrian crossings and footpath routes around the Balloon Street area have changed as a result of the new line and anyone exiting Manchester Victoria station from the doors towards the Co-op buildings should take care!*

OUT AND ABOUT...

So how did drinkers of real ale cope on a train trip to Chorley earlier this year?



A CAMRA Award winning pub and a large town centre one closed. Well that doesn't look too good, does it?

However it was well worth the visit with the first pub (The Leigh Arms) right opposite the railway station with a couple of good cask ales on at £1.50 a pint. However you have to cross the ring road so thoughtfully constructed between the railway station and the town!



Then a walk straight along this 'processional' street between the station and the church revealed one of the new breed of micro pubs. These are necessarily

intimate places given the use of formerly small shops where a reasonable rent and small investment allows a low capital entrepreneur to create a thriving little business. This Shepherds' Hall Ale House had a good range of excellent beers and ciders on sale and the apostrophe in the correct place.



It is a necessarily friendly place with one or two delightfully eccentric customers that on our visit included a retired fairground/circus cowboy!

A little further on and there is the attractively refurbished (and altogether more capital intensive) Crown. This offers a good range of beers and food.



On the right of the street is a small but flourishing market hall which includes The Bob Inn - an example of that recent new breed, the market stall pub! Space is definitely limited here but bags of enthusiasm ensure there is a good range of quality drinks on sale. Wrap up well if you plan to have more than one drink!



Continuing to where the main road crosses we went right to the impressive Town Hall (if you go left there is a Wetherspoon's house). The tall clock tower is essential to the manufacture of the local delicacy. From the top of it individual currants are dropped towards a small bowl of Chorley Cake mix placed at ground level.

On days with more clement weather it is well worth wandering past the town hall to the extensive park, lake and old house just beyond. (See past ESN coverage).

We went along the side of the Town Hall and found an architectural gem in the form of Chorley Police Station. For some reason Chorley is neither well known nor much visited in order to see this 'in your face' piece of Brutalism.



That sight brought on the need for a drink! Fortunately across the road from it is the Rose and Crown. This is definitely a Friday night after work type of pub but there was a good selection of beers, quirky decor and a fun atmosphere. We were privileged to observe two of Britain's endangered species in this environment: police staff and Town Hall workers coming in for post work drinks.



The Shepherds' Hall Inn was a mandatory call on the way back to the station. If you wish to visit Chorley there is a Blackpool train that leaves Victoria a few minutes after the train from Eccles arrives.

...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.

ARTICLES

Transport for Eccles (XII).

In the last issue we took a look at the red (L&M) route that provides the hourly weekday service to Eccles. Through running of these trains to the east would provide better connectivity for Eccles without any increase in frequency of service being necessary.

The lack of wires beyond Manchester Victoria prevents the red route electric trains from running beyond, therefore we take only a cursory look at the possibilities. If wires were to be in place then trains serving Eccles could run through (freeing scarce platform time at Victoria) providing direct services to many more stations. The benefit of direct trains is that the waiting time for a change of train is cut out and so usually the journey time is reduced.

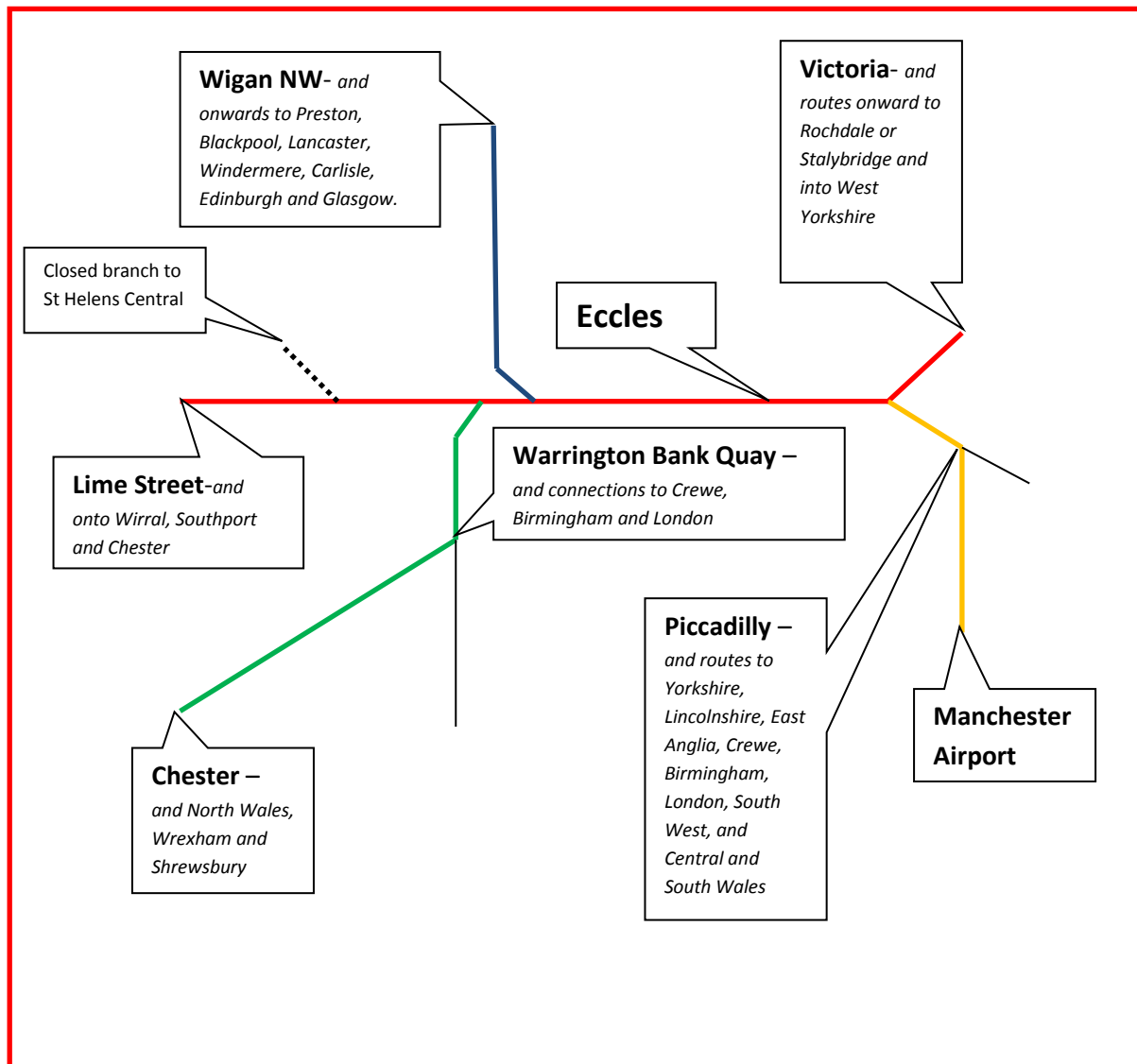
There are three possible routes the trains could take:

Rochdale, Burnley, Blackburn. This route is not due to be electrified in the near future so we shall not consider it further.

The Calder Valley. This would provide trains direct to stations including Rochdale, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Halifax, Bradford and Leeds. These stops provide good leisure, cultural, commercial and employment opportunities. This line could be electrified sometime between 10 and 20 years hence, but ESN notes that under the late 1980s BR the diesel trains through Eccles continued along this route (Hebden Bridge in 45 minutes!) and this seemed to attract good custom to Eccles station.

The Huddersfield Route. The stations on this route are Ashton under Lyne, Slatybridge, Mossley, Greenfield, Marsden, Slaithwaite and Huddersfield with trains possibly continuing to Dewsbury and Leeds. There are employment,

commercial, leisure and cultural opportunities here and the route is almost certain to be electrified within 10 years.



The trains on Sunday use the yellow route to Manchester Airport which station provides good employment links and international travel links. These could be of benefit to Eccles without an increase in service frequency if the trains were diverted to this route on a Monday to Saturday as well, because this route is already wired.

Even better for Eccles would be if an additional hourly service using the yellow route were added to the hourly service on the red route during daytime and rush hour on Monday to Saturday. The arguments for extra services at Eccles

are not part of the remit of this article so 'better' comes from intuition and the desires expressed by at least a few people locally for now!

If an extra train per hour were to call at Eccles then it could be one using the Green or Blue routes on the diagram so let us examine these.

The Green Route:

This could be called 'The Chester Route' and is currently served by hourly diesel services by Arriva Trains Wales to and from Manchester Piccadilly. They all run at least as far as Chester most running on to stations to Llandudno. If these were to called at Eccles then service frequency at Eccles would be two trains per hour to and from Manchester and the following stations would be added to the direct service list for Eccles: Warrington Bank Quay, Runcorn East, Frodsham, Helsby, and Chester, but also Shotton, Fflint, Prestatyn, Rhyl, Abergele, Colwyn Bay, Llandudno Junction, Deganwy and Llandudno. It would bring Warrington and Chester within commuting distance. Plenty potential there, then and it is noteworthy that for many years under BR the Eccles service was provided by Chester trains.

| Station | Journey time (app) mins | Characteristics |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Warrington Bank Quay | 25 | Large town. Residential, shopping, commercial, industrial, some leisure and cultural options. Employment potential |
| Runcorn East | 33 | Residential, leisure. |
| Frodsham | 37 | Attractive village, residential, leisure with pubs and walks in the area. |
| Helsby | 41 | Residential, leisure in attractive countryside. Change for trains to Stanlow, Ellesmere Port |
| Chester | 53 | Medium size historic city. Residential, shopping, commercial, industrial, employment, with abundant cultural and leisure activities. |

An intriguing possibility under the northern franchise to come is an hourly Chester to Calder Valley stations service which if it called at Eccles would greatly boost the direct service list!

The Blue Route:

This is currently served by TransPennine Express trains between Manchester Airport and Scotland so it is entirely under the wires serving Wigan North Western, Preston, Lancaster, Oxenholme (The Lake District), Penrith, Carlisle, and Edinburgh/Glasgow. Windermere is currently served by diesel trains via this route too. It is likely that Preston to Blackpool and Oxenholme to

Windermere will be electrified within ten years. If one of these trains were to stop at Eccles then it would double the service frequency at Eccles and add a number of stations to the direct service list for Eccles. Whichever train it would add these three stations:

| Station | Journey time (app) mins | Characteristics |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Wigan North Western | 20 | Large town. Commercial, industrial, employment, shopping, cultural and leisure activities. |
| Preston | 35 | Medium sized city. Commercial, administrative, industrial, shopping, cultural and leisure activities. |
| Lancaster | 65 | Small city, residential, shopping, cultural and leisure activities, university. |

So Wigan and Preston within commuting time and a very reasonable time for a leisure visit to Lancaster too.

Whether Eccles gets a second train per hour during the day, and whether it is on the Green Route or the Blue Route is going to depend very much on public, political and financial pressure being brought to bear on the new franchisee. Transport for Greater Manchester is known to be examining the Blue Route as a possibility.

If it is to happen then it requires determination and effort from:

- Transport for Greater Manchester
- Salford City Council
- Eccles councillors & MPs
- Friends of Eccles Station
- The people and businesses of Eccles.

Which category are you in and what are you going to do to help?

Some Local History.

The editor is grateful to readers Liz and Gordon who wrote in about the track layout at Sanderson Siding, pointing out that the Bridgewater Colliery Railway crossed over the LNWR line on a bridge and yet was still low enough to go under a bridge carrying Green leach Lane.

This local history project is growing out of control as more questions occur and accuracy of memory is doubted. Some very rewarding time has been spent at the Local History Library at Peel Park, and the results will be shared with readers in coming issues. For now though let us carry on where we left off. Why should Worsley have had a foundry in the middle, and yet be such an attractive spot?



The answer to its attractiveness is that it was the estate village for the Duke of Bridgewater's large land holdings in the area. Until the 18th century their local residence was Worsley Hall, now called Worsley Old Hall, situated between the Walkden Road and Leigh Road. Such a wealthy and influential personage would not want an industrial slum just outside his front gate. For images of the Duke see:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=duke+of+bridgewater&qpv=duke+of+bridgewater&qpv=duke+of+bridgewater&FORM=IGRE>



If you wish to visit the Old Hall it is situated between the Walkden and Boothstown Roads and has been nicely renovated as an upmarket Brunning & Price pub serving excellent beers and food. The entrance is marked on the left as you go towards Walkden. Nearby are the estate farm buildings.

For details see <http://www.brunningandprice.co.uk/worsleyoldhall/>

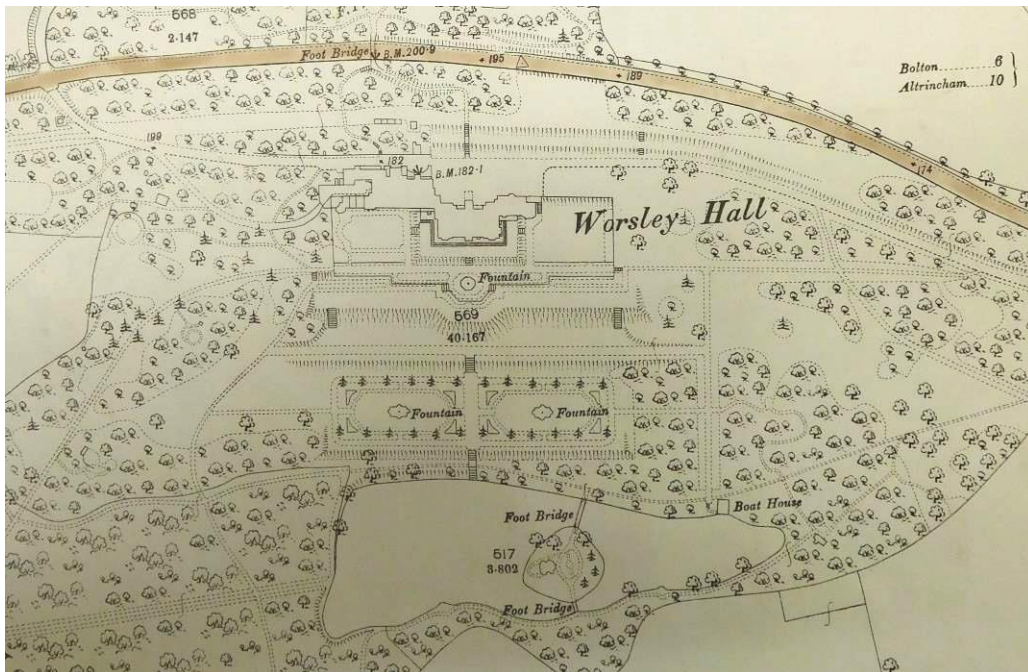
Francis Egerton was the third Duke of Bridgewater, and following an unsuccessful engagement he retreated to Worsley to live in a mid 18th century mansion, remained single and his ventures in this area meant that he became wealthier still. He built a large house in London and acquired a large and valuable art collection and became the wealthiest nobleman in Britain. He died in 1803 without children which extinguished the Dukedom but his considerable wealth and business interests were put into a long lived trust of some complexity. This trust had many beneficiaries but mainly benefitted his nephew the second Marquess of Stafford (later Duke of Sutherland) then eldest son of the Marquess who became the first Earl of Ellesmere (as per Shropshire). For details see:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Egerton,_3rd_Duke_of_Bridgewater



In the nineteenth century this prodigious wealth allowed a new, large and rather grandiose hall to be constructed between 1840 and 1845. The hall was in 'Elizabethan' Gothic style by the eminent country house architect Edward Blore. The 18th century hall was demolished to move Leigh Road northwards. The down slope of the hill provided terraced gardens and wide open views to the South and South West. A low foot bridge over the Boothstown road linked these grounds to the Old Hall grounds and meant that only single deck buses plied this road until the 1960s. These grounds had a large gateway and tower next to what is now The John Gilbert. There were some long gated driveways with stone and slate lodges (one even as far away as Monton Green). This is

the period of the Earl of Ellesmere's barge and Royal Visits (1851, 1857, and 1909) to Worsley.



This hall served as a military hospital during the First World War. The same paternalistic tradition and self interest meant that Worsley and Monton Green had to be kept attractive in keeping with such a premier residence. However things changed when the fourth Earl sold off the family's local interests in the area in the 1920s: death duties and running costs made this place expensive even for so wealthy family, and there was a decline in the coal market.

The hall was abandoned and the gardens went to ruin. The hall was demolished in 1946 and the site left to go wild until a recent archaeological dig to examine the foundations. The area was requisitioned by the government to build a concrete bunker with blast resistant entrance and radio towers. This was constructed in 1951 as part of anti-aircraft defense measures.



For a good selection of images (some stray ones though!) of the hall, gardens and dig browse at:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=worsley+hall+salford&view=detailv2&qpvw=worsley+hall+salford&id=A1AFFB9B02613CCE7A777B4291E8F799E8889E77&selectedIndex=0&ccid=NVvuG84q&simid=608032168651262061&thid=OIP.M355bee1bce2aff63e4d06de7a8708401o0&ajaxhist=0>

Some of these pictures show just how impressive the house and gardens were; far beyond what ESN had previously imagined filled that space!

We may seem to have strayed far from industrial and railway topics: but these were what allowed such palatial indulgence to be developed, and as it turns out the site will not remain an abstract bit of local history because it was recently announced (28th November) that The Royal Horticultural Society has taken a lease of the grounds from Peel Holdings. The Society intends to create 'RHS Garden Bridgewater' on the 156 acre site. Horticultural highlights will include the restoration of the 10-acre walled kitchen garden, one of the largest in the UK; developing historic features such as the tree-lined avenue and reinterpreting of the famous Nesfield Terraces, which sit between the lake and the site of the demolished Worsley New Hall. For fuller details see:

<http://press.rhs.org.uk/RHS-Gardens/RHS-Appoints-Two-New-Designers-To-Take-Forward-RHS.aspx>



For a good account of architecture, gardens and story of the hall see:

<http://www.salford.ac.uk/library/archives-and-special-collections/worsley/history>

Image of the Earl of Ellesmere's Barge and the newly constructed bridge :

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=canal+monton&view=detailv2&id=1312ACA201D5767166>

[70A6E102C7C0B6C2AD5FDE&selectedIndex=57&ccid=zIBQy7F1&simid=608011131897185150&thid=OIP.Mce5050cbb175091b8c818cc69df85913o0&ajaxhist=0](https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=canal+monton&view=detailv2&id=7E55368F39DF34CDAE15C4C44F6E7E582F8CCE41&selectedindex=47&ccid=hSsn0Inf&simid=608038173005317643&thid=OIP.Mce5050cbb175091b8c818cc69df85913o0&ajaxhist=0)

The gate house at Monton Green:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=canal+monton&view=detailv2&id=7E55368F39DF34CDAE15C4C44F6E7E582F8CCE41&selectedindex=47&ccid=hSsn0Inf&simid=608038173005317643&thid=OIP.M852b27d259df0374fa198c54b7fd4307o0&mode=overlay&first=1>

Next time we shall look at Worsley's industrial character – and it really was industrial too!

EDITORIAL

NOT BY BREAD ALONE.

Somewhere between the political doctrines of the arid right and the puritanical left lie the fertile fields of real human life, the fullness of which is enhanced by arts, crafts, society and the spiritual as much as it is by economics or class. Eccles Station News therefore does not hesitate to welcome the news that **The Royal Horticultural Society** intends to create a fifth garden of the quality of Wisley or Harlow Carr here on our very own doorsteps. Here are the words used by the RHS itself: "As a result of collaboration between the [RHS](#), [Peel Land and Property](#) and [Salford City Council](#), the ambitious landscape and horticultural aspirations for RHS Garden Bridgewater will create a major new destination garden which **aims to welcome and inspire one million people a year** within a decade"

Such a garden is in ESN's opinion unconditionally good news for this area. The project will bring great economic, aesthetic and cultural uplift to the area: the potential spiritual impact of a great garden should be beneficial to health. Such factors are entirely appropriate to aim for as an economy makes its natural progress (as noted by Adam Smith) from necessity through convenience to luxury. The RHS, Peel Land and Property and Salford City Council are to be commended for their vision.

FRECCLES itself will not be unduly worried about a little local competition to our own gardening efforts, and also has been given a challenge: that of ensuring that such a major attraction is fully served by integrated public transport including and *especially* on Sundays.

BOOK REVIEW:

'DANGEROUS DAYS on the VICTORIAN RAILWAYS.'

By Terry Deary ISBN 9780297870586

Orion Books £9.99 Available at Eccles Library.

Terry Deary is the Awful Author of those Outrageous Oeuvres in the 'Horrible Histories' series and for combining some serious points with a good chuckle (or a groan) his dark humour is hard to beat. This history takes well known events and reminds the reader that the myths of our history do not always match the reality, and that current high safety standards are a result of a perilous past (sorry.) Dealing with lesser known disasters the book makes the valid point that 'The victims of the Victorian railways had names, lives and families, and they deserve to be remembered.'

This little hardback is a Christmas cracker!

The book is available at Eccles Library.

BOOK REVIEW:

**'MANCHESTER BOLTON & BURY CANAL
through time.'**

By Paul Hindle ISBN 9781445617992

Amberley Publishing £14.99 Available at Eccles Library.

A delightful pictorial excursion along this historic canal with a thorough collection of pictures of how it used to be and as it is now. To explore this canal in a series of short walks is well worth doing, if only to see the Meccano Bridge. The book could be a preparation for this or a companion on the journey.

The book is available at Eccles Library.

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.



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