

ECCLES STATION

NEWS

FEBRUARY 2013

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

News section, Articles. Trip of the month.

It seems like a long time since the last edition of ESN – perhaps a lot has happened in the interim period. It is difficult to know what to suggest for a visit in February, so ESN has chosen a walk round the walls in Chester. If it is a nice day this is a good introduction to the city. If it not so nice a day then there are plenty of distractions to be had by coming down off the walls at various places.

NEWS

FRECCLES **tidy up day** will be Sunday February 3rd from 11.00 for a couple of hours. Do come along to help. The **spring bulbs are starting to poke their heads out of the ground**. They should soon cheer us up with their flowers!

FRECCLES and FrOPS oral history project, **Cake Hole Histories**, is up and running but still looking for people who can help run/organise the project with us between now and the end of November. This is a chance to work with a professional oral historian and help preserve the memories of people living, working and growing up in Eccles and Patricroft as an archive of oral histories. Training is being provided for the various roles. Anyone interested should call Elizabeth & Mark Charnley on (0161 789 5016) or email info@freccles.org.uk.



This is **not** the Eccles garden. It is a symbolic **railway** garden just outside the station at Stalybridge.

Photo J E Rayner.

*It probably doesn't affect Eccles travellers too much but for a few weeks now some of the trains from Victoria towards Bolton and Wigan have **not been stopping at Salford Central**. Instead they are going via Ordsall Lane and then back up to the Crescent station. Other trains from Victoria **out to Wigan are calling at the Manchester platform** of Salford Crescent. Posters at Victoria say there is a problem with one of the points and emergency work is taking place, although ESN has seen no sign of any workers on the job.*

ESN has spotted the **first bit of overhead wire** in place. It is a short length at Ordsall Lane. It crosses the Liverpool line coming from Deansgate direction towards Salford Crescent.



We don't get a lot of vandalism now that the station is looking a lot better. However, early in January **one of the heritage poster cases was damaged** (left). Perhaps it was for theft of the poster (about Bradshaw) itself?

If anyone has information about the culprit please e-mail us in confidence, **so that action can be taken**.

Photo: J E Rayner

*The latest **National Passenger Survey results** have indicated a **slight decline** in satisfaction with Northern Rail's performance. In response **Ian Bevan, Managing Director, Northern Rail** says: "We are disappointed that the number of passengers that are satisfied with our service has reduced slightly. We know that the punctuality of trains is one of the key concerns for our passengers and during the survey period our services were affected by exceptional weather. Since then we have been working hard to recover performance to levels our passengers rightly expect... we have been encouraged to see **increases in scores ... including the cleanliness and overall station environment, cleanliness of the inside of the train, the room available on-board our trains and the helpfulness of our staff at stations...** we'll be continuing with the refurbishment of our trains; installing more information screens at stations and **improving the quality of information we provide during times of disruption.**"*

Local communities in England and Wales are to get improved access to rail services thanks to a **£20m New Stations Fund** which recently opened for bids. Local authorities, passenger transport executives and train operating companies are all being encouraged to submit bids for projects which can be brought quickly into use for the benefit of passengers and the economy.

Proposed new stations must be at a sufficiently developed stage and the plans supported by train operating companies and Network Rail. While the £20m will contribute towards the cost of scheme construction, bidders must have available a **portion of match funding** of the project cost. Applications will be assessed by a cross-industry panel including representatives from Network Rail and the Department for Transport. Details of the application process can be found at www.networkrail.co.uk/NSF. **The closing date for submissions is 25 February 2013.**

OUT AND ABOUT...

2012 was a very wet year indeed!



Water lies in the fields that are by the line from Ruswarp to Whitby Town, in late December.

Photo J E Rayner.

This is Larpool Viaduct on the closed Scarborough to Whitby West Cliff line. It crosses the River Esk and the Ruswarp to Whitby Town line.

Apparently it is owned by Sustrans now.

Photo J E Rayner





Although it did not make the national press until mid January, the very wet weather caused the land slip below St Mary's Church, Whitby in December. Fortune's smokery, to the left of the picture, had to bag up bones from their back yard to return them to the churchyard.

Photo J E Rayner.

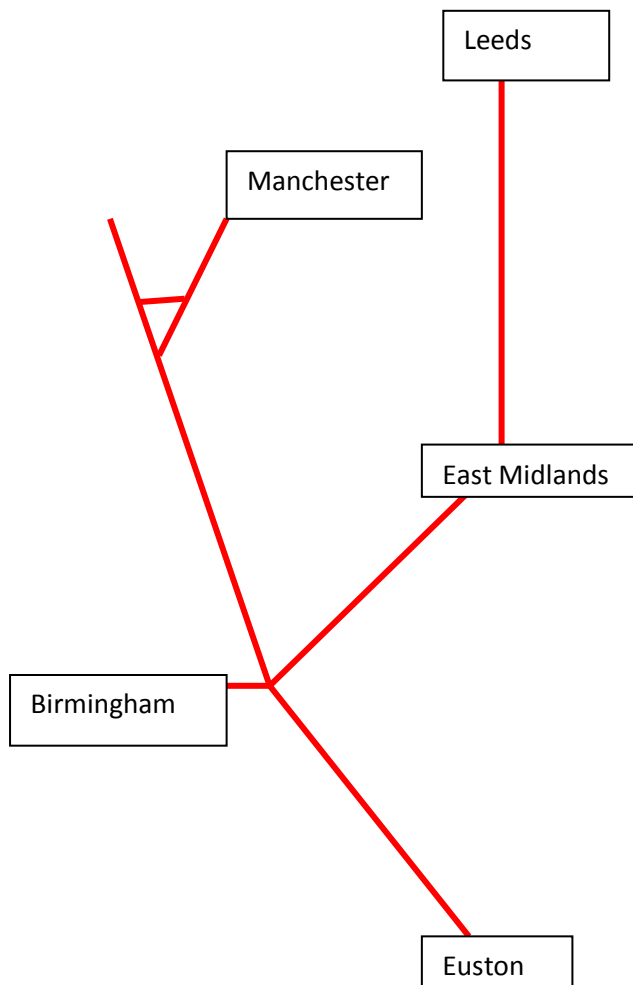
...By TRAIN from ECCLES STATION.

ARTICLES

High Speed Routes North Announced.

On Monday 28th January the government released details of the preferred routes for stage two of the proposed high speed railway system. The line will split just north of Birmingham to form a Y shape from Euston.

On the west side of the Pennines the line will pass by Lichfield, Stafford, and Crewe. The stations will be at **Manchester Airport** and **Manchester Piccadilly**. The line will also link with the West Coast Main Line (to run trains to the north) just south of Wigan.



On the eastern branch there will be a stop at **East Midlands Hub** which is situated at Toton to serve both Derby and Nottingham. The next stations will

be at **Sheffield Meadowhall**, and **Leeds**. There will be a link to the East Coast Main Line (to run trains to the north) just south of York.

There will be dedicated 225mph trains running between Euston, Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds. High speed trains that are compatible with the present network will run over the High Speed route and continue further north to Glasgow and Newcastle (these are called 'Classic Compatible' trains).

There will be special arrangements for compensation of those affected by the route, and it is anticipated that consultations and Parliamentary procedure will mean that it is 2015 or 2016 before the necessary Acts of Parliament are obtained. Construction from Euston to Birmingham should start in 2016 and of the two arms of the 'Y' should begin in 2020. Their respective estimated opening dates are 2026 and 2033! The whole project is estimated to cost about £33,000,000,000.

Cable Theft Result.

Six men who carried out attacks on railway cable and BT communications cable across Hertfordshire, Essex, Leicestershire, Buckingham and London have been jailed. The organized gang carried out 47 attacks at various times of the day between 1 May and 30 August 2011, costing Network Rail and BT almost £715,000 to replace and repair the cables as well as fines incurred to train operators as a result of delays, disruptions and cancellations caused. The men were caught as a result of a preplanned operation by specialized British Transport Police metal theft officers, who began patrolling the lines overnight, using both covert and overt tactics to track the thieves' movements.

All six men pleaded guilty to their offences at Blackfriars Crown Court on Wednesday, 2 January. At court on Tuesday, 29 January, Cruz was sentenced to three years and nine months in prison; Scott was ordered to serve three years and six months in prison; Nembhard was sentenced to two years and three months in prison; Lee was sentenced to two years' prison, in addition to a two-and-a-half-year sentence he is already serving, and Kreuder was ordered to serve one year and four months in prison. Sentencing for Newton was deferred until March, to take place following the conclusion of other unrelated charges currently under investigation.

Ordsall Lane Derailment.

On the afternoon of Wednesday 23rd January there was a derailment at Ordsall Lane Junction causing disruption to other train movements. A rake of empty West Coast Railways charter coaching stock topped and tailed by vintage diesels was travelling from Ardwick to Carnforth when the rear diesel (47 500) derailed at the junction. This locomotive then caught fire. The train was brought to a stand and the emergency services were on the scene promptly.

Once the fire had been extinguished the rolling stock could be removed from the junction and necessary repairs to track and signaling could be undertaken. This was achieved remarkably quickly (by modern standards) and trains were running again by Friday afternoon rush hour.

There is hardly a worse place on the network for such an event to occur because Ordsall Lane is a key South to North and East to West junction. Northern, First TransPennine Express and Arriva Trains were all affected. As a result of this accident, trains could not go from Eccles to Manchester or from Oxford Road to Bolton and Wigan, nor could trains run from Manchester to Chester. FRECCLES members went to Eccles and Patricroft stations to help inform passengers about the difficulties. Eoan and Elizabeth were around for three very cold hours and Stuart the booking office clerk from Eccles Station covered the rest of the “rush hour.”



The fire damaged 47 500 was taken into the Museum of Science & Industry. It will be taken from here on Monday 4th February by low loader, presumably to Carnforth, for repairs.

Photo J E Rayner.

As a result, a full page letter about the incident appeared in the national press on Monday 28th, over the names of Ian Bevan (Northern Rail), Dyan Crowther (Network Rail) and Nick Donovan of First TransPennine Express. This explained in outline what had happened; thanked passengers for their forbearance and

mentioned the work undertaken to provide an alternative service and to sort out the damage. ESN considers this to be a well judged action by the railway: the national press would eagerly report the disruption, but not so readily report on the solution of the problems caused. The letter also explained that the incident will be investigated by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch.

TRIP OF THE MONTH.

The trip this month is number Forty Seven

CHESTER – A CIRCUIT OF THE WALLS.

Chester is a lovely walled city, and there is no better introduction than this walk around the Roman and Mediaeval walls. You can leave the walls to explore anything else that takes your fancy and then rejoin for the rest of the circuit.

Catch the stopping train to Newton-Le-Willows and change there to catch the Llandudno/North Wales train soon after on the same platform. Alight at Chester Station. *This was called Chester General and served the Great Western and London and North Western Railway.*

Leave the Station and go ahead between the Queens Hotel and the Town Crier. *Notice the elegant hotel and once across the road look back to see the impressive Italianate façade of Chester General. It was opened on the 1st August 1848, having been designed by Thomson and Wild and built by the famous railway contractor Thomas Brassey.*

Continue down the road, which has many hotels, and cross the Canal Bridge. *To your left you see The Steam Mill and the shot tower.*

Descend the steps on the left to The Old Harkers Arms. U-turn to your left to follow the canal towpath into Chester. On your left you pass The Frog and Nightingale (*real ale and food*) and go under a bridge. A little further and take the path going left from the canal bank to a set of wooden steps up to the wall. At the top of the steps go left along the wall. *At key points around the wall you will find plaques with historic details about Chester and the walls.*

First on your right are Chester Cathedral and its separate modern bell tower. Then cross the bridge over Eastgate. *On this bridge is the Victoria Jubilee Clock (1897). There is also a fine view along the main shopping street.*

Continue along to Newgate Bridge. *Down below on the left a corner of the old Roman Fort and ditch is exposed. On the other side of the road you can see part of the amphitheatre and then just along the Roman Garden. At the far end of the Roman Garden is part of a hypocaust (Roman under floor heating system).*

Continue along past the Watch Tower. *There is now a fine view of the River Dee. On the left you can see the very pleasant quayside where one can hire rowing boats or take the tourist boats along the river; and also the suspension bridge.*

Continue to cross the bridge over Lower Bridgegate. *To the right you can see up Bridgegate into the city (notice The Bear and Billet and various tea rooms. On the left is the weir (with a small hydroelectric power station (defunct), and bridge over the Dee.*

You descend from the walls at this point. *Take a look at the bridge and the Roman symbols of justice and power on the Bridgegate. I recommend the Bear and Billet for Okell's (Isle of Man) real ales and good food.*

Walk above the river in front of the County Hall. At the right of the hall rejoin the walls. *Above you is Chester Castle.*

At the main road there is an option.

[OPTION: If you wish to visit the castle go right about 150 yds and enter through the classical portico. After your visit return to the same spot. *The castle was rebuilt in Greek revival style in the 18th Century to house the Cheshire regiment barracks and the courts. Pevsner considers this to be the best example of the style. There is a Cheshire Regiment museum (small charge) – see the fountain pens used to sign the Japanese surrender to General MacArthur in 1945!]*

Cross the road and continue ahead. *On your left is the historic Roodee Racecourse (first documented in 1539. Notice the villas above the river and the arches carrying the railway).*

As you come to Watergate there are many 18th century buildings on your right. *Notice the Infirmary of 1761.*

Cross the bridge over railways to Shrewsbury and Holyhead and you come to the Water tower. *Below is the canal. Its warehouses and lock buildings are typical designs by Thomas Telford.*

Continue along the walls to Pemberton's Parlour. *(Note the reference to muragers – officers to look after the walls.)*

Next is King Charles's Tower. This is at the green where you first joined the walls. Descend the steps and retrace the route along the canal to Chester General Station. Catch a train to Newton le Willows and change there for a train to Eccles.

CATEGORY: MEDIUM EASY.

ARCHITECTURE, VIEWS, PUBS, CAFES, SHOPS, RIVER TRIPS, CANAL, MUSEUMS, CATHEDRAL.

RAIL FARE: adult £16.60 anytime return.

MAPS: OS 1:50 000 sheet 117 Philip's Street Map CHESHIRE.

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

