

ECCLES STATION NEWS

July-September 2018



Welcome to the latest Eccles Station News

Please excuse the Editor for the slightly late production of this edition. This is clearly due to problems caused by Brexit, which it would seem causes all other problems.....

At the end of this newsletter is the information for the new (new) timetable that comes into effect from Monday 30th July.

Our Junior Reporters have also been out in force scouring the local area for helpful information which may affect your travel to and from Eccles & the area around the station.....

IMPORTANT NOTICES

plan extra time for your journeys!

1) Clarendon Bridge closure in August

On 28th November 2016, the Glass Bridge or more formally, the Clarendon footbridge over M602 motorway adjacent to Eccles station became the 'Glassless' Bridge as it was reopened after Highways England carried out works to improve the safety and appearance of the bridge.

The appearance has certainly improved, especially with the later addition of artwork panels and metalwork decoration from artist Mark Mennell

It has a more open feel and the perception of threats is diminished, but unfortunately the works failed to remedy the drainage issues that have plagued the bridge for many years. Since the works the surface has continued to have problems with mini-mountains appearing ready to trip the unsuspecting pedestrian and large puddles to dampen the feet un-necessarily.

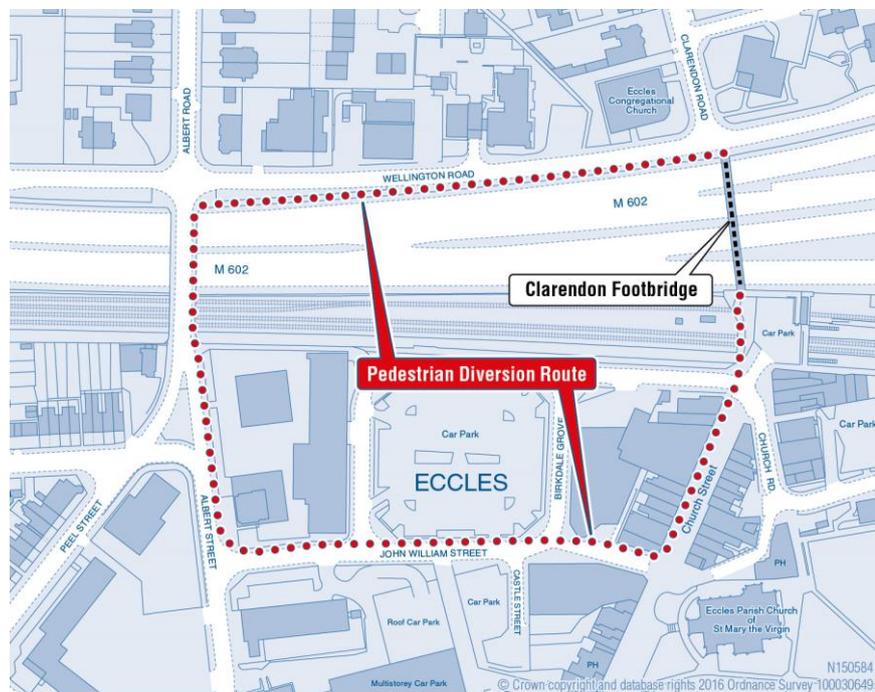
Highways England has informed FRECCLES that further work is due to start on (or shortly after) 30 July 2018 for approximately four weeks.

Works will take place seven days a week between the hours of 08:00 and 17:00, with some element of overnight working to suit certain operation of works.

As happened in 2016, the bridge will be closed completely for the duration of the works and a diversion will be in place.

The official diversion will be the same as the route from 2016 and is the one FRECCLES is recommending that people use, especially those with mobility issues or with prams, luggage & etc.

Local people familiar with the area may have alternative routes they will use but it is important that during August you allow extra time for your journey to and from Eccles in general and the Station in particular



M602 Clarendon Footbridge
Footbridge Closure – Diversion Routes for Pedestrians

Highways England would like to apologise for any inconvenience these works may cause you. If you wish to discuss this project further or have any questions, please contact the 24hr Highways England Customer Care team by phone on 0300 123 5000 or email info@highwaysengland.co.uk.

2) Eccles Metrolink Tram Service temporary Closure

Between Saturday 28th July and Thursday 9th August 2018 inclusive, there will be no tram service running between Eccles and Cornbrook and the services from Ashton under Lyne will terminate at Deansgate-Castlefield.

This is due to works for the new Trafford Park line which will connect to the network at Pomona.

A full bus replacement service will be operating throughout the closure period. Bus stops will be signposted.

As always, TfGM reminds you that you will still need to have a valid Metrolink ticket or your pass before you travel.

For more information, see the TfGM website:

www.tfgm.com/travel-updates/Eccles-line

3) Albert Road closure for sewage works

Our junior reporter has noticed that signs have gone up on Albert Road informing that the road will be closed (between Belgrave Crescent and Wellington Road) for two weeks from Monday 30th July for “essential sewage works.” As this is a major traffic route into Eccles and the station, please be aware and despite it being school holidays, make extra time for your journey.

Eccles & District History Society

Our colleagues at E&DHS have announced their new programme for the year 2018/19.

Meetings are all on Wednesdays, 7.30pm at Alexandra House, 395 Liverpool Road, Eccles, M30 7HB

Annual subscription is £16, visitors for individual presentations/talks £3 each.

12th September Local Railways Philip Hayes

10th October Eccles Cakes Kathy Percival

9th January 2019 A Lancashire Miner

Billy Kelly

13th February Elizabeth Gaskell's links to Salford

Diane Duffy

13th March the Worsley Steamboat

Norman Scott

10TH April The Boys Brigade

Bob Dewsnip.

For other events and subscriptions information visit edhs.btck.co.uk or email Eccleshistory@yahoo.co.uk

Miscellany

If people realised that the weather is always like this in Eccles, our station would benefit from a booming tourist trade. As it is the temperatures of 30°C and over can cause problems for the railway because of the extreme expansion of the rails. **Andy Thomas, managing director of England and Wales at Network Rail said:** “On very sunny days, rails in direct sunshine can be as much as 20 degrees centigrade above air temperature causing the steel to expand markedly and could, if not carefully monitored and action taken, buckle causing travel disruption.

“Our engineers and specialist extreme weather teams are monitoring track-side temperatures and vulnerable locations and will, if necessary, introduce temporary speed restrictions during the hottest part of the day to keep trains running, albeit more slowly than normal.”

How Network Rail looks after rails in extreme heat:

- We work closely with specialist weather forecasters and local weather stations to make plans and act so rails are less likely to buckle
- We have installed mini weather-stations and thousands of track-side probes to monitor local conditions
- We will introduce speed restrictions during the hottest part of the day at vulnerable locations as slower trains exert lower forces on the track and reduce the likelihood of buckling
- We paint certain parts of the rail white, so they absorb less heat – and expand less. Typically, a rail painted white is 5°C to 10°C cooler
- Our teams check track stability each winter as part of ongoing maintenance and strengthen any weak parts before summer.
- As most track is made up of long pieces of rail that are stretched and welded together, there is much less chance of buckling in very high temperatures because there is reduced compression
- When a track is made up from short rails bolted together, we leave small gaps between each one to allow for expansion

Whoops! (photo courtesy of Network Rail)



Advertisement.

Would you like to be a Friend of Eccles Station?

At FRECCLES, we are always keen to expand our membership and to recruit new members. At the AGM in March, Steve Clapham was appointed Membership Secretary to the group and over the next 12 months, he will be looking to increase and diversify the FRECCLES membership.

Becoming a Friend of Eccles Station provides the opportunity to support our work and help raise the profile of the organisation within our local community. You might also wish to join in the activities of one or more of our various groups as listed below:

Gardening Group – helping to maintain and develop the station gardens or litter clearing and tidying the station to ensure a positive image for passengers.



Service Development Group – working to improve the rail service at the station

Art and Heritage Group (in conjunction with Friends of Patricroft Station)
– looking at the background of our historic station and the wider history of Eccles and Patricroft and developing artwork on the station in partnership with the local community.

We would also like to recruit members who had an interest in communication and the use of social media.

If you are not already a Friend of Eccles Station, we would love you to join us. Please get in touch by email info@freccles.org.uk or by telephone 0161 789 5016 and we will put you in contact with Steve to provide you with more information about membership and our activities.

Looking forward to hearing from you!!!

Network Rail today is still working to complete the electrification works on the Manchester-Bolton-Preston route. Railway engineers will continue mid-week overnight working and weekend working until Sunday 4 November. There will also be a nine-day closure of the railway, from 25 August until Sunday 2 September, when buses will replace trains.

Martin Frobisher, managing director for Network Rail's London and North Western route, said: *“Our Manchester-Preston upgrade is part of the Great North Rail Project, the rail industry's team effort to transform train travel for customers across the North through track and train improvements. The delays in this are partly caused by unforeseen poor ground conditions hampering installing foundations for masts to carrying overhead power lines. The delays were compounded by the collapse of Carillion, the lead contractor for the scheme. With Amey having now replaced Carillion as the main contractor, progress is accelerating. On June 26th there were still three problem foundations (from a total of 1,659). and 117 masts (from a total of 1,519) still to install.*

All passengers who travel through the Bolton corridor are advised to check before they travel on www.nationalrail.co.uk or with their train operator.

Network Rail has produced a video of the Lime Street upgrade works. To be honest, ESN thinks time lapse filming has been used to make it look like they work really fast. Its interesting and a bit of fun. See <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/feeds/video-liverpool-lime-street-major-upgrade/>

Fair Fares (II).

In the last edition ESN gave many reasons to think that the rail fares review is a time-wasting exercise doomed to failure. Those arguments were mainly related to markets. In this issue they are more related to the network but before dealing with these some asides are appropriate.

The government has already stated that the outcomes of the review must be revenue neutral and so no net gain or loss to passengers. Where then is the point? Even worse if there are to be gainers there will be losers to balance the revenue! Secondly in RAIL magazine a cursory exploration of reform by Phillip Haigh concluded (on very shaky reasoning) that advance fares should be withdrawn to simplify the offering, so there go the cheapest fares ever offered, combined with the loss of a powerful demand management technique! Talk about be careful what you wish for!

Other suggestions seen are that over 50,000,000 fares in the database are far too many, and a national mileage rate would make things simpler. It seems to ESN that these suggestions have something in common: They display a bureaucratic desire for simple rules combined with an ignorance of markets and networks. A national mileage rate would have less well-off areas paying the same rate as affluent towns; allow no demand management; prevents a competitive response to other forms of transport and would create the problems where alternative routes are available (vide infra). Here is a likely scenario: the fastest and best served route between two towns happens to be the shortest one and this becomes the cheapest route. The alternative routes meander somewhat, taking in a few places on the way, so they take longer; might have slightly fewer trains serving them and these routes must charge a higher fare between the two towns!

What of there being over 50,000,000 fares on the database? This tells us nothing at all about the arguments. The would-be passenger, if normal, does not start off by sifting through 50,000,000 fares but looks for travel between the starting point and destination of their journey. They may include air, bus and ferry fares in their search as well. They then have a manageable number of fares to compare and choose. This is just the same as when buying manufactured goods of which there must be hundreds of millions – the potential consumer starts looking at

prices and qualities in a small range of items that might suit the felt need.

Now take a look at some network considerations: start with one station only (Home) and no route to anywhere (thanks Dr Beeching) and this station offers no fares at all (1,0) because it is not on a network. Now two stations are connected by one line – the minimum fare offering here must be one single from each station to the other, so two stations must offer one fare each (2,1). Here Home has one fare on offer. If there are three stations then Home must offer two singles: one to each of the other stations, and in return they must offer two singles each.

The argument progresses (4,3): (5,4): (6,5) etc. So, on a network of n stations each must offer at least n-1 single fares (n, n-1) and if this were not true then there would be stations without fares or fares without stations! The Office for Rail & Road data indicates 2560 stations on network rail so each of these must offer at least 2559 fares:

$$\mathbf{2560 \times 2559 = 6,551,040 \text{ fares at a minimum.}}$$

Already quite a number of single fares but this must now be multiplied: return, adult, child, off peak, weekly season, monthly season, annual season, railcard, first class (not all stations), advance (multiple according to relative train loads). There will be alternative routes in a number of cases (fewer than there were thanks to Dr Beeching) and there will be special offers and some tickets to non-Network Rail stations. So, let us multiply it by 10:

$$\mathbf{6,551,040 \times 10 = 65,510,400 \text{ fares}}$$

This is an over estimate for the number of fares on the database. One reason for this is ESN hasn't allowed for 'clustering' on longer distance journeys. An example of this could be 'Manchester Stations' to Scottish destinations and back rather than a fare for Salford Crescent and Oxford Road etc. Whatever, it is possible to see that total number of fares is reasonable and is a product of the number of stations and the much smaller number of fare types.

ESN has shied away from examining the effect of alternative routes on the number of fares on account of the complexity of that territory. The number of alternative routes escalates rapidly against the number of junctions (nodes) on a network but then the permissible fares rules come in for the tickets and if you wish to be baffled take a look at these:

http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times/fares/ticket_types.aspx#Routeing%20information

And

<http://data.atoc.org/routeing-guide>

Like trying to grab mercury this is what arises when applying a universal rule for the system. Fare simplifiers beware!

In the next edition ESN will present the reader with some network and marketing puzzles that are further illustrations of the issue.

Timetable Changes.

Eccles Station News wishes to apologise to readers for the further delay in the timetable article and apologises for any inconvenience this may cause.

The timetable is set to change again on Monday 30th July – please see our website www.freccles.org.uk for latest information or see our posters at the station

Last edition started out “Locally, May 2018 will see significant timetable changes for Eccles station when the trains start running to Piccadilly, Airport and Crewe rather than to Victoria.” Only they didn’t. Or rather they did spasmodically for a few days and then an interim (how long?) emergency timetable was introduced and is still current. This reduced cancellations and improved timekeeping.

On Northern Rail this disruption added to the RMT action trashed the gains of the last decade or so. In ESN’s opinion there will be a lot of passengers that will not return after this is all over and the morale of Friends groups could be sapped. So, what went wrong? There was a shortage of rolling stock; a shortage of driver training for the new services; a shortage of time to iron out potential problems before the due date; a shortage of timetable staff, and a failure at the top to heed warnings that it was not going to work.

The blame game is already underway, yet this chaos was a result of multiple failings across the rail system. We can start at the top with the Department for Transport whose civil servants dithered and delayed in giving decisions crucial to preparing a workable timetable. The government (and only the government) could have delayed the

implementation date; they had adequate warning, but they failed to take this crucial decision. This department is the responsibility of its Minister (Chris Grayling).

Then the Office of Rail and Road, the railways financial regulator, is responsible for telling Network Rail to cut back to 450 staff in the timetabling department, even though the biggest timetable change for decades was on the cards. If 450 staff seems generous then consider that they plan 2 timetables a year and the associated diagrams for rolling stock, drivers and guards. They then do the same for every piece of planned civil, permanent way and signal engineering work, and the same for unplanned disruption such as storm damage, derailments, etc. It is only once they have done their work that driver training can begin for the new services and the timetable was very late indeed – just a few weeks in advance rather than up to six months! Months are needed because when in training a driver is not available to drive the service trains.

Next, we come to Network Rail itself. Their failure to complete electrification of the Great Western main line and the Manchester to Blackpool line on time (even given the planned delays!) prevented the release of diesel rolling stock needed for this new timetable. (The collapse of Carrilion may have contributed as well). So much for the nationalised bits of the set up, but the Japanese company Hitachi has delayed delivery of new electric rolling stock to Scotland (partly due to curved windscreens giving images of ghost signals to drivers). The displaced rolling stock would have come south for the extra planned services.

This was a perfect storm of unconnected failings that left the franchises to pick up the pieces. On May 20th Northern had plenty drivers, but few of them trained for the new services, combined with a great shortage of rolling stock, and no authority to delay the new timetable. We shall have to wait for the results of the inquiry to see if the franchises are at all responsible for aspects of this mighty cock up, but ESN is of the view that the prime causes were nothing to do with the franchises. Politicians threatening the loss of franchises, or nationalisation, over it are on shaky ground. There is a great deal of political backside covering going on.

How Has Eccles Fared?

Annoyingly the proposed May 20th timetable provided Eccles with fewer rush hour trains than in recent years, but it soon descended into a very poor service indeed. The emergency timetable had provided some reliability by reducing the number of trains running through the station. At least now there will be surplus drivers able to train ready for new routes and services.....

The effects are documented in a table of figures collated by Freccles member Sean Dunne. <http://www.freccles.org.uk/cancellations.asp>

The work affecting the line was the completion of signalling and work for an additional platform at Liverpool Lime Street. At Huyton the fourth platform terminus road will become an additional through line adding capacity to the L&M route.

ESN's editor is very patient and is going to delay any analysis of timetable, and the amendment of 100 days out until a durable timetable seems to be in place.



Train times and routes change from Monday 30th July 2018

Monday – Friday departure times from Eccles

To Deansgate, Oxford Road & Manchester Piccadilly

06.10, 07.14, 08.14

and hourly until 16.14,

17.15, 20.14, 21.14, 22.19, 23.20

To Manchester Victoria

08.43, 18.07, 19.07, 00.20

To Liverpool Lime Street

05.35, 06.37, 07.37, 08.38

and hourly until 16.38,

17.09, 17.38 and hourly until 20.38,

21.37, 22.40, 23.34 23.47 (Fridays only)

(05.35, 17.09, 18.38 & 19.38 departures at Eccles originate from Victoria, all others originate from Piccadilly)

Stop press

FRECCLES holds public meeting

On Tuesday 26th June Freccles held a public meeting at ECHO in Eccles Town Hall. The thirty attendees were updated on the year's work on Art and Heritage, the garden, and the Service Development Group. Sean Dunne gave a brief presentation on the problems with the timetable. He has carefully logged the cancellations and delays this has caused.

The Guest Speaker for the evening was Robert Fickling. He is the Rail Strategy Manager at Transport for Greater Manchester, and his topic was 'The Future for Rail in Greater Manchester'. Robert's work is definitely strategic, not tactical. He collects statistics, trends, and uses predictive modelling to shape ideas for the area's rail network in the next 20 years. His speech noted future areas of congestion on the trains, and the fact that the train is now the dominant transport mode into Manchester city centre.

For your information, apparently the biggest employment spot is now Spinningfields (between Salford Central and middle of Deansgate.)



FRECCLES

info@freccles.org.uk tel: 0161 789 5016

Visit our website: www.freccles.org.uk

