

BRECKLAND SEMAPHORE TWILIGHT

HERE is a DVD that provides an excellent nostalgic and really atmospheric look at the manual semaphore signalling that controlled the Ely to Norwich, Breckland Line for more than 120 years.

There is no spoken commentary and only occasional informative captions – punctuated by a number of ‘cab-ride’ sequences with music.

For the most part the ‘commentary’ is provided by the working mechanism of the manual signalboxes, passing traffic, signalmen and associated signalling.

This is a ‘requiem’ for a fast-vanishing type of railway operation.

The programme was filmed between 2009 and 2012 – the final three years of traditional semaphore signalling on this route. Varied workings include regular passenger services, freight, light engine

movements, the RHT train, and even LNER ‘B1’ No. 1306 hauling a BR Class 31 locomotive!

Camera work is imaginative and all nine of the mainly ex-Great Eastern signalboxes on the line are portrayed, together with their signalmen at work.

This moving programme culminates in a poignant farewell to Wymondham South Junction Box – including detonators on the line, fireworks and an RHTT working loco salute, followed by the ‘Last Post’ from the top of the box steps.

Worth exploring - recommended. (RSS)

PICTURES IN TIME (UK), 50A Hillcrest Road, Thorpe St Andrew, NORWICH NR7 0JU, 76mins £17.99, www.picturesintime.co.uk.

