

ECCLES STATION

NEWS

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2014

A belated welcome to 2014! This year's first issue has been delayed by storm damage to the production department's internet and telephone links limiting news gathering ability and making distribution difficult. So it is now a January and February issue! Ed.

NEWS

Work is underway to provide **step-free access for passengers** to platforms 2 to 5 at **Manchester Oxford Road**. An old parcels subway will be refurbished and two passenger lifts with a 16 person capacity will be installed in the old lift towers. In addition a new emergency exit from the platforms will be provided.



The work is costing £1,800,000. This is without bringing step-free access to the 'Cinderella' platform 1. This short platform has no lift shaft and is therefore

only used by a few trains, problems that surely will need to be addressed as a part of the Northern Hub work.

*During the later months of 2013 there were **two extensions to the operations of Metrolink trams** in the Greater Manchester area. The light railway line was finally opened between Droylsden and **Ashton under Lyne and is served by Bury – Piccadilly – Ashton trams**. If you want to try it, catch a tram from Eccles to Piccadilly and change to an Ashton tram there. ESN suggests that you take a packed lunch for this journey – the train is much, much quicker during the day!*

*The extension to **East Didsbury** from **Chorlton/St Werburg’s Road** also opened. No expense seems to have been spared in converting this former Midland Railway main line from Manchester Central.*



The terminus at East Didsbury, with the adjacent car park and bicycle sheds. Photos J E Rayner.

*Along the line there are examples of **substantial civil engineering works**, sturdily built stations, good planting and rustic fencing. Unfortunately these have already provided canvas for the local graffiti artists.*

If you wish to make this journey then either catch a tram from Eccles to Cornbrook Interchange and there swap to an East Didsbury tram, or catch the train to Victoria and catch the East Didsbury tram there.

For the new timetable on the Eccles line see

<http://www.northernrail.org/pdfs/timetables/20131208/15.pdf> .

For other stations on the Northern Rail network go to

<http://www.northernrail.org/travel/timetables/295000> and enter the name of the station, then follow instructions.

***First TransPennine Express** trains are now running via Eccles, **but not stopping**, using the new 350 class electric units. The services are from Manchester Airport to either Glasgow or Edinburgh. They come via Piccadilly and Oxford Road to cross Barton Moss, then turn right at Parkside Junctions (just before Newton le Willows) to make **Wigan North Western** the next stop. On these trains then a Manchester to Wigan ticket takes you through parts of Cheshire and Merseyside! This is a journey of only 45 minutes so apparently lots of Wigan travellers are swapping to these trains providing a little relief on the overcrowded trains via Bolton.*

Arriva Trains Wales' (ATW) Club 55 is still available for spring 2014. If you haven't travelled with this offer before, Arriva Club 55 is an off-peak travel offer for everyone aged 55 or over. From only £23 return*, you can travel anywhere on the Arriva Trains Wales network and other selected stations. You can purchase as many Arriva Club 55 tickets as you want, so why not go somewhere exciting today? Buy at any train station ticket office or at:

www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/Club55

ATW has also teamed up with a number of other train companies to help you travel even further afield when using our special low cost add-on fare. Find out about all the places you can visit on the network map:

www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/Club55/Map

Don't forget, the Arriva Club 55 ticket is a time limited offer and only available until **29th March 2014**.

*Tuesday 26th November saw the publication of the statutory notice for the **HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON – WEST MIDLANDS) BILL** in the national press. The notice was nine pages long in small type face. There is a concise summary of The Bill detailing the powers needed to provide, construct and maintain a railway including modification of the requirements of other statutes and the compulsory acquisition of land, and the arrangements for comment. **The Schedules which follow the summary are:***

Schedule 1 locations of required works, stopping up or diversion of current highways.

Schedule 2 the changes to footpaths, and bridleways.

Schedule 3 affected streets.

Schedule 4 common land, public parks and open spaces affected.

Schedule 5 canal towpaths affected.

Schedule 6 Officers with whom, and locations where, the details of The Bill will be lodged for public inspection.

OUT AND ABOUT...



To cheer you up here are some pictures of drier weather.

These were taken last September on a short circular walk from Buxton station via King Sterndale.

This route proved to be a candidate for a future Days Out from Eccles Station itinerary.

ESN invites readers to send in any shots or snippets resulting from being **Out and About by Train.**

...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.

ARTICLES

Network Rail - 'a government body'.

Network rail is to be reclassified as a government body in 2014 because of a decision by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The government plays a significant role in overseeing Network Rail, through the Office of the Rail Regulator, and if Network Rail were to run into financial difficulties the taxpayer would pick up the bill to keeping the trains running. Therefore the ONS says that Network Rail is best classed as a government body. That will bump up public sector net debt for 2012-13 by approximately £30bn, or 2% of GDP, when the change is implemented next year – and could fuel the debate about the size of the public subsidy for the railway network.

Transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin said [in a statement](#): "The government welcomes the ONS review and has always been committed to the transparent reporting of public liabilities." He added: "I am committed to ensuring that Network Rail maintains the operational flexibility to continue to deliver a safe, punctual rail network and increased capacity for our busy railways and that it is able to attract a high calibre of staff, while still providing value for money and being accountable to Parliament".

The announcement came as part of an ONS consultation on plans to implement pan-European standards on calculating taxation, public spending and debt, known as ESA10. As well as the national debt, public sector net borrowing – the amount the Treasury has to borrow each year to fund its day-to-day spending – is also likely to increase, by £2.5bn, as a result of the reclassification of Network Rail. Taken together with other changes demanded by the new European rules, the ONS said the overall impact of implementing ESA10 could be an increase in public borrowing of £37bn for 2012-13.

Network Rail's reclassification does not change its constitution or its membership: it will in theory remain at 'arm's length' from the government. However NR spending will probably receive more attention from MPs and ministers, with attempts to alter its spending policies. Politicians may press to get rid of the huge bonuses paid to NR directors (hoorah) or extend treasury influence bringing back stop/go investment (boo).

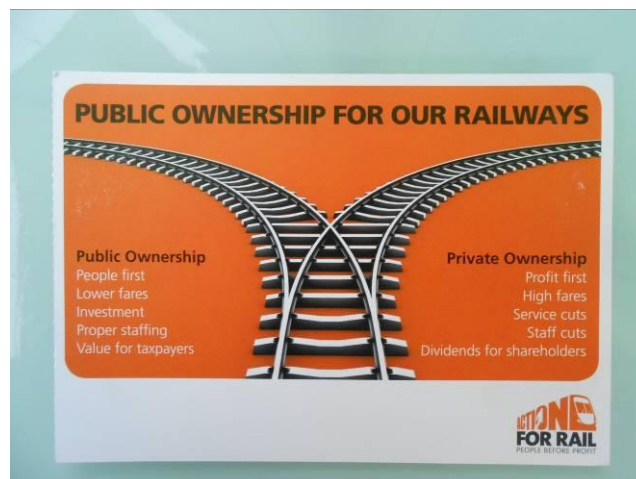
<http://actionforrail.org/>

One organisation that will almost certainly be delighted by the change in status of Network Rail is **ACTION FOR RAIL**. This is a combination of other organisations that seek to have the railways nationalised once again.



This illustrates the organisations that have combined to form the 'Action for Rail' group. It will be seen that these are mainly trades unions along with a few political campaign groups.

Action for Rail has produced attractive folded postcards with an outline of the campaign and a tear off postal half to lobby MPs for renationalisation. They have also set up a web site that can be accessed by 'control and click' on the title of this article. Readers are invited to take a look to from their own opinions on the campaign and its issues.



The campaign material seems to talk to the already converted, but 'Our Alternatives' on the website does look at some of the real issues of our railways. The news section (when ESN looked) showed a typical English bias towards London issues.

TRIP OF THE MONTH

This month we recommend **trip No 89** which is:

LIVERPOOL – ONE for SHOPPING.

Liverpool One has a huge number of shops. The finest of modern architecture, combined with good design of public space and the exclusion of road traffic makes this a tranquil and impressive experience. If you haven't shopped in the new Liverpool then you haven't shopped!

Catch a train from Eccles to Liverpool Lime Street. Alight at Liverpool Lime Street and leave the station to the left.

Cross Skelhorne Street towards The Crown Hotel, and then go right across Lime Street from there. Walk straight along Elliot Street and left round the J.D.Wetherspoon's pub onto Great Charlotte Street. *The former John Lewis Department store is opposite.*

Turn right on Ranelagh Street - *across the road is a small shopping centre above Liverpool Central Station.* Turn next right onto Cases Street (*with its fruit stalls and the impressive exterior of The Midland pub. On the right is The Globe – a lovely old pub selling cask marque real ales*).

Go through Clayton Square Shopping Centre on the level to come straight out at the opposite side. *Facing is the Saint John's centre –you'll come back past that later.* Turn left and go to the end of Parker Street. *Notice the pargeting on the corner building and The Lyceum Post Office further left.*

Turn right along Church Street. *This is a fine, wide shopping street – On the corner of Basnett Street is the very grand, stately Marks & Spencer building – formerly The Compton Hotel built in 1886.*

Opposite the M&S building turn left onto Church Alley to take a look at the Bluecoat Centre. *Built in 1717, this is Liverpool's oldest building and very*

attractive too. The name comes from the blue robe worn by boys attending such a school. Look at the keystones over the ground floor windows (cherubs or pupils?). It is now an art centre. There are galleries, a restaurant, cafe and a quiet courtyard garden. Open daily. Admission is free and includes guided tours 12.00-16.00. Tel: 0151 702 5324 Website: www.thebluecoat.org.uk

Return to Church Street and go left along it. *On the left is Keys Court, another shopping centre, with thirties exterior and imaginative new architecture inside-take a look.* At the cross roads turn left onto Paradise Street. *The Odeon Centre is on right but you'll be in it later on.*

Continue to walk past the new John Lewis store on your right. Turn right just beyond it. *In front of you are a new bus station and a multi story car park that looks good! Ahead is the Albert Dock. Walk beyond The Hilton on your right and go right onto The Strand. The striking shape of One Park West is based on a ship's prow. There is a glimpse of the grand buildings at pier head. The Strand was originally the waterfront.*

Turn right again, onto Canning Place. *It is attractively done with fountains, pink sandstone terraces and ponds-one of which is decorated with old piles (from a jetty!). Go just beyond these to see the first Liverpool dock (1709). It is under your feet. Excavated on a Time Team programme, it is down the hole just beyond steps.*

Ascend the steps and stone seating on the left to see Chavasse Park. *Francis Chavasse was the second Bishop of Liverpool. It is a small city park to take a break from shopping!*

[OPTION: To avoid the steps go past them and left along South John Street. There is a lift on the left - it is just before the narrow Wall Street goes right towards Paradise Street. Go up three floors to Chavasse Park.]

Go to the bridges to see upper and lower South John Street below you. *This is impressively creative architecture.*

Go down one floor to level four by the lift in the middle of the park. Go straight ahead as you come out of the lift *(but first you might want to take a look*

behind you at the impressive light well on the staircase). Turn left along Upper South John Street balcony and you come to Lord Street running across.

[OPTION: go left about 100yds to see Derby Square – *with its impressive Queen Victoria monument.* Look to the right along Castle Street to see the 17th century Town Hall – *it is open to the public in August. No admission charge for a very good visit.* Afterwards return to South John Street.]

Cross Lord Street and go onto North John Street. *On the left is Boodle House (1798) and on the right Central Buildings with the four Beatles statues. It's now the 'Hard Day's Night Hotel!* Turn right onto Mathew Street in the Cavern area. *The Cavern Club is a few yards along on the right. The Grapes on the left sells food and real ale.*

Bear right onto Rainford Gardens. *The tiled White Star sells cask marque real ales, and The Welkin, a J.D. Wetherspoon real ale and food pub, is at the end.*

At Button Street turn left, and then left along Whitechapel. Next, turn right onto Richmond Street. *Here are smaller shops. Then on Williamson Square there are fountains, the Liverpool Playhouse and the chocolate and cream 1897 Lee's building. The impressive St John's Tower is ahead. As you face Clayton Square shops turn left. The St John's Centre on your left has a lot of shops and a market, but it's hard to find the way out again!*

Go up the steps ahead (or slope to left of them). *The recent work has opened up Lime Street station to view and makes a pleasant space in front of it.* Cross Lime Street and enter Lime Street station for your train back to Eccles.

CATEGORY: MEDIUM EASY.

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Liverpool A-Z

Philip's Street Atlas Liverpool & Merseyside

BOOK REVIEW:

'STEAMING ACROSS BRITAIN – A journey through the golden era of steam railways'

by Julian Holland. ISBN 97807495707774. AA Publishing. £25.00. Available at Eccles Library.

Well who would have expected to see the Automobile Association publish a book of interest to railway reminiscers?

The AA has always been good at producing attractive books about motoring, days out, and the countryside: these talents are fully applied in the production of this particular book. It is divided into short sections, each about a stretch of British railway route, for which there is a map and brief history of the line accompanied by excellent photos by the author.

The ESN reviewer, being in the second flush of youth, shall we say, found this book to be a nostalgic delight. Recommended.

The book is available at Eccles Library.

EDITORIAL

OWNERSHIP and IMPROVEMENT.

One would expect that 20 years of almost uninterrupted growth in rail journeys (from a trough of about 700,000,000 journeys in 1994) and impressive progress on rail safety could make critics of privatisation of the railways pause for thought: but inconvenient facts are often conveniently ignored in what passes for public discourse in this country. The system of party politics needs division to justify itself and this in turn leads to point scoring debate rather than honest evaluation of the facts.

There are improvements that could be made to our railway system: there are distortions in behaviour that could be reduced, who could doubt this? However imperfections are inherent in every system. To change the system as Action for Rail

proposes would mean different imperfections to tackle, but imperfections there would be: the national experiment that was British Rail (ways) was hardly an unqualified success. The campaign material seems to duck the difficult problems that need answers and thus qualifies as propaganda rather than evaluation.

Is it not better to give detailed attention to remedy that which is flawed with our current system rather than keep going back to the drawing board? Here there is room for difference of opinion but ESN remains convinced that the fundamental debate needed is an economic one about the rationalisation of incentives rather than discussing change of ownership, with fingers crossed that all the problems will be solved thereby.

However one thing is certain - debate informed by doctrine rather than facts is not going to disappear anytime soon!

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

