ECCLES STATION NEWS

NOVEMBER 2016

NEWS

Network Rail has started to spend £1,600,000 on Whalley Viaduct, which is near the village of the same name on the Manchester to Clitheroe line. The 49-arch viaduct was built in 1850 and has two 'gothic' brick arches reflecting the abbey buildings nearby. The viaduct has got into a rather shabby condition and needs this attention. Nearly twenty thousand fixings will be used to stabilise the brickwork and a new drainage system will be installed. This will include a tank to capture storm water and then release it slowly into the river below.

ESN's editor points out that Whalley is an attractive village for a visit to see the work in progress. There are a number of paths around the village by the river and past the ancient abbey and church.

The last of the 120 new trams (numbers are 3001 upwards) for Metrolink was completed in Vienna in September and dispatched at the end of that month. Approval has also been given and £350,000,000 found for the construction of the ***Metrolink extension from Pomona to the Trafford Centre****, which is the place across the canal with the mysterious INTU signs. There will be stops at Wharfside, Imperial War Museum, Village, Parkway and Event City. The work should be complete in late 2020.*

Britain's rail industry joined forces on 18th October to run two special trains between Manchester Piccadilly and London Euston for the 350 members of

Team GB and ParalympicsGB athletes as part of nationwide celebrations of their Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games success. Virgin Trains, Caledonian Sleeper, GB Railfreight and Network Rail, which each offered their services free of charge. Caledonian Sleeper modified their rolling stock by removal of seats to make space for the many wheel chairs.

The Team GB and ParalympicsGB athletes enjoyed a celebratory 'welcome home' parade on the streets of Manchester and the nest day they boarded their two trains from Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston for celebration events at London's Trafalgar Square. As they boarded their trains the Transpennine Express Choir sung and local school children waved them off. Waiting beside the platforms at Euston were 10 red double-decker London buses, which took the athletes on to Trafalgar Square.

Work on The Ordsall Chord will continue this Christmas *– but will mean changes to train services from the end of October while the benefits are delivered.*

The Ordsall Chord will link Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly for the first time. It will provide direct links to Manchester Airport from Rochdale and the Calder Valley towns in Yorkshire. The work will involve reconfiguring the existing railway between Eccles and Deansgate, Eccles and Manchester, Victoria and Deansgate and Salford Crescent stations. Other work will consist

of the installation of two new bridges and renovation of one existing bridge on Water Street, the widening of Castlefield viaduct and a new track layout at Ordsall Lane. There will also be signalling improvements as well as constructing new overhead line equipment.

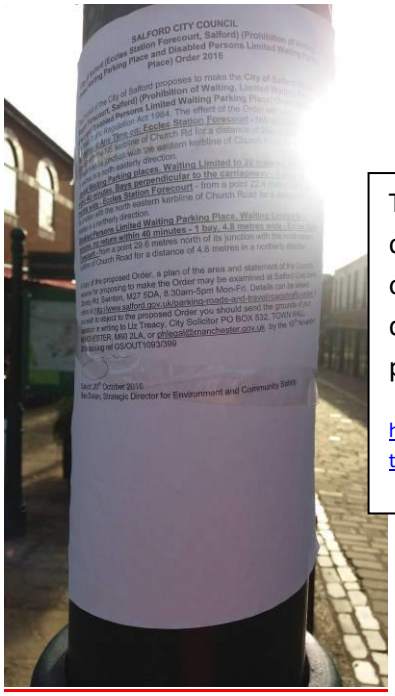
Train services in and out of Manchester will be affected at different times, including weekends from Saturday 29 October until Sunday 11 December 2016 and between early Sunday 18 December 2016 until the last service on Monday 2 January 2017.Oxford Road and Deansgate stations will also be affected and will be closed on 27 and 31 December as well as 1 and 2 January. All stations will be closed to train services on Christmas Day and Boxing Day as usual.

Passengers are being advised to plan their journey and check www.nationalrail.co.uk. Some services may be subject to change so it is important passengers continue to check whether their journey has been affected with their train operator before they travel.

ESN's editor has heard recently that there will be no trains to Manchester for this period with trains from the west terminating and turning round at Eccles station.

Work is progressing nicely on the refurbishment of the footbridge across the motorway at Eccles as can be seen on the photo below:

The end of October brought some wonderful autumnal colour to the trees on the station forecourt.



There also appeared official notices about changes to parking regulations for car parking on the station forecourt. These are a bit difficult to read being wrapped around lamp posts. The text and a plan can be viewed at:

https://www.salford.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/roads/traffic-orders/eccles-station-forecourt-salford/

Mixed Traffic: mixed blessing (I).

Eccles station is situated on a railway line that carries express passenger trains, semi fast passenger trains, stopping passenger trains, special passenger trains, heavy goods trains and light engines. This is what is known as mixed traffic: the railway is catering for a varied range of customer types. However mixed traffic is much more problematic to cater for than a single type of traffic. The competing requirements of the different traffics increase the amount of track and signalling needed and complicate the timetabling of the trains.

A single purpose railway can have a single type of train (Metrolink is a good example). On such a line, all the trains accelerate and travel and stop at the same rates removing the need for passing places and their signalling requirements. You don't need a whole timetabling and control department because once the frequency of the service is decided everything is set! This helps to make a single purpose railway very efficient.

Consider two points on a single track of railway. A fast train can cover the distance between the two points at line speed in say 5 minutes. This means that the next fast train can be sent along this stretch 5 minutes later (if there is no intermediate signalling) and the result is capacity to run up to 12 trains an hour. In railway jargon, each of these 5 minute slots on the section is known as a standard path for the train timetable.

If 12 identical trains per hour were timetabled the line would be congested and service reliability would fall off. If one train were X minutes late then all following trains would be forced to be X minutes late that day. This would not matter too much if the trains ran between only two termini, as a 5-minute service would resume after the first late train and the last train of the day would be X mins late back to the depot (c.f. Metrolink) but where trains are carrying on to varied destinations and supposedly making connections this would inconvenience passengers a great deal. Therefore, in practice not all 12 paths would be timetabled and an occasional one is left empty to regain 5 mins of timetable punctuality. The other option would be to cancel every train that approached our section of line late. This is not acceptable or even practical!

Typically, perhaps two thirds of paths are allocated (8 standard paths) leaving four paths per hour vacant. This means that a 20-minute late train would not affect the punctuality of succeeding trains after one hour so there is a trade off between train frequency and the time taken to recover to timetable running.

Now go back to our 12 standard paths of 5 minutes each and throw in some different train types. Say a semi fast train moves at half the speed between the two points and a stopping train at half that speed. This means the semi fast train occupies the section for 10 minutes before another train can be allowed on it, and the stopping train takes 20 minutes. Respectively they occupy two and four standard paths on the line. So, slower trains gobble up line capacity and service frequencies over our section (with 1/3 paths unallocated to allow recovery of lateness) would be 8 expresses or 4 semi-fast or 2 stopping trains per hour.

In the preceding paragraph notice that ominous word 'or'. In next month's ESN 'and' will be used. We shall do the thought experiment of mixing the train types on the same line.

Eccles Station in the 1960s.

George Woods, a photographer from Driffield, has sent to FRECCLES a marvellous picture of a Trans Pennine express powering through Eccles on the fast line to Manchester in 1968. The Trans Pennine diesel units were introduced by BR in the mid-1960s and this photo shows the change-over of colour schemes from the old green to the blue and grey that BR introduced about a year previously.

These units were used between Liverpool and Hull on a fast and frequent service with a buffet. Notice the spaciousness of the four-platform station and the background of tall buildings on Eccles Old Road. You can see the back of stylish wooden booking hall and its tall chimneys. In front of that is the glazed wooden footbridge linking the platforms.

On the left is a small cut out in the platform canopy to make a banner repeater signal visible. This gave advance warning of the position of the Eccles starter

signal which is hidden from view on the left beyond the arch of the bridge. Along the platforms are gas standard lamps with British Railways maroon and white totem signs bearing the name Eccles. Smoke indicates that a fire is lit in one of the grates in the waiting room on platforms 2 and 3. The station had flower tubs in those days too.

Stop press

Further detail of the effect of the Ordsall chord engineering work on trains into Manchester has appeared on the Northern Rail website. Eccles and Manchester Victoria will be linked by a bus replacement service from Sunday 18th December to Monday 2nd January. There will be no trains between Salford Crescent and Manchester Piccadilly. Trains will run between Bolton and Manchester Victoria but some of them will be replaced by buses.

Deansgate and Oxford Road stations will be closed for long weekends at Christmas and New Year. See map on:

https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/news/improvements/953-engineering-work-affecting-services-to-and-from-manchester-this-christmas

Eccles Station News welcomes feedback from readers. Please do not hesitate to send in your own views, photos or snippets of news to the e-mail address below.

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