

Friday 7 July 2023

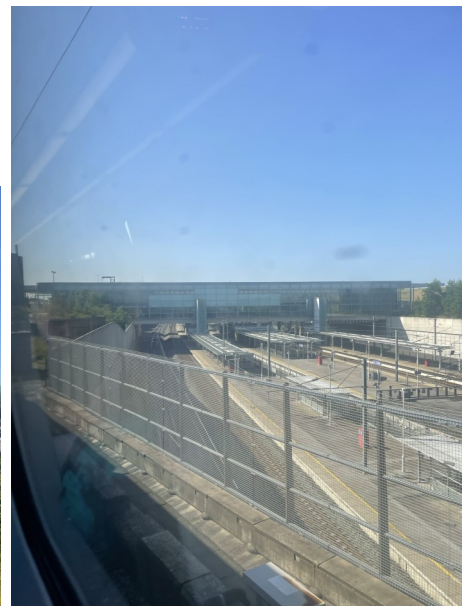
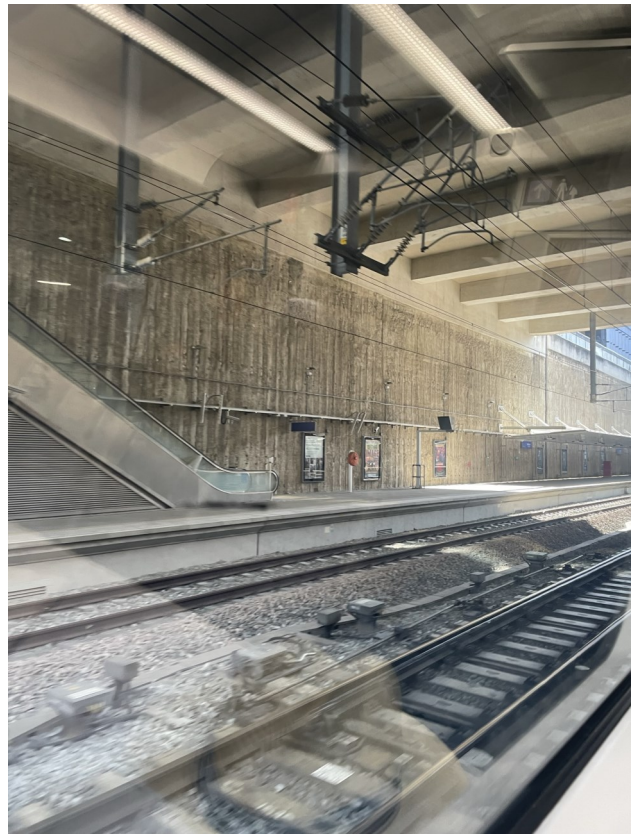
RAILWAY 83

Derby		0628
St Pancras	0808	0820
Rochester	0858	0902
St Pancras	0939	
Kings Cross		Northern
via Moorgate and Bank		
Kennington	Northern	Northern
via Bank and Moorgate		
Kings Cross	Northern	Circle
Moorgate	Circle	
Bank		Central
West Ruislip	Central	Central
Greenford	Central	1500
West Ealing	1511	1521
Farringdon	1542	
Barbican		H&C
Kings Cross	H&C	
St Pancras		1605
Loughborough	1727	1751
Derby	1818	

I had a plan to take my oboe to Howarth's music shop and sell it. I arranged a Family and Friends ticket from Matt, then phoned them - "put it on ebay" was the advice. I'll move it North, then worry about it. I had phoned Geoff and arranged a day out - meeting him at 11. Julie woke early, and as I was awake I decided to go. I arrived on the platform at 0627. The London train was less than 20% full, and no sign of any coffee.

Into London a couple of minutes early, and I decided I would do a line I have never done - High Speed 1. South Eastern run services along the line built to the Chunnel. The first train out was going to Margate, so I decided I'd go as far as Rochester - I could have gone further, but hadn't really planned it. It is very fast through the tunnel as far as the Thames - I had not really realized how much is in tunnel. Seems mad that we built this stunning line, added in International stations at Stratford and Ebbsfleet (and further down the line at Ashford), then voted for Brexit. Now we have no international trains at Stratford, Ebbsfleet or Ashford, weeds growing on the international platform at Stratford, and a pretty empty car park at

Ebbsfleet. Mad. For domestic travellers, there is a fare premium to be paid, but the trains there and back were well-loaded. I last went to Rochester for an interview as their Precentor - I wonder how different my life would have been had I got that job.





Back at St Pancras with another hour before I met Geoff, so I decided to do the City branch of the Northern. Part of this track was totally new as there is a new platform at Bank as part of the upgrade there. The original line is the City and South London Railway, opened 1890-1907. I'll need to go south sometime and do Morden - but not today.





I went and sat by the Meeting statue and Geoff turned up. We decided to go on to Moorgate and walk down to the Guildhall - stopping for coffee en route. It is a little frightening how much slower the two of us are!

There was an exhibition about Christopher Wren at the Guildhall Art Gallery. It was a very small exhibition. Some nice drawings, but not much more. A quick look at some of the other art - including a Cuneo, "The Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Banquet" 1969. "Market Arcade" by Ben Johnson. "The Thames by Moonlight with Southwark Bridge" by John Atkinson Grimshaw.



We slowly strolled to Bank for a ride on the Central Line - having done the east end of the line last week, let's tick the west end off. The Ruislip branch dates from 1947 (as far as Greenford) and 1948. West Ruislip was originally opened as Ruislip and Ickenham in 1906 by the Great Western and Great Central Joint Committee, so we could have changed back to Chiltern there. We went for a walk to try and find some food - and failed. It seems odd that nine trains an hour start and end next to a main road, an odd terminus.



Greenford has more shops, so we enjoyed the clever lift - which Wikipedia tells me is the first incline lift on the Underground, installed in 2014. We found a coffee shop and had a break - we had just missed the 1400 to West Ealing, so we also missed the 1430, and caught the 1500. You can still see some semaphore signals from the platform - they are on what is now disconnected freight line (it used to be the through line from the GW main line up towards Oxford, now disconnected because of the new station at Old Oak. Various other signal photos at <https://www.roscafen.com/signals/Greenford/index.htm>. I didn't manage to get a photo of Greenford East signal box.





The branch shuttle used to run to Ealing Broadway. Now it terminates at West Ealing due to the more frequent Elizabeth Line service. We passed through Castle Bar Park, and Geoff did some research - "Castlebar Hill in Ealing is

167 feet (51 m) high. In the 18th century, it was the location of Castle Beare, a grand mansion or country seat as the area at this time was only a hamlet, which was not yet part of the London conurbation." At West Ealing he headed west to get home, I headed east. I should have changed at Paddington onto the Circle, but decided to continue to Farringdon and head back. I made the mistake of being at the wrong end, but wasn't worried as I knew there is a Barbican end exit. For future reference, the Barbican end exit is nowhere near Barbican tube station!



By the time I got to St Pancras and walked half way to Bedford (it always annoys me that the Midland has been pushed out of its own terminus) I watched the 1602 for Derby leave, so caught the Nottingham train. Off at Loughborough for another tea, and then the next Derby train was ten late. These return trains were much fuller, I was glad I hadn't left it any later. I had packed a lot into the day - I'll be shattered tomorrow. It was worth it!