

BACK ON TRACK

Supporters Newsletter for the



Heritage Railway Trust

Autumn 2016

It is estimated that there is about 500 miles of dedicated railway heritage lines currently operating steam locomotives, with many more like the Bramley Line working towards that goal. Restoration projects like this one recently spotted on the



Strathspey line in Scotland may take years, but dedicated enthusiasts make these challenges become reality. For Bramley Line news, read on.

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The following is a report from our chairman, Simon King.

The Bramley Line and 'Devolution'

The Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with a locally elected Mayor will have more control over decisions that are currently made by Westminster. These will include how to spend funding on infrastructure projects, such as road and rail improvements:

- **a new £20million annual fund (totalling £600m over 30 years) to improve local infrastructure - such as road and rail projects. This fund would be for the next 30 years. This could be used to support the delivery of the Wisbech Garden Town and the Wisbech-Cambridge rail connection**
- **Rail improvements, including a new station at Soham, new rolling stock, an improved King's Lynn, Cambridge and London rail service as well as improvements to Ely North Junction**
- **Transport infrastructure improvements such as A14/A142 junction and upgrades to the A10 and the A47. It would also support development at Wyton and St Neots**
- **A new £100million housing fund to be invested over the next five years to build more homes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This fund would be for the next five years and could also be used for more shared ownership schemes**
 - **Transferring other powers and funding that currently sit with the Government down to the Combined Authority in areas such as public transport, apprenticeships and helping people get back into work**
- **A new £70million fund to be used to build more council rented homes in Cambridge over the next five years because house prices are so high in the city**
- **Investment in a Peterborough University with degree-awarding powers and support for the continued growth and regeneration of Peterborough**
- **Other than some transport and road maintenance funding, the majority of services currently delivered by local councils will not be affected and will continue to be operated by your local council.**

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With all the local interest in the future prospects for the Wisbech to March line, various areas of the media get in touch occasionally to source information, both past and present, which in turn gives us more insight into how things move on with the ever changing landscape of transport, and the railways in particular. A recent enquiry from a rail industry publication resulted in one of our members locating the following interesting insights into the Coldham stretch of the line in it's very early days.



Coldham station 'in earlier years'. The line has been reduced to single track for many years, but has the space to reintroduce two line working if needed.

On the following page, there is an interesting description and account of the latter years of the Coldham area, this being the only station between Wisbech and March. Also you will see mention of the Waldersea 'freight facility', as Waldersea sidings were the last 'intermediate' operational part of the line between the towns of Wisbech and March. Contrary to the following report, Waldersea was still in occasional use for seasonal agricultural produce in the early seventies.

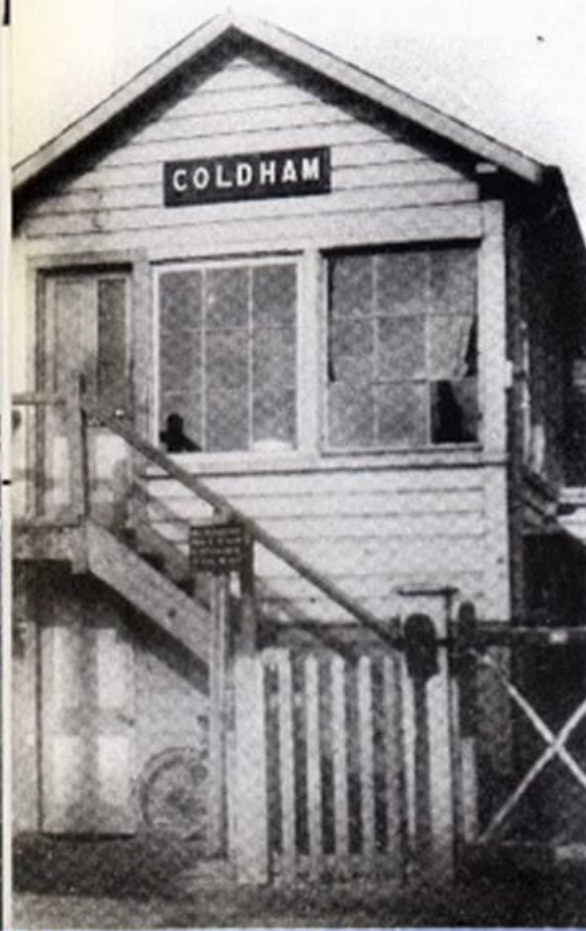
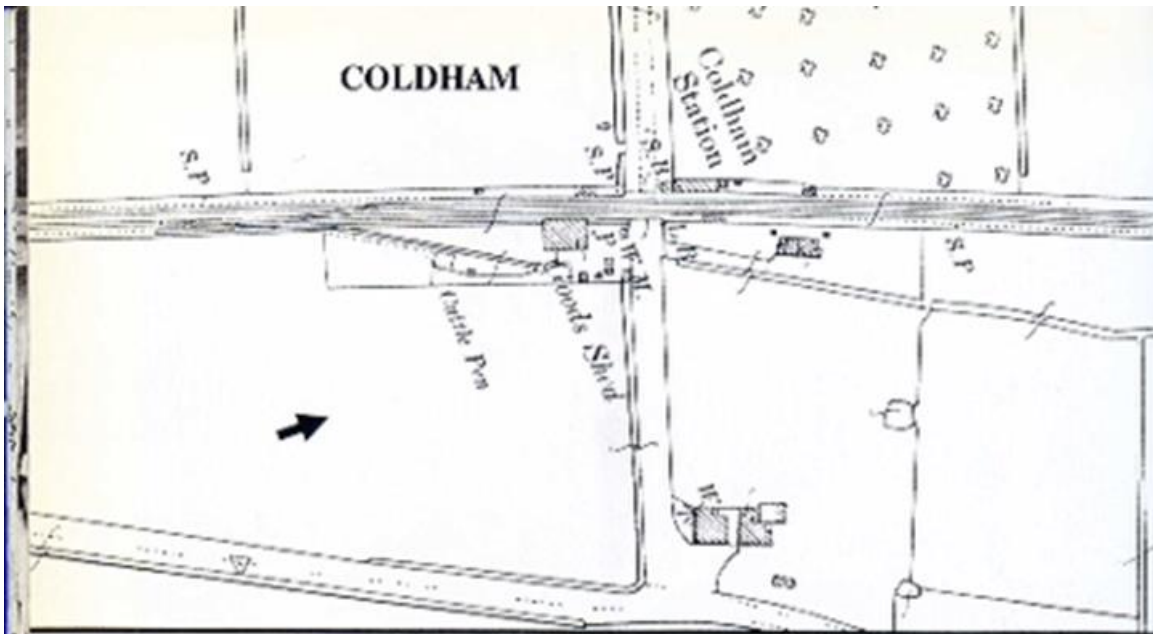
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About three miles south of Wisbech the line was crossed by a minor road at Waldersea Drive Siding, never more than a freight facility. Coldham, another mile and a half further south, was slightly endowed also - there was a small yard and goods shed south of the level crossing, while the station lay to the north of it. Coldham - at first called Pear Tree Hill, but renamed on 1st September 1876 - closed for passengers on 7th March 1966, and for goods on 19th April 1965. Waldersea Drive had succumbed on 13th July 1964.



110. Very little ever seemed to happen at Coldham, the most notable feature that the writer (CA) recalls being the plaster(?) 'cold ham' which lay beneath each station name-board. This shot of the small, weather-boarded signalbox dates from 1947. Behind the box stood one of the familiar pre-fab houses, boarded with cross-bracing. Nothing remained in 1992, other than the level crossing and its gates, which were crew operated. (N.Rand)

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The Hereward Community Rail Partnership

Simon King, Chairman of the Bramley Line, is also Chairman of the Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP). The CRP has been asked by the Department for Transport to include the re-opening of the March to Wisbech railway line in the CRP work programme. This means that the re-opening has to be taken even more seriously by Network Rail and the new train operating company, Abellio. The CRP has also prepared a draft masterplan to improve March Railway Station. Please visit the Fenland District Council website before 24th October and follow the Transport link or visit the exhibition at March Station on 10th October from 6.30am to 10.00am to see the proposals.

URGENT message just received:

'To help reopen the Bramley Line, please visit the Fenland District Council website. Page down and click on Wisbech 2020, page down again to current consultation, click on 'have your say', and complete the questionnaire **before Friday 7th October**'.

Membership

Since the AGM earlier this year, the Bramley Line has been pleased to see some new members joining, and additional activity on our working days at Waldersea. If you haven't got round to renewing your 2016/17 membership yet, it's never too late. Bacs transfers, plastic via Paypal through the website, cheques by post and even cash are all welcome. Rates have not increased due to Brexit, annual single £10, joint, £15, family £20, and 5 year single £45.

Roadshows

Our active members continue to open our roadshow stand throughout the year keeping our challenge in the public domain. Working with the Friends of March Railway Station, Ray Fothergill and Craig Castleton can often be seen on Platform 2 at March, whenever the friends are holding an open day or other event, and our thanks go to Ray, Craig and of course FOMRS for facilitating this. We are booked for the National Festival of Railway Modelling at Peterborough Showground again this year, Saturday and Sunday 15-16th October. This show always attracts a good number of railway enthusiasts and is well worth a visit. We will be on stand number 66, slightly left of centre in the main hall.

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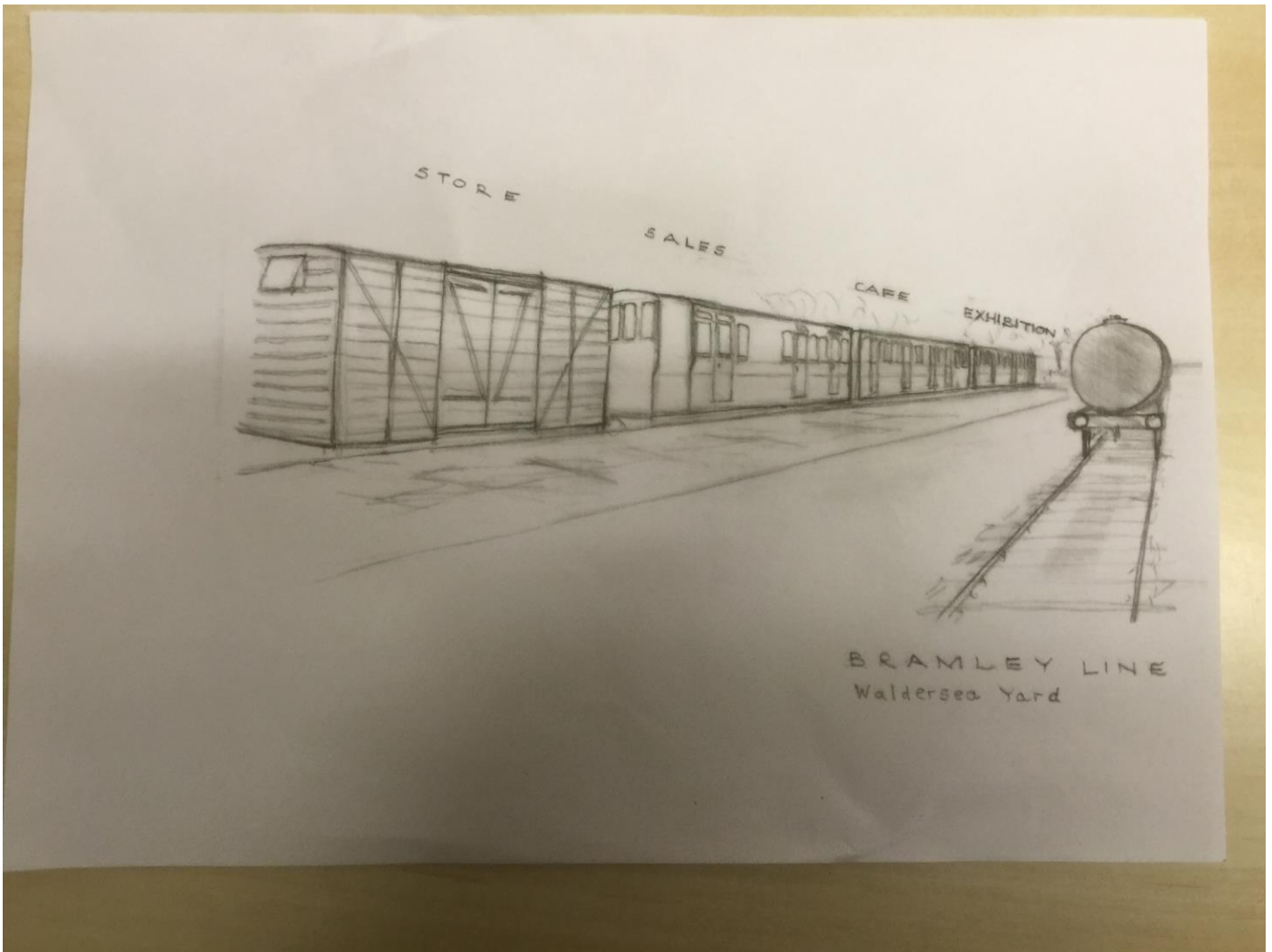
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Waldersea Heritage Railway Centre

This is the plan Antony Boroughs prepared of a possible future layout at Waldersea. The Bramley Line Management Committee would like to call it 'Waldersea Heritage Railway Centre' instead of 'Waldersea Depot'. Please tell us what you think...



Three of the items depicted in this artists impression are currently on site at Waldersea, with the possibility of others in the pipeline, so don't dream on, we are looking for skills, enthusiasm and energy that can help us turn this into reality. Working days at Waldersea are the second Saturday of each month.

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