

On a 142-Year Old Railway



London Bridge-Brighton electric train in the cutting between Star bridge and Merstham tunnel. This section of line was originally part of the Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Iron Railway opened in 1805



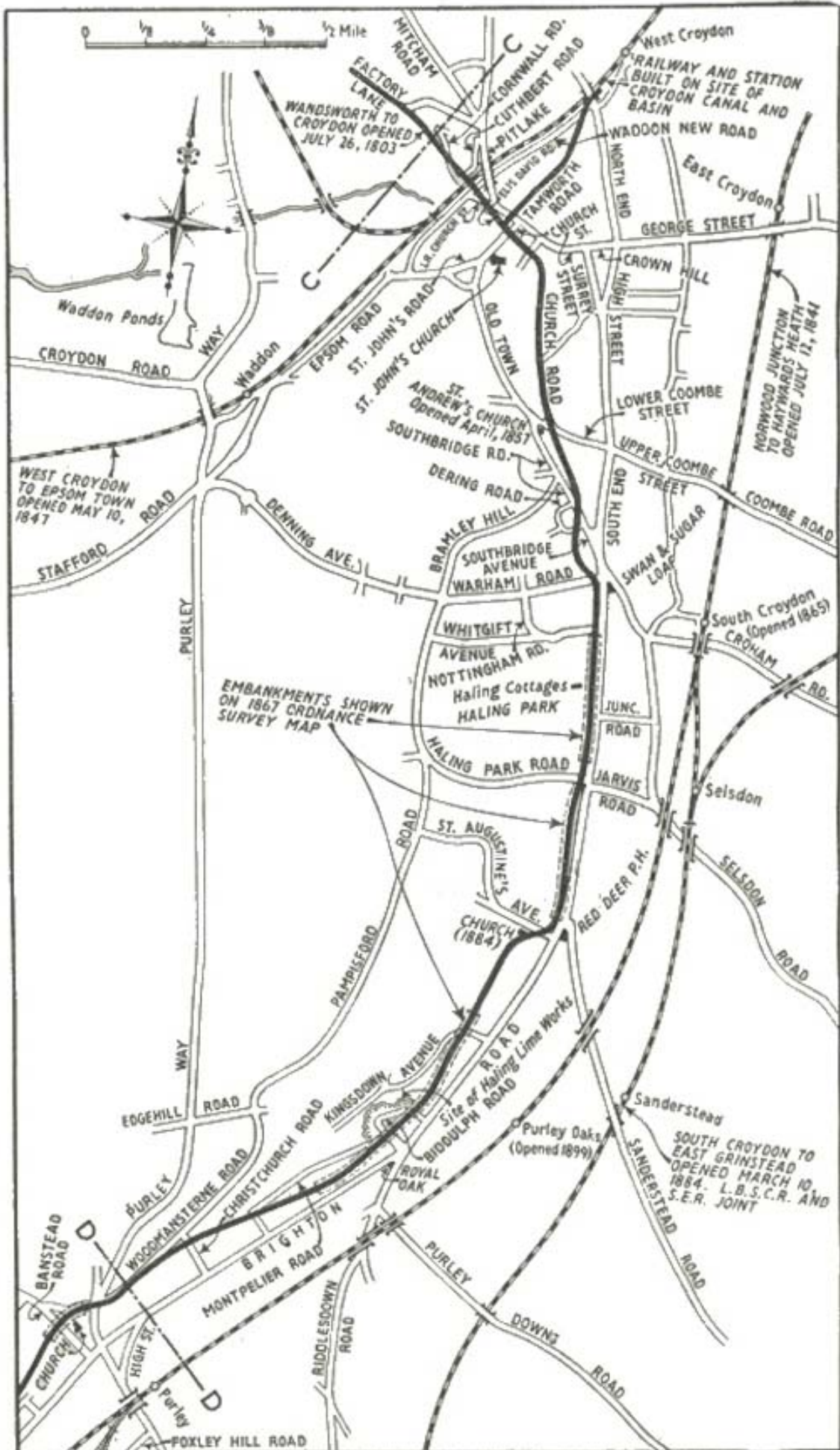
Brighton-London Bridge electric train approaching Star bridge signal box. Forge bridge can be seen in the background

(See maps and paragraph, pages 253 to 255)

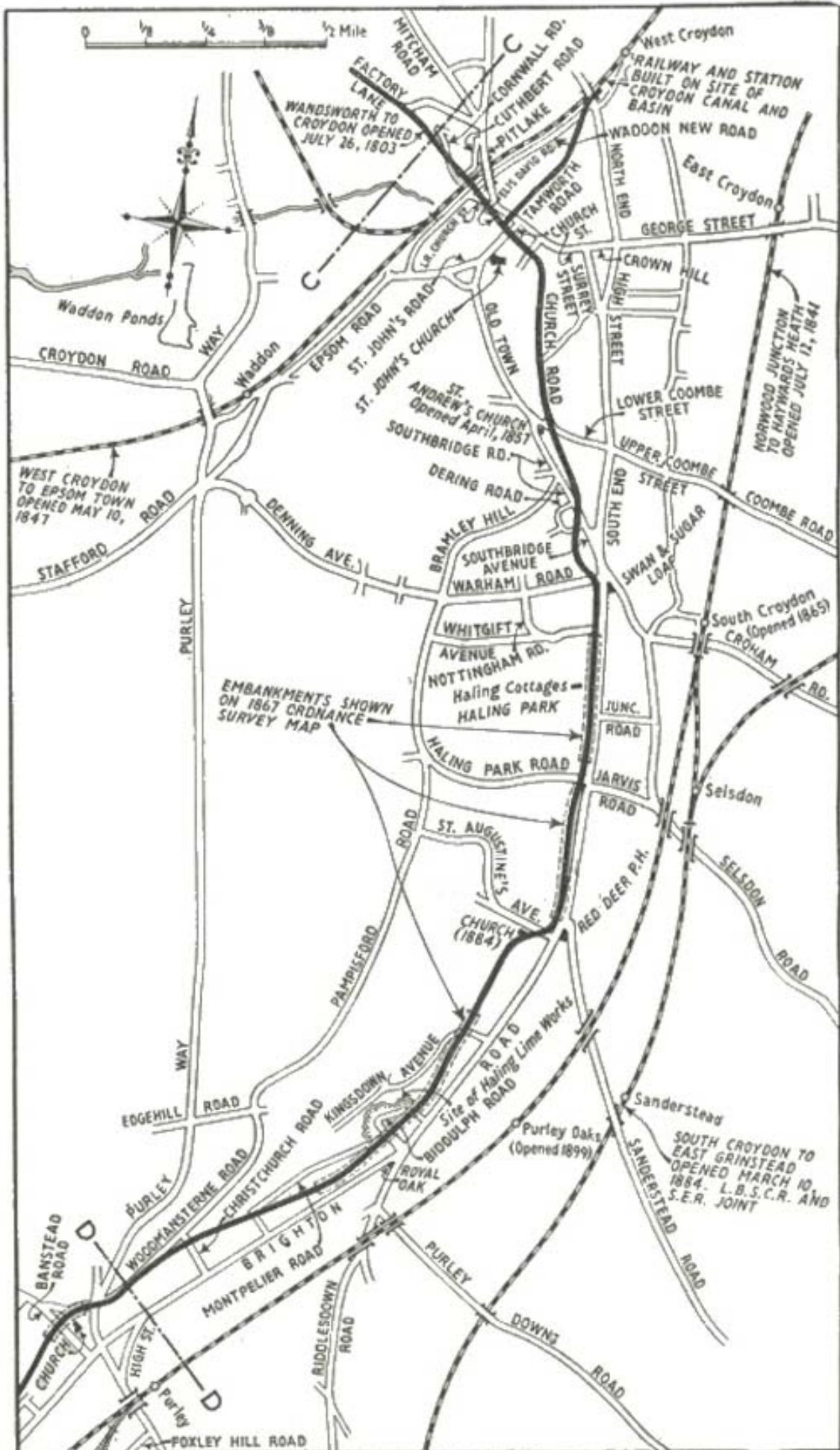
The Route of the C.M. & G.R.

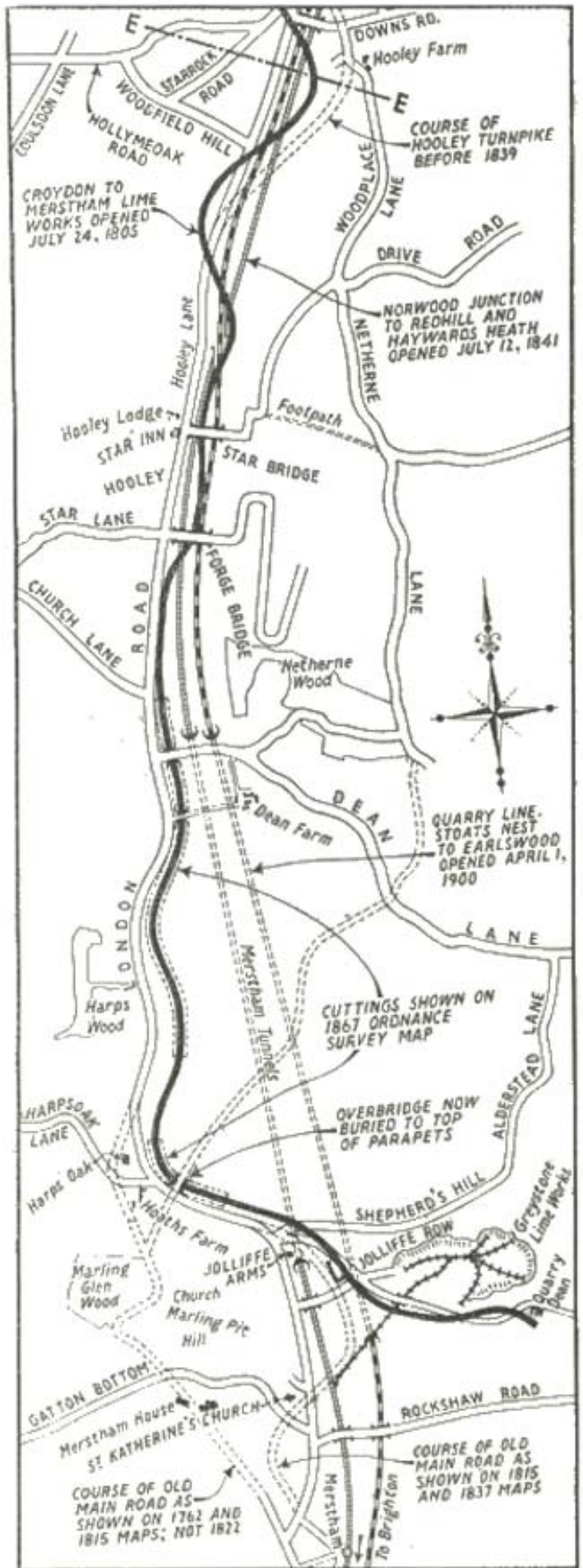
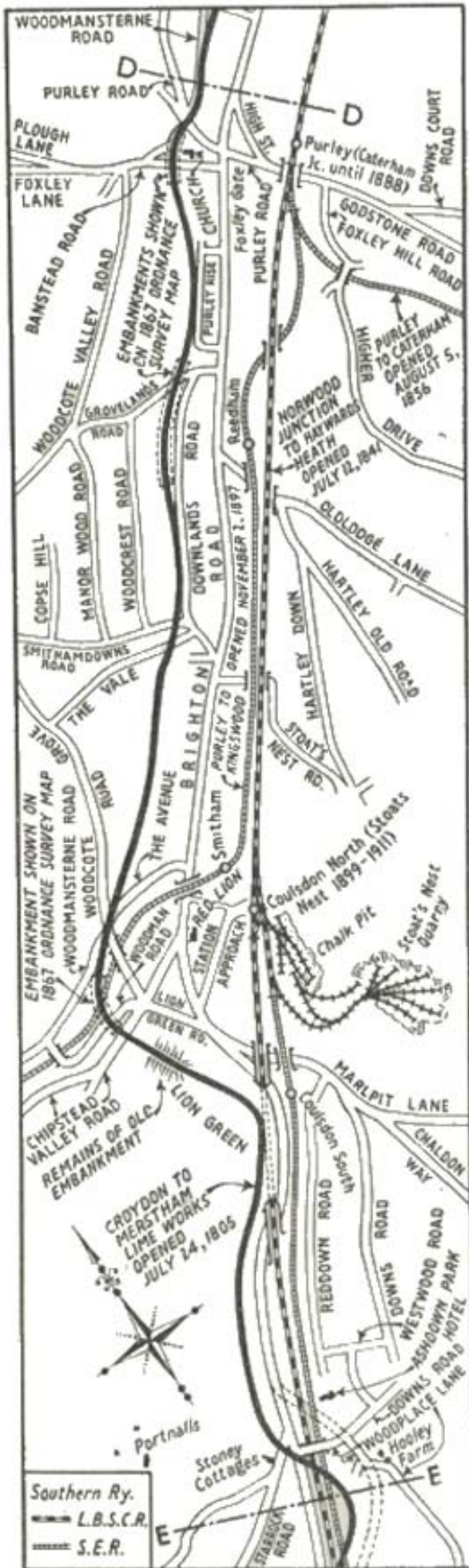
ALTHOUGH the general route of the Croydon Merstham & Godstone Railway has been fairly well-known and recognised for many years, and even has formed the subject of a booklet issued by the Croydon Public Libraries, there were sufficient undecided points to justify a further detailed investigation, before all traces were lost, and the relevant documents finally dispersed, and this was undertaken some time before the recent war by Mr. Charles E. Lee, who has devoted a considerable amount of attention to this railway. With the outbreak of war, it became impracticable to pursue these enquiries, and his book, "Early Railways in Surrey," presented originally to the Newcomen Society in December, 1940, and published by *The Railway Gazette* in 1944, deliberately omitted maps. More recently, he has been able to complete these enquiries, with the aid of Mr. C. E. C. Townsend of the Southern Railway, Mr. Clarence G. Paget, the Croydon historian, and others, and offered the results of his researches to the Railway Club, on Saturday, May 10, when a party of members was conducted over many of the interesting points of the route. This route is indicated clearly in relation to modern topographical details on the maps which we reproduce at pages 254 and 255. These maps have been prepared specially in our own drawing office, and are based on many land plans and early ordnance survey maps, kindly made available by individual land owners; by the Southern Railway; and by the Surrey County Council. Of particular interest is the tithe map of 1847, showing details of the route through the central parts of Croydon. It is worthy of note that a portion of this ancient line was utilised by the London & Brighton Railway in the construction of its original main line, although, curiously enough, this particular section was included in the portion which Parliament required to be sold to the South Eastern Railway, with the L. & B.R. retaining continuous running powers. On this section, which was converted by the Southern Railway for third-rail electric traction as from July 17, 1932, an intensive electric train service now represents the bulk of a regular railway traffic, which has been virtually continuous since the opening with horse traction of the old C.M. & G.R. on July 24, 1805—exactly 142 years ago.

The Route of the 1805 Croydon-Merstham Railway



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The maps above and on the preceding page show the route of the Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Iron Railway, built in 1805 and acquired by the London & Brighton Railway in 1838