

# ECCLES STATION NEWS

*“... better than The Times!*

*... or so we are told by one of our regular readers!*

SEPTEMBER 2013

*This copy of ESN has local railway news; a look at the local impacts of the Beeching Report, and a **brand new itinerary for your day out...** have you heard of ‘The Golden Cluster’? **Editor***

NEWS

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October** will be the next Freccles gardening and clean up day at the station. If you fancy a bit of **light exercise** in company then do come along, and bring your friends too.



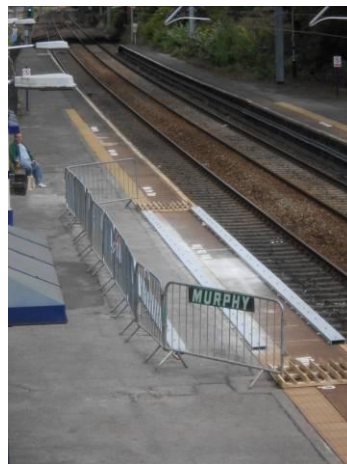
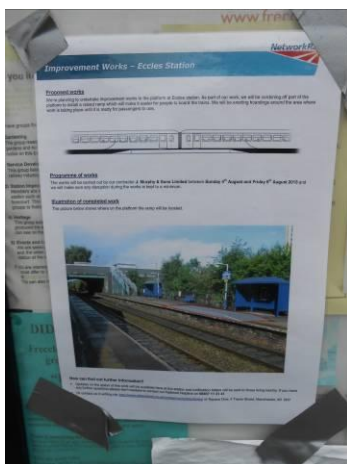
Freccles member **Mark Charnley** takes a break from his job at Network Rail to do some real work at a **Freccles Clear Up Day**.

Photo: J E Rayner

**Network Rail is spending £13m on the Southport to Wigan Wallgate line.** Work started on the 12<sup>th</sup> August with the majority due to be completed by December. Most of the work will take place **overnight** when trains are not running but there will be some effect on late evening services between Southport and Wigan, Monday to Thursday.

Martin Frobisher, Network Rail Area Director commented: “The investment we are making will provide a smoother ride and a more reliable service for passengers travelling between Southport and Wigan. **The track here along this route is extremely old** and was beginning to have an adverse affect on train punctuality. We’ll be **replacing over 11 miles of track** which will allow more trains to run on time along this important route.”

**Eccles station got the hump** in August when Network Rail installed a **Harrington Hump** on the Manchester platform. This was quite a surprise as the first inkling was the rather untidily displayed notice shown below. The humps come as a kit which is attached to the platform on battens (also below). The first of these cost saving humps was installed at Harrington Station in Cumbria in 2009. The hump adds a few inches height to part of the platform and extends closer to the trains.



**Freccles welcomes this improvement for the passengers** who have struggled to climb up to or descend from the train doors on this platform. The hump came into use on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August. Stop boards mark the points for the different types of train to stop with central doors over the hump.



*A pensioner has died after walking into the path of a tram that was arriving at the **Freehold Metrolink stop** on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013. Services between Victoria and Rochdale were suspended and the emergency services were contacted immediately. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of everyone on site, the man passed away a short time later. A Metrolink spokesman said "Our deepest sympathies go to his friends and family at this time. The driver of the tram involved will be offered counselling." Tram services resumed at 19.30.*

More fortunate (if it can be described as such) was Darryl See (23) who, **wearing headphones**, walked along tracks near Lake Michigan. He was directly hit by a Chicago bound train **doing 110 mph** and thrown 20 feet into tall grass. However he survived with crushed vertebrae, suspected broken pelvis, and a plate fitted in his neck. He has no memory of the accident.



The **new booking office building** has appeared on the forecourt of Eccles Station in the last few weeks. However it was not ready for the projected date of 19<sup>th</sup> August. The opening date is now **back to September 9<sup>th</sup>** (*what year?*).

ESN is greatly relieved that **the brickwork is a much better colour** for this town than was shown on many of the drawings and computer printouts during planning.



Workmen put up the shuttering for the concrete ramp and walkway in front of the new building, but it was to be a while before any concrete was poured!

*All photos courtesy of J E Rayner.*

*ESN has heard that **Arriva Trains Wales** and **First TransPennine Express** are both bringing back **cheap Club55 tickets** in September. With proof of age (not necessarily a rail card) you can buy real bargain fares for longer journeys on their networks. However it has not been possible so far to find out any details of the offers, **even using the computer inter web thingy**. Hopefully ESN will have news for you in October. In the meantime keep an eye on*

*<http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/Home.aspx> and on*

*[http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/?qclid=CMCuw4\\_FpbkCFQbJtAody28AnA](http://www.tpexpress.co.uk/?qclid=CMCuw4_FpbkCFQbJtAody28AnA)*

There are changes afoot with the Greater Manchester **Wayfarer** tickets. The price has changed to **£11 adult, £6 concession, and £21 group**. This is still good value for a day's travel in the Wayfarer area. When the current supply of scratch card tickets is exhausted they will not be reprinted. Instead tickets can be bought at **PayPoint** retailers (including **TfGM Travel Shops**) for use on the same day, and up to 3 days in advance at **manned railway stations**. ESN has heard they will not be sold on trains, and has received no information about this or whether they will be sold on the buses. We shall inform our readers when we find out more. There will be a full article on Wayfarer in next month's issue.



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

So you didn't go on the last Trip of The Month? What did you miss?



As soon as you are on the canal the walk is green and tranquil, and you are faced with the first refreshment opportunity! (Above)



We don't recommend these trips for no reason!

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

## ARTICLES

### **EXPERIMENT.**

Network Rail is working in partnership with The Department for Transport Enabling Innovation Team, Greater Anglia Trains, and Bombardier to create a prototype battery-powered train. Funding is coming from Network Rail, the Enabling Innovation Team (hosted by the Rail Safety and Standards Board) and the Department for Transport.

The train could run on battery power over non-electrified lines (charging up at terminal stations), or over stretches of diesel line connecting electrified parts of the railway. Electric trains are quicker, quieter, and more efficient - making them better for passengers and the environment. The potential to spread those benefits while not having to put up miles of wiring would be cost-effective and sustainable.

Bombardier will adapt one of Greater Anglia's Class 379 units for the experiment. It will be fitted with two different forms of batteries: lithium (iron magnesium) phosphate, and hot sodium nickel salt. The batteries will undergo many lab tests before being fitted to the train. The prototype will then run in and out of service on an electrified Great Anglia line. This is so it can use its pantograph to get power if any problems develop. Once the tests are complete, by the end of 2014, the unit will be returned to its former state and will run as a normal unit again in service.

### **A Bash at Beeching (3).**

Following the 'Beeching Report' great damage was done to the UK railway network. If there is any good fortune to be found it is that the report was not followed systematically to completion. The political controversy was too great and there were many branch lines that passed through marginal seats; closures were prevented by some vigorous campaigns; others were merely delayed for a few years. In typically British style, lack of investment continued; there was no strategic reappraisal, and alternative damage was done in some cases even though the Labour Government elected in 1964 had promised to end closures.

Time and space limit consideration to very local examples, which illustrate the general story.

Railway closures were not a new thing – the network had always been gently pruned to keep it healthy. For example the LMS closed Weaste, Seedley and Cross Lane stations in the 1930s because they were so little used. Ordsall Lane station was hit in the Blitz and did not reopen. Glazebury, Kenyon Junction, Norton and Dunham on the Hill closed in the 1950s. Closures though piecemeal did accelerate: Manchester Exchange to Bolton Great Moor Street via Worsley and Walkden Low Level closed in the early 60s. Rochdale to Bacup closed in the early 60s.

What stands out is the rate of and haphazard nature of the closures that followed the report. At the end of the article are the lists again. In red are the closures. A single asterisk indicates a later reopening; a double asterisk a reopening on a preserved railway. More specific local examples raise some points of interest.

Eccles and Patricroft stations survived but Monton Green and Worsley did not. Leigh became the largest town without a railway service.

The Manchester Exchange to Chester General local service survived providing a useable but irregular service to Eccles and Patricroft stations.

Illustrative of the lack of strategic thinking was the withdrawal of Manchester Exchange – Tyldesley – Liverpool Lime Street services as per the report, whereas those via Patricroft were saved. However there was no improvement made to the service via Patricroft to cater for the displaced traffic: the trains remained as infrequent as before!

A Labour Government was elected in 1964 on a platform of opposing rail closures. Despite this the closures continued and some were extra to the Beeching Report. The Manchester Exchange – Wigan North Western stopping service (via Eccles) was withdrawn as per the report, but in addition the line was closed from Eccles Junction to Wigan, and via Leigh to Kenyon. Therefore a valuable diversionary route between Eccles and Huyton, or Eccles and Kenyon was lost. Soon afterwards suburban house building was in full swing on both sides of the former line from Boothstown onwards.

The Piccadilly to Macclesfield stopping service via Rose Hill was closed in 1970 as per the report, but vigorous campaigning saved the trains as far as Rose Hill.

The first electrified intercity railway in the UK from Manchester Piccadilly to Penistone and Sheffield was closed. This was not mentioned in the report and did not occur until 1970. This was the end of frequent expresses taking less than 40 minutes between the two cities. The irony in this is that most of the line survived – only the crucial central link over Woodhead was closed. The Penistone to Sheffield section survived as part of Huddersfield to Sheffield local services. The Piccadilly to Glossop and Hadfield local trains survived but the 4 track link between Hadfield and Penistone over Woodhead was lifted.

No replacement expresses were put on the alternative Midland line via Edale! What did survive the report was the infrequent Piccadilly – Sheffield stopping service through Edale taking nearly two hours at the time. Again this surely tells us something about the real agenda for the railways!

Manchester Central to Derby Midland expresses and local services (not threatened in the report) were withdrawn. Thus one could no longer travel to Derby or Nottingham in just over an hour. No alternative trains were provided on other routes so the journey then became about two and a half hours with train changes. Nor could one visit Millers Dale (for Tideswell), Bakewell, Cromford or Matlock from Manchester. The line was lifted between Chinley and Matlock Bath – the local trains from there to Derby were saved.

In line with the report Victoria to Bacup services were withdrawn as was Victoria – Bury – Haslingden- Accrington – Colne service. Both lines were closed and lifted between Clifton Junction and Accrington. As a result fast trains to busy parts of north east Lancashire were lost.

#### Rail Services to be discontinued: (actual closures in red)

Crewe – Warrington – Preston - Carlisle (local)

Crewe – Shrewsbury (local)

Crewe – Chester General (local)

Manchester Exchange – Warrington – Chester General (local)



Bangor – Afonwen

Chester General – Holyhead/Caernarvon (local)

Manchester Piccadilly – Buxton

Stockport Edgeley – Stalybridge (local)

Liverpool Lime Street – Tyldesley /Patricroft – Manchester Exchange (local)

St Helens Shaw Street – Earlestown – Warrington Bank Quay

Manchester Exchange – Huddersfield (local)

Wigan Wallgate – Fazakerly – Liverpool Exchange

Wigan Central – Glazebrook

Glazebrook – Stockport Tiviot Dale

Blackpool North – Fleetwood

Southport Chapel Street – Preston

Earby – Barnoldswick

Rose Grove – Todmorden

Ulverston – Lakeside

Barrow – Whitehaven

Carlisle – Penrith – Workington

Oxenholme – Windermere (local)

Manchester Victoria – Bury – Bacup

Manchester Victoria – Bury – Accrington – Colne

Liverpool Exchange – Southport Chapel Street

Lancaster Castle – Lancaster Green Ayre - Heysham

Manchester Central – Chinley – Derby Midland (local)

Buxton – Millers Dale.

Carnforth – Wennington

Carlisle - Skipton

Manchester Central – Chinley – Hope – Sheffield Midland

Manchester Exchange – Tyldesley – Wigan North Western (local)

Manchester Exchange – Stalybridge – Greenfield

Manchester Victoria – Newton Heath – Middleton

Manchester Victoria – Horwich

Manchester Victoria – Bury Bolton Street

Royton – Royton Junction

Southport Chapel Street - Crossens

Manchester Piccadilly – Hadfield/Glossop

Manchester Piccadilly – Romiley – Hayfield/Macclesfield

### Rail Stations to be closed:

**Apperley Bridge**

**Ardwick**

**Ashburys for Belle Vue**

**Ashton Charlestown**

**Bacup**

**Baguley**

Balshaw Lane and Euxton

Bank Hall

**Barnoldswick**

**Bassenthwaite Lake**

**Beeston Castle & Tarporley**

**Blackrod**

Bamford

**Besses-o'th'-Barn**

**Birch Vale**

**Birkenhead Woodside**

Blackpool North

Blundellsands and Crosby

**Bollington**

Bootle (Cumberland)

Bootle Oriel Road

Broadbottom

Bryn

**Bury Bolton Street\*\***

Buxton

**Birch Vale**

**Cadishead**

**Culcheth**

Chapel-en-le-Frith Central

Chapel-en-le-Frith South

**Cheadle (Cheshire)**

**Cheadle Heath**

**Chester Northgate**

**Churchtown**

**Chorlton-cum-Hardy**

**Cromford**

**Crumpsall**

**Denton**

**Didsbury**

**Diggle**

**Dinting**

Disley

Dore and Totley

Dove Holes

**Droylesden**

Earlestown	<b>Eccles</b>	Edale
Edge Hill	Ellesmere Port	Entwistle
<b>Fairfield for Droylsden</b>	<b>Fleetwood</b>	Formby
Foxfield	Freshfield	Frodsham
Furness Vale	Gargrave	Garsdale
Giggleswick	<b>Glossop Central</b>	<b>Godley Junction</b>
<b>Gorton and Openshaw</b>	<b>Greenfield</b>	Grindleford
Hathersage	<b>Hayfield</b>	<b>Hazel Grove</b>
<b>Haigh</b>	Hathersage	<b>Heaton Park</b>
Hellifield	<b>Helmshore</b>	Helsby
Hesketh Bank	<b>Hest Bank</b>	<b>Higher Poynton</b>
Hightown	<b>High Lane</b>	<b>Hindley South</b>
Hope	Horton in Ribblesdale	<b>Horwich</b>
Huyton	<b>Hyde Central</b>	<b>Hyde North</b>
Ince & Elton	<b>Keswick</b>	Kirkby
<b>Lancaster Green Ayre</b>	Langwathby	Layton
Lazonby and Kirk Oswald	<b>Leek</b>	<b>Leigh (Lancs)</b>
Liverpool Central	Long Preston	<b>Lower Ince</b>
Marsden	<b>Matlock Bath</b>	<b>Middleton (Lancs)</b>
<b>Middlewood Lower</b>	<b>Miles Platting</b>	Millers Dale (for Tideswell)
<b>Mill Hill (Lancs)*</b>	Milnthorpe	<b>Monton Green</b>
<b>Mossley (Lancs)</b>	Nantwich	<b>Newton Heath</b>
<b>Northenden</b>	<b>Orrell</b>	<b>Park (Manchester)</b>
<b>Partington</b>	<b>Patricroft</b>	Peak Forest for Peak Dale
<b>Pemberton</b>	<b>Pendleton</b>	Penruddock
<b>Prestwich</b>	<b>Radcliffe Central (Lancs)</b>	Rainford Junction
Rainhill	<b>Ramsbottom**</b>	Ravenglass

Rawtenstall\*\*

Rose Hill Marple

Slaithwaite\*

Scorton

Sellafield

Silecroft

Stockport Tiviot Dale

Tebay

Troutbeck

Vulcan Halt

Wem

West Timperley

Whitefield

Woodley

Yorton

From North Wales:

Abergele

Bagillt

Blaenau Ffestiniog

Brynkir

Connah's Quay

Deganwy

Dolwyddelan

Glan Conway

Hawarden Bridge

Llangollen\*\*

Llanwnda

Reddish South

Royton

St Bees

Seaforth & Litherland

Settle

Slaithwaite\*

Strines

Thatto Heath

Tyldesley

Waterfoot for Newchurch

Wennington

Whaley Bridge

Wigan Central

Worsley

Acrefair

Bala

Bodorgan

Caernarvon

Conway

Dolgarrog

Flint

Groeslon

Holywell Junction

Llangybi

Menai Bridge

Roby

Saddleworth

St Helens Shaw Street

Seascale

Shap

Stacksteads

Stubbins

Threlkeld

Upton

Waterloo (Lancs)

West Leigh and Bedford

Widnes Central

Woodlands Road

Wrenbury

Amlwch

Bala Junction

Bontnewydd

Chwilog

Corwen\*\*

Dolgellau

Gaerwen

Hawarden

Llanfairfechan

Llanrwst & Trefriw

Mostyn



Penmaenmawr

Penygroes

Prestatyn

Queensferry

Rhosneiger

Roman Bridge

Shotton High Level

Shotton Low Level

Talacre

Tal y Cafn & Eglwysbach

Ty Croes

Valley

Ynys.

## **TRIP OF THE MONTH.**

This is a new itinerary specially written by ESN for September, and it probably contains some surprises for you. It can be a shopping trip, an architectural ramble, or a pub crawl. Perhaps a combination of the three would be really good!

You may not have heard of **Middleton's Golden Cluster**, but it is well worth **visiting**. It consists of The Old Boar's Head, The Edgar Wood Centre (Long Street Methodist Church), St Leonard's Parish Church and the Old Grammar School. There is free entry to these buildings every Tuesday and Friday afternoon in September 2013 1pm-4pm. Visitors are often surprised to discover such architectural gems so close to Manchester! So explore Middleton and speak to the knowledgeable and enthusiastic volunteers in 4 of its most special buildings.



*Some of the helpers for Middleton's special September – Golden Cluster Month, pictured outside of the Old Boar's Head.*

*Photo – Middleton website.*



## MILLS HILL – MIDDLETON MEANDER.

Edgar Wood (1860 – 1935) was a talented architect producing buildings of character. John Willie Lees is a traditional brewer, producing a dark mild and a brisk, hoppy, bitter beer - selling these in some very attractive pubs. Middleton is an old market town with historic buildings and an open market on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Take the train from Eccles Station to Manchester Victoria.

At Victoria board a stopping train towards Rochdale, and alight at Mills Hill station. *Between Moston and Mills Hill note the Lees brewery on the left as the train passes the site of Middleton Junction. At this point a line used to split off left to Middleton, and another off right up a steep climb to Oldham. 'Vitriol Works' signal box is then on the right.*

Go down the station steps and turn left to follow Oldham Road. *This will also be the return route.*

On the left is the Old Cock Inn. *A Lees' pub that was probably a farm at one time - notice the great stone trough marked 'DOWRY FARM 1863'.*

Continue along Oldham Road as far as Elm Street. *On the right is the former Soudan Spinning Mill that is now the Vitafoam works.*

Take a look left down Elm Street *and you will see a very distinctive school building. This is Elm Wood Primary School built 1908 – 1910 by Edgar Wood. It is grade two listed and combines stone, brick and concrete. Intended for 100 boys it now has 420 boys and girls on the roll! The Head has to balance his education spending against the requirements of English Heritage!*

Carry on along Oldham Road *passing the Jolly Carter (Lees); The Hare and Hounds (Thwaites cask marque real ales, and food).*

[OPTION: To visit Tonge Hall, turn left up the street by the side of the Hare and Hounds and keep straight ahead a short way uphill into the fields. *This beautiful, old half timbered hall is now being carefully renovated, but as a result the plot is more like a building site. Note the view across to St Leonard's Church.*

Come back down to Hare and Hounds and continue along Oldham Road. As you approach a roundabout *(you will see Warwick Mill ahead and St Peter's RC Church up a street on the left)* cross the road and turn right down a ginnel, cross the River Irk, and approach Middleton Arena. *This is a striking modern building providing gym, swimming and entertainment facilities. Look ahead at the array of buildings stretching along Market Place.*

Cross left over Oldham Road, go right and then turn left into Middleton town centre. *On the right is The Harbord Harbord – a Wetherspoon's public house and notice Albion Buildings on Wood Street.*

Keep ahead. This is Market Gardens *with an attractive garden area, commemoration of Drummer Lee Rigby, and the open market stalls. Beyond is the shopping centre - of note is the history frieze inside. The town motto is 'Respice et Prospice'.*

Retrace steps towards the roundabout. Use the underpass to cross the roundabout to look at the buildings on Market Place. *They stretch from the Assheton Arms up to a derelict chapel building. Of note is the Manchester and Salford Bank building by Edgar Wood – this has been grit blasted taking the delicate glaze off the tiles causing them to crumble, as with The Town Hall Hotel in Eccles. Next door is the fine facade of the RBS building but which now*

*has a shoddy 'flat pack' interior in the banking hall – this building is as good a metaphor as any for the recent history of banking! On the opposite side of the road is a green glazed frontage of a former Gartside Brewery pub. The front is now the back of a Domino's Pizza Parlour, and the former back is now the front facing the car park.*

Retrace your steps to the roundabout and turn right to follow Long Street up hill. *On the left is the Conservative Club, an old hall whose grounds have been developed as single storey shops with parking on the roof.*

Cross Long Street to look at the Methodist Church. *This is a very fine essay in brick and sandstone, designed by Edgar Wood, and was built in 1899.*

On the same side of the road is the half timbered The Old Boar's Head. *So now you can guess the nickname. This pub has rambling low ceiling rooms and a very attractive small beer garden. It sells Lees' beers, and food is available.*

Opposite The Old Boar's Head is the stone built Parish School 1842. Next to it is Middleton Library and then Jubilee Park. **You will return to Jubilee Park.**

Continue up Long Street which becomes Rochdale Road to see 51 & 53 Rochdale Road. *A fine pair of semi detached houses by Edgar Wood.*

Further up, at the corner with Cleworth Road, you will see Fencegate and Redcroft. *Edgar Wood resided here from 1895 to 1916. On the other side of the road notice the cream and brown tiled facade of an old McKenna's pub.*

Cross the Road and go back down hill to Jubilee Park. *Above the park is St Leonard's Church.* Take a look round the park and perhaps go to the upper floor of the library to look at the local history section.

Leave the park by the top corner (diametrically opposed to the library building). Opposite this gate is The Ring o'Bells - *an attractive Lees' pub with a spacious, well planted beer garden behind.*

Cross the square to look around the church and yard opposite. *The church of St Leonard has a distinctive wooden belfry and is clearly ancient. Unfortunately it seems to be open rarely!*



Leave the churchyard and go left along St Leonard's Passage. Enter the cemetery opposite. *There are fine views from this hilltop cemetery; you can see St Mary's RC Church at Tonge. The cemetery has clearly suffered much neglect and vandalism, but Middletonians are now working to tidy it up. Take a walk around it and see the restored monument to Samuel Bamford.*

Leave the cemetery the way you entered and turn right to go steeply down St Leonard's Street. There is a green immediately below the churchyard. Cross diagonally to your left. At the opposite corner cross right and go down Bardsley Street. Cross Boarshaw Road and go onto the little lane opposite. *There is a memento of the former municipal electricity works.*

Left down this lane is the Old Grammar School, *delightfully sited next to the River Irk.*

Return to Boarshaw Road and go left. Take the next left along John Lee Fold and then right along Hanson Street (you will enjoy this industrial estate bit!) Pass Hanson Close (up which is Middleton's other brewery, called Wilson-Potter and run by two brewsters).

Take the next road left, Spring Vale, and follow it to where it rejoins Oldham Road at the Hare and Hounds. Cross towards the pub, and go left towards the station.

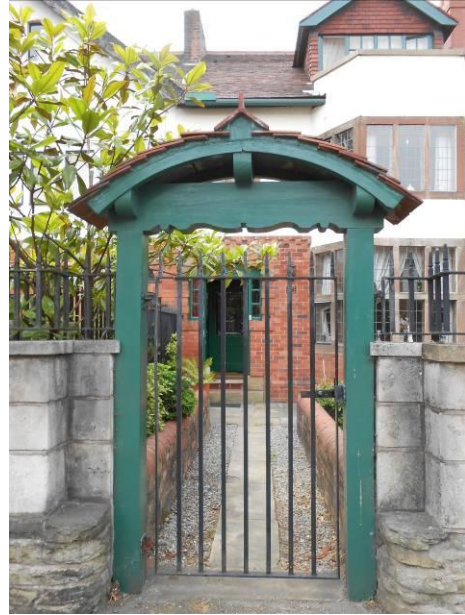
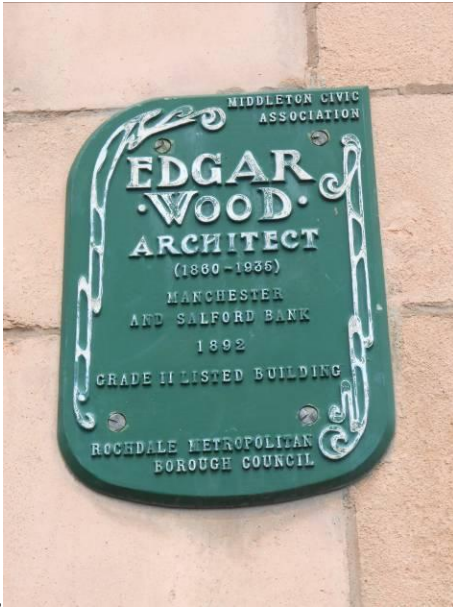
Go under the railway bridge and take the steps up right to the platform for the Manchester train.

CLASSIFICATION:            AN EASY WALK OF MEDIUM LENGTH  
   HISTORIC BUILDINGS, GOOD VIEWS, PUBS, FOOD,  
   MARKET AND SHOPS.

RAIL FARE:    £3.80 adult off peak return with a journey time of about 40mins.

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

Philips Street Atlas of Greater Manchester.



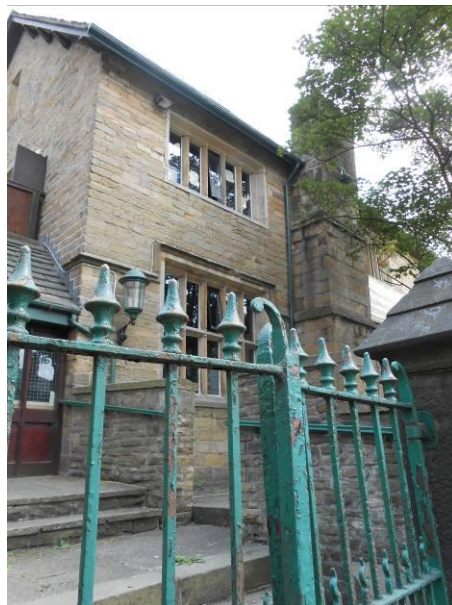
*Influenced by the arts and crafts movement.*



*A couple of lovely beer gardens.*



*ESN is grateful to The Headmaster of Elm Wood Primary School (Mr David Willis) for permission to photograph the buildings during the school holidays.*



*Many buildings of interest in a small town.*

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)

