

Croydon, capital city of — er — Croydon.

Thursday November 6th 2008

Was served firstly by the Surrey Iron Railway from Wandsworth and the Croydon Merstham and Godstone Railway [freight only]. The former closed in 1846 and the present trams runs on part of its route as they come through Waddon. West Croydon Station was built on the site of the Croydon canal basin and opened in 1839 and by 1847 the route reached Epsom. The line through East Croydon was opened in 1841.

In 1868 a terminus, Croydon Central Station opened, closed in 1871, reopened 1886 and closed in 1890. On its site is the present Town Hall, Town Hall Gardens built in 1896 and much later, Fairfield Halls on the track beds. [It was possible to get a LNWR train to Willesden via Kensington or GER to Liverpool Street via the East London Line.] Croydon once had its own racecourse not forgetting the airport from which you could fly the world with Imperial Airways.

Croydon Tramways Company opened its first line along North End to Thornton Heath in 1879 and another line ran south in the Purley direction but they were not connected until 1897 when the high Street was widened. The Corporation decide to purchase the system in 1899 and proceeded to electrify it on the overhead principle. The South Met System served Sutton, Mitcham Norwood and Crystal Palace amongst other places but did not interconnect with the Croydon system until London Transport was created. The last trams from Purley through to Westminster ran on 7th April 1951.

Today's trip starts from **East Croydon Station**:

Come out of the concourse; catch any tram going right, one stop to *George Street*, which is just past the Wetherspoons **The George** for the briefing and breakfast. [One of the earliest Wetherspoon's once Waring & Gillows furniture shop]

Leave **The George** at 10 50 and continue on following the tram tracks to where they drop down Crown Hill, stopping to look



up

North End to compare it with the scene below. The building on the right and Allders are still there. Near the bottom of the hill turn left into Surrey Street [Market] and go a short distance to the **Dog & Bull** on the right which opens at 11 am, an unashamed Young's Market Pub.

Leave at 11 25 and follow the tram tracks to *Church Street* Tram Stop [5 mins] and take the next *Beckenham Junction* or *Elmers End* tram. This takes you round the circuit up Tamworth Road and just past the next stop *Centrale*, as you reach the cross roads with the railway on the left, note the scene on the right

Past *East Croydon* the tram at *Sandilands* drops down to pick up the old track bed with the New Addington branch turning off right though a tunnel.

Alight at *Addiscombe* [12 minutes] and with back to the tram, take the right hand exit to the road crossing, turn left and the **Claret Free House** is a couple of shops up. A drinking pub that opens at 11 30, it boasts Palmers Best and 5 guest beers. A gem amongst the dross.



South Met Type J Bogie Car at the Tamworth Road Croydon Terminus. Croydon Corporation would not let the company lines cross theirs. Tramlank track runs to the left of the tram.

Catch the 12 50 tram on to *Beckenham Road*, [trams every 10 minutes, journey time 11 minutes]. Down the steps turn right under the bridge and take an 8-minute walk to the **Moon and Stars** just before Sainsbury's. Six guest ales on at time of visit including Yorkshire Terrier and Bishops Finger. This is a relatively quiet Wetherspoons pub in an old cinema and good for a lunch stop.

[There is a pub, **Graces** [WG is buried in the nearby cemetery], right next to *Birkbeck* stop, under the bridge on the left which opens at 11, has very reasonably priced food, not tried, but only one beer, on tap, Bombardier when visited Also has tv screens and the thus the Wetherspoons is recommended]

Options after this are, return to *East Croydon* for de-briefing at the **Porter and Sorter**, down side, past the taxi rank. Which is likely to have London Pride, Pedigree and one other, or break the journey at *Addiscombe* and drop back into the **Claret Free House**.

As you might gather it is extremely difficult to avoid Fullers, Green King, Young's, gassy beer and alcopops in Croydon.

Travel is free on all tram routes but you will need to show an undated travel card if jumpers get on.

Trains to **East Croydon** from:

Victoria—About every 10 minutes journey time 16 minutes [miss out the /15 and /45 which take longer]

Thames link St Pancras: 9 39, 9 54, 10 09, 10.24 journey time 30 minutes [varies earlier missing London Bridge]

Thames link Farringdon as above but 4 minutes later

Thames link London Bridge as above but 16 minutes later

If you travel from Wimbledon by Tram, get off at *Wellesley Road*, walk forward to the traffic lights and turn right following the tram track to **The George**

Trains to **Victoria** from **Beckenham Junction** /23 /38 /53 /08 taking 21 minutes, from **Kent House** 2 minutes later

Trains to **London Bridge** from **Birkbeck**, /19 /49 journey time 29 minutes on a rather circuitous route

Thameslink St Pancras from **East Croydon** /01 /17 /32 /47 minutes past

