

ELHAM VALLEY MILITARY RAILWAY

motor trolley to each station where they were engaged in painting and general maintenance. Ethel, Nell, Elsie, Winnie, Gladys and Doris kept the wheels in motion as well as keeping the spirits high of the many British and allied troops who passed through the Elham Valley during those bleak days.

For a short period during 1943 the EVMR became a training railway as well as an operational one, taking the overflow from Longmoor in Hampshire. There were about twenty trainees at a time for which two extra goods trains were run per day. As the SR would not permit these extra trains access to and from Canterbury West, engines had to be watered at Lyminge from a hose affixed to the station tap, which took almost half an hour to fill each locomotive.

By the end of the year all the railways guns were withdrawn and the units, disbanded in 1944, left their local HQ, the 'Plough & Harrow' at Bridge, taking their beer-stained piano with them.

Other than the official shots of 'Boche Buster', few photographs exist of the railway at this time. However,

Arthur Wells remembers seeing armoured 2-4-2T engines in the sidings at Canterbury South whilst Gordon Young recalls the long military trains with a locomotive at each end, which made an impressive sight winding up the valley, their exhausts echoing back from the hillsides.

In March 1944 an inspection was made of the line by the SR shortly before it was officially derequisitioned by the War Department. Subsequently they drew up a list of necessary repairs and compensations in order that they could reinstate their goods and possibly passenger service. The cost of restoring the key token system was put at £128 2s. 9d., the removal of surplus sidings at £1,165 and repairs to bridges and buildings £2,120. In addition, £100 was needed to repair damage to Lyminge station caused by firing practice which had brought down most of the ceilings as well as damaging some 8 ft of platform coping. Besides the numerous panes of glass and broken locks which needed replacing at the other stations, the floors at Elham had to be renewed as they were saturated with oil. It was plain the SR would be taking a long hard look at the future of the line.

ELHAM VALLEY LINE

Main particulars of traffic dealt with for 12 months ending September 1940

	Lyminge	Elbam	Barbam	Bishops-bourne	Bridge	Canterbury South
No. of passenger tickets issued	16,548	1,765	1,408	1,355	97	321
Season tickets issued	43	3	—	—	—	4
Platform tickets issued	5	4	—	5	—	—
Dog, bicycle tickets	101	35	20	7	—	24
Excess fare docketts	60	50	20	13	1	31
Tickets collected (excluding platform tickets)	7,438	1,916	560	372	153	718
Cloak Room tickets	10	—	—	2	—	17
Parcels forwarded	646	251	342	93	28	35
Parcels received	2,129	767	1,225	206	922	4
Horses forwarded	3	—	—	10	—	—
Horses received	3	2	1	1	3*	—
Cans of milk forwarded	312	2,231	—	7,208	—	—
Cans of milk received	2,747	1,936	—	—	—	—
General merchandise forwarded (in tons)	38	51	329	34	3*	—
General merchandise received	231	162	180	78	76*	—
Coal, Fuel received (tons)	1,807	577	32	—	1,694*	5,103*
STATION DEBITS						
Passengers	£571	£308	£64	£25	£9	£31
Season tickets	£59	£28	—	—	—	£17
Parcels etc.	£106	£50	£55	£76	£5	£7
General Merchandise	£125	£110	£538	£54	—	—
Coal, coke, etc.	£3	—	—	—	—	—
Livestock	£848	—	£16	£30	—	—
Lavatory receipts	11s. 0d.	7s. 9d.	3s. 6d.	—	—	10s. 10d.
Cash remitted during month	£1,410	£516	£291	£160	—	£153*
Staff employed, number	3	4	1	1	1	1

*Figures shown are for 12 months ending December 1938.