

BACK ON TRACK

Supporters Newsletter for the

BRAMLEY LINE

Wisbech - March Railway

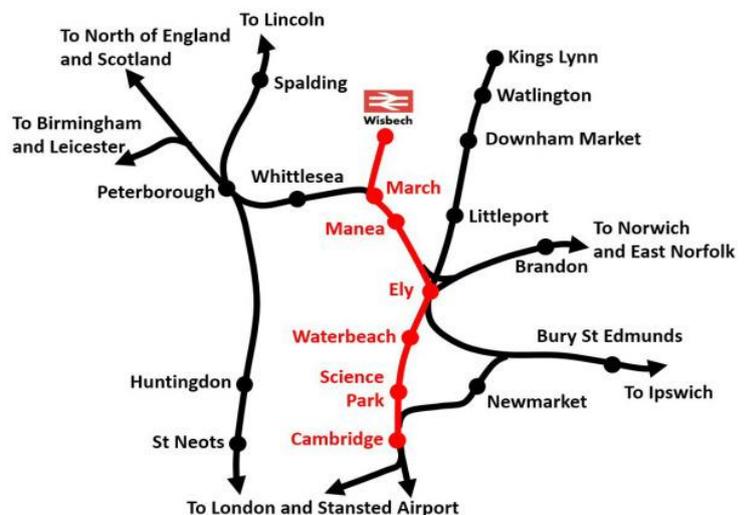
Heritage Railway Trust
December 2014

All the latest News on the Line

Local members and readers may have seen a great deal of speculation and announcements in the media lately concerning the future of the Wisbech to March Line, the Bramley line. Cambridgeshire County Council and Fenland District Council, along with several business organisations and local politicians, have combined to produce an 'Infrastructure for Growth' initiative as part of the Wisbech 2020 vision project.

Wisbech, known as the Capital of the Fens, is the largest conurbation in Fenland. Yet, for such a large town, with an inland port on the River Nene, it has been stifled by poor transport connectivity to the rest of the county since losing its rail link to March.

The coalition of both public and private sector partners states a strong economic case for reopening the line, primarily to give Wisbech a good transport link to Cambridge and beyond. The possible upgrading of the A47 is also on the agenda, but neither of the proposals will be cheap



in this day and age. However, 7 miles of railway with the track bed in place and readily accessible, would suggest a far stronger case than 16 miles of dual carriageway, linking the Thorney bypass with the A47 dual carriageway north east of Wisbech. The map above shows the main economic benefits in travel times for access to and from the town. Cambridge would be under one hours travelling time.

Ok, so where does that leave the Bramley Line Heritage Railway Trust?

Waldersea Depot, Long Drive, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180

BACK ON TRACK

The Trust has always been about *heritage* railway interests and that has not changed. As members and regular followers will know, we have three current restoration projects 'on the books' at Waldersea depot, and active members are frequently investigating local railway heritage throughout the area. One particular rescue was a c1901 49ft railway carriage from a local village garden. This carriage originated on the North Eastern Railway, so contact and interest was established

with the Tanfield Railway near Newcastle upon Tyne. The Bramley Line members contacted local contractors Tears Recovery, who worked with members of the Tanfield Railway to extricate the vehicle from its resting place of around 60 years.

Currently, the Trust is investigating other heritage opportunities at several local sites, whilst we support, and await, the outcome of the ongoing feasibility studies into our own line.



The carriage is seen here creating considerable local interest at the start of its long journey north.

Waldersea Depot, Long Drive, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180

BACK ON TRACK

Bramley line member ready to get up a head of steam.

Trust member Gordon Dockett has bought himself a 7.25" gauge steam loco to run round his garden, see photo. It is based on a LBSCR 'Tich' and is ideal for the radius of curves needed for his garden when Gordon gets the track laid. Driving a miniature steam loco like this is very similar to the real thing.

Anyone interested in helping to lay track will be invited to drive the loco on running days over the summer. Gordon lives in Wisbech a few yards from the old Walsoken station on the former Wisbech-Watlington branch. If you fancy giving Gordon a hand you can contact him via sue.jjones50@btinternet.com.

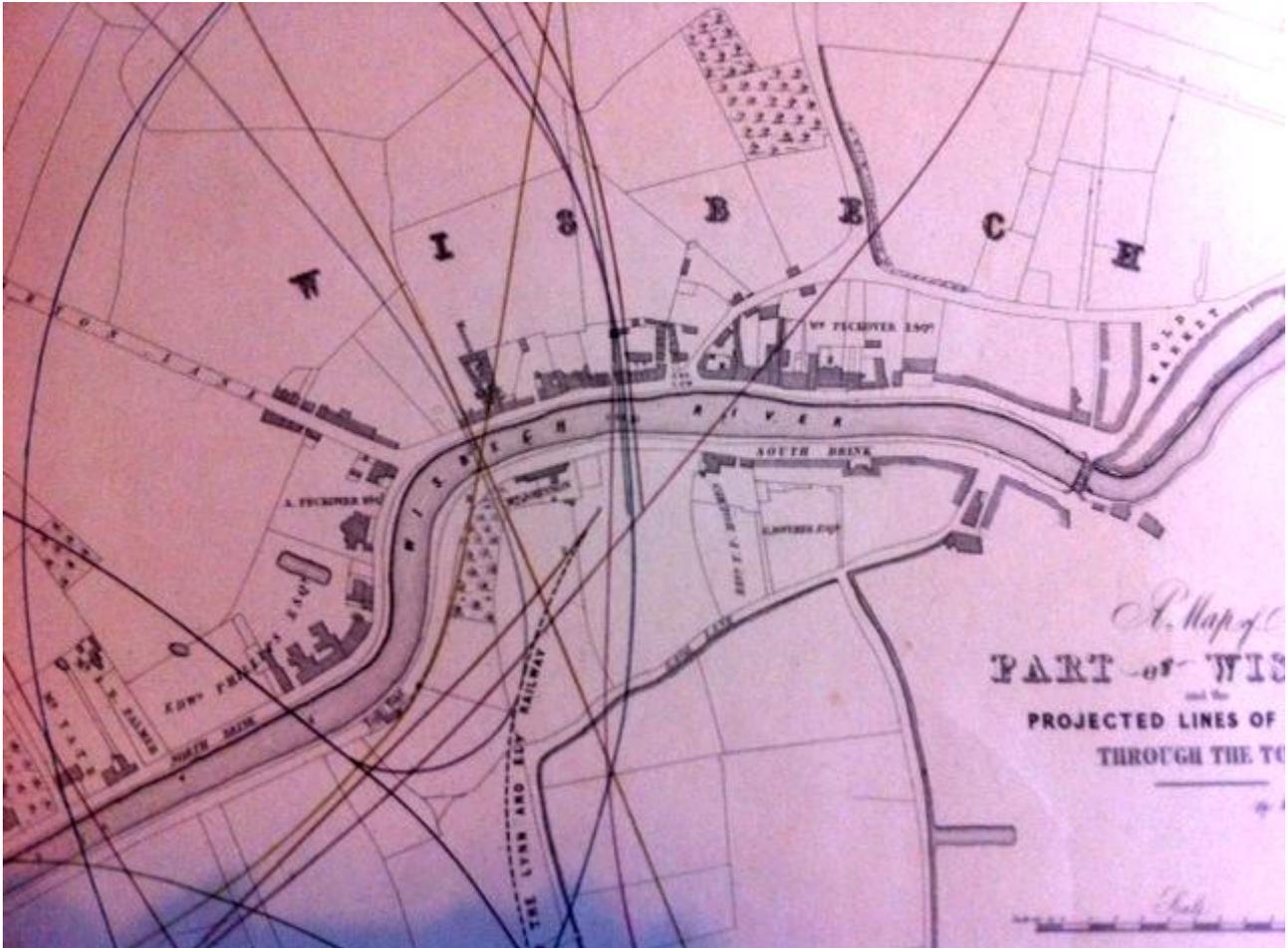


A couple of weeks ago restoration work started on the tank wagon at Waldersea Depot. A volunteer is seen here inspecting the wagon to assess what remedial and preservation work is required.

Waldersea Depot, Long Drove, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP
Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk
Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk
Phone or text: 07591769180

BACK ON TRACK

The Railway Boom



An 1846 surveyors map, drawn by W. Adams, (by kind permission of the Wisbech and Fenland Museum)

During the mid 19th century, Britain was going through a period of high enthusiasm for railways. Proposals for the new concept in travel were rife, and Wisbech was not to be left out of this excitement. Around 1845-1846 the town had no less than 11 new possible lines (see above) hoping to come through, including the East Coast main line. What would the growth relationship between Wisbech and Peterborough be now had that happened?

Local opposition to most of the proposals

resulted in two different lines serving Wisbech. The Bramley line, as it is now known, serving Wisbech station, later replaced by Wisbech East station, opened on 3rd May 1847 following the 1846 Wisbech, St Ives and Cambridge Junction Railway Act. The Midland and Great Northern Railway, from Peterborough and Wisbech St Mary to Sutton Bridge ran through Wisbech North station. Despite the multitude of proposals, no railway ever got approval to cross the river in the town.

Waldersea Depot, Long Drove, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180

BACK ON TRACK

Talk to the GERS

Earlier this year the Great Eastern Railway Society invited the Trust to give them a talk at their October meeting, on the Bramley Line.

Trust member Sue Dockett did much of the research work for this opportunity and Trust Chair Simon King with Sue delivered an interesting and entertaining talk to the society.

Video Interview

Just recently trust member Ray Fothergill and Simon King recorded an interesting interview with a local lady who was working on the railway in Wisbech just after the Second World War. This is currently in the process of being edited in preparation to be circulated via the trust website. More on this as the project develops.

And Finally.....

The Officers and Committee members of the Bramley Line Heritage Railway Trust would like to take this opportunity to wish all our valued members and supporters a

*Very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.*



Waldersea Depot, Long Drove, Waldersea, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, PE14 0NP

Website: www.bramleyline.org.uk

Email: office@bramleyline.org.uk

Phone or text: 07591769180