



Reproduced With Permission Frinton Station Mural Illustrating Tendring Districts Diverse Coastal Legacy

ONTRACK” Walton on Naze, Frinton on Sea, Kirby Cross, & Thorpe Le Soken Rail Users Association

Representing Users of Clacton & Walton Rail Lines and Public Transport Passengers for over 20 years

<http://www.ontrackrailusers.org.uk/>

TENDRING HUNDRED RAILWAYS - THE FIRST 150 YEARS

Railways have transformed the economic fortunes of Great Britain's trade and industry as we are no longer reliant on ships ferrying heavy loads around this island coast of ours. Our railway history started with the opening of the Steam hauled Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825 and was then quickly followed by lines such as the Liverpool & Manchester Railway in 1830, the Grand Junction Railway, the London & Birmingham Railway, the Gt. Western Railway and the Eastern Counties, Eastern Union and subsequently the Gt. Eastern Railway. The High Speed 2 Line Project (HS2) underlines the importance of rail in the 21st Century. The railways made a big impact on Tendring enabling its agricultural produce to reach the cities and they still continue to play a vital economic role today. In later years the railways ability to move vast numbers of people made coastal towns into holiday resorts and encouraged the growth of commuters.

To mark 150 Years of the TENDRING HUNDRED RAILWAYS (THR) ceremonies took place at Alresford Station on 13th February 2016 and also at Kirby Cross Station on Saturday 30th. July 2016 to mark the construction and rail services as they reached these points first. Before reaching Kirby Cross, Weeley Station had also been a temporary terminus as the construction progressed. Plaques were unveiled and refreshments provided. The Tornado Steam Locomotive and special trains of August 12th. celebrate the arrival of the railway 150 years ago at the coastal fishing resort of Walton on the Naze, in May 1867; Engineering works prevented doing so earlier. Until electrification and later “rationalisation” Walton Station comprised two platform faces, Engine Shed, Turntable, freight (goods) sidings and passenger carriage stabling sidings. The Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust Museum, at the OLD LIFEBOAT HOUSE (by old Coastguard Station) Walton on Naze has a large scale model of this as it was in “Steam Days”.

The “Railway Revolution” came to the Tendring coast when on Saturday July 28th. 1866 when the first train steamed down from Colchester to Kirby Cross Station. The Tendring Hundred Railway (THR) Company had been formed in 1859 to extend the line from Colchester (Hythe), initially to Wivenhoe, opening on 8th. May 1863. The construction of the Tendring Hundred Railway (THR) line had progressed as far as Weeley by January 8th. 1866, finally reaching Walton on the Naze on May 17th. 1867. However, even then financial problems and other issues made life difficult for these Victorian pioneers.

From the outset the line was operated by the neighbouring Gt. Eastern (*Mainline*) Railway Company, which had taken over the THR completely by 1888, along with the various connecting branch lines. Branch lines were built by various companies to link Colchester Town (St Botolphs) by March 1866, and to Brightlingsea by April 1866 (the latter station and branch line closed under the Beeching Plan in 1964). However, the construction of a line linking Thorpe Le Soken with Mistley, as part of an ambitious strategic trunk route linking up with “The Midlands”, was started but never finished due to financial and legal disputes. The uncompleted works for this aborted line were abandoned in 1869, with the long siding at Thorpe Le Soken Station remaining as a legacy. Only later was a single track line to Clacton opened in 1882. As Frinton developed, the current “new” station for Frinton was opened in 1888 replacing earlier informal arrangements.

The Gt Eastern Railway was absorbed into the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) upon the “Grouping” of the nation's railways into four large companies on 1st January 1923 under the terms of the 1921 “Grouping Act”. The LNER realigned a section of the line in 1929 between Frinton Station and Walton-on-Naze due to a landslip at the end of Woodberry Way endangering the original route earlier in the 1920's. The LNER was then nationalised as part of British Railways Eastern Region January 1st. 1948. A franchising system, created by the Railways Act 1993, once again has involved the private sector, in the guise of First Great Eastern, then National Express (“One Railway”) and currently Abellio Greater Anglia Railways, a subsidiary of Dutch National Railways operating passenger trains on behalf of the Department of Transport's Rail Executive.

The THR line was the first in the country to be electrified using the ground breaking, for the UK, 25 KV AC system, pioneering the use of overhead wires taking power virtually direct from the National Grid. Full local electric services started on 13th April 1959 with a new timetable, which had trains running at half-hourly intervals with alternate trains giving London connections at Colchester. The trains between Walton, Clacton and London still had to be steam or diesel-hauled pending completion of electrification between Colchester and Chelmsford and London in the early 1960s. Through electrified services to/ from London, Liverpool Street, were officially introduced on 7th January 1963 when the GT. Eastern mainline was wired up. Until 1992, the London services on the line were largely operated by a fleet of British Rail (BR) Class 309 "Inter City standard" 100mph express *electric multiple units* (EMU), based on BR Mark 1 Coaching stock.. These were then replaced in the 1990s by BR Network South East commuter sliding "air-door" EMU stock (Class 321) and also by some BR "slam door" open saloon outer suburban EMU stock (Class 312) which had several years earlier been "cascaded" down from elsewhere on British Railways network. The small fleet the of slam door stock had to be eventually replaced by the Siemens built DESIRO EMU Class 360 EMU Trains from August 2003. These were the only completely brand new trains the local lines have seen for many years. The DESIRO trains again introduced innovative technology in the type of "traction motor" used. The last major capital project was the replacement of a 50 year old life expired signalling system with a new one using colour LED lights, with computerised systems controlled from Colchester's Signal Control Centre completed in 2009. The new Greater Anglia Railway franchise contract promises to replace all trains with completely new trains from 2019.

In the 21st Century the THR still plays a vital role enabling our residents to travel to jobs and educational opportunities in London and other Essex Towns and bringing in visitors, tourists and new businesses. Once again new technologies are making railways a key part of our nation's economic landscape with national passenger traffic at its highest level since the Second World War and with hoped for improvements in infrastructure and services coming as part of the new franchising arrangement. Will Tendring, Clacton, Walton and Harwich also start to reap the benefits? Watch this space!

Below are the Coats of Arms and Logos associated with those who have run our railways over the years and pictures of motive power? We should also not forget the local role in the Pre WW2 Kinder Transport (1938-39) from Harwich.



LNER COMPARTMENT STOCK (NNR) /// LNER LOCO & CARRIAGE (NNR) ///CLASS 321 EMU NEAR FRINTON ///DESIRO CLASS 360 EMU FRINTON



KINDER TRANSPORT MEMORIAL ///REFURBISHED CLASS 321 EMU// KIRBY CROSS STATION..... /// WEELEY STN ... /// ALRESSFORD STN PLATFORM/ REAR///



OLD STN. HOUSE WALTON ///NEW STN BUILDING WALTON//FRINTON STN.....// CLACTON 1929 STATION /// COLCHESTER TOWN STN WITH CLASS321 EMU



EMU 08 145 AT KIRBY CROSS, C. AUG 1980/// EMU 308 144 Thorpe-le-Soken, C. AUG 1981/// EMU 315 CRASHED WALTON 1987 /// AS IN 2011/// EMU309 EXEPRESS/// DEPOT CLACTON//

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