

**A HISTORY OF THE  
INGOLDMELLS  
MINIATURE  
RAILWAY**

**A short history of an east coast  
7¼" gauge railway**

**Peter Scott**

***MINOR RAILWAY  
MINI HISTORIES - M1***

## **INGOLDMELLS MINIATURE RAILWAY**

**7¼" gauge. c1960 - c1983**

### **Introduction**

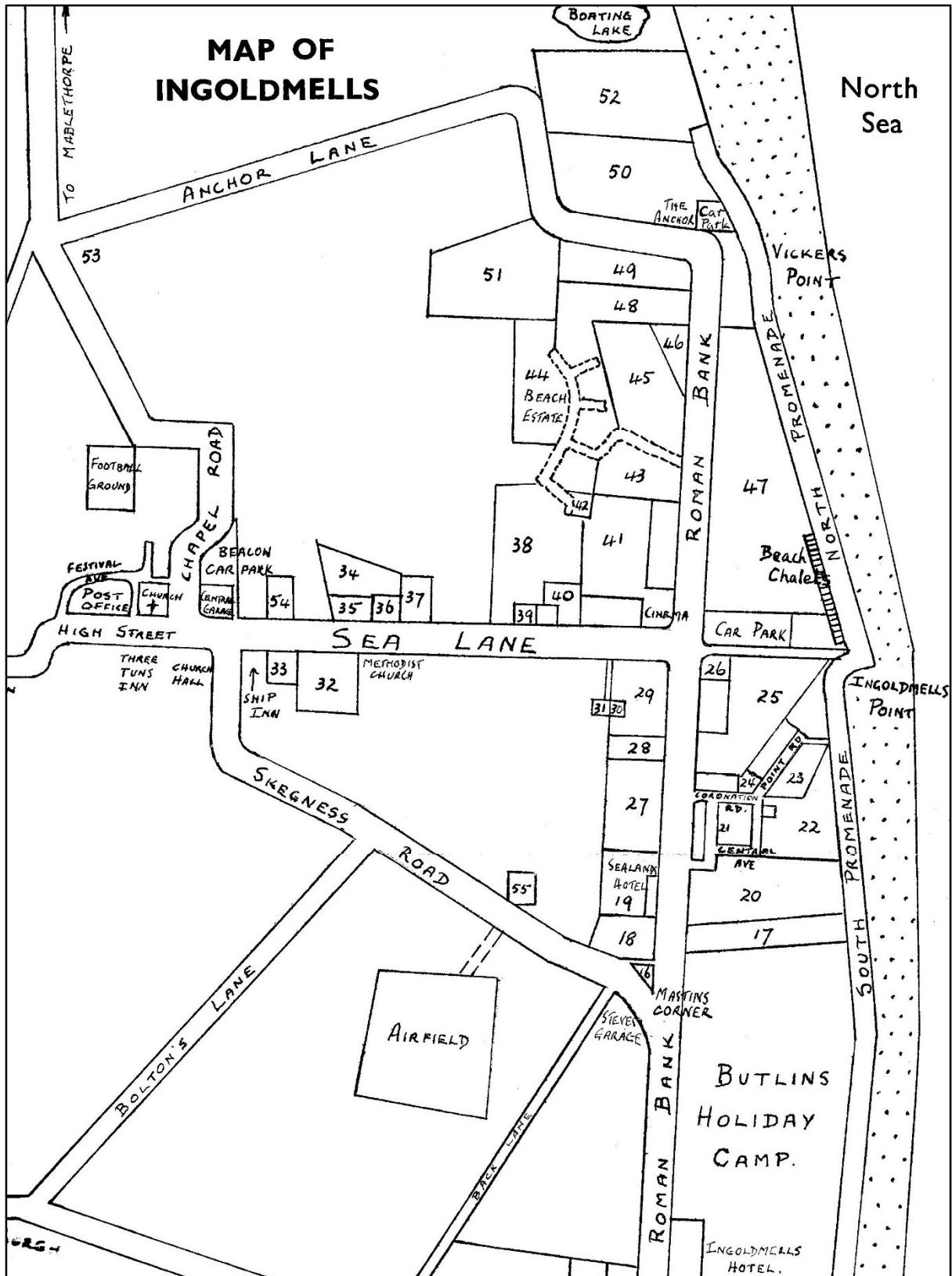
These notes cover the history of a little known and poorly recorded 7¼" gauge railway in the east coast resort of Ingoldmells. Little primary source evidence exists of the railway, which was originally operated by a steam locomotive, although it did appear on a number of postcards in later years.

### **Ingoldmells**

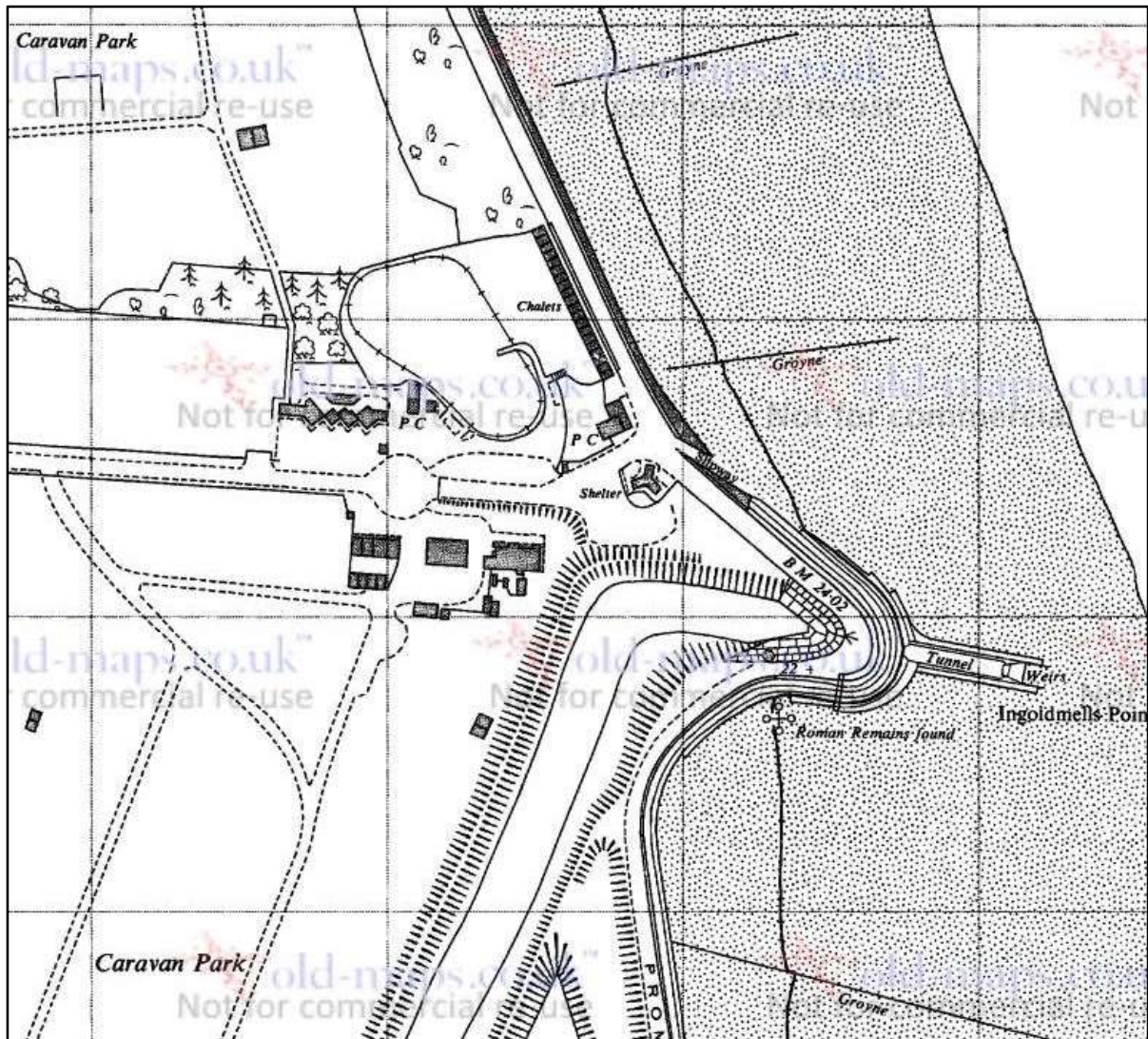
Ingoldmells lies on the North Sea coast of Lincolnshire - some 3½ miles north of Skegness and 10½ miles south of Mablethorpe. Its name is derived from Danish, meaning "The Sand Dunes of Ingulf" and it was once of greater importance than Skegness. For many years Ingoldmells was a small country village, centred on a crossroads, and about ¾ mile from the sea. Apart from some small scale Holiday Camps close to the coast, little changed in the area until the building of Billy Butlin's first Holiday Camp about 1 mile south of the village, which opened on Easter Saturday, 11th April 1936. Post Second World War development was fairly slow. In the 1950s a small estate of Council houses was built and in the early 1960s parts of the old village were demolished and new shops and public facilities constructed. However, Ingoldmells and the surrounding area were totally transformed in the 1950s & 1960s by the development of caravan parks, which now cover a large part of the area between the coast and the old village. The number of static caravans between Cleethorpes and Skegness rose from 4,200 in 1950 to 11,000 in 1959, 18,600 in 1969, with a peak of 21,000 in 1974. Indeed at the peak, 8% of the UK's caravans were sited on this part of the coast, with over a third at Ingoldmells. However, the 1963 official holiday guide for Ingoldmells was able to describe it as *"a village in a country setting with a glorious beach three miles long providing a playground for thousands of happy families each year"*.

### **Location & Layout**

The 7¼" gauge railway was located at TF57346877 - immediately north of Sea Lane at the point where it ended and just inland of the promenade - close to Ingoldmells Point and east of Roman Bank. Prior to the mid-1950s this was open marshy ground, but was reclaimed and protected by a new sea wall and promenade that was fully completed in July 1957, running from Ingoldmells to north of Mablethorpe. The railway was formed of a circuit, around 200 yards in length (not 100 yards as quoted in all other sources), with a spur of some 20 yards serving a station on the south east "corner" of the circuit. Just north of the points for this spur, on the eastern side of the circuit, was a footbridge allowing access to the centre of the circuit where there were other small children's amusements, including a "Crazee" golf course. The station was simply a hard-standing open area. Taken at different times, early photos of the line show trains running either way round the circuit.



A "Map of Ingoldmells" from the 1963 Ingoldmells official holiday guide. The railway is not specifically highlighted, but was located immediately to the left of the Beach Chalets - below No.47, which was the Lindsey County Council caravan site. All the other numbered locations refer to different "Camping Grounds". The original village was located at the crossroads, centre left.

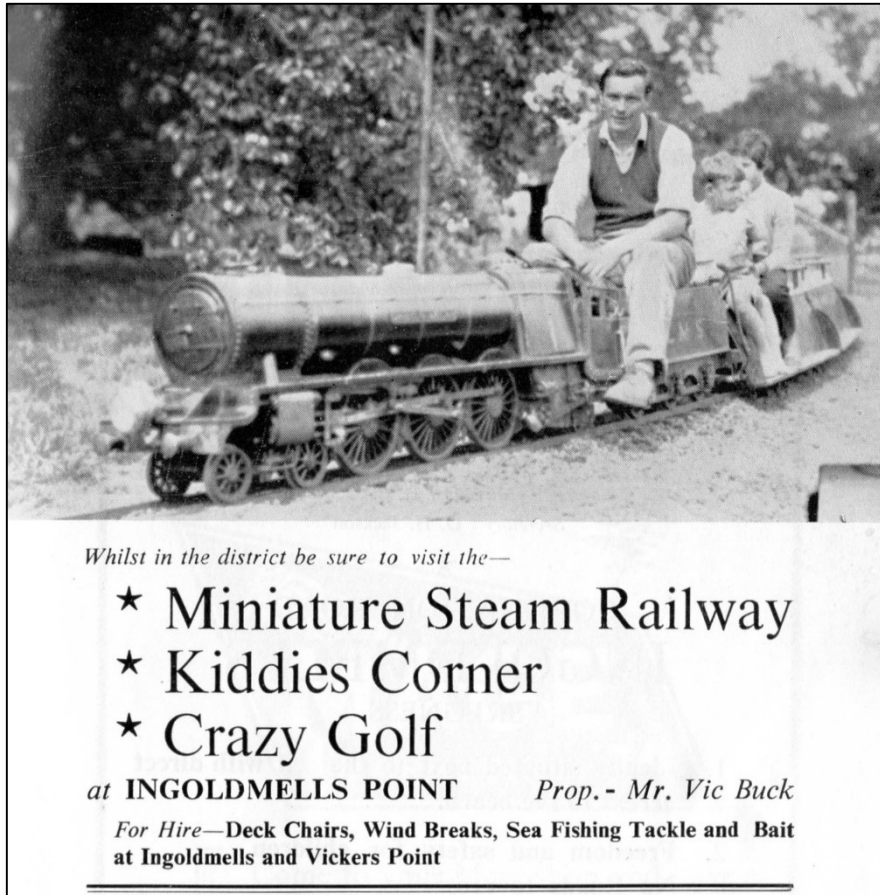


An extract from the 1969 Ordnance Survey 25" map taken from the now defunct *Old Maps.co.uk*. It is reproduced here approximately full size. By this time the station was located immediately to the right of the "P.C" on the west side of the circuit.

### Opening

It has not proved possible to determine exactly when the Ingoldmells Miniature Railway opened. It was certainly open by the 1963 summer season, as it is featured in that year's official holiday guide - along with Kiddies Corner and Crazy Golf - all on the same site. No earlier editions have been found - it had been published from at least 1959. No mention of the railway was found in the minutes of Ingoldmells Parish Council or those of Spilsby Rural District Council. The *Skegness News*, *Skegness Standard* and the *Louth Standard* between 1955 and 1963 were all silent about the railway - Ingoldmells was too small to have its own newspaper. A detailed article about Ingoldmells appeared in the 9th March 1960 edition of the *Skegness Standard*, but makes no mention of the railway. A photograph, dated 1963, appears in R H Leithead's 1975 *Miniature Railways Stockbook and Guide*. The locomotive used at opening was 4-6-2 6100 "Duchess of Ilkeston", which had been in use at the Derbyshire Miners' Holiday Centre probably up to the end of the 1955 season, and definitely no later than the end of the

1957 season. As already mentioned the promenade, behind which the railway ran was not completed until July 1957. The *Skegness Holiday Gram* 1969 (published by the Skegness Advancement Association) noted "*The miniature railway, with its scale model steam engine, is one of the newer attractions of Ingoldmells, and extremely popular with children*". So, in summary, the railway probably opened around 1960.



This advert appeared in the 1963 Ingoldmells official holiday guide. The picture is a mystery as it does not appear to be of the line at Ingoldmells, which did not have any trees inside its 200 yard long circuit - unless they were cleared shortly after the railway opened.

### **Motive Power**

Motive power for the railway was 4-6-2 6100 "Duchess of Ilkeston", built by Stanley Battison of Ilkeston in 1944 and renamed "Ingoldmells Flyer" for its new location. Prior to this the locomotive had run on a line in the Derbyshire Miner's Holiday Centre at Skegness. Rolling stock was three or four 4w sit-astride coaches. The owner/operator of the line at this time was Mr Victor Buck of Albany Road, Skegness - a former local champion swimmer and diver and, prior to the Second World War, an amateur boxer. By this time he was a self-employed plumber & heating engineer with seasonal amusement interests.

## Alterations & Developments

At opening, as already described, the station was located on a short spur on the south east "corner" of the circuit. By time the 1965 Ingoldmells official holiday guide was published, the station and spur had been moved to the southern side of the circuit - indicating this change had taken place by the 1964 season. By 1969, according to an Ordnance Survey 25" map, the spur to the station was incorporated into the circuit by extending it out slightly to the south. A station was now provided directly on the circuit at the south western "corner", close to the roundabout at the end of Sea Lane. In the summer of 1970 the railway was "dieselised" - or more accurately steam was replaced by a petrol locomotive. *The World's Fair* of Saturday 20th June 1970 reported "*To supplement the steam locomotive on the 7¼in gauge miniature railway at Ingoldmells by Sea, near Skegness, Mr V Buck, the proprietor of the local amusements, has recently bought a diesel style (BR Hymek) locomotive, built by Cromar White Developments Ltd of Wimbledon*". An accompanying photograph with the article showed Mr Buck seated in the locomotive with Roland White from Cromar White standing alongside. *Narrow Gauge News* No.68 (December 1970) also reported the arrival "*early this summer*" of the "Hymek" style locomotive. It was turned out in a "rail blue" livery and numbered D7017, but does not appear to have been named. It was a Bo-Bo locomotive powered by a Norton Villers 200cc two stroke petrol engine with mechanical transmission (four speed reversible gearbox), the leading bogie being driven. The coaches remained as before. Despite the reports in *The World's Fair* and *Narrow Gauge News* stating that the Hymek would "*supplement the steam locomotive*" it seems to have replaced it. R H Leithead's 1975 *Miniature Railways Stockbook and Guide*, noted "Ingoldmells Flyer" hadn't "*run at Ingoldmells for a few seasons due to rebuilding*". In fact an enthusiast visiting in September 1975 was told it was stored at Fir Tree Farm (TF530670) on the road between Ingoldmells and Burgh-le-Marsh. "Ingoldmells Flyer" seems to have been sold to Godfrey Mottram of Royston, near Barnsley. *Narrow Gauge News* No.115 (October/November 1978) quotes a newspaper article stating it had been "*used until five years ago at Ingoldmells near Skegness until replaced by a diesel*". In September 1975 the fare for one ride, which comprised two circuits, was 9p. All photographs and postcards of trains operated by D7017 show the train operating in a clockwise direction. By 1970 the railway encircled a Go Kart track, which had replaced the golf course.

## Closure

The railway seems to have closed in the early 1980s. Around 1983/1984 a covered amusement arcade building was erected over the site of the railway and the Go-Kart track. Funworld Limited applied to East Lindsey District Council (Ref: E90/293/83) on 17th March 1983 for planning permission for the "*erection of an amusement arcade on the site of existing open air amusements*". This was granted on 12th May 1983. It would therefore seem likely this work was carried out over the winter of 1983/1984, which would mean the railway last ran at the end of the 1983 season (assuming it even lasted until then). The last advert & photograph of the railway in the Ingoldmells Holiday Guide was in 1981 edition - nothing appeared in the 1982 or 1983 editions. Planning permission was granted in 1985 to extend the amusement arcade building.



There are two photographs of the railway in the Francis Frith collection. They can be viewed by following these links:

Reference: 147075

[www.francisfrith.com/ingoldmells/ingoldmells-miniature-railway-c1960\\_i47075](http://www.francisfrith.com/ingoldmells/ingoldmells-miniature-railway-c1960_i47075).

This shows "Ingoldmells Flyer" departing from the station - with the help of some human "banking"! A dog looks on. A footbridge crosses over the line where the station spur joins the circuit, leading to the amusements in the centre of the circuit. This appears to be same train as in reference 147076 noted below. Dated c1960.

Reference: 147076

[www.francisfrith.com/ingoldmells/ingoldmells-miniature-railway-c1960\\_i47076](http://www.francisfrith.com/ingoldmells/ingoldmells-miniature-railway-c1960_i47076).

This depicts a three coach train on the circuit and about to pass under the footbridge. The spur to the station trails in. Dated c1960.



Running the opposite way around the circuit to the two Francis Frith views, "Ingoldmells Flyer" hauls a well-loaded train. The building in the background contains beach chalets. The North Sea is in the distance beyond. The train is on the most southerly part of the circuit.  
(Author's Collection)





A colourised postcard. The train is in the station. The whole railway is visible, with the "Crazee Golf" course and other small amusements in the centre.

*(Postcard)*



This view is from the 1965 edition of the Ingoldmells official holiday guide and shows the station had been moved to a spur on the southern side of the circuit (by at least 1964).

*(Ingoldmells 1965 official holiday guide)*





By the date of this view (which is unknown), the station spur has been incorporated into a slightly larger circuit and the station relocated on to it. It is visible in the centre of the picture, with a white hut. The photographer obviously picked a quiet time to take his shot!

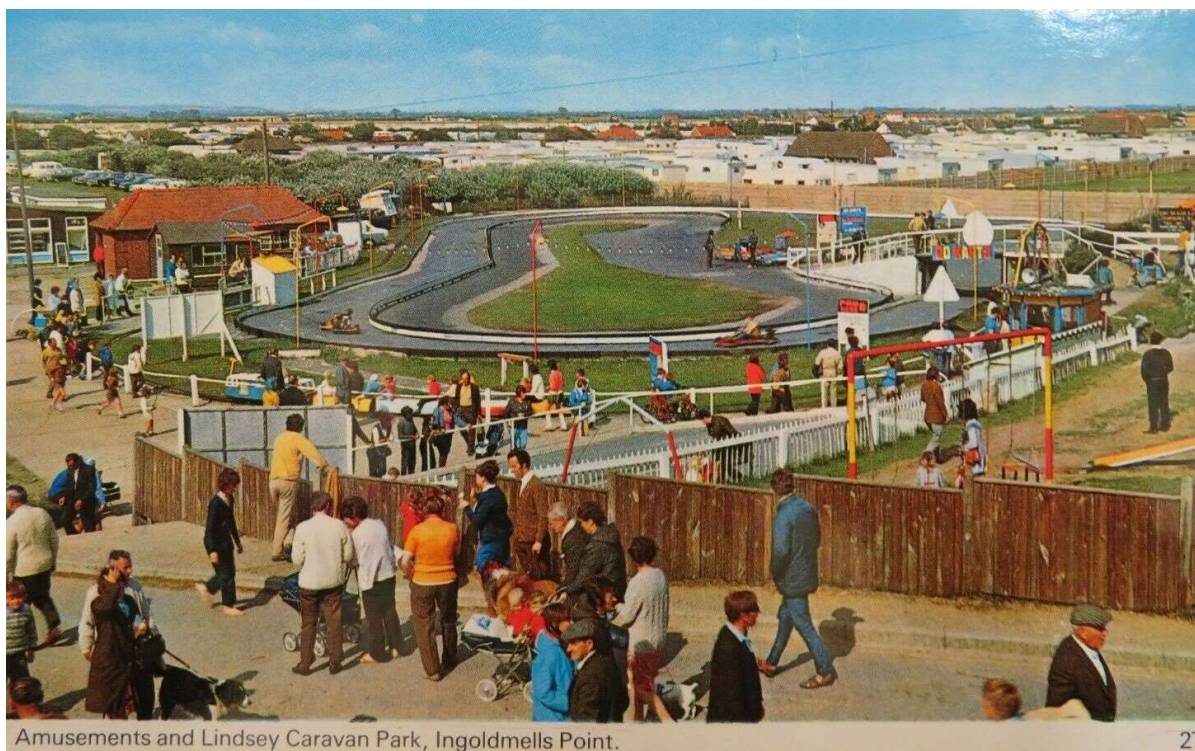
*(Postcard)*



This view shows the Cromar White "Hymek" on the circuit approaching the station.

*(Skegness & Ingoldmells 1980 official holiday guide)*



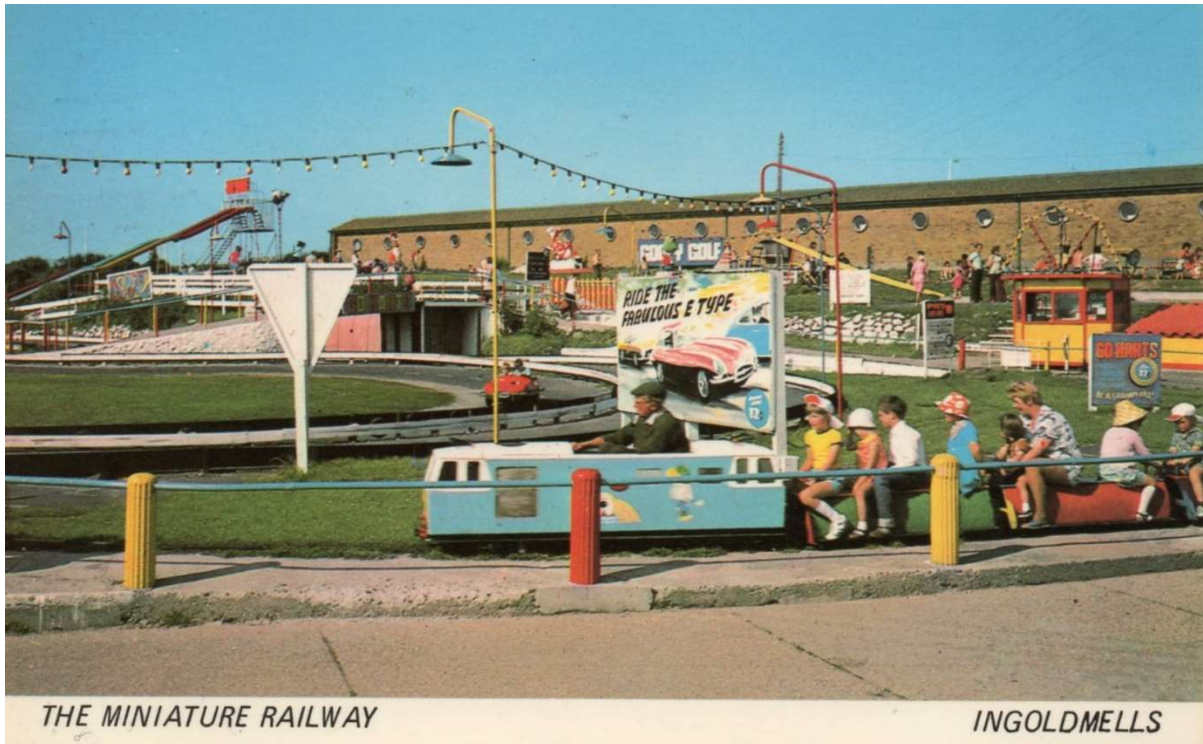


The "Hymek" passes with a lightly-loaded train of four multi-coloured coaches. The station hut now has a yellow roof and a Go-Kart track has replaced the Golf Course.  
(Postcard)



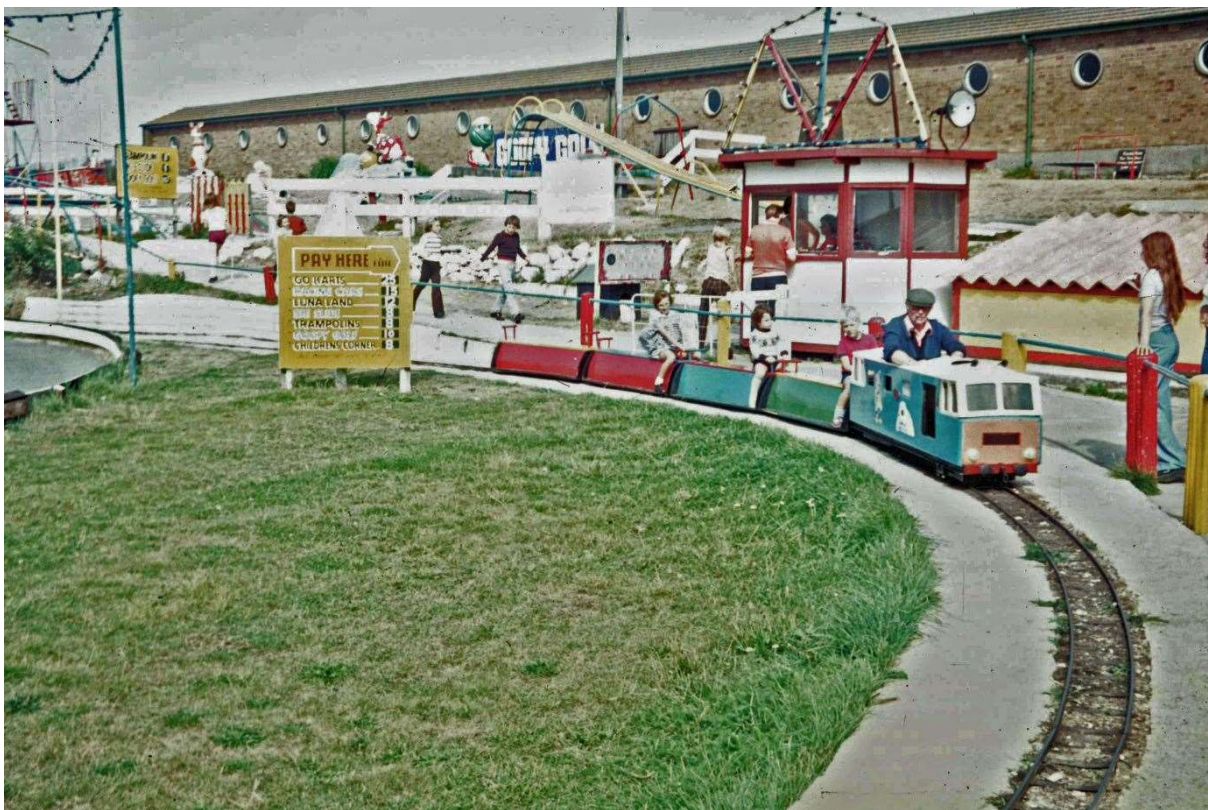
Another very similar photograph from the same viewpoint. The blue liveried "Hymek" approaches the station with a four coach train.  
(Postcard)





A train approaches the station, hauled by Cromar White "Hymek" D7017. The distinctive beach chalet building, with its round windows, can be clearly seen in the background.

*(Sapphire Postcard L1727. Posted 29/06/81)*



A pipe-smoking driver takes a very lightly-loaded four coach train around the circuit. The railway is not among the attractions, with their charges, listed on the "Pay Here" sign.

Presumably, it was not part of a central charging scheme.

*(Henry Pryer. 07/09/75)*



## Summary

Opened: c1960

Closed: c1983

Layout & length: Circular, with spur to station (later removed), 200 yards

## Locomotives (7¼" gauge)

Ingoldmells Flyer	4-6-2	Stanley Battison	1944	LMSR Princess Royal	1
D7017	4w-4PM	Cromar White	1970	BR Hymek	2

- 1 From: Derbyshire Miners' Holiday Centre, Skegness by c1960.  
To: Godfrey Mottram, Royston, Barnsley c1976 (after 9/1975, by 9/1976).
- 2 From: new c6/1970.  
To: unknown - sold or scrapped.

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## **Acknowledgements**

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