

9th June, 1959

EMBARGOED FOR EVENING PAPERS

TUESDAY, JUNE 9th 1959

FIRST KENT COAST ELECTRIC EXPRESS -  
THE INAUGURAL SPECIAL

The first electric train to carry passengers to the Kent Coast was due to run from London to Ramsgate today to inaugurate the new Kent Coast electric services.

This express is one of the new-style specially built trains which will on Monday, June 15, start running an hourly interval service each way between London and the Thanet towns. On it more than 200 invited guests were travelling as far as Margate where they were attending a commemorative luncheon at the Winter Gardens.

Mayors and other civic leaders from all over Kent were attending the ceremony together with Mr. G.R.H. Nugent, M.P., Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation; Sir Brian Robertson, Chairman of the British Transport Commission; and Sir Philip Warter, member of the British Transport Commission and Chairman of the Southern Area Board.

Eight cars of the express train -- the new trains can run as one, two, or three, four-car units -- were bringing the main party from London. At Faversham another four-car unit with Kent guests from Dover was to be joined to the London train so that twelve cars could carry on to Margate as one train.

Arrangements were made for both the London and the Dover portions to stop at several points along the line to pick up guests.

At Margate station the Chairman of the British Transport Commission and Mr. Nugent were being welcomed officially by the Mayor of Margate and the Town Clerk.

Alderman E. Butcher, the Mayor of Ramsgate which is the terminal of the electric services, was travelling on the special train from London.

Due to speak at the <sup>official</sup> ~~official~~ luncheon in the Winter Gardens

were Mr. Nugent, Sir Brian Robertson, Sir Philip Warter, and the Mayor of Margate, Alderman Gordon A. Kirby.

A 20-page illustrated book describing the two years' work to provide the new electric services was distributed to every guest (copy enclosed).

END

Note to Picture Editors:

Picture suggestions:      early pictures; the train leaves Victoria, platform 7 (9.55 a.m.)  
Formal welcome at Margate (11.47 a.m.)  
Sir Brian meeting the Mayor of Margate and congratulating the motormen who drove the train (11.55 a.m.)

Getting pictures back:      First train leaves Margate 1.27 p.m.  
arrives Victoria 3.49 p.m.

Sir Brian Robertson was taking the chair and was supported

by :-

*Sir Brian Robertson*

Sir Philip Warter ✓      Member of the British Transport Commission and Chairman of the Southern Area Board.

Mr. G.R. Nugent, M.P. ✓      Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Monsieur P. Dargacq ✓      Director General, French Railways.

Monsieur de Vos ✓      Director General, Belgian National Railways.

Monsieur F. Bertrand ✓      Director General, Belgian Marine.

Mr. R.M. Hanks ✓      Member, British Transport Commission and Chairman, Western Area Board.

The Mayors of *together if in cars* ✓      Margate, Dover, Ramsgate, Canterbury, Faversham and Gillingham.

and four Members of Parliament: ✓      Mr. Leslie Thomas, Mr. P.W. Wells, Mr. A. Arbuthnot, and Mr. W.R. Rees-Davies.

KENT COAST  
ELECTRIFICATION  
PHASE ONE.

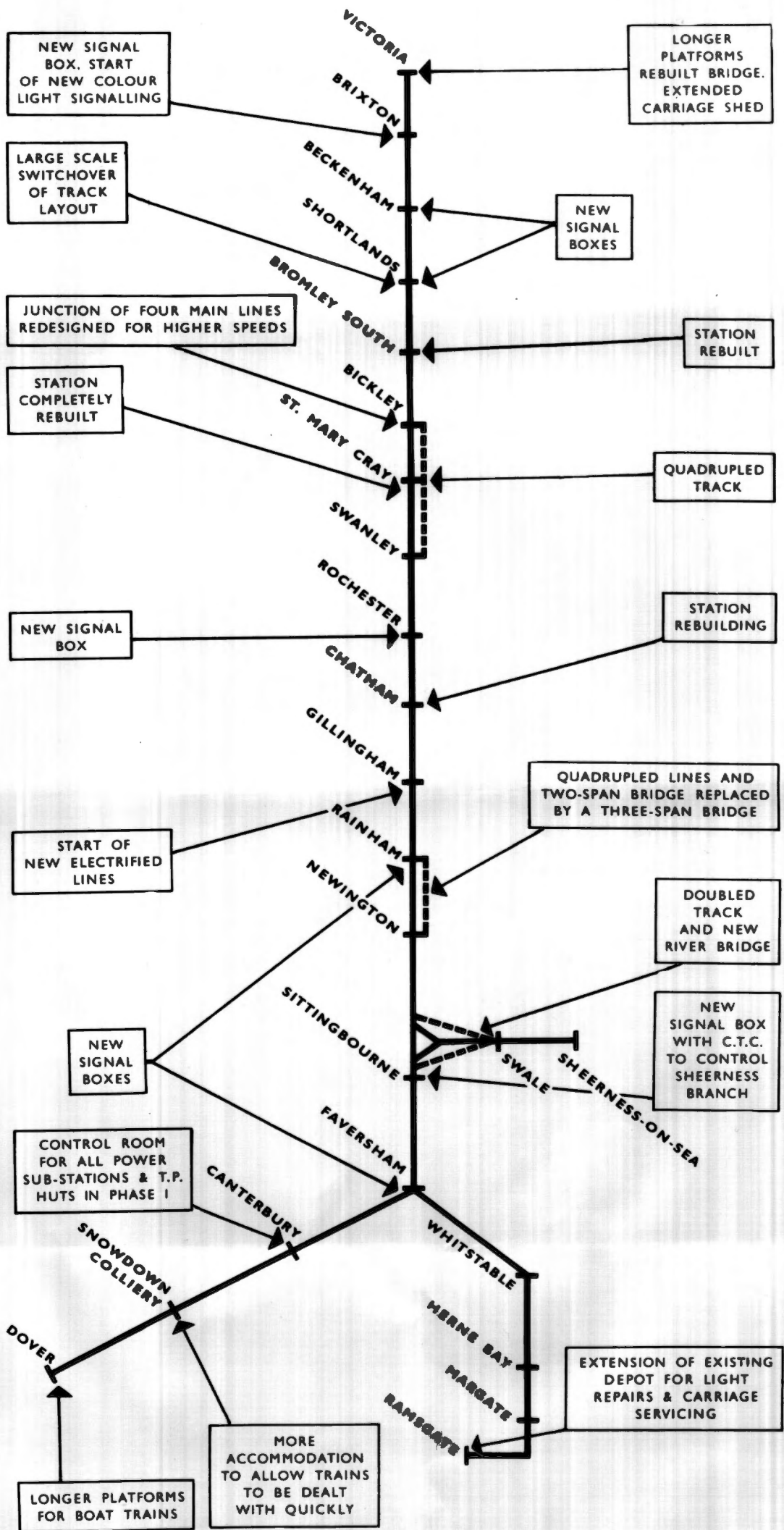
This envelope contains:

Notes on works along the route  
and transport arrangements at  
Margate.

Diagrammatic map of route.

Folder describing new trains.

Pocket train service cards of  
type prepared for business  
travellers.



KENT COAST  
ELECTRIFICATION  
PHASE ONE.

ROUTE GUIDE  
(to be read in conjunction  
with diagrammatic map)

and

NOTES ON TRANSPORT  
ARRANGEMENTS.

INAUGURAL JOURNEY  
JUNE 9 1959.

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VICTORIA (9.55 a.m.)

The platform from which this train is leaving at Victoria is being lengthened with seven others to take longer trains.

This means that the Eccleston Road Bridge, which surmounts the far end of the station and carries heavy West End traffic, is having to be reconstructed. The bridge will be a single span over platforms 1 to 7.

Two lines into Grosvenor Road Carriage Sheds, just outside the station, have been electrified and the remainder will be electrified in Phase Two of the Kent Coast Scheme.

BRIXTON (10 a.m.)

Just before the train reaches Brixton you can see on the right of our direction of travel the new Shepherds Lane signal box -- by the side of the old one. The new box was the first of the eight power-operated semi-automatic signal boxes to come into use for the electric services. It was opened on March 8, and controls colour-light signalling in the Brixton area.

SHORTLANDS (10.12 a.m.)

At Shortlands Junction there is the start of a long stretch of line on which there were massive earthworks. On the up side a new cutting and bank to flatten the existing curves has been formed. The bridge over the road has been rebuilt, and a good deal of work was necessary at Shortlands Station. Flattening out the curves has raised speeds from 40 m.p.h. to 60 m.p.h. on the Victoria line and from 20 m.p.h. to 40 m.p.h. on the Holborn line.

Last week, the newly re-arranged tracks between Shortlands and Swanley were brought into use. Until then the lines ran in pairs -- up, up, down, down -- which meant that at the junctions some up trains crossed the paths of some down trains.

With the new arrangement -- up, down, up, down -- trains can cross at more than one point, which cuts out the bottlenecks at the junctions.

It involved drastic alterations to both the track layout and the signalling.

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Many trains calling at Shortlands, Bromley South, Bickley and St. Mary Cray now leave from different platforms.

#### BROMLEY SOUTH STATION

The switchover of lines meant that extensive alterations were necessary to the platforms, station buildings and track layout. Speed limits of 30 m.p.h. on the outer tracks have become 60 m.p.h.

#### BICKLEY STATION

Here again there were extensive alterations to the track layout.

#### BICKLEY JUNCTION (10.16½ a.m.)

There are four main junctions close together where the Victoria, Charing Cross, Kent Coast and Folkestone lines meet and diverge.

There is a complicated system of flyovers and junctions to enable trains to cross from one line to another. The loops originally curved sharply and that meant severe speed restrictions, which seriously hampered traffic, including boat trains.

The whole junction has been redesigned. Three of the loops have been diverged with extensive earth removals, amounting to 125,000 tons, and seven new bridges and culverts have been built. The increase in speed over the loops and junctions is from 30 m.p.h. to 50 m.p.h.

Eleven bridges and a viaduct over a five-mile stretch between Bickley Junction and Swanley had to be rebuilt to allow for the width of the two extra tracks. Several old bridges had to be completely demolished. Two were blown down with explosive.

A new signal box at Chislehurst Junction was brought into use last week to replace seven manual boxes.

#### ST. MARY CRAY STATION

The entire station has been completely rebuilt. The old staggered platforms have been replaced by island

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platforms, and the new station buildings include a booking hall at road level and other up-to-date facilities.

Heavy retaining walls have been built along the banks to accommodate the widened lines and goods yards, rather than sterilise the surrounding land.

In the seven-mile stretch from Shortlands to Swanley 650,000 tons of earth were moved.

#### FARNINGHAM ROAD, FAWKHAM, MEEPHAM AND SOLE STREET

Platforms have been lengthened to take eight-car trains.

#### ROCHESTER

A new signal box has been built to replace two manual boxes at Chatham Goods siding and Chatham station.

#### CHATHAM (10.40 a.m.)

The main platforms have been extended to take 12-car trains. The down and up slow lines and up sidings have disappeared. A scheme has been prepared for reconstructing the platform buildings.

#### GILLINGHAM

Platforms have been extended to take 12-car trains; and it is here that the extension of electrification begins.

#### RAINHAM (10.49 a.m.) AND NEWINGTON

The major construction work and alterations to the track on the newly-electrified lines lie between Rainham and Newington and along the Sheerness-on-Sea branch.

Between Rainham and Newington passing loops have been installed in each direction so that expresses can pass stopping trains .



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At Rainham, the platforms have been lengthened for eight-car trains. There is also a new signal box.

Among guests joining the train here is Alderman H. Smith, J.P., Mayor of Gillingham.

Just past Rainham are the junctions with the new loops, and for the next 2½ miles there are widened cuttings and embankments which again required large-scale earthworks.

At Newington, more new platforms for eight-car trains have been built, with a new waiting room, and alterations to the goods yard have been carried out.

#### SITTINGBOURNE

Just before Sittingbourne you can see the loop lines leading off to the Sheerness-on-Sea branch line, on which the track has been doubled for three miles as far as the Swale.

The line across the Swale Bridge has been electrified, but trains will eventually use the new bridge which is being built alongside the existing one.

A number of other bridge works have also been carried out along the branch line.

On the main line at Sittingbourne another power sub-station has been completed and a new signal box built. The signalling system at this box, centralised traffic control, enables one signalman to control the movements of trains all the way along the eight-mile branch line by pressing buttons on an electric panel to move the power-operated points and powerful colour-light signals. Previously the branch line was controlled by semaphore signalling operated from four separate signal boxes.

The new box also controls an important stretch of the main line.

At Sittingbourne we are being joined by Councillor H.L.Wise, Vice-Chairman of Sheerness-on-Sea Urban District Council; the Chairman-Elect of Sheppey Rural District Council; Mr. P.L.Wells, M.P. for Faversham, and other civic officials.

#### FAVERSHAM (11.13 a.m.)

Platforms have been extended and improvements made to the track layout. Berthing sidings have been electrified.

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There is also a new signal box.

Joining the train here is Councillor R.S.Amor, Mayor of Faversham.

A special four-car train bringing guests from Dover and Canterbury is being attached to the train here.

( DOVER FRIORY (10.25 a.m.)

( Here again platforms have been  
( lengthened and carriage servicing facilities  
( for the new stock have been installed with  
( berthing accommodation.

( Guests include Alderman R.L.Eckhoff  
( J.F., Mayor of Dover, and Councillor K.J.Madge,  
( Chairman of Dover Rural District Council.

Dover  
train

( SNOWDOWN COLLIERY

( More accommodation has been provided  
( to deal with trains quickly.

( CANTERBURY (10.48 a.m.)

( A control room has been built as a  
( "nerve centre" for all the power sub-stations  
( and track paralleling huts on the newly-  
( electrified lines.

( Boarding the train at Canterbury  
( East is a party including Councillor T.McCallum,  
( Mayor of Canterbury.

WHITSTABLE & TANKERTON (11.24 a.m.)

Platforms have been extended to take longer trains.

Among guests joining here is Mrs. E.Watts, B.Sc., J.P., Chairman of Whitstable Urban District Council.

HERNE BAY (11.33 a.m.)

Again, platforms have been lengthened.

Guests here include Mr. A.E.Tugwood, J.F., Chairman of Herne Bay Urban District Council.

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MARGATE (11.47 a.m.)

At Margate our arrival will be greeted by the Mayor and the Town Clerk. You are asked to remain in the train until Sir Brian and his party have moved off the platform and reached the booking hall.

You will be conducted from the train to motor coaches waiting outside the station and we will then be driven to the Sun Lounge entrance of the Winter Gardens.

There you will find table plans and a key listing us all in alphabetical order.

After being received at the Winter Gardens there will be cocktails before luncheon at 1.0 p.m.

So that we can get away in time the luncheon will have to end at 2.45 p.m. when the same motor coaches will take us back to the station.

The train leaves at 3.30 p.m. from the up side and will stop at Herne Bay, Whitstable and Faversham where it will divide again. One portion will go to Sittingbourne and Rainham, and then to Victoria to arrive at 5.19 p.m.; the other portion will run via Canterbury East to arrive at Dover Priory at 4.41 p.m.