



Magnus Volk's Railway

Presented by Ian Gledhill

14 Mar 2014

Ian gave a very interesting, informative and well received talk about the life of Magnus Volk, the grandson of a German migrant to the UK, and his enthusiasm for applying and developing the new electrical technologies of the day. These ranged from telephones to electric light to electric railways, in all of which he was the first person in the south east of England to introduce them to the region, in his native Brighton. As with all new developments, he faced a whole series of setbacks in his projects, some caused by Mother Nature and others man made. Undaunted, he persevered and triumphed in areas where most others would have given up. The well attended audience was shown a series of magnificent old photographs and also the only known film clip of one of Volk's most famous and sadly short lived creations, the "daddy-longlegs", an elevated train that ran across a track laid in the sea. It had been discovered in an archive in Madrid as a decaying nitrate film, but luckily was restored by the BBC for our enjoyment. Ian concluded by bringing us up to date with Magnus' most enduring project, the Brighton sea front narrow gauge electric railway, which is now the oldest of its type in the world.

L.Whewell