

# ECCLES STATION NEWS

JULY 2013

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

**News section.**

**Articles.**

**Museum Review.**

**Book Review**

*Hello again to all you thousands of readers. The various staff at Eccles Station News have been out far and wide to find out what is going on in the railway world for your information and entertainment. We have the first part of an article about the Beeching Report and in place of our Trip of the Month Itinerary we have selected one new museum for your trip out. **Editor***

## NEWS

At the end of June, **Mick Whelan** of The Associated Society of Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen (**ASLEF**) welcomed the House of Commons Transport Select Committee's decision to hold an inquiry into the safety of 8,000 level crossings in Britain. He said: '**Level crossings represent the single most dangerous point in Britain's rail network;** this is where the risk of a train accident is at its greatest. Last year **six people died in accidents** at level crossings; three pedestrians and three in motor vehicles. Those figures exclude deaths due to trespass and suicide. 'No level crossing can ever be completely safe and that is why ASLEF has been campaigning to phase them out.'

**Network Rail has cleared the severe landslide at Hatfield, east of Doncaster.** Normal train services will soon resume to Goole, Hull, and Scunthorpe. The disruption to services was caused by the heavy rainfall of the last twelve months. This led to a twisting slide of colliery waste that moved the tracks. The problem faced by the civil engineers was that as material is cleared from the track bed more slides down to take its place.



*The twisted track at Hatfield Colliery, as a result of the landslide.*

*Photo Network Rail.*

A bid has been launched by the **Transport and Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) rail union** to halt a new double bonus scheme for top bosses at Network Rail which could see their total **earnings increase to over £11 million** by 2015. Union general secretary Manuel Cortes wrote to public members, who act as shareholders at the state funded firm, urging them to reject a new long term bonus scheme which could pay out **£5.8 million by 2015 for five executives** on top of their annual salary bill of £2 million a year. Chief Executive Sir David Higgins would be the biggest gainer from the new scheme, being paid over £2.5 million by 2015 if he met all performance targets. Mr Cortes called the new scheme "divisive and unfair" as it only applied to the top bosses. He called for them to be rejected by the members at their AGM on July 18 and replaced by a "fair shares" scheme which benefits all the staff.

*Work has begun on the **new station building and forecourt at Eccles Station.** The car park has been fenced off and contractor's facilities have appeared.*

*There will be no car parking at the station and **entrance to the platforms will be off the entry alongside Smith's Restaurant** while the work takes place. The booking office will be closed until 19<sup>th</sup> August.*



*A section of fence has already been removed to form the grand temporary access to the platforms.*

*Below the notice about temporary closure of the booking office. Photos J E Rayner.*

**Eccles station**  
**Ticket office closure**  
**From Monday 1 July until Monday 19 August 2013**

From Monday 1 July the ticket office at Eccles station will be closed. Services are not affected - trains will call at Eccles as normal.

You can buy tickets for travel on the same day from the conductors on the trains. However, we regret that it is not possible to offer the full range of tickets, including advance purchase tickets, Monthly season tickets, all Metro Cards and other Metro tickets.

Please buy these tickets and passes from other stations when this ticket office is closed.

[northernrail.org](http://northernrail.org)

Many tickets can be bought on the train but closure of a booking office means the loss of advance purchase, season tickets, Wayfarers and Metro tickets. Passengers should use the Travel Shop in Eccles or other stations.

***The next gardening and station cleaning day is on Sunday 6th July at 11.00.***

***Join the team for a pleasant couple of hours exercise.***

## **OUT AND ABOUT...**



It is a long train ride from Eccles! Goathland Station is on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. This fine preserved line meanders along a sparsely populated valley through the moors near to Whitby.

This lovely North Eastern Railway engine was hauling an old inspection saloon on the day of ESN's visit.







The goods shed at Goathland is cleverly converted to a cafe and shop. The door from the platform takes you through an old mineral wagon to the counter. The mineral wagons contain the tables and seating!

The temporary men's toilet is a converted box van!



Restored chaldron waggon on the coal staithes. The long levers on either side open the waggon bottom to drop coal into the yard below.



Of course in real life (as on television) Goathland is the village of Aidensfield in the series 'Heartbeat'. Here an elderly member of the Scripps family gets ready to dispense petrol.

*All photos courtesy of J E Rayner.*

**...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.**

## **ARTICLES**

### **STOP THESE JUGGERNAUTS.**

ASLEF is spearheading a campaign to stop 25m mega-trucks from blighting the UK roads. A change in European rules could let massive new mega-trucks which are up to 25 metres long (80 feet) into the UK. Some countries already allow mega-trucks on their roads but this change would mean that they become standard across much of Europe.



Photo: ASLEF.

The mega-trucks would increase competition for more environmentally-friendly freight-on-rail so this might seem to be a self serving campaign by the

union. However what are the hidden costs to the rest of the community if these rules are introduced?

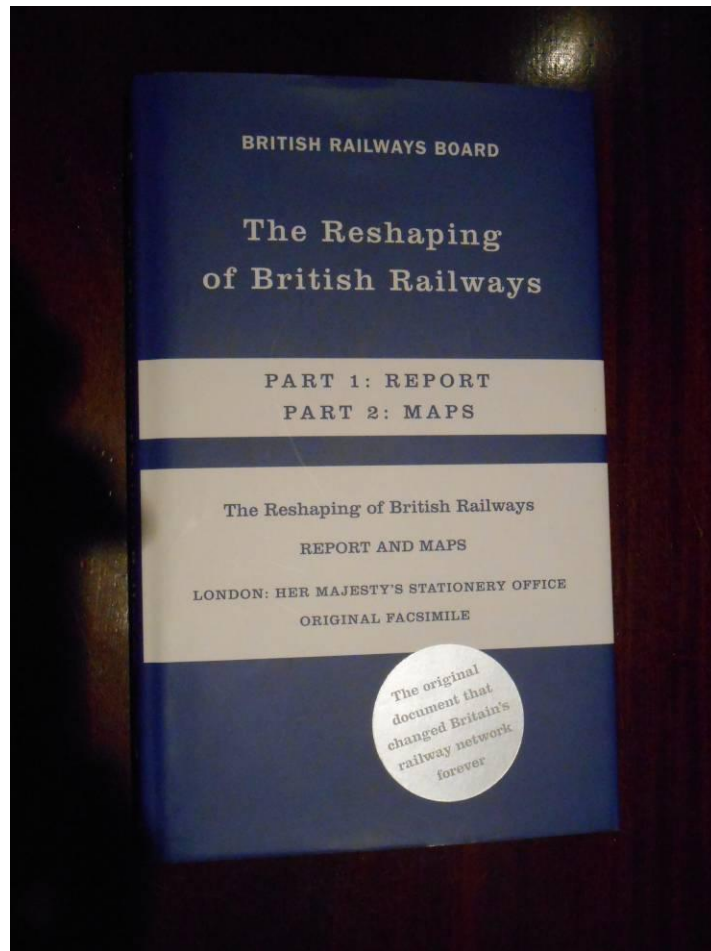
The European Commission, which is pushing for this change, admits they are dangerous, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. The trucks also damage roads and there are the problems of vibration and increased damage to lights, fences and buildings at corners. The UK government has already buckled under pressure from the road haulage industry and allowed trials of 7 feet longer HGVs, **so ASLEF says** 'We need to throw out the European Commission's proposal now before more pressure from industry pushes the government into accepting mega-trucks in to the UK.' The union asks: "[Please write to your MEP asking them to throw out this proposal.](#)"

The editor of **ESN** suggests that this is a campaign worthy of readers' attention. It is very much to do with quality of life in our towns, cities and countryside not to mention everyone's safety. You can visit the [Freight on Rail](#) campaign website for more information.

## **A Bash at Beeching (1).**

March 27, 2013 marked 50 years since the publication of the notorious "Beeching Report" whose actual title was "The Reshaping of British Railways". Famous for axing so many railway lines across the country, the report also initiated modernisation of rail freight and Inter-City services. ESN hopes that readers will forgive our editor for not marking the anniversary with any celebratory articles.

By the 1960s the railways were losing money each year. The operations were old fashioned with ageing equipment and buildings, as a result of general lack of investment and the wear and tear of two world wars. Looking back the amounts were hardly a matter of national emergency but murky politics and the attitudes of the time come into play.



A modern copy of the Beeching Report euphemistically entitled 'The Reshaping of British Railways'. They can be purchase from bookshops and Amazon. Photo J E Rayner.

The Transport Minister at the time was Ernest Marples, who had a large shareholding in a road building firm. When this was picked up by the press he made the holding over to his wife so as to claim there was no conflict of interest! There was a road and plane mentality developing in sections of the public too, and also an attitude of the Conservative Party that the railways should be profitable while the state built and maintained roads.

Dr Richard Beeching was just the public face of this bigger picture. He was a physicist by training and a senior manager at Imperial Chemical Industries. ICI, happily ESN has heard, seconded him to the government to produce a plan for



the railways. His salary was an early fat cat outrage! The resulting report was brief, unsentimental, to a degree unimaginative and politically naive.

In the report it is admitted that the radical surgery proposed would not totally eliminate the losses, which rather begs a question doesn't it? Although there is good thinking on the introduction of container trains and the provision of intercity services, little is mentioned of investment. Also there is an unspoken assumption that loss making services cannot be changed to profitable or cost neutral ones, and social value of services gets merely a token mention.

These limitations might have been politically convenient but not so the lists! There are two lists appended to the brief report: a long list of the services to be withdrawn, and an even longer list of stations to be closed. Their honest open inclusion is an act of political naivety that is hard to imagine from modern spin doctors. Whatever the complexities of language and obfuscation shown in the report, here was something easily understood by everyone. The result was a justifiable public uproar both in the press and demonstrations at major railway stations!

Partly as a result, and politics being the art of the possible, implementation of the plan was far from straightforward. The convoluted events are covered in the book that is the subject of this month's book review.

**Next month ESN looks at the local impact of the Beeching report.**

# *The National Football Museum.*

*By our sports correspondent, Mark Charnley*



The National Football Museum is situated next door to Manchester Victoria railway station in the former 'Urbis Museum' and so is very handy for the rail traveller from Eccles. The above picture shows the main entrance and once through here, the entrance to the galleries is via what else but a Turnstile. (There is also a more accessible entrance for people who require it.) Once inside the museum is fully accessible.

The ground floor includes the National Football Hall of Fame. The main exhibition galleries are on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors with the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor set aside for regularly changing special exhibitions and the 4<sup>th</sup> floor designated as a learning area.

Without spoiling it too much for potential visitors, the various displays cover: History of the game, Rules, Football League, history of various trophies from the FA Cup to the World Cup, Famous players, Memorabilia, TV and other media coverage.

The current exhibition on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is 'Strike A Pose: 50 Years of Football & Fashion' showing football associated style from the players to the terraces.

There are also various interactive areas to keep kids (of all ages) occupied.



The 1966 World Cup winning football and Geoff Hurst's shirt.

*Photos courtesy of Mark Charnley*

If you wish to get more involved there are some areas known as 'Football Plus' where a payment is required. This includes penalty taking and providing your own match commentary and starts from £2.50.

If you enjoy watching football, whether from the armchair, the bar or the terrace there will be something here for you.

The museum is free to enter, however donations are welcome. There is a small foyer inside the main entrance where you can buy a guide map for £1. As with most museums nowadays the exit is via the gift shop and café but there is no pressure to buy. As well as the ground floor café there is the 'Kaleido' Bar & Restaurant on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors providing views over the city.

Open: Monday – Saturday 10am-5pm; Sunday 11am-5pm

Closed: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, Easter Sunday.

Telephone number: 0161 605 8200

<http://www.nationalfootballmuseum.com/>

<http://www.kaleidorestaurant.co.uk/>

***ESN's editor must thank Mark for this article and also recommends the mugs of tea and big homemade sausage rolls (with black pudding bits!) available at reasonable prices in the ground floor cafe!!!!***

## BOOK REVIEW:

### **'HOLDING THE LINE: How Britain's Railways Were Saved.'**

by Richard Faulkner and Chris Austin.

ISBN 9780860936473

Ian Allen £19.99

This is an account of 50 years of struggle, with successes and its failures. For example, people in Leigh and Tyldesley might question the suggestion that the railways were 'saved'. The authors state there was no single conspiracy to destroy the railways and demonstrate that had there been such a conspiracy things could have been far worse.

The book provides powerful evidence that changing circumstances drove a vacillating policy. Comparatively few of the Beeching closure proposals had been implemented when a Labour Government, committed by its own manifesto to halt closures, was elected in 1964. Yet Tom Fraser, its Minister of Transport, proved quite intransigent in resisting efforts by his own party to stall the programme. By contrast the first Minister appointed by the notoriously anti-rail Conservative administration headed by Margaret Thatcher was Norman Fowler, who appears to have stonewalled in the face of serious pressure to instigate a new round of closures.

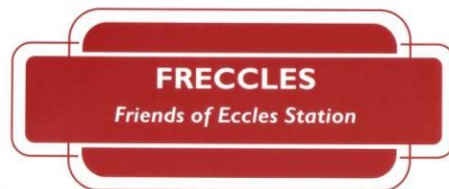
That opposition to the railways existed within the civil service comes as little surprise but the railways were also cursed by the enemy within such as a railway manager who rejected any constructive suggestion at a line closure enquiry and who seems to have been far from atypical. The militant opposition of the Transport & General Workers' Union completely stymied attempts by the Callaghan Government of 1977 from implementing its policy of transferring freight from road to rail.

How many of those enemies are still awaiting their chance? Those who would convert railways into roads have not gone away, and an underlying message of this book is the absence of a strong railway lobby.

Acknowledgement: this review is adapted from "Train On Line." The book is on order at Eccles Library.



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)



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