

ECCLES STATION

NEWS

NOVEMBER 2013

*Welcome to the November edition. That it is late is due to web connections problems following on from holding it back to gather news on the opening of the railway tunnel under the Bosphorus. Once again there is no trip of the month, but a **Bargain Fares** section full of ideas, and a hint in Out and About. Editor.*

NEWS

*The **Friends of Patricroft Railway Station** AGM will be held at 19.00 on **Thurs 14 Nov 2013** at Eccles Fire Station. The speakers will be **Don Jary from Northern Rail** and **Lee Evans from Salford City Council's Strategic Transportation Team**. Notes of the last AGM and an agenda about a week before the meeting, and nominations (other than the current holders) for the offices of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary should be e mailed to Nina the FrOPS Secretary, via keshishian@btinternet.com*

First TransPennine Express will start running **direct electric services** using 10 new Siemens-built Class 350/4 trains from **Manchester Airport to Glasgow** from December 2013. These new trains will deliver an increase in capacity of more than 80 per cent on this route. The new 100mph, Class 350/4 trains will each have four carriages and a total of 210 seats, 19 of which will be first class.

In case you are wondering what a **secure cycle store** for about 35 bicycles is like here is a possibility found on the platform at Ashton under Lyne. Which, being a Northern Rail station should be a good indication of the style likely to be chosen for Eccles station forecourt.



There is a roof to keep the rain off (no more tying plastic bags around the bike seat), and a secure cage to keep the bikes in by keeping the criminals out (one hopes). Use of the stores is controlled by a membership scheme.

The bicycles go on two levels of racks so that less space is taken away from the forecourt area. The top racks tilt down so the bike can be rolled on, and are counter balanced for an easy lift back up with the bike securely in place.



Photos courtesy of J E Rayner.

*During perusal of various railway publications this last month **ESN** noted a report of **entertainment organised on some of the Norfolk community lines** during October. Greater Anglia's **Mayflower Line** trains had sea shanties as part of the Harwich International Sea Shanty Festival, which takes place from 11– 13 October. Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership decorated a carriage with a sea shanty theme on three special 'Music Trains', On the **Bittern Line** Morris Dancing was organised by one of the Directors of Community Rail Norfolk (Peter Mayne) of the local morris side 'Kemp's Men'. He invited three other sides to encourage visitors to the line on the first Saturday after school holidays, when the route is very quiet.*

ESN editor's challenge: what is the chance of arranging something like this on (quieter) trains, and stations along the Liverpool and Manchester Railway?

Who says people don't care where they throw their litter? It is obvious at Eccles station that **well over 90% of passengers** using the station **dispose of their litter in a responsible way**, either taking it home with them or using the two bags provided by Northern Rail on each platform. Freccles members are pleased by this and the evidence is shown in the following photos of what happens when there is a slight delay in the emptying and replacement of the bags:

Photos courtesy of J E Rayner.



On our tidy up days we find a few cigarette packets, an occasional take away wrapper or discarded drink cans – this only takes a handful of people who do not or will not behave in a community respecting manner. The item that occurs with by far the greatest frequency is the **smoker's discarded filter tip**. We find great numbers of these: smokers don't seem to see them as litter, nor do they heed the smoking ban on railway stations! **Is an awareness-raising campaign needed?**

Lawrence and Wishart (who style themselves 'independent radical publishing'), has just issued a new book by Dr Paul Salveson, known to many people as 'The Railway Doctor.' It is called '**Railpolitik: bringing railways back to communities**'. The national launch of the book took place at **The York Railway Institute** on Tuesday October 29th and it is available online for £14.99 from www.lwbooks.co.uk or order it at your local bookshop. ESN hopes to be able to provide a review of the book in a coming issue.

BARGAIN FARES.

No we're not. Yes we are.

Club 55 is back on Arriva Trains Wales after all! No sooner do you say that Arriva Trains Wales won't be having a Club55 offer this season, than up it pops on their website. This seems a little perverse after queries indicated there would not be such an offer; the lack of an introductory trailer on its website; its appearance on the website only as the offer starts, and no poster or leaflet advertising all add to this mystery! Still let's not complain that the offer is being made after all.

Providing that you can prove you are over 55 you can travel anywhere on the Arriva Trains Wales network for £23 for an 8-day return. Passengers in the Greater Manchester area can pay a £1.50 supplement to use Northern trains to link to the Welsh trains at Manchester Piccadilly or at Newton le Willows. The tickets are on offer between October 1st and November 30th.

There are more restrictions on travel than in previous seasons but it is still a good offer if you plan to visit South or Mid Wales for a few days.

Pembrokeshire is lovely (Cornwall without the crowds); Cardiff offers a full range of City entertainments; The Gower, next door to Swansea, is a gorgeous quiet seaside promontory with sandy beaches (starfish and razor shells in the rock pools!), and there are the little towns of Welshpool and Machynlleth on the way to Aberystwyth which has the VALE OF Rheidol steam railway. You can book a ticket on the website at <http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/club55/> or at Eccles Station. The terms and conditions of travel are given at: <http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/Club55/TandCs/>

A reminder also that the offer is still available on **First TransPennine Express** services. From 15th September to 16th November 2013, if you can show you are 55 or over (passport, photo driving licence), then on **FTPE** services you can travel:

Anywhere in North of England £18

From the North of England to any station in Scotland £28

If you hold a senior citizen railcard then there is a further 20% discount to be had! (£14.40 and £22.40). You can go first class for 50% extra.

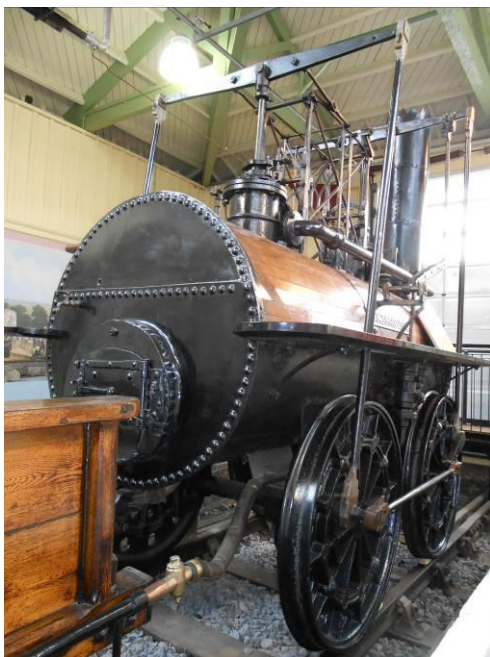
OUT AND ABOUT...

Darlington is a town of some significance in the history of the railways. It also has an attractive centre and ESN's editor was fortunate enough to give the place a couple of visits recently. This was done using the club 55 offer from First Transpennine Express. The second visit was undertaken using first class return at £21.60 (unfortunately on the normal arrangements for ESN staff expenses!) providing a very comfortable, un-cramped ride.



A fifteen minute walk along the main road north from the town centre takes you to Darlington North Road Station, which served the famous Stockton and Darlington Railway (1829). This building was erected in the 1840s to replace the original.

North Road is now an interesting little museum – home to Locomotion, and Derwent which illustrate the rapid changes in locomotive design in the early years of the railways.



There are two other locomotives of topical interest and a collection of interesting and surprising small artefacts.



Cheaper than a paraffin lamp to light the back of a train – if your trains happen to serve a massive colliery!

Where Northern Rail's trains still call at Darlington North Road! The museum is on the other side of the fence.



Walking back into town one does not pass by The Half Moon – a nice cosy local that brews some of its own beer. Edward Pease's house is one of the interesting buildings in the town



All photos in this article are courtesy of J E Rayner.



...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.

ARTICLES

Growth and Prosperity.

This is the title of a report published in July by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and based on data analysed and collated by KPMG. **This article gives the ATOC view based on that research.** ESN is happy to air this as for once the railway industry is being forthcoming about its achievements.

The broad conclusion of the report is that 'Passenger Growth Helps Drive Big Rise in Money to Reinvest in Rail Services'. Train operators are generating more than four times as much money for Government to reinvest in rail services than 15 years earlier. By significantly growing passenger revenue while containing the costs they can control, train operators have increased the money they generate for Government to reinvest from £400 million in 1997-98 to £1.7 billion in 2011-12. This money is helping to reduce public subsidies and sustain the biggest investment programme in rail in decades. At the same time, the operating margins of train companies have remained modest, most recently on average around 3% of turnover.

The key factor driving the £3.2 billion increase in passenger revenue, which is helping to generate the money from train operations for Government, has been the phenomenal rise in passenger journeys. 96% of the increase in revenue has come from passenger journey growth, as opposed to 4% from fare changes.

The data collated shows that, while rail prices and motoring costs have broadly mirrored each other, passenger growth in Britain has outstripped other external demand factors and other major European railways.

Since 1997-98 rail journeys have grown at a rate twice as fast as the growth in GDP whereas in the previous 15 years journey growth was around half that of GDP growth; journeys per head of population have risen significantly from 14.9 in 1997-98 to 22.4 in 2011-11, and UK journey growth has been bigger than in France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Franchising, along with Network Rail's sustained efforts to improve performance and successive Governments' increased investment, has played an important role in encouraging greater rail use by providing passengers with better services and value. On a railway effectively the same size as 15 years ago, there are now 4,000 more services a day - a 20% increase. In addition, 500 million more journeys a year are now rated 'good' or 'satisfactory' by Passenger Focus, the independent watchdog.

Despite UK Government policy since 2004 favouring above-inflation increases in Season tickets, the average price paid by passengers for each mile they travel has only increased from 19.6p to 20.4p in 2012 prices over that period, because more passengers are taking advantage of discounted rail travel offered by train companies.

Michael Roberts, Chief Executive of ATOC, says: "The railway has been transformed in the past 20 years. Unprecedented growth in passenger journey numbers is creating a virtuous circle by generating record levels of revenue to pay for better services in turn encouraging greater rail use. Government commitment to significant investment in rail and competition among train companies to win and run franchises have driven improvements, as operators are incentivised to attract more passengers and contain costs. Rail franchising is a partnership between the public and private sectors that is delivering for passengers, taxpayers and the country."

The report has the backing of the Rail Delivery Group, the leadership body for the rail industry. **Tim O'Toole, CEO of FirstGroup plc and Rail Delivery Group Chairman, states:** "By working in partnership with Government, Network Rail and the rest of the industry, franchised train companies will continue to strive for a bigger and better railway. This is not simply because encouraging more people to travel by rail is good for our business, but because it is vital for the future of the economy and the country."

Sir David Higgins, Chief Executive of Network Rail and Rail Delivery Group deputy chairman, takes the following view: "There is no question that train operators have played a key role in making rail an attractive way to travel. The industry's separation of infrastructure provider and train operator has allowed operators to focus on passenger needs and preferences, to make significant strides forward in understanding their markets and to tailor the services they offer. For Network Rail, the key issue is that we work collaboratively with all operators to deliver outstanding value for rail users and taxpayers."

Ed Thomas, Director, KPMG Transport Advisory, KPMG, adds: "The franchising model can bring beneficial effects for both taxpayers and customers. Each bid competition brings a fresh focus on the needs of customers and other stakeholders. UK rail franchises attract interest from the leading transport players from around the world. This helps to drive product innovation and sharing of best practice."

First Intercontinental Tunnel!

At 1.00pm (GMT) on Tuesday 29th October 2013 the world's first intercontinental tunnel was formally opened. Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President Abdullah Gul, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta and numerous transport and trade ministers gathered for the opening of the tunnel and large railway system on Turkey's 90th anniversary Republic Day. The rail system, built by a Turkish/Japanese consortium, is expected to have a capacity of one and a half million people a day, connecting the two continents in about four minutes.

The tunnel crosses the Bosphorus Strait linking European Turkey (Constantinople) with Asiatic Turkey. The two track railway through the tunnel will form part of the Istanbul public transport network and be able to carry up to 75,000 passengers per hour between the two parts of the city which now has a population of nearly 14,000,000. It is 8.3 miles long, 1500 yards of which is composed of prefabricated sections which were lowered onto and connected together on the seabed.

The overall project is called the **Marmaray** from a combination of **ray**, the Turkish for railway, with **Marmara**, the name of the sea connected to the Mediterranean by the Bosphorus Strait. The idea of such a link was first proposed in 1860 by Sultan Abdulmecid I. Work started on the modern Marmaray in 2004 but uncovered the remains of the Byzantine port of Theodosius resulting in a delay of nearly five years to allow an archaeological investigation to be conducted.

The design takes into account the unstable geology of the area which Seismologists reckon is almost certain to be hit by a massive earthquake in the next thirty years: Turkish officials claim that the Marmara will withstand earthquakes of magnitude 9 or even 10 suffering only minor leakage. Despite this the Marmaray is estimated to have cost £1.85 billion pounds to construct. This is a very modest cost given such a delay, and the engineering challenges involved.

In fact it is a bargain project, given that it is to be of far more than merely local significance. The tunnel rail link forms a key part of a projected high speed rail route to be developed from Britain and Spain to the port of Baku on the Caspian Sea, and from there onto Beijing. Clearly the potential freight traffic for such a route would be enormous and the scheme is coming to be known as 'The Iron Silk Road'. ESN presumes that goods and passengers will cross the Caspian on railway ferries to rejoin the railway and travel eastwards, but perhaps the Marmaray seabed tunnel could provide a viable model for a much larger version on the Caspian Sea bed.

The editorial staff of ESN looks forward to Club55 offers to Baku and beyond, and dreams (fondly?) that the UK might even link its rails from beyond London into this great economic artery.

There are many web sources for information, pictures and diagrams of the Marmaray project, just enter Marmaray in your search engine and many will appear for your perusal – by now the engines have worked out that one is not looking for 'mammaries'.

BOOK REVIEW:

'British Steam PATRIOTS – celebrating the new national memorial locomotive.'

by Keith Langston. ISBN 1845631455 Pen & Sword Books. £19.99. Available at Eccles Library.

The 'Patriot' class of 3 cylinder 4-6-0 locomotive was designed by Sir Henry Fowler (1870 – 1938) while he was Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway. They were introduced from 1930 to replace the lacklustre 'Claughton' class locos of the London and North Western Railway on express passenger work.

However they were clearly Derby inspired rather than of Crewe breeding. This gave these 'early modern' steam locos an old fashioned appearance* but definitely gave good reliable service as shown by service mileages of about 1,500,000 miles in about 30 years of service. They were regular visitors to Patricroft engine shed working on North Wales services.

The book gives a brief history and a photograph of all 52 members of the class (so it is great for nostalgists) and laments the fact that none of these transitional locomotives were preserved.

The lead locomotive of the class was number 5500 and this was given the nameplate of a Claughton: 'PATRIOT in memory of the fallen L&NWR employees 1914-1919', hence the name of the class and hence the link to a proposed 'national memorial engine'. The book explains the project that is under way to build a Patriot steam locomotive and call it 'The Unknown Warrior'.

**some might say a slightly comical appearance - modern square smoke deflectors around a big cylindrical plain smoke box with a tiny ornamental chimney on top!*

The book is available at Eccles Library. See www.lms-patriot.org.uk for more on this project.

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

