The Railway, the Cutting, the Fridges and the Tip!

Do you recognise the view in the photograph below?

This is on one of the busiest routes out of the village and this is how it looked back in the 1970s prior to the development of the recycling centre at the Heath. The building in the right of the photo is Bridge Farm, which was for many years run as a thriving business by the Pingree family. The small patch of ground to the left is where the tip now stands and in between them both is a rather large railway cutting and bridge. The structure of the top of the bridge, or what’s left of it can still be seen on either side of the road as you are driving on the Heath Road today.

The railway was the Cambridge to March line, and ran up the Heath from St Ives station, and under the bridge on its way to the next station in Somersham. According to the information available today, the line closed in 1967 and was left alone pretty much until the 1970s when the railway lines were removed, the cuttings filled in and the land returned, where possible, to agricultural use.

In Bluntisham, quite a novel approach was taken to fill in the cutting as this article from the Hunts Post back in 1976 explains:
So, next time, as you drive up the Heath Road look out for the stones from the top of the railway bridge at either side of the road, they form the curb. This is what is left of the bridge over the cutting and the land where the tip now sits and where the poly tunnels are is the old cutting, filled to the brim with rubbish. Maureen tells me that it took ten years to complete and there is all sorts buried underneath; fridges, mattress’, cookers, all covered in a good layer of topsoil. Hard to imagine that it was once a thriving railway line at the bottom of it all.