

NOTES FROM THORNHAM

In November I wrote about the Mellis and Eye Railway which opened in 1867 and closed to passengers in 1931, having been overcome by competition from the newly introduced bus services that were faster, more convenient and probably cheaper.

I was pleased to hear that Joyce Mayes, who has lived in Thornham Magna since 1939, remembers taking the train from Yaxley to Eye in around 1926



when she would have been five years old. Her grandparents lived in one of the cottages near the halt, and she went on the train with her brother Freddie who was three years older. She remembers being anxious that he would know where to get off the train!

Much of my information has come from a highly recommended book: *The Mellis and Eye Railway* by Peter Paye. The expanded second edition includes a photograph of the halt which is reproduced here with the kind permission of Mr Paye. As well as the group on the platform there are more people at the top of the stairs, perhaps on their way to or from a train, but more likely to be bystanders attracted by rare activity. It would be interesting to know if anyone recognises the people in the picture.

When the halt opened, the ticket office in Eye was closed down and from then on tickets were sold by the guard on the train. Perhaps the guard also had to leave the train to attend to lighting and extinguishing the halt's oil lamp and occasionally topping it up and trimming the wick.

FEBRUARY EVENT IN THE THORNHAMS ● Friday 16th: Village Hall film, *Lost in Paris*, 7.30pm, admission £5, advance booking unnecessary