

Ely Air Lines –

Bradshawing

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

We’ve been indulging in the re-release of the classic BBC series Great British Railway Journeys, freely available on YouTube. Hosted by the Right Honourable Michael Portillo, the show pairs train travel with a worn copy of George Bradshaw’s 1839 railway guide – history, charm, and wanderlust in one package.

In Season 3, Portillo’s route took him from Great Yarmouth to Beccles. Although Bradshaw’s guide didn’t include Beccles, Portillo made an exception to share a remarkable story: how British pilots in World War II used the very railways Bradshaw mapped as lifelines. Surely Bradshaw would have been gratified to learn that his journal would help shape a wartime technique that “could mean the difference between life and death.”

That technique came to be known as “Bradshawing.” It meant following railroads to safe landings.

To bring the story to life, Portillo visited legendary Air Transport Auxiliary pilot Joy Loft-house, who flew every British single-engine aircraft – Spitfires, Hurricanes, Mustangs, and the rest. Like America’s WASP, ATA pilots delivered aircraft from factory to squadron, freeing combat pilots to fight.

Portillo, who isn’t a pilot, could hardly grasp how she flew such a variety of machines. Loft-house smiled and held up the battered manual ATA pilots relied on: the Ferry



Pilot Notes. “This was our bible,” she said. Each plane had one page of essential information. You studied it, strapped in, and off you went.

She laughed at his astonishment. “We were very young, you know.”

Loft-house had answered an advertisement in 1943, despite never having been in an airplane – she didn’t even drive a car. What drew her in? With a mischievous wink, she admitted, “A lot of my boyfriends were in the Air Force.”

Because wartime Britain had camouflaged key landmarks, the railways – still visible from the air – became essential navigation tools. Pilots drew a line on a map, corrected for wind, and followed the tracks below. Loft-house called it “Bradshawing,” a nod to the guidebook that once mapped those very routes.

One line in the Ferry Pilot Notes made Portillo

smile. It warned pilots searching for an airfield: “Don’t look for it. Some camouflage expert has done his best to prevent your seeing it. Look instead for the landmarks, which point to the airfield. Even the Air Ministry cannot camouflage them.”

Wanting to experience Bradshawing firsthand, Portillo went aloft with pilot John Wignal. Portillo sat up front with a map, and once Wignal flew a few miles from the airfield, Portillo traced the landscape – roads, villages, bends in the river – until he spotted a long, straight ribbon of steel below.

“Railway line ahoy!” he called out, delighted. “According to my map, the airfield should lie to the left of that track.” Wignal turned, and sure enough, the runway appeared ahead.

Portillo closed the segment with quiet gratitude. The same railways George Bradshaw mapped in the 1830s became the guides young pilots followed more than a century later. And the act of following the humble rails leading homeward earned a name of its own. Bradshawing. *ElyAirLines.substack.com*

Happy Thanksgiving

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DAYTON

DISD Superintendent Young speaks to Lambda Alpha Sigma

DAYTON - Thirteen Lambda Alpha Sigma members met at 6 p.m. November 11, in the home of Lee Ann Douglas. Presiding, President Shirley Sisk expressed appreciation to the hostesses and welcomed guest Travis Young. Then she led in the reading of the Club Collect and the pledges to the American and Texas flags. Minutes of the October meeting were read and approved. The treasurer’s report was filed as given.

Updates were given about members who have

been unable to attend recent meetings. Then, after the president reminded members of the club’s participation in the Christmas Brown Bag Buddy Program, the treasurer collected funds for it. Finally, President Sisk noted the plans for the Christmas meeting.

There being no further business, Program Leader Lois St. Pé introduced guest speaker, DISD Superintendent Dr. Travis Young. Dr. Young is a Dayton native. He attended

Dayton schools, graduating in 1996. After high school, he received a Bachelor’s Degree in Communication from Stephen F. Austin University, a Master’s in Education Administration from Prairie View A&M, and a Doctorate from Lamar University. He then returned to DISD and began his life on the other side of the fence: first as a teacher, a coach, then as an assistant principal, a principal, an assistant superintendent, and finally the superintendent.

To enlighten LAS members on what is happening in DISD, Young began by telling how veterans were honored at the high school. Students were present and involved in the program to commemorate all branches of the military, and to honor those veterans in attendance. Then the guests were served a Veterans’ Day dinner.

Continuing, Dr. Young mentioned some of high school’s achievements in band, FFA, and JROTC, as well as sports. As for education in general, DISD partners with Lee College and Lamar University to enhance opportunities for students by expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit courses, increasing access to high school credits for junior high students, and emphasizing early literacy and math proficiency for elementary learners.

He also mentioned his desire to form an Education Foundation Board, as well as an Advisory Committee that will begin studying Dayton’s needs for additional schools. DISD’s current enrollment is 5,792 students. That number will continue to increase with Dayton’s rapid growth.

Dr. Young’s passion for education and the students permeated his presentation. His goal is to always be accountable and keep moving forward. He concluded with, It’s a great day to be a Bronco!

In appreciation, Lois St. Pé told Dr. Young that the book The Houston Texans by Joanne Mattern would be placed in the Jones Public Library in his honor.

The meeting was adjourned and everyone visited while enjoying delicious refreshments provided by the hostesses Mary Ellen Conner and Lee Ann Douglas.

Lighted Christmas parade

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Santa and Mrs. Claus and Panther Claws. Free refreshments are sponsored by Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center.

Each Tuesday evening through Dec. 16, Lights in Liberty will host themed holiday events starting around 5:30 p.m. at the Vara Martin Daniel Park and Pavilion adjacent to the Liberty Center.

For updates and event details, follow the City of Liberty on social media or the official website lightsinliberty.org.



DAYTON HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR STUDENTS ADVANCE

Eight Dayton High School choir students have advanced to the Area round of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) All-State Choir audition process. The students earned advancement after their outstanding performances at the Pre-Area audition, held at Huffman Middle School on Saturday, November 6. The students advancing include Jacob Smith (12), Richard Caster (12), Jeremiah Gant (11), Keira Carroll (12), Joseph Briggs (12), Abigail Vega (10), Anna Briggs (11), and Olivia Williams (12). This marks one of the strongest showings in Dayton High School Choir history and represents a major achievement for the district’s fine arts program.

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Merry Christmas Open House

Come Join Us!

LET'S EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

Wednesday, December 3, 2025
11am - 4pm
ENTER IN OUR DOOR PRIZE

CHRISTMAS SALES ALL DAY

GOP candidates can file through Dec. 8

LIBERTY COUNTY - Applications from candidates who wish to participate in the 2026 Republican primary will be accepted through December 8. In-person filing opportunities are also available.

For links to application forms, cost details, and

candidate information as well as all the dates, times, and locations for in-person filing opportunities, visit the Election Notices page at liberty-countygop.org/elections.

If you’d like to become a precinct chair and be involved with the leadership of the Liberty County Re-

publican Party (LCRP), applications for precinct chair positions on the county executive committee are also being accepted and can be found on the Election Notices page.

If you have any questions, email info@liberty-countygop.org or contact visit the website: liberty-countygop.org/contact.

Holiday Health Fair, Continued from Page A-1

Santa. Weather permitting, several emergency responder organizations will be giving walkthroughs of their emergency response vehicles.

If your organization is interested in joining, please reach out to: lmacneil@libertydaytonrmc.com or use

the QR code for vendor and sponsor registration.



APPLY FOR DEDC BOARD

The Dayton Economic Development Corporation is seeking dedicated individuals to serve on its Board of Directors. Apply today to help shape Dayton’s growth and create a thriving economy for everyone. Apply at cityofdaytontx.com.