

ECCLES STATION

NEWS

OCTOBER 2013

*Shortage of space means no trip of the month (sorry) but look at the **Bargain Fares** section for some ideas. We have an article on the Gresley A4s and we take a final bash at Beeching (not all his ideas were bad!).* **Editor**

NEWS



Freccles member **Ann Taverner** helping with one of our station gardening days which are on the first Sunday of each month t 11.00. Next session is Sunday 6th October

Photo J E Rayner.

*There seems to be **no** club 55 offer from **Arriva Trains Wales** at the moment. This is unusual as it had almost become a tradition for them at this time of year. However **First TransPennine Express** did introduce Club 55 tickets for this part of the year. See our bargain fares article to get the details of this great offer.*

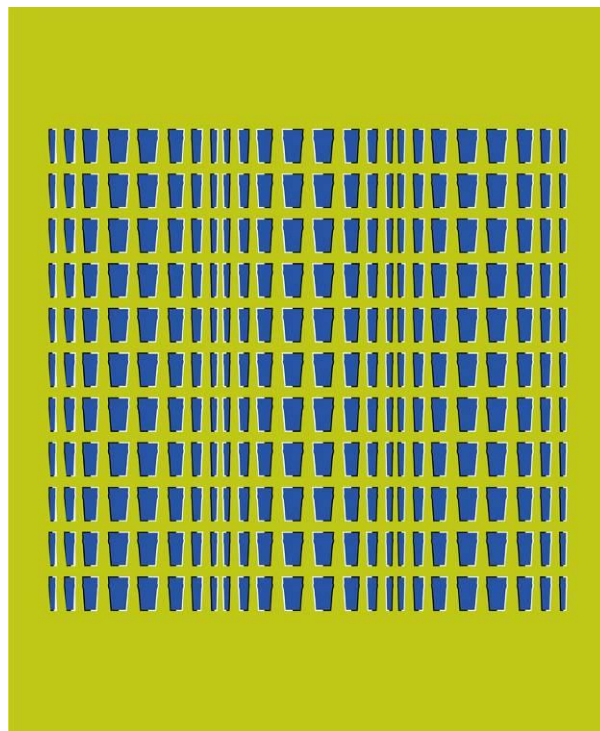
The **new Eccles Station building** finally opened (without ceremony) to passengers on Tuesday 10th September. It is a big improvement on what went before for passengers & staff. (The new building has disabled access and a dedicated parking space for blue badge holders.) Stuart is apparently pleased with it. It is also much more secure. FRECCLES has also been given access to a water supply to assist with the watering of what are becoming quite extensive gardens.



The next stage of the project is to make the parking and forecourt area much more attractive and better for pedestrian access to the station. This area will include a secure cycle store for about 35 bicycles. The bicycles will go on two levels of racks so that less space is taken away from the forecourt area.



*Network Rail is offering good advice to drinkers with a series of **Beer Goggles Test** posters now appearing at many railway stations. The posters point out that there were 1600 accidents at stations last year and suggest taking mineral water with it, of getting an earlier train home. The campaign is backed by a **video clip** that is both highly amusing and alarming. Take a look at this at <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/safety/stations/>*



Colourful semaphore signals have been an emblematic part of Britain's railway stations for 150 years or so, but they are now disappearing rapidly as Network Rail invests in newer, more cost effective signalling systems. ESN has been keeping an eye open for those still in use.



At Barrow in Furness station there are still a few upper quadrant semaphore signals. The small shunt signal is off for rolling stock to leave platform one and go onto the depot.

The other signal is the starter for the coast line to Whitehaven.

At Nantwich the starter signal is off for the stopping train to Shrewsbury. Work has started here to replace this signal.

Note the traditional level crossing and signal box.



A **mural at Patricroft train station** was one of six shortlisted for a national Community Arts Schemes award. The judging was at the end of September and whilst the Association of Community Rail Partnerships' (ACoRP) judges didn't place it in the top three, FrOPS (Friends of Patricroft Station) were very pleased to have the mural (which was commissioned and created by pupils of St Patrick's High School, Winton during 2012) shortlisted for a national award.



The mural entitled 'Pioneers of the Industrial Revolution' highlights the rich industrial past of the area including Nasmyth's steam hammer foundry and the world's first commercial railway and canal which pass over each other at Patricroft. The mural artistically incorporates many historical faces including that of Queen Victoria who famously alighted at the station in 1851.

*On Tuesday 24 Sep 2013 Network Rail released **station retail sales results showing a 6.4% growth in like-for-like sales** from April to June 2013, whereas in the same period high street sales, reported by the British Retail Consortium, increased by 0.4%. The figures were compiled from the results of retailers operating from over **500,000 sq ft of retail space** (520 units/shops) at 16 of Britain's biggest and busiest stations owned and operated by Network Rail, benefiting from a combined annual footfall of over a billion. Top performing stations include King's Cross (+38.2%), followed by Cannon Street (+32.3%), London Bridge (13.6%), Euston (+7.7%) and Edinburgh Waverley (+7.5%) compared to the same period last year.*

A new rail service will operate in the Ribble Valley from Sunday 15th September through to Sunday 11th May next year, courtesy of Northern Rail, and Community Rail Lancashire. This winter Sunday train service between Blackpool North and Hellifield will be known as the '**Ribble Valley Rambler**'. There are two return trips to Hellifield via Clitheroe, connecting there with trains on the Settle to Carlisle line. The Ribble Valley Rambler is **designed to provide a short day out**, allowing enough time to enjoy a walk or to explore towns such as **Blackburn, Clitheroe, Settle or Appleby**.

BARGAIN FARES.

1) Club 55 is back but this time on First TransPennine Express services.

Basically 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.

The offer is open from 15th September to 16th November 2013

Travel must be after 09.30 Monday to Friday: they are not just day returns; you can stay for several days or weeks before returning. However they do bring some longer distance places to a cost one can consider as reasonable for a day out. These are great value tickets & can be purchased at Eccles Station for travel from Manchester Piccadilly.

Here are some ESN suggestions:

HULL – a fine city centre, good maritime museum, Ferens art gallery, old dock area, Wilberforce's house.

YORK – so much to do and see. Look at the Freccles 100 days out for some ideas.

SCARBOROUGH – a great big sea side town, docks, castle, museum parks, beaches, walks.

CLEETHORPES – small, sandy, great views of Humber shipping, fish and chips, Bateman's pub, miniature steam railway and a cliff.

DARLINGTON – attractive centre, cattle market, market, St Oswald's Church, North Road Museum, arts centre.

DURHAM – a lovely old town with river, ancient cathedral, university & old streets.

NEWCASTLE – everything a city could offer, great pubs, huge bridges, River Tyne, museums and galleries, superb shopping, and across the river the centre of Gateshead.

EDINBURGH – castle, palace, Royal Mile, cathedral, Arthurs Seat, Calton Hill, Old Town (Burke and Hare territory), New Town (well 18th century).....

GLASGOW - a splendid large 18th century city, cathedral, university, amazing parks, museums and art galleries, River Clyde

CARLISLE – walls, cathedral, castle, Tullie House museum, shopping.

PENRITH – sizeable market town adjacent to lakes.

WINDERMERE – perhaps a trip on the steamers? Or a visit to the boat museum?

GRANGE OVER SANDS – attractive small former seaside town with a long promenade.

ULVERSTON – old market town & birthplace of Stan Laurel (Laurel & Hardy).

Check it yourself on <http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/campaigns/club-55/>

2) Peak Wayfarer.

Wayfarer is the day-out ticket that lets you travel wherever you want to places in Greater Manchester and parts of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire and the Peak District. It's perfect for a day out with your family or friends and gives complete freedom to go where you choose, using buses, trains and trams.

Wayfarer lets you travel for a whole day by bus at any time and by train and tram after 9.30am weekdays and anytime Saturday, Sunday and public holidays.

Group £21 - Up to 2 adults and 2 children. Children must be aged under 16. Proof of age may be required.

Adult £11

Concession £6 – For children 5 – 15 years (inclusive) or adults aged 60 and over. No concessionary pass or permit is needed but proof of age may be required.

Buy from these places in the Wayfarer area:

Staffed railway stations (up to three days in advance) and PayPoint retailers (including TFGM Travelshops). **Wayfarer tickets bought at PayPoint outlets must be used on the day of purchase.**

[Click here](#) to find out more about buying tickets through PayPoint retailers.

It seems the tickets can no longer be bought on the bus or train.

Places you can visit:

[Click here](#) to see where a Wayfarer can take you by bus (PDF 592k)

[Click here](#) to see where a Wayfarer can take you by train and tram (PDF 96k)

The following bus train and tram companies take Wayfarer tickets.

Buses

You can travel at any time on services run by these bus companies.

Accrington Transport	Magic Bus
Arriva bus companies	Maytree Travel
Bakerbus	Rosendale Transport
Belle Vue (M/C) Ltd	Selwyns
Blackburn with Darwen	South Lancs Travel
Bluebird Bus and Coach	Stagecoach Bus Companies
Bowers Coaches	Stotts Tours
Bullocks Coaches	Swans Coaches
Checkmate Travel	TM Travel
Clowes Coaches	Trans Dev
Eurobus	Trent Barton
Finglands	Vale of Llangollen Travel Ltd
First Bus Companies	Warrington Borough Transport
Go Goodwins	Warrington Coachways
Hulleys of Baslow	Warringtons of Ilam
JP Travel	Wigan Buses

Trains and trams

You can travel after 9.30am Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and public holidays on services operated by these train and tram companies.

Arriva Trains Wales

Northern Rail

Cross Country East Midland Trains

First TransPennine Express

Virgin Trains

Metrolink

OUT AND ABOUT...

The Trip of the Month in the last edition was a visit to the 'Golden Cluster' of buildings in Middleton walking from Mills Hill Station. It seems as good a place as any to show some photos of especially as a regular reader has written in to say "I never thought Middleton would be so good, particularly the bit around the Church with good views from hill which was very memorable. I checked in Pevsner which went overboard about the Methodist chapel by Edgar Wood on Long St, describing it as a "Knockout" inside and out."

If you didn't go, then wait till next September and dig out the Old ESN from your files.



Above: inside the parish church of St Lawrence, the bows of the Middleton Archers are on display. Below in the Queen Elizabeth (number 1, not number 2) Grammar School where there were free samples of a truly excellent bottle conditioned ale from the local brewery. (Read the label)



Above: as the Pevsner guide says a “Knockout” inside and out, Long Street Methodist Church by Edgar Wood. Below a ‘Golden Cluster’ pilgrim enjoys his Lees bitter in the Old Boar’s Head, where there is a rather unfortunate sign on the toilet door.



...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.

ARTICLES

The Great Gathering at York.



The A4 class 4-6-2 locomotives of the London and North Eastern Railway with their streamlined casing are symbols of the 1930's fascination with speed and luxury. They represent the most romantic aspects of rail travel, and of course it is Mallard of this class that holds the world steam speed record of 126mph.

During July The National Railway Museum at York held an event called 'The Great Gathering' bringing together, from around the world, the six surviving members of this class designed by Sir Nigel Gresley in 1935. They were built at Doncaster Works for use on the London and North Eastern Railway Company's expresses between King's Cross and Edinburgh. In the picture above all six locomotives are in the roundhouse at York (The chimney and headboard of one just visible behind loco on extreme right).



Thirty five of the locos were built at Doncaster in the following three years. The first four were Silver Link, Quicksilver, Silver King, and Silver Fox as they were to run the Silver Jubilee Train between London and Edinburgh starting that year. The following locomotives were named after birds because their designer was a keen birdwatcher. However A4 no 4468 was actually the 100th Gresley designed pacific loco (he had previously introduced the pioneering A3 class, the first of which was Flying Scotsman) so the LNER named it after its designer.



No 4468 Sir Nigel Gresley. The side flaps which originally covered the motion were later removed from all the locomotives. A rear view shows the corridor connection through the tender. By allowing a crew change to take place while on the move, the locos could run the 400 miles nonstop. The drivers and firemen must have been very slim!

This naming of 4468 after the designer broke the run of bird names and was even followed by the renaming of some of the locos after company officers. Thus 4469 Gadwall became Sir Ralph Wedgwood (LNER Chief General Manager); 4500 Garganey was named Sir Ronald Matthews (chairman); 4499 Pochard became Sir Murray Wilson (deputy chairman); and 4462 Great Snipe became William Whitelaw (a succeeding chairman).

On the night of April 28th /29th there was an air raid on York, and 4469 Sir Ralph Wedgwood was damaged beyond repair when a bomb hit York North engine shed. As a result 4466 Herring Gull was renamed later as the second Sir Ralph Wedgwood.



The damage to 4469 indicates that the bomb managed an almost direct hit on the loco. Below is a plaque marking the place in the roundhouse.



4496 Golden Shuttle was renamed Dwight D Eisenhower in honour of his service as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces (Europe) in the war.





Locos were also renamed after parts of the British Empire for their war contributions.

The renaming continued after the war: for example the names Walter K Whigham, Miles Beevor, and Lord Faringdon appeared.

When the class was renumbered 60001 to 60034 under British Railways there were only a few of the stylish bird names left, these being Sparrow Hawk, Bittern, Guillemot, Wild Swan, Mallard, Golden Eagle, Kingfisher, Falcon, Merlin, Woodcock, Golden Plover, Gannet, and Seagull.





A Bash at Beeching (4).

The facile argument of the notorious Beeching Report was that one third of the route mileage carries only one percent of the passenger mileage and one percent of the goods ton mileage, so close it. Exactly the same can be said about the road network except in that case the saving by ceasing to maintain all minor roads would be vast. Notice the argument ignores the inconvenience of the user.

The report dealt with lines operated as they were and not as they could have been. That many lines were losing money is true: that they would always lose money is false. Improved operations, investment and reduced staffing would have turned quite a few of the lines into profitable community assets. Instead they were lost.

The railways losses were running at £68million pa (around £1.2 billion today.) This was hardly a catastrophe, but it was turned into one. It seemed to be ignored that the closed lines would still need long term drainage, fencing and

bridge maintenance whilst no longer providing a service. The closures yielded a saving of only £30million pa (about £500million).

Clearly politics (or the zeitgeist if you prefer) played a greater part than logic or sense in what happened: the corrupt Marples; the temptations of power; the developing “petrol head” mentality; the elevation of individuality over community benefits; dislike of collective forms and pursuit of selfish ends; the hypocrite Anthony Crosland – railways are an elitist form of transport; trades unions’ often intransigent resistance to innovation; and finally the power of the road lobby.

This last point is well illustrated by two events. Harold Wilson had to get rid of Beeching because the powerful road lobby foresaw the danger of his proposed freightliner trains. From the other side of the industry fence was the shameless permanent blacking of new liner train depots by the Transport and General Workers’ Union in order to protect lorry drivers from the competition it would bring.

That such disparate groups should work together effectively in a conspiracy to close railways is hard to imagine; this is not to deny that such aims existed in certain quarters. It seems to be more likely that the railway disaster arose from a temporal confluence of poor thought, ideologies, and unsuitable individuals in certain roles, incompetence, and bad organisation – all things that this country excels in.

Chapter XX of Faulkner and Austin’s book ‘Holding the Line’ contains 18 important conclusions from their survey of the period. In sum these conclusions are quite damning of the procedures (or lack of) at the time, but they do not conclude from this that it was a conspiracy either.

ESN has three last points:

It could happen again – the historic forces have not gone away but sleep, and ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it’.

Thus ‘Holding the Line’ is a very important book indeed and it is a pity that Salford Libraries chose not to buy it (YOU KNOW WHY). If you are interested in railways, transport, politics etc, get a look at this book!

Lastly is a semantic point relating to the bad thinking. ESN wonders why state money spent on the railways is called subsidy. It is not called subsidy for road works, education or health services is it? Why should the procurement of a social good be a 'subsidy' in one case only?

ESN is pondering reprinting two book reviews relating to the A4 and Beeching articles.

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

