

# ECCLES STATION

# NEWS

JULY 2015

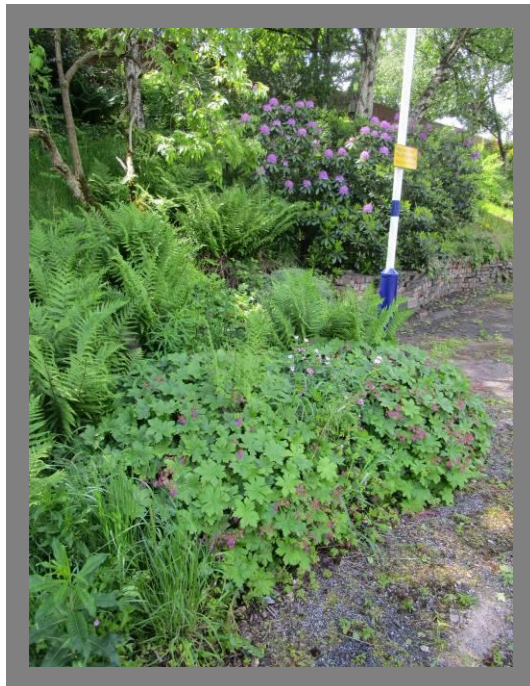
*A hearty welcome to all readers! Editor*

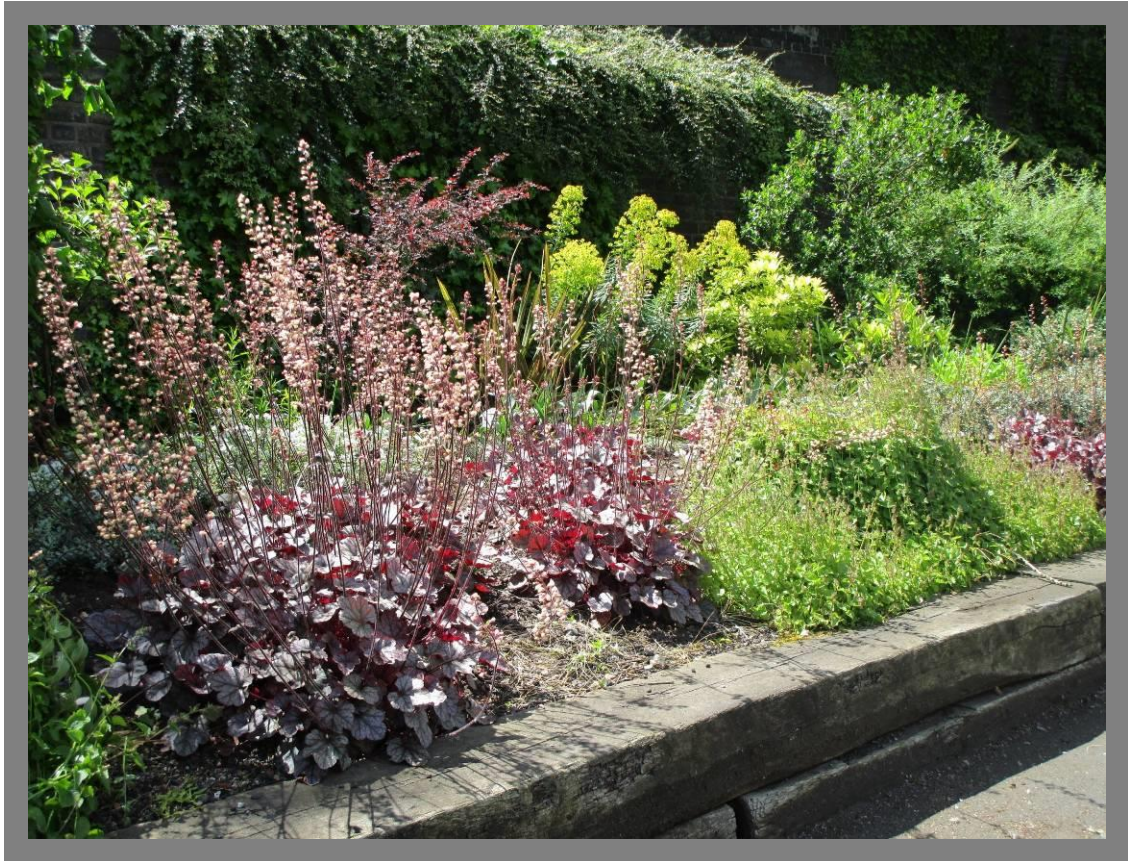
## NEWS

We must start the issue with **an apology respecting the spruced up class 319 trains**. We stated that “The low ceilings leave no room for luggage racks... but there are some generous luggage spaces between the backs of some of the seats.” This only applies to the area beneath the pantographs – the rest of the space has ample luggage racks for small to medium sized baggage.

*At **Freccles** we are rather proud of our garden area. It is not a gaudy composition: **much of the delight is in the detail**. This can be seen in these splendid photographs sent in by Freccles member and ESN junior reporter Mark Charnley.*







***The association of bicycles and railway stations is catching on in Britain only (a few decades later than in our continental neighbours). Eccles now has a secure bike shed but at many stations bicycles are now available for hire. This example is at Blackburn station:***



*The red bicycles are part of [www.bikeandgo.co.uk](http://www.bikeandgo.co.uk) details for which are given on the poster below:*



## It's easy to hire a Bike & Go!

- 1 Register**  
Go to [bikeandgo.co.uk](http://bikeandgo.co.uk) and register to become a member and get your Bike & Go Card.
- 2 Scan**  
Get your card scanned at the ticket office and collect your key.
- 3 Ride**  
Unlock your bike and go!
- 4 Return**  
Return your bike to the same station, lock it and hand in the key.

## Before you ride

Adjust the saddle by releasing and tightening the lever

Check brakes: first the rear, then the front

Handlebars should move freely

Spin the front wheel to check the front and rear **dynamo lights**



Use key to release **wheel lock and cable**. While riding, keep key in the lock and cable stowed securely. To lock, plug cable into wheel lock. Press lever and turn key simultaneously.

Ensure **pedals** move freely

**Tyres** should be properly inflated

If any part of your bike is damaged or not working, swap your key at the ticket office. Visit our website for more information on checking the bike or how its features work.

Register at [www.bikeandgo.co.uk](http://www.bikeandgo.co.uk)

*There is a £10 annual membership charge and the charge for a day's cycle hire is a reasonable £3.80. A post box is provided to return keys should the booking office be closed but if that is the case note that rental only ends when the booking office reopens.*



Work has been continuing at Eccles station to install electronic information equipment. Here you can see the ducting introduced on the retaining wall of the Liverpool platform. Note also the new pointing of the brickwork just below the platform edge. Photo:JER

**Network Rail comes in for quite a bit of criticism** in the latest Office of Rail and Road Regulation report (see <http://orr.gov.uk/news-and-media/press-releases/2015/orr-publishes-network-rail-performance-review-for-2014-15>) for lack of cost control and failure to achieve the regulator's targets, and there is room for serious concern on that score in the opinion of ESN. However to be fair much that is positive is achieved and so NR does have things to say in its own defence. Here is the list published on 11<sup>th</sup> June in response to the critical report:

**Over the past 12 months (2014/15) Network Rail has:**

- Made Europe's safest major railway even safer – a 4% improvement on 2013/14
- Accommodated 67.3m more passenger journeys, reaching a new record high of 1.65bn – a 4.2% increase (40% above CP5 forecasts) and over double the number of just 20 years ago
- Invested £3.4bn in growing and expanding the network, over 40% higher than the average for the past five years and double the rate of 2009/10 – the equivalent of building an Olympic Stadium every month
- Renewed £3bn of the base assets of the railway, 6% higher than the average for the past five years
- Delivered eight of the top ten project milestones on time
- Continued cutting the cost of running the railway, reducing total cost by 40% in the past decade and saving taxpayers and fare payers £5.2bn
- Run almost 20,000 more trains than last year – a new record level and more than a million more trains per year than in 2004/05
- Improved the reliability of our assets to record levels and 5% better than last year
- Removed some 7.6m lorry journeys from Britain's roads by increasing the strategic freight network
- Generated £9bn of wealth for the UK economy
- Trained and gave careers to over 300 apprentices and graduates
- Closed 120 level crossings, adding to the 804 closed over the last five years and reducing risk by 30%
- Strengthened key executive positions with the arrival of Phil Hufton from London Underground, Francis Paonessa from Bombardier and Graham Hopkins from Rolls Royce

Major works are continuing on the railway between Salford Crescent and Bolton as can be seen in these glimpses taken from a train on that route:



A succession of views, taken while passing through Farnworth Station in early June 2015, show a major transformation in progress.

Photos by J E Rayner.



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These are **platform alterations** of course, but these must be made if overhead live wires are to be installed. Puzzled as to why? Well, see next month's ESN Articles section for some of the answers.

*When the new timetable in May, the **0830 Patricroft to Manchester train was reinstated** after a gap of a year, following campaigning by Friends of Patricroft Station (FROPS). On the first day a group travelled from Patricroft to Eccles and then went for breakfast in the Café Vintage: the only disappointment was that it was not an electric train as all the others were! Here are two photos by Mark Charnley of the group setting off from Patricroft and arriving at Eccles on a rainy day.*



Good news from Freccles Members who undertook the annual passenger count this year. **Passenger numbers grew overall by 3.3%** despite the Government’s imposition of higher fares in the late afternoon last year. The figures and analysis below are provided by Freccles member Stephen Clapham who organises the survey:

#### ECCLES STATION PASSENGER COUNT ANALYSIS 2015

##### 1) Total Passenger Numbers Recorded (2014/2013 figures in brackets)

Manchester Bound	Alight	<b>110 (107) (147)</b>
	Board	<b>156 (144) (177)</b>
Liverpool Bound	Alight	<b>121 (129) (182)</b>
	Board	<b>101 (95) (118)</b>
	TOTAL	<b>488 (475) (624)</b>

##### 2) Analysis

- 488 represents a 2.7% increase on the figure for 2014.
- 3 less services were counted due to the failed train problem from 10pm onwards and last year these services recorded 3 passengers. Adding an equivalent number to the 2015 figure would produce an overall increase of 3.3%
- The main increase (12) was passengers travelling to Manchester. An increase of 6 passengers travelling to Liverpool was off-set by a fall of 8 alighting from Liverpool meaning that Liverpool traffic overall was static.

- There was a 13% decline in passengers in the morning rush hour (07.09-09.10 inc.) but a 6.6% increase in daytime (leisure) travel between 10am and 3pm approx, followed by a 7.2% increase in passengers in the evening rush-hour (16.09-18.29)
- However, all the changes were basically marginal and it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about trends.

## ARTICLES

### **Invitation to Tender (IV).**

The 'Invitation to Tender' documents issued by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 27<sup>th</sup> February set out minimum service requirements for each station on the routes covered by the franchise. The new Northern franchise will begin in April 2016. To view the tender documents please visit the DfT website: [published documents](#) . The tenders must be in by the end of June.

Of note is the remapping of responsibilities between the TransPennine Express and Northern franchises. The documents have the following to say on this:

*'... the (Northern) Franchisee shall from the Start Date take responsibility for:*

*(i) the operation of the passenger services between:*

*(A) Blackpool North and Manchester Airport;*

*(B) Barrow-in- Furness and Manchester Airport; and*

*(C) Windermere and Oxenholme and Windermere and Manchester Airport,*

*which in each case...were operated as part of the TransPennine Express Franchise.'*

On the Liverpool to Manchester services the specification says:

*'... the TransPennine Express Franchisee will cease to have responsibility for the provision of the passenger services operated between Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester via Warrington Central (the "**Warrington Central Route**") and the TransPennine Express Franchisee will be required to increase the frequency of*



*the passenger services operated between Liverpool and Manchester via Newton-le-Willows (the “Newton-le-Willows Route”).’*

Then of note to those living along the Liverpool and Manchester route:

*‘From the CS5 Remapping Date the Franchisee will increase the frequency of the Passenger Services operated on the Warrington Central Route and decrease the frequency of the Passenger Services operated on the Newton-le-Willows Route.’*

Doubtless Freccles’ **Service Development Group** will be giving some thought to what the implications of this could be. Freccles has prepared one submission on this matter and for readers’ information it is reproduced in full below:

### **Freccles Submission to Short-listed Bidders – Northern Franchise**

#### 1) Background

*Improvements to the service at Eccles Station have been recommended in successive Route Utilisation Strategies going back to 2007 to build on the interchange potential with the Metrolink Network. The development potential was recognized by Alliance Rail (Arriva Trains) who included an Eccles stop in their proposal for a Bradford to London Euston service.*

*Recognising Eccles as the largest conurbation in Salford and the only one having an interchange with a Metrolink and bus terminus, service development at Eccles station has been the policy of Salford City Council for many years. The city council has pressed for such improvements at meetings with train operators and TfGM. Similarly, additional services at Eccles has consistently been the policy of Transport for Greater Manchester. Under TfGM’s own criteria, passenger numbers at Eccles Station merit a minimum of 2 trains per hour which recognizes the interchange potential at Eccles, but we remain with only an hourly service. Recent communications between Freccles and TfGM indicate TfGM’s ongoing support for more trains stopping at Eccles.*

#### 2) Economic Arguments

*Eccles and West Salford represents a large population that requires good transport services to the rest of Greater Manchester, Manchester Airport and to wider destinations such as Leeds and Chester as it is accepted that good transport links are vital to encourage economic growth. Interchange capacity and current passenger trends indicate major potential for increasing rail revenue by bringing passengers from the west of Manchester to the Trafford Centre, Trafford Park, Old Trafford, and Media City. There is also significant travel from Eccles to Warrington and Liverpool. Salford City Council have been backing service improvements at Eccles for precisely that reason and are currently developing a business case for Eccles Station which we shall forward as soon as we receive it.*

#### 3) Service to Manchester

*The number of passengers using Eccles Station has increased by 150% over the last 10 years without there being any additional train services. Initial growth was primarily in terms of passengers traveling to Manchester though such growth has now flattened somewhat. Feedback suggests that the lack of frequency offered by an hourly service is the major deterrent to switching to rail travel. However, increasing traffic congestion on routes through Eccles and Salford into Manchester, indicates great potential for travellers to abandon their cars and use the trains. A franchisee offering this service would therefore be able to claim a contribution to reducing traffic congestion and bringing environmental benefits in terms of lower carbon emissions.*

*An improvement in service will lead to more commuters and shoppers to switch from road to rail. There will also be benefits to starting long-distance rail journeys at Eccles instead of going to central Manchester mainline stations to commence journeys thus reducing congestion at the mainline stations. We also believe that walking to the station will also have health benefits over exclusive car use. Finally, it is hoped to encourage more cycle owners to cycle to the station and switch to the train –once the new 50 space secure cycle store opens at Eccles station.*

#### 4) Interchange Development

*With a bus station and tram terminus within a short walk, Eccles Station has the potential to be part of a fully integrated bus-tram-rail interchange. Our recent passenger counts and surveys show that growth in passenger numbers at Eccles has come particularly from travellers alighting at Eccles and returning home later in the day – in particular passengers continuing their journeys by Metrolink to Salford Quays and Media City. This indicates the potential of Eccles Station to act as an interchange facility and with further developments taking place at those locations, we predict considerable future growth from this connection. It again has the benefit of relieving pressure at central Manchester stations and enhances system resilience at times of disruption as well as providing a more convenient route to the Quays for passengers from the west.*

#### 5) Proposal

*In the Train Service Specification for the Northern Franchise, a Leeds to Chester service is specified which stops at Eccles only in the morning and evening peaks.*

*Our major contention is that this Leeds to Chester service which derives from the Northern Hub development, should include a stop at Eccles throughout the day and not just at peak hours and should preferably be an all stations stopping service. The latter, as well as providing the necessary twice hourly service at Eccles, would enable passengers from Leeds and other stations east of Manchester, and passengers from Frodsham, Helsby, Runcorn and Warrington to reach Salford Quays via a connection at Eccles and so access the leisure and employment opportunities that exist at Media City and the Quays.. The North Cheshire Rail Users Group (NCRUG) has advocated this development for those stations in their area for some time. Once again this would reduce congestion at the City Centre stations as well as providing improved connectivity and travel opportunities for passengers.*

#### 6) Conclusion

*Since the Northern Hub proposals were first published, it has been assumed that the proposed Leeds to Chester service would be an all stations stopping service providing the 2 trains per hour timetable that is required at Eccles and enabling the travel benefits detailed above to be implemented. It came as a surprise therefore when the DfT designated the service as semi-fast stopping only at Newton and Warrington.*

*The arguments set out above clearly demonstrate why it is essential in our view, that the Leeds to Chester service is implemented as an all-stations stopping service to provide the additional connectivity and travel opportunities described. However, the evidence also makes clear that because of its location and interchange facilities, there should be a requirement for the Leeds-Chester service to stop at Eccles throughout the day irrespective of other considerations.*

***Our recommendation therefore is that all bidders for the Northern franchise should be committed to inserting a stop at Eccles Station into the proposed Leeds to Chester service and that preferably that service should be designated an all-stations stopping train between Manchester and Chester to maximize the benefits to the travelling public.***

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

In this month's article ESN starts to look at the trains, infrastructure and timetables provided at Eccles railway station. One of the yardsticks that will be used is the success of the Metrolink system in attracting passengers in great numbers despite having had at times poor reliability of services. The provision of railway service at Eccles is divided between Network Rail, Northern Rail, and Transport for Greater Manchester.

For this first railway article we shall begin by examining the railway station platforms.

There are two platforms, both of more than adequate width for current passenger numbers and free from obstructions for at least six feet from the platform edges. The one to the north of the tracks is for Manchester direction (now platform 1) and facing it is the Liverpool direction platform (now platform 2). Both platforms are of a length to accommodate a 10 carriage train (about 570 feet) but the lengths currently in use are about 290 feet – more than sufficient for a four carriage train.



Neither platform provides level access to the trains. There is a short step up over a gap on platform 2, but a large step up over a gap to board trains on the Manchester platform. On this platform a Harrington hump of about one carriage length has been provided to reduce the step up needed to board.

Neither platform has sets of moveable boarding steps or ramps.

The platform edges are of wide, concrete, slightly projecting slabs. These are backed by a row of cream tactile paving. The platform surfaces are tarmac – in reasonable condition on the Liverpool platform, but very uneven on the Manchester platform such that large puddles form in rainy weather. Weeds sprout from the tarmac in places and moss builds up in certain areas. The platform faces are of brick, some of which is spalling. Recent pointing of some of this brickwork is in contrast to the decades of neglect.



On each platform there are two litter bags provided. These are emptied weekly which is just sufficient time for them to fill up. The provision of



the second bags by Northern has helped to reduce greatly the amount of small litter thrown on the platform. However great amounts of litter build up behind the Manchester platform on the goods loop – some is thrown there: some is blown there – and remains for long periods. This gives a bad impression, as does the builders' waste that is regularly tipped over the wall from Trevelyan Street area onto the



embankment on the Liverpool platform. These problems are worthy of the attention of Mark Carne, Network Rail's Chairman, who has expressed concern about the scruffiness of much of the NR estate.

The engineering brick retaining wall at the back of platform 2 has lately been patch pointed in parts, but much of it still sprouts unwanted vegetation between the bricks. Once again this gives a poor impression.

The currently used lengths of platform are adequately lit at nights, but if one bulb is out there is a significant dark patch. On platform 1 there are two basic

three sided shelters (room for about 12 passengers) and 2 benches for passengers. On platform 2 there is one such shelter and three benches. The benches seat 3 to 4 people.

Both platforms display paper line timetables and railway adverts and Freccles display cases. On platform 1 these display cases suffer from water ingress (possibly because they lean slightly backwards on the sloping (or *battered*) retaining wall. Neither platform has electronic information screens, emergency help points nor tannoys for announcements. It is anticipated that these facilities will appear in the next few months.

Station supporters' group FRECCLES helps to keep the platform areas tidy and holds a gardening day on the first Sunday of each month. On platform one there are two sizeable anchored tubs with small shrubs and annuals. The content of these tubs changes about twice a year. Further along the platform FRECCLES members have built a herb garden from reclaimed sleepers, which was not intended to but now provides a popular seating area. The old brick toilet is now a tool shed for the gardeners.



On the Liverpool platform FRECCLES maintains in good condition a rockery garden beyond which is the main garden occupying a brick walled recess where the waiting rooms and toilets used to be. This elegant garden has a wave them as a reference to travelling. Further along still the embankment is gardened for a short distance and then is covered by the natural trees and vegetation. There is still a great amount of tidying up for the volunteers to do on this stretch: it looks ok in summer but when the leaves fall the horrors are revealed.

**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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