

ECCLES STATION

NEWS

MAY 2014

NEWS

The Japanese electronics conglomerate **Hitachi** announced in March that it is **to move its headquarters of train manufacturing to Britain** (or more specifically, England!). The head office will be in London (where else?) and the £82,000,000 purpose built factory will be in Newton Aycliff, County Durham. Building the factory will support about 200 construction jobs, and **train production will create 730 skilled jobs.**



***Mary Eminson**, who has been a stalwart Freccles gardener from the beginning, **is to leave Eccles** and move to Shropshire. Her last regular gardening day was on Sunday May 4th when the rest of the work team will wish her well, while at the same time wishing she were not going!*

Photo JERayner

Arriva Trains Wales has sent out a reminder of some of its **Wales holiday offerings**.

The **Explore Wales Pass** is one ticket that gives you the freedom to enjoy unlimited access to all of Wales' train services and a huge number of supporting bus services. There's also the **Explore South Wales Pass** for those wanting to concentrate their travel in South Wales and the **Explore North and Mid Wales Pass** for those wanting to concentrate their travel in North Wales. **These passes start from £64** and allow four days train and eight days bus travel within a period of eight consecutive days.

You can find full details and terms and conditions for the Explore Wales Pass and many other types of rovers and ranger tickets by visiting any rail station ticket office, or by clicking [here](#).

***FRECCLES held their Annual General Meeting** on Thursday 10th April at 7pm in the Eccles Community Hall, Eccles Town Hall. There were two high profile speakers from Transport for Greater Manchester: Karen Hornby (interim head of Rail) and Roy Chapman (Rail Services Development Officer) who talked about the future rail service plans for Eccles.*

The ORR has published the station usage estimates for 2012-13 and you can view these at (<http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>). Here are the local total entries and exits:

Eccles	147,582	(down 1.2% from 149,360 for 2011-12)
Patricroft	42,946	(down 4.0% from 44,742 for 2011-12)

All GM stations 69,804,168 (up 1.5%)

Note that a **new infill method** for assigning travel on non-station-specific PTE passes/tickets to stations has been introduced for Greater Manchester stations this year, so figures for individual GM stations may not be directly comparable with those for last year. Freccles will get a better idea from its annual passenger count figures later this year.



*The **modernisation of Manchester Victoria Station** is progressing well. The old Stephenson columns are disappearing and steelwork for the new passenger bridge is taking over the space. Access to the Arena will be separated from passenger flows. Work has also commenced on erection of gantries for the overhead power wires for the trains.*

Photo JER

Don't forget the **timetable changes on May 18th** this month. New train times can be viewed at:

www.opentraintimes.com/location/mcv/2014-05-23/0002-0001

<http://www.opentraintimes.com/location/ECC/2014-05-28/0809-1009>

OUT AND ABOUT...



Liverpool – it's always worth a visit for art's sake whether on the streets or in the galleries.



...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.

ARTICLES

Change at Rochdale.

The rate of change in Rochdale town centre is impressive. Trams are now running down into the town from the railway station so those who did not fancy the long walk have no excuse! The changes are worth a train trip to take a look at - of course it is much quicker to get the train to Rochdale Station than take the tram all the way from Eccles.

Outside Rochdale station there is now provision for pedestrians to cross the roads: there was no provision at all before. The tram stop is just across the road near the fine Catholic Church whose redbrick architecture is in keeping with the fire station and firemen's houses opposite.

The trams are often four carriages and snake down Drake Street to a two platform terminus.



Change is happening around the tram terminus too. The ugly old bus station and brutalist multi storey car park are being demolished on one side of the stop. At last ESN could get some pleasure from photographing a multi storey car park: each snip of the concrete crusher improved the architectural aesthetic of Rochdale.



On the opposite side of the stop impressive new architecture is springing up to make it worth wandering beyond the Regal Moon. Does this mean yet another update is needed for Freccles' Rochdale itinerary?

Number One, Riverside is a new and accessible council building that has replaced a multiplicity of smaller sites and fragmented services; a reception desk offering directions to the various services available upstairs. The ground floor houses the library and an attractive cafe with a simple modernist garden outside.



This garden overlooks the River Roch which is now being treated as an asset to the town rather than being hidden in culverts. The weir once helped to provide power to an ironworks on the opposite bank. The ironworks site is where the new bus station has been constructed.



The bus station is both attractive and functional being just across the road from the tram terminus. The bus times are displayed on large clear LCD screens, but TfGM does not seem to be fortunate in the passenger information stakes. on the day of ESN's visit (08/04/14) all was not well with these.



Take a careful look at the picture above. Hopefully this was teething problems and now resolved.

Happily for Freccles not everything has changed – you can still enjoy the shops, The Baum, The Town Hall or The Touchstones Gallery (below) at the other end of town.



TRIP OF THE MONTH

Two trips again this month: one stretches the legs the other allows some shopping. One uses the Ashton and Stalybridge through service before it ends on 18th May, and the other uses a Southport train from Victoria on the basis that that connection must surely improve! Firstly we recommend **trip No 4** which is:

Four STALYBRIDGE – MATLEY LANE (Rising Moon).

This walk gives some very fine views of hills and open country. At the halfway point is The Rising Moon on Matley Lane. This is a pleasant roadside pub open from noon. It serves good hand pumped beers by Robinson's Brewery and has a range of cooked food and sandwiches on offer.

Take the train from Eccles Station to Stalybridge Station. Leave the front entrance of the station and walk down to Market Street. Turn right under the Railway Bridge and walk through the town. (*'Q' – Hydes, 'White House' – Hydes plus guest beers.*)

Continue along Market Street until you come to the façade of the once very impressive town hall. (*Who on earth was responsible for demolishing this fine building?*).

Ignore the small continuation of Market Street, instead bear right to the War Memorial and Victoria Bridge. (*Note the smaller addition for the fallen of The Second World War*).

Cross the River Tame and go up Trinity Street. In succession on your left you will see: *the post office, Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and Library (well worth popping in if only to see the splendour of the computer room!), and then the impressive former Market Hall.*

Past the large stone church you will come onto Armentieres Square and the canal side. Cross the Huddersfield Canal and proceed by the left side of 'The Millpond'. *The Millpond serves Lees hand pump beers and food.*

Go to the traffic lights and cross over High Street. Then go up Hough Hill Road, which is slightly to your right.

Follow Hough Hill Road past the 'British Protection' and the school. It veers to the left by the side of a green after it crosses Astley Street.

Then keep going to the very top of Hough Hill Road where it becomes more like a track or bridleway.

Now you just follow this rough stone road with Cheetham Park wall on your left. *It's called 'Early Bank Road' further on.*

The road moves away from the hillside and descends slightly to the left to pass some houses. At the end it comes out on Matley Lane and the 'Rising Moon' is on your left. *Notice the various footpaths offering walking opportunities in the countryside. The one down the side of the pub offers an alternative way back to Stalybridge town.*

From the 'Rising Moon' retrace your steps on Early Bank Road to where it forks. Take the left fork rising up along the hillside.

Where you come to some houses follow the track to the right of them. It's known as Range Road and meanders alongside the hill.

It has an S-bend at one farm area, then another opposite S bend where it is also briefly a narrow path past Lower Hough Hill farm.

Descend past some stone houses on your right and continue ahead, crossing over Oak Tree Crescent.

You will rejoin Hough Hill Road. Follow it left to descend back in to Stalybridge town centre once more.

CLASSIFICATION: MODERATE, MEDIUM LENGTH WALK, COUNTRYSIDE,
FOOD & DRINK,

RAIL FARE – category one £3.90 adult

Maps: OS 1:50 000 sheet 109 Manchester A-Z

Philip's Street Atlas Greater Manchester.

Eleven

GATHURST – ASHURST'S BEACON.

An attractive, varied countryside walk up to a beacon with wide ranging views of the north-west. Those who like to pick out landmarks should choose a clear day and perhaps take binoculars.

Catch the train to Manchester and at Victoria change to a stopping Southport train. Alight at Gathurst station just after Wigan Wallgate. Go down the platform approach slope.

Cross the road at the bottom and just follow the road opposite. Eventually cross a small footbridge over a stream and go right to follow the side of the river.

At a field gate turn left and follow the fencing by the field up to a stile. Cross the stile and go uphill ahead. *This is an old paved route marked now by a conspicuous line of trees.* Follow this and its curve to the right at the top of the slope.

Cross the stile into a small triangular paddock and go to the left between the low walls.

At the gate go left along the lane. You will come to The Star Inn on the corner. *Real ales and full meals.*

Turn left and after about 200yds look for Farley lane on the right. Go up this lane and go right onto a road by a field immediately after the new houses (*one called Stoneacre*).

At the T junction with the large tree in the centre go left then immediately right into the fields and right again over the field boundary.

Then proceed to your left by the boundary to the top of this field. Then re-cross the field boundary and go right to the top of this field edge.

At the corner of this field take the path to the right by the cricket pitch. Where it joins the lane (Long Heys Lane) go to the left to the next junction. *Fifty yards to the left is the Prince William pub with Robinsons' ales and food.*

Turn right at this junction and you come to The Beacon Inn. *Jennings ales and food.*

Go on to the track on the right immediately after this and walk up to the beacon. *Ashurst's beacon was part of the signal beacon network – enjoy the fine views. There is a compass landmark pointer just beyond the beacon.*

Follow the path past the compass pointer into and down through the oak wood . *Notice the different feel of this woodland.* Follow this path over a stile until it meets a tarmac road. *This is Long Heys Lane again.*

Go left down the lane and follow it to the bottom of the slope. It curves to the right and starts to ascend slightly.

At this curve go left towards the field entrance then immediately left onto the obscure path amongst the trees. *This is an old paved route (I am not kidding) and you can hear a stream on the left of you.*

At the bottom as you come out into the open cross the stream to go right across the field and then between the river and some houses.

At the main road turn left uphill. Go over the river, the canal, and the railway and on your right is the road down to the Manchester platform of Appley Bridge station.

CLASSIFICATION: MEDIUM LENGTH, MODERATE WALK WITH UPHILL STRETCHES. THERE ARE SOME MUDDY SECTIONS ON PATHS. WIDE OPEN VIEWS, COUNTRYSIDE, WOODLANDS, PUBS – REAL ALE AND FOOD,

RAIL FARE – category one £4.20 adult

Maps: OS 1:50 000 sheet 108

BOOK REVIEW:

SIGNAL BOX COMING UP, SIR! (and other railwaymen's stories)

by Geoff Body and Bill Parker ISBN 9780752460406.

The History Press £9.99 Available at Eccles Library.

This paperback is an edited collection of many short anecdotes told by former railway managers. Readers should find it amusing and informative in turn. What it does reveal is just how varied the demands of managing a railway can be, and what a far reaching business the old railways engaged in. It is a read for those interested in railways per se, and it also offers something for the merely curious.

The book is available at Eccles Library.

EDITORIAL

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS.

A major timetable change such as this one alters connecting times for journeys involving train changes. Some improve, some stay the same and others become worse. Basically the framework for the whole timetable is set by long distance mainline expresses. Semi-fast trains get next call on slots and last come the poor old stopping trains which have to fit in where time allows!

This month's new timetable sees the loss of the popular through daytime service from Eccles to Ashton and Stalybridge: passengers will have to change at Victoria in both directions. The connection is a good one though, giving a total journey time of about 35 minutes to Stalybridge. Let us be thankful for this! Travel to Mossley,

Greenfield or Huddersfield still takes about the same time while to Preston and Blackpool connections improve a little. Blackburn which had a quick connection outward and a bad one on return now has poor connection both ways. Likewise Chester and North Wales travel via Newton le Willows. Lancaster and beyond has not improved, indeed it is worse at certain times of day. The biggest improvements are Bolton which will now be about 45mins in both directions via Victoria, and on the Southport line. These could not have been worse than they were but now reasonable connecting times are available at Victoria in both directions.

Commuting workers have no choice, but leisure travellers – try Southport!

LOST AND FOUND.

Great Britain once built its own trains.

There was employment in the thousands at each of the great railway owned works: Ashford, Bow, Eastleigh, Swindon, Crewe, Derby, Doncaster, Horwich, Darlington, St Rollox, and Wolverton. There were also many lesser places employing hundreds, such as Newton Heath, Oswestry, Inverurie, Shildon, and Earlestown. Then there were the independent builders: vast enterprises such as the North British railway works at Glasgow, Beyer Peacock in Gorton, Robert Stephenson and Hawthorn, Newcastle; Hunslet in Leeds, and lesser ones such as Nasmyth Wilson and Vulcan Foundry (near Earlestown), Metropolitan Cammel in Birmingham, Gloucester Carriage and Wagon, Wigan Wagon Works and many more. All have vanished (save for a small relic of Derby where Bombardier assembles foreign produced kits).

Key factors have been lack of steady investment in the railways as part of an industrial policy and resistance to innovation. A decade of no orders leaves no industry to respond when 500 or 1000 items are wanted in a panic! A steady stream of 100 or so items a year might have kept some of the smaller manufacturers going.

In contrast it is welcome news that Hitachi is to move its train manufacturing headquarters to London (a city in the south of England) and even better news that there will be a real place of work for 720 people in County Durham to produce the trains. This is the only way that train manufacturing will return to this country and it is in response to the steady investment flowing from both Government and Network Rail. If this works, and it should, then there could be more start ups.

Let's try not to lose it this time!

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

