

# ECCLES STATION

# NEWS

**OCTOBER 2012**

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

**News section,**

**Articles.**

**Trip of the month.**

*Plenty articles for you all this month. September was a busy time for the Editor. Presumably you have also enjoyed the second month of record rainfall? Our trip of the month is a very pleasant walk from Wilmslow station and this threw up a little glitch in the system.....*

## **NEWS**



**Here is a picture of our compost heap containers**, constructed by volunteer labour. There is something Woodhenge about them isn't there? Freccles will be gardening and tidying again on **Sunday October 7th at 11.00**. Feel free to come along and join in, or just ask us about the station.

*In the recent cabinet reshuffle the following responsibilities were allocated to the new transport ministers:*

***The Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP - Secretary of State for Transport***

*Overall responsibility for Transport Strategy, including Economic Growth and Climate Change, Transport Security, High Speed Rail Strategy.*

***The Rt Hon Simon Burns MP - Minister of State for Transport***

*Rail strategy (including overall fares policy), HS2, International and Europe, Aviation – including Air Accident Branch, Corporate issues (including correspondence improvement and Civil Service reform)*

***Norman Baker MP - Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport***

*Rail (including commercial, operational performance and Community Rail), Buses – including concessionary fares, Taxis, Light rail and trams, Smart ticketing (including rail fares and ticketing), Traffic management, Regional and Local transport (including local roads, maintenance, Major Projects, winter resilience), Natural environment – including bio fuels, Sustainable travel – including walking and cycling, Accessibility and equalities, Alternatives to travel, SMEs and growth.*

***Stephen Hammond MP - Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport***

*Strategic Roads and Highways Agency, Motoring Agencies, Road Safety and Standards, Freight and Logistics – including lorry road user charging, Maritime and Dangerous Goods (including Maritime and Coastguard Agency), London, Crossrail, Better regulation.*

***Sounds like some people are going to be very busy or some things will be overlooked! Editor.***

**Punctuality on the railways reached 94.0%** according to monthly performance data from Network Rail. The data for Britain's train services covers the period from 19 August 2012 - 15 September 2012. This compares to 92.5% for the same period last year and is the best period 6 yet recorded. The moving annual average is now at 91.7%.

**The best performance was by c2c which increased to a remarkable 98.7%. (This franchise is up for bids – it will be interesting to see the result. Editor) Northern achieved 92.9%.**

***Northern Rail's Manchester Stations Team*** was winner in the Judges' Special Award category at this year's National Rail Awards after they showed the best of the railway spirit under incredibly difficult and dangerous circumstances last August.

*Judges recognised the extraordinary challenge presented to them when rioting and looting broke out on the streets of Manchester. **As both tram and bus services were suspended throughout the city, the Northern team made sure passengers kept on the move.** Judges commented: "The team showed incredible courage and resilience –protecting staff, providing passengers with safe havens and a means of getting out of dangerous situations back to their homes, and working round the clock to make sure that railway services were back to normal as quickly as possible.*

Here is a glitch of '**computer says no**' variety! Try entering Eccles to Wilmslow day return in the Network Rail journey planner. **You will be offered a £65 return!** Now in fairness it does offer you a 'cheapest fare' option. **This is £20.50!** Apparently this is the Cheshire Ranger ticket – not an off peak return. The computer is doing its best but seems it does not have fares programmed for Eccles or Patricroft to Wilmslow, and this has been the case for several years despite its being reported to management.

**Go to the booking office and ask Stuart** to sort out a ticket to Manchester and a suitable Manchester to Wilmslow ticket – it will be very much cheaper. *(This calls into question the wisdom of relying on ticket machines only at unmanned stations doesn't it? Editor.)*

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



Ok it's a long train ride (Whitby) then a bus and then a country walk, but ESN thought you might like this one!

*Photo courtesy J E Rayner.*

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

### ARTICLES

## **NORTHERN DAY OUT**

Railway volunteers were treated to an excellent day out by Northern Rail on an excursion train to Edge Hill on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September. This is on the edge of the city of Liverpool, and we knew we had arrived there when the first instruction received was to keep an eye on the cables. These were the microphone cable for the official ceremonies.

First one of the diesel units in the train had its name unveiled in a naming ceremony. It was christened George Bradshaw, a Salford man famous for producing the first comprehensive train timetable book. (The other unit was already named – William Huskisson!



Also a blue plaque was presented for display at historic Edge Hill station and there followed an excellent buffet in the historic buildings along with entertainment!



On another platform clips from many historic railway films were being shown, and an historic St Helen's Bus was laid on to take us to our next destination.



The bus took the party past splendid Regency terraces, and also urban decay to the Williamson Tunnels under Edge Hill. These are being excavated gradually by archaeologists.

Here is a view of a large double tunnel in use as the cafe.



Members of Freccles and FrOPS at Edge Hill station, Liverpool, on the day of the excursion. The train ride back included an entertainer too!

*All photos courtesy of J E Rayner*



2012

PRESTON GUILD YEAR

**It is twenty years now till our next article on Preston! The guild is over and we thought it good to finish with a valedictory article and photo survey of some of the many events.**

The right to hold a ***Guild Merchant*** was conferred upon the burgesses of Preston (hereditary posts) by a charter of 1179. Before 1328 a celebration had been held on an irregular basis, but at the Guild of that year it was decreed

that subsequent Guilds should be held every twenty years (*how sober was this discussion?*). There were breaks in the pattern for various reasons, but an unbroken series was held from 1542 to 1922. A full 400 year sequence was frustrated by the cancellation of the 1942 Guild due to the Second World War, but the cycle resumed in 1952. The expression '(Once) every Preston Guild', meaning 'very infrequently', has passed into fairly common use, especially in Lancashire.

Guild week begins with the opening of the Guild Court, which since the Sixteenth century has traditionally been on the first Monday after the feast of the decollation (the beheading) of St John the Baptist on 29 August. (*But you knew that didn't you?*) As well as concerts and other exhibitions, the main events are a series of processions through the city. Numerous street parties are typically also held in the locality. *Thanks to Wikipedia for these two paragraphs.*



There were a number of different parades with up to a hundred floats! Here are two local business contributions. Below are the Trades Unions. They made a colourful and largely traditional contribution with their banners.



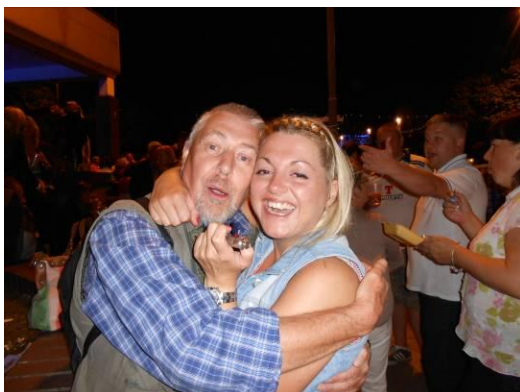


In the three riverside parks there were many events during the Guild.

Here is the variety tent in Miller's Park.

This is a floral display for the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Below it in the park is the ornate 1920's 'Spiegel Tent' – a small circular portable theatre with a quite baroque interior!

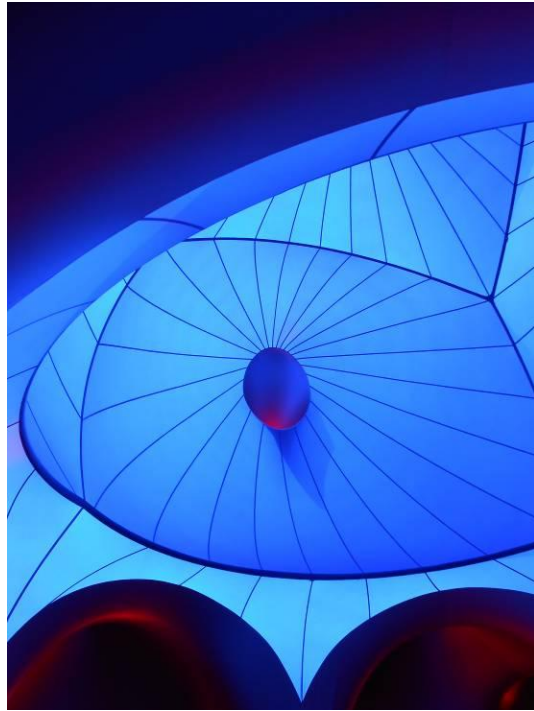


Even a very elderly gentleman can make the most of the festivities at the last night of The Guild. (***ESN reporting team members should stay on task at all times - Editor***)

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



The Luminaire Sculpture in Frenchwood Park was great for some abstract photography. It is a large inflatable maze relying on daylight filtering through the different coloured skins.



## **Changing trains 20**

This is the final article describing train connections around Manchester.

Piccadilly does have trains to Bolton Wigan Blackpool and Southport but these were covered in the Victoria articles - although they can be useful on Sunday when the Eccles trains are running into Oxford Road and Piccadilly. This just leaves us to cover the airport/Alderley Edge trains and the Liverpool trains via Warrington Central.

First of all the **Manchester Airport** service - these trains are frequent all week. Some go nonstop, others call at Heald Green. There is an hourly stopping service too calling at Mauldeth Road, Burnage, East Didsbury, Gatley, Heald Green, Manchester Airport, Styal (limited service), Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, Chelford, Goostrey, Holmes Chapel, Sandbach and **Crewe**.

These services are useful for plane spotters and air travellers alike. In addition, East Didsbury is handy for the Mersey Valley and its walks. Styal is an attractive spot with the wonderful Styal Mill complex, but the trains are limited, on Sunday every two hours. So it is best to do the Freccles walk *from* Wilmslow (see our trip of the month article).

Farther along the line is Alderley Edge – spot the overpaid footballers and their wives or go a walk out to the old mill and along the Edge itself. Chelford is the stop for visiting the big Astle Park Traction Engine Rally each summer, and Holmes Chapel is the station for a visit to the Jodrell Bank radio telescope. At Crewe there is a huge railway station but a shadow of what it used to be, and likewise a bit of the old LNWR railway works is a Railway Heritage Centre.

The next line is to Lime Street via Warrington Central. There are frequent express trains calling at Warrington, Widnes, and Liverpool South Parkway – some of these also call at Birchwood. The stopping trains are half hourly and call at Manchester Oxford Road, Deansgate, Urmston, Irlam, Birchwood, Warrington Central, Widnes, Hough Green, Liverpool South Parkway, West Allerton, Mossley Hill and Lime Street. This is useful if you want to get to Widnes, or Liverpool airport from the Parkway Station (the beautiful Speke Hall is nearby too) but you can go to these places via Lime Street from Eccles.

Alternate trains add in some of the other stations to give them an hourly or less frequent service.

**On Sundays** the trains from Eccles usually run direct to Piccadilly and on to the airport (but check – electrification will alter this on some Sundays). On weekdays take the train from Eccles to Victoria and transfer by tram to Manchester Piccadilly. From the tram platforms you can ascend to the main concourse for your train.

## **SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>**

Saturday 15th September 2012 was a significant day for Friends of Eccles Station. Not only was it the 182nd anniversary for the Liverpool -Manchester line, but it was also our 7th birthday. FRECCLES organised a day of events that included the unveiling of a commemorative plaque in memory of the victims of the rail crash at Eccles on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1941.

The plaque is made of English ash and was made by Steve Willis, a Master Pattern Maker from Leicester. This event was preceded by an extremely informative talk about why the crash happened. The content was based on material found in archived copies of the Manchester Evening News at Manchester Central Library and was given by Jim Rayner of Freccles, The talk,

at Eccles Parish Church, was very well attended - standing room only - and over 40 people attended the unveiling of the plaque on the station platform.

Before the talk in the Parish Church the Ceremonial Mayor of Salford, Councillor Bernard Lea, examines some of the documents relating to the crash along with other members of the audience.



Present were Cllr Bernard Lea, Ceremonial Mayor of Salford and his Mayoress, Ann Cox, Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP, Barbara Keeley MP and Mark Barker of Northern Rail, along with FRECCLES members and a large number of members of the public who had their own memories and stories of the crash on 30th December 1941.



Some of those attending had travelled long distances. Here is Karen from Sheffield – a former EGS pupil and the grand-daughter of fireman Ashcroft of the Pennington train.

The plaque was unveiled by FRECCLES members Bert and Peter Cresswell, who lost their father, Jack, in the crash. They were reminded of the event every time they travelled on the train until the M602 motorway was built. This is

because the previous railway tunnel wall had deep scars caused by the impact of the engines and carriages.

Bert and Peter Cresswell lost their father in the crash. In this picture they have just unveiled the plaque. The story of the crash is told in a large poster just to the right.



The day was not entirely sombre in tone. We distributed Eccles cakes to mark our birthday and also enjoyed a specially baked 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday sponge cake. FRECCLES members also had a small information stall in the Eccles Community Art Gallery in Boothway during the morning.



Elizabeth Charnley, who is the Secretary of Freccles, poses with the display stand in the art gallery. She was also responsible for providing the really delicious, sponge birthday cake for the occasion!

We do of course, have some thanks to give: to Northern Rail and ISS who made the installation of the plaque possible; to our visiting dignitaries, and to all of our members who researched the crash, produced the new poster, arranged for the plaque to be made, manned our stall on the day, or who wrapped up Eccles cakes!

Special thanks to Jim for the talk, and to Eccles Community Art Gallery who accommodated our stall during the morning.

All of the photos in this article are courtesy of J E Rayner. Many thanks are due to those who sent in photos of the event - ESN was intending to use some of these but was prevented from doing so by technical computer difficulties. (More pictures can be seen by clicking [here](#))

## **POSTSCRIPT.**

The 1941 crash is a significant event in Eccles local history and in family histories. Following the talk a number of people came forward with extra details about the 1941 Eccles Crash. When these have been recorded ESN proposes to include them in a future article. If any readers have any more details please e-mail them to Freccles. We are particularly interested in the family stories about individuals.

## **TRIP OF THE MONTH.**

This month the chosen trip is number Seventy nine:

### **WILMSLOW – STYAL - HANDSWORTH.**

A lovely walk along the Bollin Valley includes the option of visiting Quarry Bank Mill, one of the premier National Trust sites. There are many good picnic spots en route.

Take the train to Manchester Victoria and from there a tram to Manchester Piccadilly Station. From here there are frequent trains that stop at Wilmslow.

*Option: - turn right as you get off the tram and on Fairfield Street use the lift on the left to the link bridge lounge.*

Alight at Wilmslow Station. Go down the short approach road and walk ahead along Station Road.

Cross the main road and go along Swan Street by the right of The Bollin Fee (*The Rectory and The Bollin Fee both sell real ales and food*).

Turn next right down Church Street towards St Bartholomew's Church. *This is a lovely old red sandstone church. Open Wednesday 09.30-11.00 and 12.00-15.00, Friday 10.30-11.30, Saturday 12.00-15.00 and for Sunday services. [www.wilmslowparish.org.uk](http://www.wilmslowparish.org.uk).*

Pass the church and cross the bridge over the Bollin. Take the second path left through an arch (*into The Henry Boddington Playing Fields*).

Go through the gate at the end of the hedge and turn right.

Follow along the river valley. *This attractive area is known as 'The Carrs'.*

Cross a bridge and go right along the other side of the river.

Continue past one bridge on the right to a brick arched bridge. Go right across this.

Then turn left besides the conveniences and head towards a little wooden bridge.

Cross this and turn left to pass a National Trust sign. Go over Heron's Pool Bridge *which is followed by a small quarry on the right. Carry straight on but off the left of your route is the mill pond and dam.*

You will come into the Mill Yard of Quarry Bank Mill. *There are toilets and a cafe here. The mill is 18<sup>th</sup> century – built for Samuel Greg's cotton spinning business, but also with nonconformist social aims of a better environment for the workers. There are working spinning and weaving machines, steam engines and the great water wheel. Open most days of year 11.00 to 16.00 or 17.00 (Mar to Oct). Admission is from £5 upwards according to which parts of site are visited. It is costly but worth doing.*

Pass through the Mill Yard *and on the left is the Greg family house and garden.*

Continue up the Mill Road *towards the apprentice house. Where it levels off take the path left signed to Styal Village.*

Pass through a field, cross a lane and a short way ahead is village and the remains of the old stone cross. *Left is the Norcliff chapel (Unitarian) and ahead is the model village, school and shop built for the mill workers. Please respect the private signs as it's still a lived in village!*

Turn right past the stump of the cross and fork right between the old wooden fencing. *You come to the small Methodist Chapel.*

Turn left passing some thatched cottages and when you reach the tarmac Altrincham Road turn right.

Pass the Ship Inn *which is a nice old pub selling real ales and food – but what type of ship could sail up the Bollin and the Dean????*

At the main road (Hollin Lane) turn right. Then cross the road to go left onto Station Road (*opposite the war memorial*).

Styal Station is on your left. *Check the timetable - You could catch a train back to Manchester from here (and you have done the best of the walk) - there are few, but on Sunday every two hours.*

Keep ahead by Styal golf Club. The road then bends sharp right but carry straight on to the left of the sheltered housing. (Sagars Road).

Fork right at a single house called Spurs Lodge and then keep going. *More mundane now, eventually there are houses on both sides.*

You come out at Wilmslow Road. Cross to go along Station Road almost opposite. *Ahead of you is the Railway Inn – Robinson's real ales.*

Handforth station is on the right. Go down onto the near platform for a train back to Manchester Piccadilly.

CLASSIFICATION: MEDIUM LENGTH, EASY.

MUSEUMS, COUNTRYSIDE, RIVER, PUBS, CAFE, FOOD,  
ARCHITECTURE

RAIL FARE: **It should be no more than £6.70 for adults** – but see our little news article! Less for children and railcard holders. GM pass holders even cheaper!

MAP OS 1:50 000 sheet 118  
Street Atlas Greater Manchester

Philip's Street Atlas Cheshire. Philip's

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)

