HOLT PROBUS CLUB

On 5th December at the Feathers Hotel, the Holt & District Probus club were given a talk by David Bill, OBE, on the prospects of Holt being reconnected to the main railway network.

He gave an account of his background with three generations having worked on the M&GN railway with his great grandfather, who was the first stationmaster at Massingham and his own father, who had the sad task of locking up Sheringham for the last time in the mid 1960s. When the Sheringham to Melton Constable line closed, efforts were made by a group of enthusiasts to purchase that line but the cost was prohibitive.

However, the line from Sheringham to Weybourne was saved and extended to the present day Holt Station (at High Kelling) to become the North Norfolk Railway (aka The Poppy Line). The Melton Constable trust was formed to purchase the old rail tracks to connect the NNR to Melton Constable and, via Fakenham, to join the Mid Norfolk Railway. Thus via Wymondham and Norwich to complete the orbital track.

The proposed first phase in this scheme is to extend a line from the present High Kelling terminus across the Old Cromer Road and along the side of the Holt Bypass to a new terminus close to where the original Holt station was sited. Progress has been made with the purchase of a piece of land which will permit a crossing of the Old Cromer Road near to the NNR terminus at High Kelling. Mr Bill acknowledged the difficulty in this, whether by bridge or level crossing. He said the possibility of running a mainline service from Holt to Norwich in the morning and return in the evening, without disturbing NNR operations, might appeal to Holt and High Kelling residents.

After a lively questions session a vote of thanks was given by Alan Mason and the members were reminded that the next talk would be on Trench Art in WW1 on 2nd January.

ORIGINAL BRITTEN SCORE RETURNS TO HIS SCHOOL

An original music score by celebrated composer Benjamin Britten is being returned to the school where he wrote the piece.

The song 'Lilian' was written in 1929 when Britten was at Gresham's School in Holt and was later presented to the architect of his Library at the Red House in Aldeburgh.

It is a two page piece in Britten's characteristically mannered handwriting for Baritone/Mezzo Soprano and Piano.

The piece was purchased at a Sotheby's auction with funding from the Old Greshamian (OG) Club and the Fishmongers' Company, one of the London Livery Companies with close connections to the School.

Nathan Waring, the Prep School's Director of Music said: "In Britten's Centenary Year we're delighted to be able to bring this evocative and early piece 'back home'. We're very grateful to the OG Club, the Fishmongers and other benefactors for making it possible."