



The Journal of the TENTERDEN RAILWAY COMPANY LIMITED

BODIAM NORTHIAM

TENTERDEN



Photo

Re-laying Rolvenden loop – January 1973

*Courtesy of The Times*

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Alan Dixon,  
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## EDITORIAL

A new year, and a new style magazine should be the harbingers of a new era for the Kent & East Sussex, one in which the line will take its rightful place amongst the ranks of the preserved railways which provide the public with an increasingly important service in leisure activity. After so many vicissitudes and an uphill struggle against almost insurmountable odds over the past eleven and three quarter years, the Railway, our Railway, is at the very threshold of success, but whether we cross that threshold depends, as we have observed many times before, upon physical effort in the completion of the hundred and one detail tasks which remain outstanding.

With an event like our celebration of Bodiam's centenary, we demonstrated the ability to work together in all departments as an extremely effective and cohesive team, and it is this team work which will be required to get the Kent & East Sussex running again.

With the best will in the world, however, the team which we have at present can only achieve limited results, due to the shortage of numbers. There is a great deal of work still to be done, as reference to Progress Report will show, and time is now of the essence. Some 1,400 members of the Company will receive this new magazine, but only about 5% will actually be seen at work on the project, the remainder being content to sit back and watch. Well, unless a goodly proportion of the 95% get off their bottoms, and come and help, there isn't going to be anything for them to watch anymore. A full scale working week on the Railway from 20th - 29th April will embrace the Easter weekend, so let's be having the other 1,330, if not for the whole week, at least for one day!

## PROGRESS REPORT

### TOWARDS RE-OPENING

An application for the Light Railway Transfer Order, whereby operating powers for the Kent & East Sussex Railway will be transferred from British Rail, submitted to the Department of the Environment in draft form during December, was returned for minor amendment. Formal application, which is being handled by Tenterden Railway Company director Peter Barrett, through his own practice and Messrs. Sharpe Pritchard, our Parliamentary Agents, now awaits the outcome of protracted negotiations with The Kent River Authority. Once these negotiations are complete, the application will proceed, which fact will be advertized for 28 days in the London Gazette and one of the local papers, in order to allow for possible objections which we sincerely hope will not materialise. Indeed, the bulk of our effort behind the scenes over the past five and a quarter years has been directed at obviating possible objections. Nevertheless, there may be some, and we must be prepared to meet them.

Timing is now critical, since written into our sale contract is a clause stating that completion of the purchase is conditional upon the granting of the L.R.T.O. which must be within nine months of contract exchange, and April will see that deadline reached.

The granting of the Transfer Order is not, of course, conditional upon the railway's fitness or otherwise to operate, which is determined separately by the inspecting officer of the DoE. However, once the purchase has been completed, it is imperative that revenue earning services be commenced with the minimum of delay. This inspection is therefore of vital importance, and work is concentrated upon those tasks which must be completed in order to ready the Tenterden-Rolvenden section for formal inspection by the DoE. We are, however, fortunate that Major Rose of the DoE has agreed to pay us another informal visit, which is scheduled for March, in order to give us his valued advice and guidance.

## MOTIVE POWER DEPARTMENT NEWS

The Department's most spectacular success since the last Progress Report was published has been the triumphant centenary steaming of No. 3 "Bodiam" in November. Whilst special credit must go to the smart appearance of No. 3, it must not be forgotten that endless hours of effort had to be expended inside and underneath the locomotive before that gleaming paintwork could be applied. Even now, the work on No. 3 is not over as retubing is scheduled for the Autumn and before then the lubrication of the axleboxes and motion requires checking.

Whilst "Bodiam" has deservedly taken the greater part of the limelight lately, work has continued on the other locomotives as well. It is hoped that No. 10 "Sutton" will soon be running again, now that cylinders, valves and motion have been re-assembled following work on axlebox journals, and regrinding and replating of piston rods to increase the life of the cylinder packings.

'P' Class No. 11 "Pride of Sussex" is mechanically sound at the moment but its boiler really needs replacement. Until funds are available for a new boiler No. 11 is only available for use in emergencies.

Stripped of its cab, boiler, cladding and all fittings, a detailed examination of No. 14 "Charwelton" has revealed severe cracking in the firebox walls. In view of this, and the high cost of necessary re-tubing, No. 14's future hangs in the balance, and although potentially an extremely useful engine, a current study of the boiler's life expectancy will decide its fate.

When No. 16, the B.T.H. Diesel, was used for filming last year it was found to be suffering from control gear faults. A major overhaul is required in the course of which the axlebox journals will be changed.

No. 17, "Arthur" has been re-assembled under the careful guidance of Greg Trice, and a return to service is hoped for before Easter.

The Norwegian Mogul, No. 19, has run on several occasions including its use in lighter vein by the Catering Department, during the "Bodiam" Centenary celebrations. In view of its usefulness for service on the line with its light axle loadings it is being equipped with vacuum brake ejector and pipes and steam heating gear is to be fitted. Repainting is planned for the Spring.

Adrian Landi and Paddy Ahearn have had their many hours of work on No. 20, the diesel railcar, rewarded by a return to service just before Christmas. However, the twin engines are not quite in harmony, but it is hoped to cure this problem by fitting a new fuel pump and injector on No. 2 engine. When repainting is finished this vehicle will be a credit to the line.

Those who have wondered about the lurid orange paintwork on No. 21 "Wainwright" can be reassured that this is not a new livery for the line, but simply a coat of protective paint. No. 21 is to remain in 'mothballs' for the time being but fellow USA Tank No. 22, "Maunsell" is still in regular use, and first class mechanical condition.

Our trio of Hunslet 'Austerities', Nos. 23, 24 and 25, all require attention, though No. 25, ex-LMR No. 196, has been in regular use during the year.

At Tenterden, the little Hawthorn Leslie saddle back "Met", which was successfully steamed in the Autumn, for the first time in many years, has provided useful motive power on this isolated section in recent months. Its first duties were to manoeuvre the Shell tank car for the official handing over ceremony, after which the small amount of stock at Tenterden was re-positioned to allow room for the arrival of No. 1618 the Southern Mogul. Subsequently, "Met" has sallied forth down the bank as far as bridge 2330 with the Rodley Crane, which has proved its worth in connection with the bridge re-construction.

The Autumn saw other new arrivals at Tenterden. The first was a privately owned Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-6-0 saddle tank of austerity pattern, ex Stewarts and Lloyds.

The second, was the Southern Mogul Preservation Society's magnificent 'U' class 2-6-0 No. 1618, which was re-united with its tender, delivered earlier from New Hythe.

At Rolvenden too, there are new locomotive "faces", with the arrival of two more saddle tanks of the erstwhile Stewarts & Lloyds fleet. This pair of hefty Mannings are named "Rhyl" and "Dolabran", although the nameplates are not attached at present. One departure has to be recorded also, which will be greeted with mixed feelings. "Dom", although it has never run on the Kent & East Sussex, was one of the two original locomotives donated to the newly formed Preservation Society back in 1962, and must therefore retain a place in the Railway's history, albeit static. "Dom" is now to go to Quainton Road, so an old face will be lost to the Rolvenden scene.

Apart from major projects, there is a great deal of routine maintenance to be done. More willing hands are urgently required therefore, so if you can help, please contact Mike Hart, Locomotive Department Foreman, at 33 Barchester Way, Tonbridge, Kent, Tel: 2861.

### CARRIAGE & WAGON DEPARTMENT

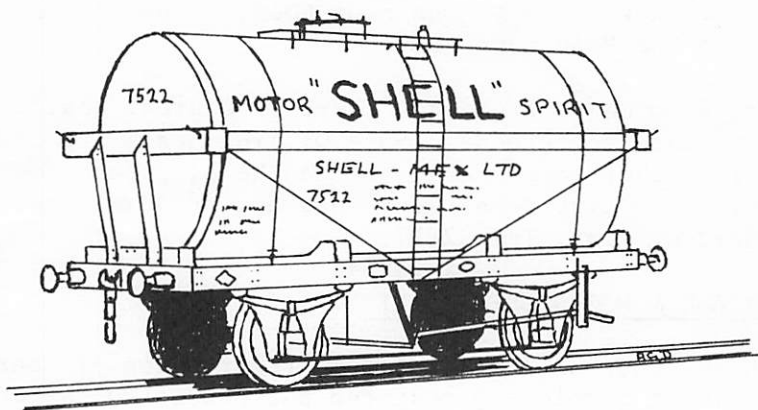
With the four original Maunsell restriction '1' carriages now almost completely restored and repainted, attention has been turned to the more recently acquired Maunsell carriages at Northiam. The roof on one of the restriction '0' examples is being re-felted, and the interior of the former Continental boat train saloon, used latterly by B.R. as a painters' store, has been cleaned out in readiness for its restoration. Also at Northiam, Mr. Haddock, a local member has been working on one of the ex S.E.C.R. birdcage brake thirds, whilst the vans from Hodson's Mill at Robertsbridge are being re-roofed.

The relative brevity of this news section belies the extreme importance of work in this Department, where there is a great deal to be done, with carpentry and painting skills of particular use. To help, please contact C. & W. foreman, Rodney Packham, at 68 Braemar Avenue, South Croydon, Surrey.



## CIVIL ENGINEERING & PERMANENT WAY DEPARTMENTS

The last six months have concentrated on finishing off items postponed in the past. A lot of work still needs to be done before the Tenterden-Rolvenden section is ready for passenger operation but it is intended that the essentials will be completed in the next two months. We still desperately need helpers so no matter what your skill or inclination, please come to Tenterden Station on any Saturday or Sunday from 9.30 a.m. onwards and ask for Derek Dunlavy - every man hour is vital.



Gordon Laming's gang has been working hard on the section below Rolvenden. The timbers in the pointwork at the south of Rolvenden Yard have been replaced, and over the weekend of 27th/28th January the passing loop was completely re-sleepered under Gordon's direction. This was a major operation, for which Gordon organized a London Transport bus to bring his group of forty youngsters from South East London, who were joined by a further ten members of the Tunbridge Wells group en route. With a task force 50 strong, not only was the work on the loop completed to schedule, but a start was made on the preliminaries for re-alignment of the first part of the reverse curve to the south of Rolvenden yard, with measurement pegs being



driven at regular intervals.

The little Ruston four wheeled diesel shunter was in use for some of the weekend, handling spoil and materials for these works, but on Sunday 28th it was supplemented by Hunslet 0-6-0 No. 196 in order to produce the necessary steam "atmosphere" for television and press cameras which were covering the day's activities. In the sidings the ashpit has been completed and track laid over it. An interceptor and drain have to be provided and this will be started in the Spring.

The Rolvenden platform has been refaced and temporarily surfaced with ash until funds for tarmac are available. Meanwhile, Gordon Young has started to make a picket fence for the rear edge. Over the road, work on bridge No. 2330 continues, to the designs prepared by our Consulting Engineers, Messrs. Trevor Crocker & Partners, under the supervision of Rick Edmundson. The last pour of concrete to complete the abutments, was made early in February, and the girders have been cast into position.

At Tenterden, the platform extension is complete and paving slabs have been set along the edge of the whole of the platform in order to raise it to a safe height for passengers. Tarmac will now be used to make up the level of the platform to that of the slabs. The unsightly hill of ash at the end of the platform has at last disappeared and has been put to good use in strengthening the embankments on the Tenterden-Rolvenden section.

Movement of materials around Tenterden Yard has been greatly facilitated with the generous gift of a dumper truck by local builder Stan Smith. Although of uncertain age and out of use for the past five years, little effort was needed to get it to work and it is now proving very useful.

#### SIGNALS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The signal box at Tenterden is progressing well, work during the winter months being concentrated on internal

fittings and assembly of lever frame. The roof has been felted but we now need approximately 100 slates. Can any member locate a supply for us? If you know of any slates, e.g. a house due for demolition, please contact Nick Blake on Chestfield 2681.

The Department has taken over responsibility for the modification of the crossing gates at Cranbrook Road which previously had too big a clearance between the gates and the road. The hinges have been modified and the gates now function satisfactorily. Chain link fencing is being erected at the sides of the gates to make access to the line more difficult.

On the equipment side, Donald Wilson, the TRC Director in charge of Purchasing, is trying to obtain for a nominal sum, two crossing-keeper's huts from the Polegate-Hailsham line where the track has now been lifted. Recently we have been successful in obtaining eight oil lamps and columns from the last three S.R. stations to use this form of lighting - Haver, Cowden and Ashurst. We were very fortunate to obtain these as B.R. have a bulk order from America for railwayana - remember East Grinstead old station? It was only after some persuasive negotiations that we were successful. Five have been delivered so far. The remaining three are still in use at Cowden pending connection of the local grid supply! The cost of the lamps was £15 each and any donations to defray the expenses of their acquisition would be most welcome.

## "BODIAM"

The whistles of Swedish, American and English built locomotives greeted our 'Terrier' 0-6-0 tank No. 3 "Bodiam" when she steamed into Rolvenden Station with a special train on 4th November, for official celebration of her centenary.

Speeches of welcome were made by His Worship, The

Mayor of Tenterden, Alderman B. J. Collison, and Peter Davis; Chairman of the Tenterden Railway Company Ltd., who later introduced the locomotive's owners, messrs. Ron and Vic Wheele of Brighton. No. 3 was crewed by Charles Kentsley, and B.R. driver Jack Hoad of Tonbridge, who, as many readers may know, began his railway career on the Kent & East Sussex, in the early thirties.

After the ceremony, No. 3 made several photographic runs with its train, bearing a commemorative headboard especially painted for the occasion by David Dyne. These were followed by the running of a second train, powered by ex Army Hunslet austerity 0-6-0 No. 196, and ex Southern Region USA class 0-6-0 No. 22 "Maunsell".

The fourth locomotive in steam for this historic occasion, was the Swedish built Norwegian State Railways mogul No. 376, which provided a high class catering service during the day, with hot dogs grilled in its fire box, and later made a short run, light engine, towards Wittersham and back.

In support of the occasion, we had two visiting traction engines, a fairground organ and an ex Eastbourne Corporation open topped Leyland Titan. The Bursens Key organ played throughout the day, and although it was using mains current, the little Wallis & Stevens showmans locomotive with its generator belt slapping away merrily alongside, completed the scene perfectly.

On the opposite side of the yard, a compound Fowler road locomotive from Hawkhurst was marshalled alongside the Tunbridge Wells group's 5" gauge portable miniature railway which provided visiting children with rides during the day.

It is estimated that about 2,000 people visited Rolvenden for the occasion; indeed, the field which we had allocated for parking was soon full and a second had to be hired, so rapid was the influx of visitors around lunch time. Amongst our special guests, were representatives of Rolvenden Parish Council, the Romney Hythe &

Dymchurch and the Bluebell railways, and in the latter context, it was a happy coincidence that the Bluebell had chosen the following day for celebration of Fenchurch's centenary at Sheffield Park.

Taken overall, November 4th, our first real event on the Railway, was a great success, it was highly profitable in financial terms, it provided a much needed boost for morale within the Company, it generated a great deal of interest and goodwill over a wide field, and many valuable lessons were learnt from it which will be put to good use in the future.

## NEWS FROM AREA GROUPS

### BLACKHEATH & SOUTH EAST LONDON

Gordon Laming's group now covers a much wider area than hitherto, with youngsters from Forest Hill, Bickley, Beckenham and Bromley joining the original nucleus of Blackheath members.

Under Gordon's leadership, this group's regular attendance at the Railway has achieved splendid results on the permanent way, with slewing, packing, re-sleepering, construction of point turnouts and so on, being all in the course of the day's work. In fact no permanent way task seems to be too large or complex for this team.

Re-sleepering of the loop road at Rolvenden, referred to in Progress Report, was one of the largest projects yet undertaken, and the renewal of the main line through the station platform is next on the agenda.

Meetings are held at 7.00 p.m. every Thursday, at John Ball Primary School, in Baizdon Road, London, S.E.3. and will anyone who is interested in joining the group, or in helping with its organization and activities, please contact Gordon Laming at 71b Foyle Road, London, S.E.3.

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Secretaryship of the Tunbridge Wells group has been relinquished by Stephen Gates, who has put in so much hard work over the past few years, and his place has been taken by Howard Strongitharm, a group member of long standing.

Norton Brown, the group's chairman, has also resigned, which is a sad loss, particularly as it is to another railway venture. The new chairman is Peter Walters.

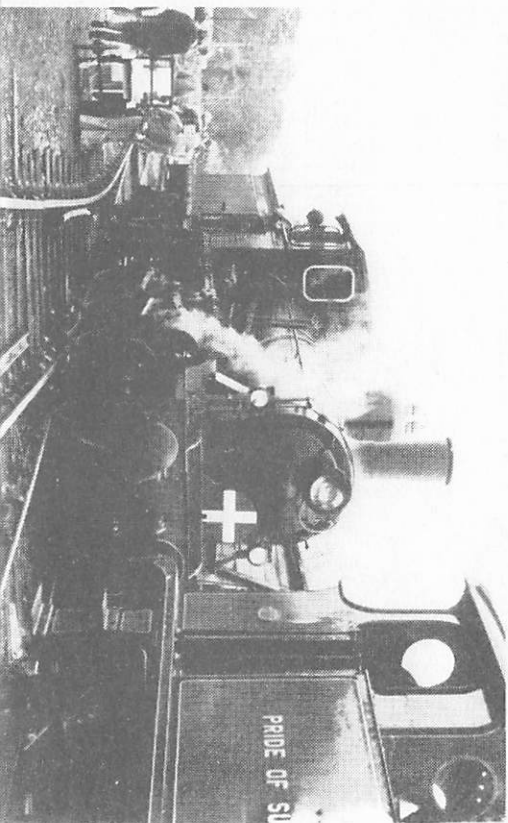
Apart from attending the "Bodiam" centenary at Rolvenden with their miniature railway, the group continues to attend other outside events. Indeed, Stephen Gates and Alan Stevens took a K.E.S.R. stand in Brighton in November for the "Model Rail 72" exhibition of the Sussex Association of Model Railway Clubs. At home, a film show at Christ Church Hall in Tunbridge Wells during December, organized jointly with the Nord Loco Society, was highly successful, but a suitable venue for regular meetings still remains to be found.

On the railway itself, the group have joined forces with Gordon Laming's South East London team for permanent way work, thus providing them with a well earned rest from the forestry work with which the T.W.A.G. had almost become synonymous. For more details please contact Howard Strongitharm at 2a Calverley Park Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Telephone 34760.

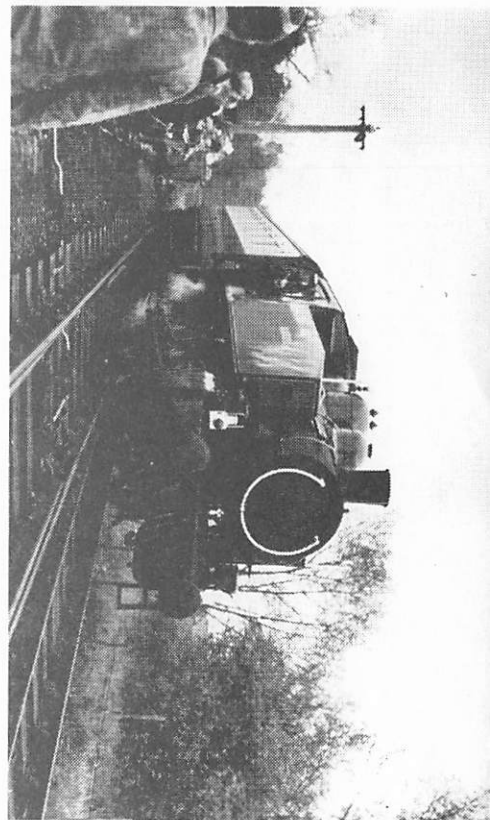
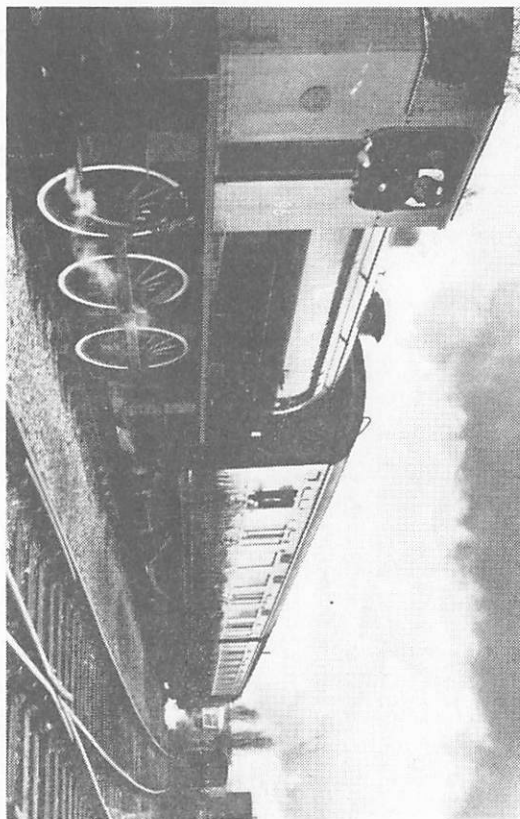
## SURREY

During the course of 1972, led by Richard Halton, the Surrey group and its representatives have attended some nineteen events on behalf of the railway. In addition to building up a considerable stock of sales goods almost from scratch, and purchasing a frame tent for use at outdoor events, the group produced a profit in excess of £400 which has been paid over to company funds.

In addition to the group's annual Guildford exhibition



Peter J. Lock



...AND  
"BODIAM"  
REACHED  
HER TON



Photographs courtesy Telephone Rentals,  
except where indicated.



in the Spring, November saw an experiment in the guise of a new form of exhibition which was staged at Aldershot. This event realised a profit in the region of £45, and a number of lessons were learned, in addition to generating some very worthwhile publicity for the Railway.

Plans for the 1973 season are now well advanced, and a number of events have already been booked. Among these is the annual K. & E.S.R. model railway exhibition which will be held on 31st March at Holy Trinity Church Halls, High Street, Guildford, from 9.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. As usual, help is required on the day, and to publicise the event beforehand. If you can assist in any way at all, either by displaying a poster or by staffing at the exhibition itself, please let Richard know. For further details of Surrey Group's activities contact Richard Halton at "Nutlea", Glaziers Lane, Normandy, Guildford.

### ESSEX

The thoughts expressed in the last edition of the magazine, on the formation of an informal group of Essex, north and east London members, elicited precisely four replies.

This seems to be a pity, because there are certainly more than four members who live in the area, and any organization, however loosely knit can only be of advantage to the Railway in terms of increased and co-ordinated effort, and to the individual in terms of pooled transport costs, increased involvement and comradeship in this extremely exciting project of ours. Will members in the area please get in touch with the editor, and let me have your views. Telephone: Hanningfield 684.

## OUR FIRST CENTENARY

by Stephen Garrett

In 1872 it was proposed to link the towns of Tenterden and Headcorn by a roadside tramway. However, most readers will be aware that it was not until 1900 that Tenterden gained its first railway and even later before Headcorn was reached. Nevertheless, 1872 is a date of real importance to members of the Tenterden Railway Company as it was in that year our oldest locomotive was built.

The locomotive concerned is No. 3 "Bodiam". This was one of the first six locomotives of William Stroudley's A1 Class of 0-6-0 tank engines, later known as 'Terriers', built for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. The class was specially designed to cope with the L.B.S.C.R.'s increasingly busy suburban services in South London and particularly on the steeply graded East London Railway.

No. 3 was originally No. 70 on the L.B.S.C.R. and named "Poplar". It entered traffic on the 4th December, 1872, its entry into service having been delayed by the transfer of its cylinders to its fellow locomotive No. 71 "Wapping" whose own cylinders had proved faulty. The fact is important because the cylinder delay meant that the first of the class to go into service was No. 72 "Fenchurch" now owned by the Bluebell Railway whose oldest running locomotive therefore pre-dates ours by three months.

During its years with the L.B.S.C.R. No. 3 seems never to have strayed far from London. Not that No. 3's life was uneventful - in 1873 it was derailed at Victoria, in 1881 it ran into the back of a train between London Bridge and Battersea, and in 1895 it demolished a set of buffer stops at London Bridge. Such a wayward career might suggest why the L.B.S.C.R. had No. 3 in mind when it began to dispose of some of its 'Terriers' at the turn of the century although again the 'honour' of being the first 'Terrier' sold out of service belongs to No. 72 Fenchurch which was sold to the Newhaven Harbour Company

in 1898.

In 1901 the Rother Valley Railway, the predecessor of the Kent and East Sussex Railway, required a third engine to supplement the efforts of its Hawthorn Leslie 2-4-0 tank locomotives "Tenterden" and "Northiam". The 'Terriers' were ideal for the Rother Valley, being powerful but light, and so it was that "Poplar" became "Bodiam". The price charged by the L.B.S.C.R. for No. 3 was £650. Being short of cash the Rother Valley borrowed £500 from Barclays Bank in return for which Barclays were allowed to fix a plaque proclaiming their part in the transaction to the engine. Whether such a plaque was ever affixed is unknown but the L.B.S.C.R. carried out a number of other alterations before delivering No. 3. The locomotive was painted royal blue, the livery of the R.V.R., a vacuum brake replaced the Westinghouse brake previously carried and extra coal rails were fitted.

In 1905 No. 3 was joined on what was now the Kent & East Sussex Railway by its old companion No. 71 "Wapping" which became No. 5 "Rolvenden". Little of note is known of No. 3's career on the Kent & East Sussex, apart from an overhaul at Rolvenden in 1923, until it was laid aside, apparently worn out, in 1930. No. 3 was not cut up immediately, Colonel Stephens locomotives rarely were, but instead lingered chimneyless in Rolvenden yard. In 1932, however, No. 3 was taken in hand and by 1933 had been completely renovated. During the renovation No. 3 acquired the chimney from No. 5 and the sidetanks from yet another 'Terrier' No. 81 "Beulah" which had since 1921 been No. 7 "Hecate" on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway. It is probable that many other parts from No. 5 went into the rebuilding of No. 3 thus repaying the 1872 cylinder debt. The rebuilding also gave No. 3 a much larger coal bunker than any other 'Terrier'. On the debit side No. 3 lost its nameplates and shed its blue livery for a light green.

By 1943 No. 3 was again in need of rebuilding, this time acquiring a new boiler of the improved AlX pattern. The boiler used had been previously carried by 'Terrier'

655 (originally No. 55 "Stepney") but had been overhauled in 1939 and was therefore in good condition. The facilities at Rolvenden must have been insufficient for the task of re-boiling as the work was carried out by two Kent and East Sussex fitters at St. Leonards shed using Southern Railway facilities.

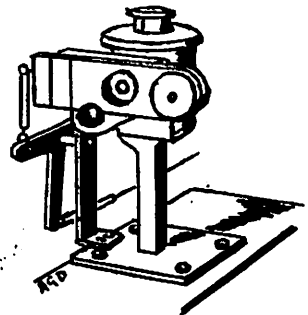
In 1947 No. 3 appeared in a film, 'The Loves of Joanna Godden', for which purpose it travelled to Lydd and was disguised with plates reading 'S.E. & C.R.' on its sidetanks. Immediately afterwards No. 3 entered Brighton Works for the fitting of a new smokebox and left the Works in a coat of dark green paint boldly lined in yellow. At Nationalisation in 1948 No. 3 did not immediately lose its Kent and East Sussex identity. In 1949 it was renumbered 32670 at Ashford but remained painted green until overhauled at Brighton in 1954.

Until 1954 No. 3 had continued to work over the erstwhile Kent and East Sussex but after its overhaul it was sent to Fratton to work the Hayling Island branch and therefore missed the end of regular passenger services to Tenterden. In 1956 No. 3 was at Dover where it was called upon to rescue a snowbound B4 0-4-0 tank locomotive No. 30084. Between February and May 1956 No. 3 was lent to Bowater's at Ridham Dock. In 1957 No. 3 returned to assist with the freight services between Tenterden and Robertsbridge but spent 1958 at Brighton. In 1959 another return was made to Tenterden, this time to haul a rambler's excursion and to run freight trains for nine days while the resident diesel locomotive was repaired. By 1960 No. 3 was back at Brighton and during its stay there lost its copper-capped chimney taken from No. 5 in 1932. The chimney was required by the first of the 'Terriers' to be preserved, No. 55 "Stepney" owned by the Bluebell Railway. In its place No. 3 received a rather worn cast iron chimney.

From Brighton No. 3 returned to its old haunts for a melancholy duty in 1961 when, assisted by 32662, it hauled the ceremonial 'last train' from Tenterden to Robertsbridge on the 11th June.

No. 3 then returned to the Hayling Island branch, though now shedded at Eastleigh, and, in 1963, shared the haulage of the last train from Hayling Island with its old companion No. 32636, originally No. 72 "Fenchurch". With the closure of the Hayling Island branch British Railways could find no further use for its 'Terriers' and the survivors gathered at Eastleigh. The Kent & East Sussex Railway Association was now in existence and the opportunity was taken to open a fund to purchase No. 3. In fact No. 3 was purchased by Ron and Vic Wheele in 1964 for £750 and placed on permanent loan to the Association. This generous act obtained for the Kent and East Sussex not only the sole surviving locomotive from the old Kent and East Sussex Railway, but one of the three locomotives surviving from any of Colonel Stephens' standard gauge railways (the other two are the Dodman 0-4-2 well tank locomotive "Gazelle" from the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway preserved at Longmoor and the L.S.W.R. 4-4-2 tank locomotive No. 488, previously East Kent Railway No. 5, now preserved on the Bluebell Railway).

Since arriving at Robertsbridge on 11th April, 1964, No. 3 has naturally been somewhat restricted in its movements. At first No. 3 helped out at Hodson's Mill while "Pride of Sussex" was overhauled, but since then has only really seen use in 1966 when it ferried stock between Robertsbridge and Rolvenden. However, restored to gleaming condition for its hundredth birthday, it is to be hoped that the day is not far off, when No. 3 will resume regular service along the Rother Valley.



# THE EAST KENT RAILWAYS

by S. R. Poole

## PART 2: THE DECLINE

The year 1925 marked the turning point in the history of the East Kent Railway despite the new stations and an improved image, profits sank, and it was the last year in which any dividend was paid although the company continued to make a profit in the region of £3,000 per annum. It is interesting to note that in the following year the Southern Railway bought all the outstanding E.K. R. debenture and ordinary stock. Also in 1926 work began on a triangular junction at Eastry which would have enabled through traffic from Wingham to reach Richborough Port direct, without reversal. However, the General Strike held this up and work was never resumed.

The Guilford colliery branch, out of use since 1921 was officially abandoned in 1927, though it was not until 1937 that the track was recovered.

After ten years of building, the last stretch of railway No. 1, from Sandwich Road to Richborough was finally opened in August 1928 for passenger traffic. However, no trains were advertised and the whole of the line from Eastry to Richborough was officially closed on 1st November 1928 for passengers. Occasional goods trains continued to run from Richborough port with pit-props for Tilmanstone colliery, but the line was put to little additional use because the Tilmanstone company, East Kent Colliery Co., had decided not to use the port for coal shipment after all.

Recognizing the potential competition from road traffic, the E.K.R. Co. sought permission to run bus services in the area in 1928 but nothing came of this application.

On 23rd October 1931 Lt. Col. Stephens died. He had been a director of the company as well as General Manager

and Engineer, but he had resigned his Directorship in 1926, and had been ill since April 1930.

A solicitor, Mr. W. H. Austen, took over the management of all Col. Stephens railways, and under his guidance greater economies were practised; useless rolling stock was scrapped; stations were rebuilt for more efficient running, and all the locomotives of every railway under his care obtained a standard livery akin to Southern Railway green.

In 1937 he recommended the entire closure of the Eastry-Richborough line, as it was losing about £60 per annum. The branch was retained however, as it supposedly acted as a feeder to the rest of the railway, but maintenance ceased and the viaduct was declared unsafe.

On 1st September, 1939 the entire railway came under the control of the Minister of War Transport. A rail mounted gun was stationed at Shepherdswell, and W.D. locomotives invaded the railway; major track renewal was begun and the War Department occupied sidings at Eythorne, Shepherdswell and Staple. They also laid additional sidings, mainly at Wingham.

During the war the W.D. agreed to pay the company £400 per year compensation for damage, but due to the large number of claims by the company this was raised to £600 per year.

After the war the railway was returned to the E.K. R. Co. In January 1947 the four surviving Kent collieries at Tilmanstone, which was the only one served by the East Kent Railway, Snowdown, Betteshanger and Chislet came into the control of the National Coal Board and one year later, in January 1948, the railways were nationalized. However, the E.K.R. retained its independence until February, and British Railways closed the whole line to passengers on 30th October 1948 as passenger traffic had been gradually dwindling for a long time.

The Richborough line from Eastry was closed entirely



on 27th October 1949, twelve years after Mr. Austen had suggested this course, and lifting of the track began on 1st January, 1950. On 25th July that year the line from Eastry to Wingham, Canterbury Road, was closed for all traffic, and on 1st March, 1951 all traffic north of Tilmanstone colliery ceased, though that part of the line was not officially closed until 1st July.

The remainder of the E.K.R. from Shepherdsweil to Tilmanstone is still in use with N.C.B. and B.R. diesel locomotives taking Tilmanstone coal to the main line.

It is fortunate that the line's greatest engineering feat, Golgotha tunnel, should be on the stretch still in use, as it is undoubtedly one of the most unusual and interesting tunnels in the country.

The station at Shepherdsweil now consists of a crumbling brick platform and the two lines terminating there are used for storing wagons.

At Eythorne the station has been entirely demolished, but a section of the passing loop still exists, though disused. Elvington platform is in very good condition, complete with track, but north of the colliery no platforms remain except for those at Eastry South where the station is still in use as part of a builder's yard. However, much of the railway's former route can be traced from the ordnance survey maps.

Of a total of 56 proposed route miles, serving the coalfield, which once threatened to convert Kent into a second Glamorgan, there remain only three, and with the intent to halve the market for Kent coal by switching Richborough Power Station over to oil fuel, it looks as if even Tilmanstone colliery and its railway could be in jeopardy.

Concluded).

## CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,

Your closing paragraph in Number 6, Vol. 8 of 'The Farmers' Line calling for correspondence has inspired me to put pen to paper.

You ask for thoughts and criticisms, so for criticisms first.

Congratulations on your Open Day to celebrate "Bodiam's" Centenary. I hope it was successful from the organizers point of view. I for one enjoyed my visit to Rolvenden immensely, and I was encouraged to see so many other supporters present. At 15p admission it was excellent value; would anyone have objected to another 5p or 10p Car Park charge (I would not) and it would have raised quite a few extra pounds.

The sight of "Bodiam" and her colleagues making full steam across Wittersham marsh may have been very impressive and photogenic, but the REAL KESR was never like that. With respect, this, for me, was the "prostitution of steam for the benefit of the camera".

I first travelled on the KESR in 1943, and in those days real travellers were the passengers, not enthusiasts. Whilst I welcome Steam Preservation Societies and fully agree with and admire their efforts, I also regret that the young enthusiasts of today will never feel the same atmosphere which pervaded the real thing.

So much for well-meant criticism, now for a thought.

During the L.B.S.C.R. era locomotive naming was a standard practice, the company drawing for inspiration upon, amongst other sources, the names of villages and towns in Sussex, Surrey and districts of London, even going as far afield as France and Italy (Stroudley El Class). By no means did they restrict their names to places served by the Company's lines.

There seems to have been a reluctance, however, to use the names of towns and villages in this most easterly part of Sussex, as I can only find reference to the following:-

No. 182	Hastings	B Class
390	St. Leonards	D3 Class
397	Bexhill	D3 Class
400	Winchelsea	E5 Class

What about Northiam, Beckley, Peasmarsh not to mention Rye and Battle? Does anyone know if these names were ever used, and if not, was there a reason?

Incidentally, can I refer once again to the history of No. 3 "Bodiam"?

No. 5, "Rolvenden" was purchased from LBSCR in 1905, at which time it was known as No. 671 "Wapping"; this locomotive was originally numbered No. 71, and was the first Class A1 loco to be built, coming out in October 1872.

"Bodiam", or rather No. 70 (later 670) was one of a batch of a further five locomotives with a 1872 building date.

Now, on page 5 of KESR Stockbook we are told that No. 5 Rolvenden had been cannibalized during the 1930's to rebuild No. 3 Bodiam. If some researcher could prove that your present No. 3 Bodiam in fact contains more of No. 5 than of No. 3, then our present Bodiam could claim to be The First A1 Class Locomotive instead of One of the First!

Doubtless such a suggestion will be scorned as unethical by professional railway historians.

CYRIL R. KNAPP

See Stephen Garrett's article on page 15 - Editor

SIR,

As the progress towards reopening gathers momentum, and train drivers, fireman, guards and others are trained for their vital work, might I humbly offer some advice, based on some experience on the R.H.D.R. to future station-masters, booking clerks and station staff on the problems presented by the great British public?

First: ticket issuing can be brought to total standstill if large, obvious and comprehensible signs are not displayed at every station saying 1) Where the line runs to 2) How far it is 3) How long the various journeys will take 4) When the next train is, and perhaps most important 5) How much it will cost. These signs are not difficult to instal and save a great deal of time and temper.

The second essential feature is a system whereby no station issues tickets to more passengers than there will be room on the train for. To be faced with an angry crowd of passengers who have waited a long time for an overflowing train is not an agreeable experience!

Finally, cultivate a sympathetic attitude to the public's lack of thought. Most booking clerks will recall:

Woman: "Could I have a return, please?"

Booking Clerk: "Certainly, Madam. Where to?"

Woman, annoyed: "Here, of course!"

Clerk, patiently: "Yes, madam, but before you return here, you must first go somewhere else."

Perhaps now is the time to consider not only the problems of the mechanics of the return of steam to the Kent & East Sussex, but also the problems of the public, and its familiar world of nearest loos, lost dogs or husbands, and trodden-upon ice-creams.

GEORGE ALLAN

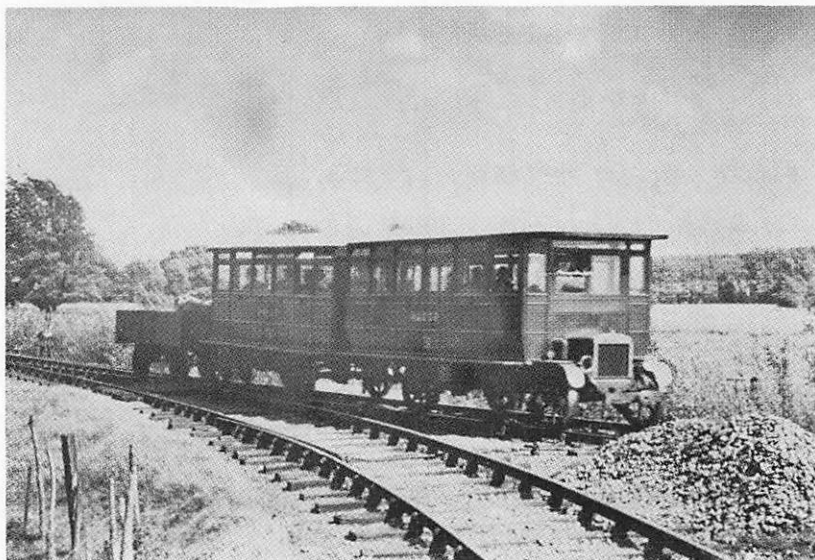
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