



JOURNAL OF THE KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY

Tenterden Terrier



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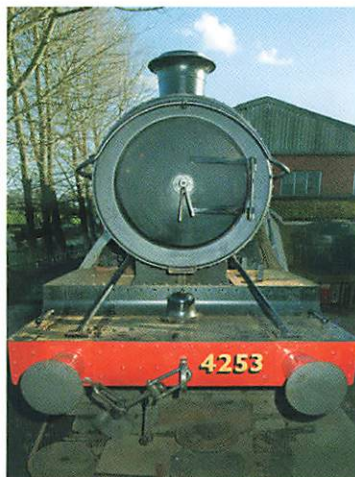
FRONT COVER

No.32678 on the approach to Cranbrook Road, having just passed the User Worked Crossing at Pole 21, on 1st November 2015
(John Wickham)

BACK COVER

At a remarkably clutter-free Rolvenden, No.32670 is seen being prepared for service on 23rd September 2015
(Hugh Nightingale)

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February 2016

(Alan Crotty)

Tenterden Terrier

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Editorial

All Change!

The above title has to be just about the most hackneyed of railway clichés. It nonetheless neatly sums up the K&ESR at the start of 2016. Recent months have seen the retirement, among others, of two long-serving directors – Derek Dunlavy from the post of Safety Director and Philip Shaw from the role of Finance Director (although he remains a Trustee). Many thanks are due to these colleagues for their sterling work over many years. In addition I have announced that I will be retiring as Company Secretary – but not *Terrier* Editor – by the end of the year.

The Board's composition following the AGM is to be found on page 48 and also in the Company Secretary's notes in *Lineside News*. Particular mention must be made of our new young Chairman, Jamie Douglas, who is the subject of a 'People in Profile' interview on page 26.

Nick Pallant

The Assistant Editor reminds contributors that they should be able to supply high-resolution digital photos for use in the *Tenterden Terrier*. Low-res images are the best way initially, but if we then ask for a larger file it needs to be available on request. May we please request that prospective images are capable of being supplied at least 1,800 pixels longest axis; that is, for a half-page reproduction or thereabouts.



No.19 on Santa duty at Wittersham Road, December 2015

(Phil Edwards)

Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme in Focus

Another record season

The 2015 season, which ended on 20th December with the last weekend of Santa Specials, saw more than 197,000 passengers carried on the CFBS – up from 183,000 the previous year. It can therefore safely be anticipated that in 2016, taking into account the numbers expected to attend the April Steam Gala, the 200,000 mark will be exceeded.

This places the CFBS squarely in the top league of French Heritage Railways, confirmed by an excellent rating on the Tripadvisor website. But it also means that management, maintenance and safety have to meet increasingly exacting standards, as the mileage travelled every year by the locomotives and carriages continues to grow.

On the motive power front, the season began and ended with two steam locomotives out of commission: Corpet-Louvet 2-6-0T No.1, due to major boiler repairs, and Buffaud-Robatel 0-6-2T No.3714, due to work on the wheels, motion and cylinders. Add to this an unexpected crack in the steam dome manifold of Cail 2-6-0T No.2 in early April, and this meant that the first two busy months of the season saw just three steam locomotives available for service – Réseau Breton 4-6-0T No.332, Haine St Pierre 2-6-0T No.15 and the small Corpet-Louvet 0-4-0T No.25.

This uncomfortable situation was alleviated somewhat when No.2 was returned to service on 22nd May, and things improved further when

maintenance work was completed on Pinguely 0-6-0T No.101 in early June.

In parallel with the steam loco difficulties, problems were encountered with the railway's diesel fleet; No.351 and No.352 were both unavailable, leaving only the ex-MOB four-wheel diesel shunter operational for line service. Add to this that the Verney X 212 railcar had to be withdrawn early in the season because of excessive vibrations on the engine block (only returning to service in time for the Santa Specials), and the situation was beginning to look grim.

Much faith had been placed in the availability of the Spanish-built naval diesel six-wheeler, but tests carried out in January 2015 on the St Valéry-Cayeux line proved unsatisfactory. The engine was returned to Germany, where it had been overhauled at great expense, and at the time of writing it shows no sign of returning any time soon...

With shortages of both steam and diesel motive power, a 'quick fix' solution was urgently needed prior to the high season. This took the shape of a large Bo-Bo diesel, built in Romania by FAUR, rented for four months (May–August) from the French Colas Rail public works company, which had used it for track renewal on the Corsican system and the Blanc-Argent line. This enormously powerful engine, fitted with an eight-cylinder Caterpillar motor and an automatic gearbox, is able to perform all types of duties on the CFBS; it can replace any steam engine, is easy on the track and comfortable to drive. But the locomotive did, however, require extensive trouble-shooting by CFBS volunteers before being considered fully reliable. It mostly ran on the Cayeux line: a blessing for those (like myself) who, on scheduled trains replacing the railcar, had had to drive the MOB diesel to a tight schedule – a truly dreadful 'bone-shaker'!

Despite its massive appearance and bright orange livery, the Colas diesel proved quite popular with passengers. An agreement has since been reached with its owner whereby the CFBS may continue using the engine for at least three years, Colas Rail retaining the



Bo-Bo diesel leased from Colas Rail seen at St Valéry-Ville in May 2015 (CFBS/M. Testu)



*No.75 and No.3714 with a mixed train on the line from St Valery to Cayeux during the 2013 Fete
(Robin Dyce)*

right to retrieve it, in case of need, subject to three months' notice.

Turning to carriage stock, 2015 saw the return to service of Swiss ex-BOB bogie carriage No. B 208, after more than 4,000 man-hours of volunteer work. In parallel the rebuild of the body of Somme carriage Acf 10303, by a professional woodworking company in Abbeville, was completed. The body has been transferred to St Valery for varnishing and mating with a pair of rebuilt bogies. Work also began on restoring an ex-Réseau Breton four-wheeler goods van, and on a pair of Somme four-wheeler open wagons.

More than 450 people visited the railway works at St Valery over two open weekends in late February and early March, with a railcar shuttle service operating from St Valery harbour. This successful experiment was due to be repeated in February 2016.

Some holiday weekends in May, June, July and August saw so many passengers wanting to travel that extra trains had to be put into service. Many special trains also ran for TV or cinema shooting, and the 'dinner on board' trains were, as usual, fully booked. In connection with the latter the CFBS has bought a double dining car from the RhB in Switzerland, which was delivered to St Valery in December. Coupled to the two ex-RhB carriages already acquired by the CFBS this will enable us to run trains all the

year round in future, as these carriages have heating and air-conditioning, and the dining car features a fully equipped kitchen. Enclosed gangways between the carriages mean that waiters can move along the train without salad being blown off diners' plates into the Bay – a frequent incident on windy days with the current open-balconied stock!

The main work on the permanent way was the renewal of 1,000m of dual-gauge track between Noyelles station throat and the entry to St Valery works, completing the task undertaken by the CFBS professional track team over the past four years. This whole stretch is now in excellent condition. A loop siding was re-laid by volunteers at Lanchères station, and a turntable and water column installed at St Valery-Ville station. The water column at St Valery harbour is now also operational. Two level crossings on the Cayeux line have been fitted with automatic gates, and a third one should be operational before the April 2016 Steam Gala. That will leave only two to be equipped, on either side of the top of St Valery gradient.

Webcams have been installed on the harbour at St Valery and at Noyelles station; they are accessible via the CFBS website www.cfbs.eu

An increasing number of tickets are sold via the Internet, and this helps the railway plan for train capacity, particularly at peak weekends.



Corpet-Louvet 0-6-0T La Scarpe, pictured on the Tramway Touristique de l'Aisne preserved line in Belgium in 1973 (TTA)

Naturally preparations have been under way since early 2015 for the April 2016 Steam Gala, and these are now moving into top gear.

Metre-gauge guest motive power will include the ex-TIV Corpet-Louvet 0-6-0 from the MTVS museum (which arrived in St Valery in November and took part in the Santa Specials), a 2-6-2 from the Harz railway in Germany (a first on the CFBS), an SLM 0-6-0T from the Blonay-Chamby Swiss heritage railway and a Belgian vicinal railcar (which, because of the tyre profile of its wheels, will be restricted to shuttling between St Valery harbour and St Valery-Ville).

On the standard gauge, we are expecting the Norwegian 2-6-0 from the K&ESR and an industrial 0-4-0 saddle tank from Maldegem in Belgium. And not forgetting the highly popular Paris metro!

On the SNCF side, tender engine 230 D No.9 from the Mulhouse museum will be on static display at Noyelles, and a modern X 73500 railcar at St Valery harbour.

There will also be 60cm gauge track at Cayeux, 40cm gauge track at Noyelles and a dual-gauge 5"/7¼" live steam circuit.

All the latest news about the Steam Gala can be found at www.fetevapeur.fr

Two more news items are particularly worthy of mention. The first is the return to the Somme of Corpet-Louvet 0-6-0T *La Scarpe*, after almost half a century spent in Belgium. This 1907 engine worked the private sidings of the sugar-beet plant at Lanchères, between St Valery and Cayeux, from 1951 until its closure in 1965. It was then bought by the Tramway Touristique de l'Aisne (TTA) preservation

society and moved to Belgium in 1967, where it was restored to working order and operated from 1973 to 1978. Withdrawn from service due to boiler wear, it was maintained in good condition until 2008, when restoration plans were mooted. These came to nothing, however, and last spring the TTA offered to sell the engine to the CFBS. As this had not been budgeted, a group of five CFBS members funded the purchase privately and had the engine shipped back to the Somme in June.

The next step will consist of raising funds to restore her, the ultimate goal being to integrate the engine into the CFBS steam fleet. It is noteworthy that *La Scarpe* is the only surviving steam locomotive to have actually run on the Somme metre-gauge system, as all the other engines were scrapped in the late 1950s after dieselisation.

The second item is the unexpected arrival of standard gauge ex-SNCF Pacific 231 K 8 at St Valery on 11th October, following its breakdown two days before between Noyelles and Abbeville while hauling a London to Paris 'Golden Arrow' charter. Rather than see the engine stranded in Abbeville sidings with no security, the CFBS offered to accommodate it. The Pacific was diesel-hauled back to Noyelles before being taken over by ex-Réseau Breton 4-6-0T No. E 332 for the journey over the dual-gauge section to St Valery-Canal. Since then the problem that caused the breakdown has been identified and repairs have been carried out; the engine was tested in steam to Noyelles and back on 30th November. As of mid-January, however, the date of its departure back to its shed in the Paris area has yet to be decided. Perhaps it may still be on the CFBS for the April Steam Gala?

Geoffrey Nickson



The Réseau Breton 4-6-0T hauling Pacific 231 K 8 between Noyelles and St Valery on 11th October last year (CFBS/A. Paillard)

Lineside News

Compiled by
Hugh Nightingale

COMMERCIAL

Company Secretary – Nick Pallant

The result of the Board election held at the AGM on 14th November 2015 was as follows:

David Hazeldine – 257 votes – Elected
Brian Janes – 225 votes – Elected
Paul Jessett – 269 votes – Elected
Ken Lee – 221 votes – Not Elected
Carol Mitchell – 256 votes – Elected
Stuart Phillips – 245 votes – Elected
Philip Shaw – 275 votes – Elected

Keith Jones stood down with effect from the same date as a Director of Colonel Stephens Railway Enterprises. The post of CSRE Director who is not also a K&ESR Trustee remained to be filled at the time of going to press. Other Board members are Geoff Crouch, Jamie Douglas, Paul Hutchinson and Ian Legg.

As members may know, Jamie Douglas was elected Chairman and Geoff Crouch Deputy Chairman at the Board meeting held on 12th December. At the January 2016 Board meeting Philip Shaw resigned as Finance Director and was replaced by Geoff Crouch. Trustees passed a unanimous vote of thanks to Philip for the immense amount of work he has done in connection with our finances. He remains a non-executive Director.

Also at the January Board meeting, Stuart Phillips was elected Director for Volunteering.

I have announced my intention to retire as Company Secretary during 2016. The necessary action is in hand to appoint a successor.

2016 Annual General Meeting

For information, please note that the AGM this year will again be held in **Zion Baptist Church, Tenterden High Street, during the afternoon of Saturday 12th November**. A formal Notice will be issued in due course. Nominations for election to the Board will close at 2.00pm on 20th August. The necessary nomination forms can be obtained from the Company Secretary.

Awards

Once again we remind members that we run two award schemes – one for 25 years' service as a volunteer and a second for 50 years of continuous

membership of the company and its predecessors. The actual awards are made at the AGM in November. I will be contacting those who I am able to trace and appear to be eligible over the next couple of months, but it would be of great assistance if anyone who thinks they have a claim to either award would write to me, as Company Secretary, at Tenterden Town Station.

Chairman's Statement – Jamie Douglas

We can look back on 2015 as a mixed year; overall passenger numbers have slid significantly for the second year. However, there was a silver lining... we had the best Santa Specials for ten years or more. This really couldn't have come at a more important time, and on behalf of all the Trustees I offer my sincere thanks to those who made this happen. I also hope that we can use this great result as a springboard to launch into 2016.

For 2016 is going to be an important year for the K&ESR, and we really do need your help to get this year right. Are there any members out there who have yet to start volunteering, or perhaps some former volunteers who may wish to make a return? Are there any active volunteers who may be persuaded to do an extra turn or two? Every day we can get a volunteer to work a turn means a day we don't need to pay someone to do that task, and this really does matter!

We are hoping that we may be able to start some small-scale projects this year to improve various aspects of our business. One scheme is currently being planned – to build a coin-operated model railway to give our visitors something else to look at while they are waiting for a train – as well as proposals to improve heating and lighting in some of our buildings. This should result in better working environments as well as greater energy efficiency – something that in today's energy-conscious world we shouldn't ignore.

The focus of the Board's work this year is planned to be preparing ourselves for running to Robertsbridge: ensuring that our resource planning is matched to the expected challenges that running a longer railway will bring. This will be a very detailed and challenging task in itself, and we look forward to facing it head-on.

The K&ESR Guest Engine Club continues to attract a steady stream of members. For those of you yet to join, there should be a leaflet included in the mailing for this edition of the magazine – please do think about helping your railway out.

So, while not wanting to overdo it, I want to offer my personal thanks to all staff and volunteers for your support up to now and, I hope, your continuing support, as we begin the running season. Can we make 2016 a record-breaking year?

Catering and Wealden Pullman – *André Freeman*

The run up to Christmas is without doubt the most demanding period of our season: Santa trolleys, the buffet, BBQ and Pullman services all need to be fully staffed. We were very fortunate to receive an excellent response to our appeals for help in filling all the planned duties, but the great popularity of the 2015 event meant that we needed some additional help for our busiest days – our thanks to everyone for their efforts in ensuring our customers had a great time. By the end of Christmas Eve, 232 turns had been worked in the nine days of operation.

Given that there are only around 35 regular catering volunteers, the scale of both the challenge and the commitment required becomes apparent. Santa trolley staff cheerfully distributed a total of more than 30,000 mince pies, drinks and items of confectionery to our customers. It's always difficult to predict what will be popular from the choices offered, but the empty storeroom shows we got it about right.

With the change to our financial year-end now falling in October, Santa now comes at the start of the trading year. Thanks to the buoyant visitor numbers and a tremendous amount of hard work, we were delighted that business exceeded what was without doubt an ambitious budget. For a time it felt like the whole of Kent and Sussex wanted our chips – the BBQ sold well over a tonne, pushing the single fryer to the limit!

Our Wealden Pullman services also exceeded budget, the season finishing on a high with an excellent firework display as part of our New Year's Eve service. 2016 services went on sale during August and are once again proving popular, with Sunday Lunch trains particularly heavily booked. While wishing to keep the Pullman offer fresh and appealing, it's important to remember that a great many of our regular

customers return because they value the traditional consistent offer we provide.

Improvements in presentation will continue to be made as we await the step-change that Aries will bring to the train; we look forward to the day when *Aries* can enter the C&W workshops for her bodywork restoration. In the meantime she remains under cover in the Rolvenden Carriage Storage Shed and fundraising continues.

A welcome increase in Wealden Pullman charter enquiries has been noted of late. For the past few years private charter traffic has been rather thin, primarily due to the non-availability of the 'other' Maunsell BNO which provides the increased capacity so often required for this type of business. Allied to this is the shortage and high cost of overnight accommodation within Tenterden. Couchettes for the Wealden Pullman perhaps?

Barbara and Theodora reach the grand age of 90 this year. Both have received some attention, during the 'maintenance gap' in services, to keep their Pullman liveries in good order. We shall again welcome The Pullman Society for their AGM Dinner in May and look forward to receiving their considered feedback.

Following a number of staff Christmas lunch functions, catering staff have undertaken redecoration of the Buffet seating area. Although it had been well cared for, redecoration had not been undertaken for well over ten years and even then not all areas were completed.

As a result of improving contacts with various local bodies, a number of regular meetings are being accommodated in the Station Refreshment Rooms. These are primarily of benefit in that they showcase our facilities to local people, many of whom would not have otherwise visited. Naturally a modest income is also forthcoming; most welcome during the lean 'closed' season.

New for 2016: Afternoon Teas are being offered in the Station Refreshment Rooms in addition to the established Cream Teas served onboard our trains. Various upgrades are available including Prosecco or Chapel Down sparkling wine, K&ESR chocolates, helium balloons and personalised bouquets. As always we'd be pleased to welcome new volunteers to help deliver our increasing range of services. No previous experience is needed, as full training (including City & Guilds accredited) is offered. Contact any member of the catering team for further details.

Sales, Marketing and Events – *Graham Snyer and Jemma Hosmer*

It would be remiss not to record the achievement of last year's Santa Specials. Record ticket revenue of 100.4% exceeded the ambitious budget of £241,473, giving the start of the new financial year a positive boost. Our Santa Specials are the most inter-departmental and resource-hungry event we undertake, and these relationships were tested to the limit from the departure of the very first train on the 5th December. Not only did our customers have to battle with unprecedented traffic volumes on the approaches to the High Street, due to the town's all-day Christmas Market (moved from the traditional Friday evening), but the 10.05 ex-Tenterden on this day failed at the Wittersham Road Up Home Signal. There's probably no need to describe the feelings of staff at this point, but in true K&ESR style – bearing in mind we love a crisis – everyone rallied to ensure our visitors were kept informed and watered.

With hindsight, the delay of around 75 minutes that ensued was a blessing in disguise. The events team had previously negotiated out-of-town car parking for patrons' use, employing a minibus park & ride shuttle service. Once the car park at

Tenterden Station approached capacity, we instigated this scheme and successfully carried around 300 customers between Pickhill Business Centre on the Smallhythe Road and the event until 6.00pm. The park & ride customers, and those who remained after struggling through the High Street traffic, were delighted to hear upon arrival that they were, in fact, early for their delayed train rather than 30 minutes late had it been on time!

The revamped Snow Queen offer and the Christmas Maze, together with a skilfully crafted marketing message, propelled ticket sales to an all-time high. Our previous record was £213,000 in 2013. Ticket sales achieved a 99.7% load factor against budget. We also introduced the opportunity to book an exclusive compartment in SK63 at both Standard and First Class. This was well received and will be repeated, if not extended, in 2016.

A few of our Santa Special TripAdvisor reviews:

"This is really well done – I recommend it highly. The children (aged 7 and 8) greatly enjoyed it. The staff are marvellous."

"Never disappoints. Great Santa train for our train-mad son. Santa was lovely and friendly on the



Stock including the Vintage carriages in Rolvenden Carriage Storage Shed on 5 January (Phil Edwards)

train and staff on the platform jolly and in the spirit of things. Amusements were in keeping with the theme of the time of year. See you in 2016."

"We had the most amazing time today, this is the first time we had visited and we will without a doubt return again. What a wonderful Christmas experience we had; the steam train was spectacular, the staff were welcoming, friendly and obviously loved what they do. The visit from Father Christmas went down exceptionally well as did the gifts for our children, and how lovely to be offered a drink and a festive treat on the train to get us into the festive spirit. I cannot recommend this day out enough, it really made our day and we have some wonderful memories to share. The kids loved the carousel (so did we) and the food we had was served fresh, hot and again with welcoming staff. Compliments all round. We look forward to booking again next year."

Looking ahead to the coming season a number of new events have been introduced. Real Ale Trains have proved particularly popular on other heritage lines, and so it seemed obvious – with the Old Dairy and Rother Valley breweries so close – that we should dip our toe into the market.

Over the weekend of 6th and 7th August we will host our first 'Food Fest'. Working in conjunction with the organisation 'Produced In Kent', the weekend will showcase the best local produce that Kent and Sussex has to offer. Stallholders will be at both ends of the line, and we're even planning to include a continental element!

We often run carriages from our Vintage fleet, and diesel traction is often used on passenger services in the event of a failure. In the planning process for this year's timetable it was decided that as there was a desire to operate both Vintage stock and diesel traction (not at the same time) we should tell our visitors in advance when this was happening. Diesel locos will take one of the paths on each of the two May Bank Holiday Mondays. More details will be found online nearer the time.

Social Media continues to grow in importance, and the amount of time spent managing it increases, but for RoI (Return on Investment) nothing comes close! Every marketer knows that brands need to go mobile in a big way. We're told that 56% of content today is consumed on a mobile device, and that social media users are overwhelmingly accessing social networks from their phones. This has huge implications for any

marketer that is building content, whether we're making eBooks, pamphlets, coupons, product pages or e-mail campaigns. As 2016 will see the launch of our new responsive website, it's clear that digital content has to be mobile-first.

In the 12-month period to the date of writing, our Facebook 'likes' have increased by 71% from 2,941 to 5,042. 'Boosting' or applying a fixed budget to a particular campaign post gives us by far the best response to our digital marketing. Typically, for a £75 boost, in excess of 64,000 Facebook users are reached. A recent 'Day Out With Thomas' post resulted in 1,872 actions. In the same 12-month period the number of Twitter followers grew by 812; we currently have 2,951.

Nowhere else is digital marketing more about engagement than with TripAdvisor. We recently managed to merge two listings for the Railway into one. Somehow a listing for Kent & East Sussex *Steam* Railway had sprung into existence. With the one listing, we now have 478 reviews; 443 of which (92.7%) rate us as 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

Shop Report – Craig Tyler

Firstly, a huge thank you to all the shop staff for their hard work and dedication throughout 2015 – it's been an interesting year. Many thanks to Sjors, who left as the Shops Organiser in July. Without his input the shop would not be progressing as it is now. So, on behalf of the shop team here, we wish him all the very best for the future. Merac is continuing to prove useful, with most of the teething problems having been sorted since its re-installation into the Tenterden shop during August.

To close with 2015, September's Thomas gave us an average spend of £3.94 per passenger over the weekend. Christmas was a reasonable period, with an average spend of £1.62 per passenger.

Looking forward to 2016, we will see an increase in the amount of local produce stocked within the shop, ranging from a slightly different selection of locally produced cider to a larger range of local jams and sweets. In keeping with the railway's theme, our Robert Opie collection will be expanding to include a greater selection of vintage games and home cookware items as we progress into the new running season. Let us hope that, as a consequence, this year proves to be an even better one for trade.

We welcome Ann Blewitt, a shop volunteer at Bodiam, to the department.

Rolling Stock – David Brailsford

Mark I's

The department has been busy during the run-up to the Santa Special season with steam heat pipe testing; Alan Brice's steamroller has once again simplified the task. Pipework has been replaced on the Headcorn end of **No.73** and **No.68** in the area of the bogie.

On the inspection front an 18-month exam has been carried out on **RMB Buffet No.59** in November and the same has been done on **No.85**. We currently have a TSO, 4767, on hire from the East Lancashire Railway (to compensate for the loss of **No.64**). The coach was inspected upon its arrival from Wittersham Road and has performed well over the Santa and Thomas period.

The overhaul of **No.64** is progressing steadily with much varnishing taking place on the newly installed internal panels and window frames. Boris Perkins is re-installing the low-level lights, which have been expertly refurbished. The only windows still to be fitted are in the toilet area. The remaining Headcorn end plateway should have been installed by March. Doors are being made up from their component parts and then fitted to the body side openings. This is a laborious task that can test anybody's patience, as they have to fit correctly into the not-so-standard openings.

The Robertsbridge end bogie is under overhaul with various pins and bushes being replaced on the brake rigging and the buckeye coupling. The wheelsets are due to be turned from one side to the other in order to even up the flange wear. With the bogie out, access to the steam heat pipe is possible in this area; it is showing signs of porosity. A number of small steam pipes have had to be replaced due to excessive corrosion. This has fitted in nicely with the refurbishment of its internal valves and pipes. Much filling and preparatory painting has taken place on the exterior of the coach. The final colour will match all the other Mark I's in the A set.

Vintage Coaches

S&ECR Birdcage No.61 has had an 18-month exam and some steam heat pipe repairs in the area of the take-off for the guard's compartment heater. **Great Eastern six-wheeler No.197** is now available for traffic and will hopefully be weighed on the axle weighing equipment at Rolvenden in the near future.

There has been significant progress on **District Railway No.100** of late. The roof canvas has been fitted and much work is taking place, under the supervision of Ron Nuttman, on internal and external mouldings, doors and compartment panelling. Assistance is being provided by Ken Lee and John Garner with Boris Perkins working on the coach electrics.

S&ECR 2947 is now available for service. There have been 18-month exams carried out on **NBO 54**, and Pullman cars **No.52 Barbara** and **No.51 Theodora**. A certain amount of repainting, varnishing, panel and door maintenance has had to be carried out on both of these Pullmans to ensure that standards are kept to their high levels.

Goods Vehicles

LMS box van M515184 (Kit Kat Van) is now available for use, however the other LMS box van – **No.138**, owned by Jon Colwell – currently resides in Rolvenden Carriage Storage Shed with a damaged roof canvas. A replacement will be fitted in the spring. Work on **Medfit No.158** is moving in the right direction, although workshop shed space is at a premium at the moment with so many revenue-earning vehicles requiring attention. The ballast chutes from **Dogfish hopper wagon No.154** are now in their component parts and much cleaning down and refurbishing is required. The chutes' main supports are life expired and will have to be replaced. The magnitude of this task should not be underestimated!

Various

Room has been allocated on an as-and-when required basis to the P-Way dept for repairs to their **TRAMM** trailer vehicle and **TREATS' 108 DMMU, Class 14** and **Class 03** diesels.

Space has been created for an equipment lay-down area next to the department's machine shop. This means that the sides of the shed are much less cluttered than they have been in the past.

We have been fortunate in acquiring a pipe threading machine, some steam jointing, storage bins, and nuts and bolts from the RWG power station at Littlebrook near Dartford. Our thanks go to Richard Stannard for his efforts in obtaining this equipment. Finally, the department is very short of cotton/linen-based rags; we would welcome any donations. Please leave them just inside the C&W entrance at Tenterden.

Rolvenden MPD – Paul Wilson

Locomotives available for service:

32670: Passed her annual boiler inspection with no issues. Upon completion of formalities it is hoped that the ten-year overhaul will be postponed until 31st December 2016.

32678: The smokebox front is undergoing replacement at the time of writing. The annual boiler inspection is being carried out concurrently.

14 Charwelton: Not being needed until Thomas, repairs were carried out to stop the reverser jumping into full gear.

376 Norwegian: The steam generator is proving troublesome; otherwise the loco is running well.

30065: After a season of sterling work, she has successfully undergone the annual boiler examination with no issues. As at the end of 2016 *Maunsell* will be stopped for a ten-year overhaul.

Ford diesel: We are still looking for volunteers to assist in refurbishment work. Sadly it is very hard to devote paid resource to this unique machine, which is so worthy of restoration.

Ruston diesel: As soon as time permits the loco needs a new cab floor and a general repaint.

Locomotives under overhaul:

11 P-Class: New pistons are being machined for fitting. The valve spindle glands have been re-metalled and machined. The brake gear has been fully refurbished. There is still a lot of cleaning and painting of the frames to do, so any volunteers to assist would be most welcome.

21: Apart from fitting new tubes and expanding the main steam pipe in the smokebox tubeplate, all boiler work is complete. To expand the main steam pipe we have had to construct an impressive looking 7-inch diameter five-roller expander. New boiler cladding is being made. As was done on sister locomotive **22 (30065)**, the cladding will be extended to cover more of the firebox sides than originally. This has proven to be a great improvement for retaining heat overnight. Machining and fitting of Great Western manual cylinder cocks continues so that the inadequate auto drain cocks can be dispensed with. With all motion work completed we are approaching the time when the cab and

tanks can be fitted, although there are modifications to carry out to the cab and bunker to bring them in line with *Maunsell*.

23 Holman F. Stephens: In store pending shed space for overhaul.

25 Northiam: Riveting around the foundation ring, where replacement plate has been welded in, is complete. The next job to undertake is the fitting of stays.

1638: All statutory boiler tests are now complete and running in light engine has been undertaken. A few minor issues that have arisen need to be dealt with.

6619: In store pending shed space for overhaul. A new smokebox is under construction by the experienced 4253 volunteers, who made a fantastic job of the (much bigger) one for their locomotive.

Cranes:

10t Taylor Hubbard: Available for service.

36t Ransomes and Rapier: The boiler was scheduled for removal at the end of February. The firebox is to be removed, to allow replacement of wasted rivets.

4253 Locomotive Company – Bryan Atkins

Work on 4253 has continued on a number of different fronts. The cab has now been completed and put aside while the window frames are being made or repaired.

The push to re-wheel the engine has continued, with axleboxes drilled for brass rubbing plates. The long job of tapping threads into all the new axlebox holes has been completed, and the side brasses have now been riveted to the trailing axlebox and ground flat. The newly built horn grinder has continued to be developed by ongoing trials and modifications. This has taken considerable time but it has now successfully completed all tests. Once the horn grinder has been put to work it will be possible to machine the remaining axleboxes to size.

The new smokebox has been assembled and the door fitted; new front handrails have also been fabricated. The completed smokebox has been temporarily installed on the saddle along with the chimney, providing a glimpse of the engine's outline and of things to come. While the team is

tooled up a start has been made on the new smokebox for locomotive 6619 (as mentioned above). Any 6619 shareholder who would like to help with this will be warmly welcome.

Work on the boiler and firebox has continued, with all the steel firebox stays now removed and the majority of the copper firebox stays drilled out. An eye-watering cheque has been written to our suppliers for the dispatch of a new throat plate, two firebox outer half sides, a front tube plate and six longitudinal stays. These should be on site by the beginning of February, and it is envisaged that most of 2016 will be taken up with installing these replacements. At the other end of the boiler, a decision was made to replace the front section of the barrel on the grounds that a complete replacement was almost as cheap as a repair. The new barrel section has been offered up and drilled; it now awaits riveting.

Meanwhile the usual myriad jobs continues by many volunteer hours. The superheater header studs have been removed and threads re-tapped and the blast pipe has finally been stripped into component parts. The expansion links, which have also been dismantled, have been cleaned up prior to being sent away for grinding and new die blocks made.

Working parties continue on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday. Those wishing to view progress will be warmly welcome during these times. Weekly progress on the engine can be viewed at www.4253.co.uk

The Group is desperately looking for a Sales and Fund Raising Manager to work with the Directors in organising and leading a team to run the sales stand which visits local events throughout the year. For more information please contact gwr4253@gmail.com

We are very grateful to the many K&ESR members who kindly supported the annual Grand Draw, the proceeds of which this year will go towards the boiler repairs.

TREATS – Mike Grimwood

The **DMMU** (cars 51571 & 50971) was withdrawn from service at the end of October for its winter maintenance. The first job was to remove all the carriage door locks for their five-year overhaul and certification at the Severn Valley Railway. All the door wooden frames and window mechanisms were inspected, and repairs carried out as required.

50971 entered the C&W shed in mid-December for cleaning and re-varnishing; the opportunity was taken to repaint the roof. However corrosion was discovered in the driver's cab, requiring a section to be cut out and new steel welded in. Replacement oil seals have been fitted to both gearboxes; also a replacement vacuum exhaustor has been fitted during the unit's B-exam and maintenance.

Class 14 D9504: The auxiliary generator failed in July, requiring its withdrawal from traffic for specialist repairs. This required a huge amount of work, including the removal of the brake frame and associated equipment, and the use of the railway's 36-ton crane. On its return the reverse procedure was required for reinstatement.

During December the locomotive was used to run some of the Santa Special trains. However the starter motor failed to disengage on one trip, requiring a replacement unit to be fitted.

Fate struck again in mid-December when two bolts on the generator drive coupling failed due to metal fatigue, damaging the drive shaft. A new set of bolts has been manufactured and the drive shaft repaired. Once the old bolts were drilled out and the repaired drive shaft fitted, the engine returned to service in January.

Class 03 D2023: We had been experiencing problems with the engine's fuel pump and governor for some time. A decision was made to remove the pump and the governor unit for repairs by a specialist contractor – Gardner Marine Diesels. They have since been refitted, along with overhauled injectors and new filters. The locomotive has also undergone a full service and a number of repairs undertaken.

GWR Railcar W20W – Andrew Webb

The project to rebuild the Railcar continues...

We have 18 wooden valance panel frames, nine each side, in stock as they were made some time ago. All have been trimmed and planed and are now ready for sheet metal cladding, as it was impossible to do this work previously due to access issues at the time.

At the moment there is a novel chance to see how they are assembled. As far as we are aware, they have never been photographed on a GWR Railcar; when the Railcars were under production it was during the early part of WW2.

Above each engine there were asbestos panels covered with life-expired metal sheets. These have been replaced with Masterboard clad with new sheet metal, painted and fitted to protect the timber framing above the engine exhaust system from scorching.

As part of the ongoing preparation for fitting the engines, flexible fuel pipes and engine mountings have been replaced.

Permanent Way On Track Machinery – *Jamie Douglas*

07 Tamper 73434: At the time of writing the tamper is having its maintenance carried out over the disposal pit at Rolvenden. It was intended to leave this until the works under way on the TRAMM had been completed; however we received a hire enquiry from the Swanage Railway for early March and made the decision to bring the maintenance forward to facilitate this. Various oils and filters have been renewed and brakes adjusted – which included having to remove a particularly obstinate brake adjuster, to allow it to be freed off in a vice in the workshop.

Currently outstanding work includes maintenance and exams of the measuring system components and some final system tests. This at least will get the machine working again, but will still leave bodywork tasks to complete at a later date.

Ballast Regulator 77329: Currently stored out of use at Wittersham Road pending maintenance and repairs.

TRAMM 98211: This has spent some time in the workshop at Tenterden, so that a start can be made on the extensive bodywork repairs required to keep the weather out of this extremely versatile machine. At the time of writing the machine's trailer has been in the shed at Tenterden. Two of the three cab doors have been removed and extensively reconstructed, as we found that not only had the steel skin of the doors rotted through, but also the steel channel framework had extensively corroded. Paul Jessett has been doing sterling work rubbing down the cab and machine frame and then making a start on priming these areas. However the TRAMM had to give way in the shed to the DMMU, for preparation for service this year.

OPERATING

Operating Department – *Pete Salmon*

The Operating Department has taken charge of planning for the 2016 timetable, which is an extremely complex process. You might think it can't be that complicated for a 10½ mile long railway; but when you take a look at how many different activities need to be planned, you'd be surprised just how much effort it takes to get it right.

In addition to all the regular activities such as passenger trains, Railway Experiences, Pullman and catering trains, charters, special events etc., we also now have to consider how and when we move stock to and from the new Rolvenden Carriage Storage shed. In order to maximise the benefits of undercover storage we have to plan very carefully, taking into account the requirements for catering stock, maintenance and cleaning.

James Palk and the Timetable Planning Committee have put in a fantastic effort to make sure we get a Working Timetable that plans our traffic requirements in considerable detail. This has meant that, for the first time for many years, the public timetable leaflet was delivered from the printers before the Santa season.

The popular Railway Experiences had a change of

manager last year with Bradley Bottomley taking over from Howard Wallace-Sims. We have made some changes to the basic train driving experience for 2016. Previously working entirely within Rolvenden Station limits, the experience now runs from Rolvenden to Bodiam and return, with all participants getting the opportunity to not just drive the locomotive but also to have a go at firing and guarding for part of the journey as well. We have re-introduced the Signal Box Experience day, which this time will be at Northiam. The range of Footplate Tasters, DMMU cab rides and Behind the Scenes tours also sell well.

On the footplate, Adrian Chapman has been appointed as Locomotive Inspector and with his team is working hard to keep up with the all-important competence management and crew training. We are hoping to re-introduce the popular Saturday Goods workings in 2016. As well as creating something of interest for our passengers to see, these are primarily a great opportunity for our trainees to experience handling freight trains and honing their shunting skills. Now that the new carriage sidings at Rolvenden are in use we have a useful space that we can utilise for training purposes without

impinging on the operational railway.

There has been a noticeable improvement in locomotive cleanliness this year, so our gang of loco cleaners deserve a big thank you. Keeping our locomotives clean does use a lot of old rags; if you have any old clothes or sheets, preferably cotton or linen, please take them to Rolvenden where they will be put to good use!

Our locomotives get through quite a lot of wood for lighting up and we welcome people bringing us further supplies. We would appreciate it if you could only bring wood that is suitable for locomotive fireboxes. I'm afraid that chipboard and old kitchen cabinets are no use to us and should be taken to your local tip. If you do want to bring wood to the railway, particularly in large quantities, please let us know in advance so that we can make sure it's suitable and can be stacked away neatly.

Although the railway generally runs very well, inevitably things sometimes go wrong. One such occasion was on 5th December when 30065 failed just outside Wittersham Road station with a Santa Special train. It was very satisfying to see that the staff on duty rallied round to rescue the failed train and re-work the crew diagrams to keep delays to a minimum. By the end of the day trains were back on time and many of our customers were none the wiser.

We have had the pleasure of welcoming several new volunteers in the past year. We continue to attract a good number of younger volunteers, who will hopefully be around for many years to ensure that the railway has a healthy future.

With the opening of the extension to Robertsbridge getting ever closer, the Railway will need to train lots more volunteers to keep the trains running. If you're not already a volunteer but would like to get involved in a fantastically rewarding hobby, please get in touch with Andy Hardy or Pete Salmon on 01580 762947. We will happily discuss your options and show you round. Whether you want to stay clean or are happy getting dirty, we will find you a job!

Guards Report – *Bradley Bottomley*

The inspectors would like to thank all Guards, Trainees and Shunters for their hard work over recent months; and well done to Freddie Drayner, who passed out on Sunday 20th December – he is now our youngest Guard.

Doug Barrow has retired from his role as Guard,

which he has been undertaking since 1989. The training dates for the Guards Classes in 2016 are 19th March, 23rd April, 7th May and 11th June – all Saturdays. We currently have nine trainees on our books.

Guards will now be needed to help run the new format RXDs, which will involve shunting the stock out of the new Carriage Storage Shed. This will also assist in keeping up competences for this part of the Railway.

2016 will again be a busy year – hopefully eased by the healthy number of new Guards recruited, in training and trained over recent months.

Signalling Department – *Tony Ramsey*

At the end of the 2015 season it was pleasing to note that, once again, our volunteer Signalmen and Crossing Keepers had undertaken all the turns required of them. We extend sincere thanks to everyone who made this possible.

Members of the Department have continued to work hard to extend their competencies. We salute those who have passed out as Signalmen: Steve Cassidy at Tenterden Town (first box); Bernie Bone at Rolvenden (second box); John Pocock at Northiam (second box); and Chris Small at Northiam (fourth box, making a full set!). We also congratulate those who have passed out as Crossing Keepers: Martin Skinner at Cranbrook Road; Rob Leach, Will Salmon and Nigel White at Rolvenden; and Susan Jacques-Bartlett at Wittersham Road. Training in point-winding has now been undertaken by the first tranche of Rolvenden and Northiam Signalmen.

The members of the Railway Rules Working Group have continued with their painstaking task of updating our Rules, Regulations and Instructions. Revisions to be introduced in March 2016 include Train Failures, Engineers' Machines and Working by Pilotman. In addition the long-awaited One Train Working Regulations will be published.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to report that Signal Box Experience Days will resume from April 2016, based at Northiam. Several new features have been incorporated into the programme, and we trust that these will be favourably received by the participants.

Finally we congratulate Joel Pearson, our Signaller Training Officer, on his recent marriage to Sharlena Joseph, and we wish them both every happiness.

Bodiam Group – Robin Dyce

For once I am not going to mention the weather – other than to say that had it been colder and drier maybe the group would not have been decimated by colds and 'flu. When we were at Bodiam it did a lot to stop us working outside.

Malcolm Burgess, Paul Randall, Chris Wady and John Harding in the main managed to clean down the outside of the station building and get a fair bit undercoated. We are now using Craftmaster paints, as used by the C&W Department, for outside work; their undercoat for the 'peach' top coat is almost a primrose shade. To date roughly half of the building has been gloss top coated, which has smartened those parts of the building up a lot, and as it is being done in the closed (for Bodiam) season, we don't immediately get the wet paint smothered in ash and looking like emery paper.

Before Christmas the Cavell Van went into storage in the new C&W Storage Shed at Rolvenden, where it will stay for the winter. It is due to return to Bodiam a week before Easter so that we can clean it and touch up the interior paint where necessary. As the steps are not currently needed the opportunity has been taken to refurbish them. They have done very well but now need strengthening and repainting and, with experience gained from their use, it may also be possible to reduce the number of steps – making them a lot lighter and easier to manhandle when necessary.

We have a number of tatty and derelict platform trollies and sack barrows at Bodiam; a start has been made on renovating them. In general the metal work is OK and needs only a de-rust and repaint, but the woodwork and fixing bolts have had to be replaced. Richard Brice, Graham Holden, John Harding, Chris Wady and Robin Dyce are also working their way through rebuilding our platform seats, which include some SER monogrammed ones. John Harding has located a grit blasting company which cleans and primes metalwork at reasonable cost and it is expected that this treatment will considerably extend the life of the seats – this will pay for itself over many years. Some of the softwood wooden seat slats have been restored, but where this is impossible they have been replaced with hardwood ones which are then clear varnished. They look very good.

A couple of years ago we twice had floods in the toilet. The ceilings were brought down when the pipes, which are mostly in the roof space, froze. More insulation has since been added, as well as a couple of tube heaters, but when not needed we are still careful to shut off all water to the toilets and shop, which also has a supply for the coffee and tea machine. Water was reconnected for Christmas and the New Year Pullmans.

As mentioned previously the interior of the toilets at Bodiam has been the subject of criticism from the annual Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme, being seen as dirty and unattractive, and needing replacing in part with modern facilities. Two contractors were invited to quote for refurbishing the interior but unfortunately the submitted prices were way beyond what the railway could afford, so it was agreed that the Group would carry out a deep clean and generally tidy things up a bit. We will be installing better and more efficient lighting together with self-closing taps, which should help reduce our energy and utility bills. A steam cleaner has been used to clean the wall tiles and the quarry floor tiles; they are beginning to look a lot better.

Together with Shop Supervisor Craig Tyler we are considering moving the wall between the Shop and Waiting Room towards the Ticket Office – very much as was done at Tenterden – to increase the size of the trading space and improve the viability of the shop. At the time of writing no decision has been taken, but it is doubtful that (if agreement is reached) the work could be completed before the start of the 2016 season, so implementation may have to wait until next winter.

On 2nd February we witnessed a train at Bodiam. It was a works train pulled by the Ford diesel with the 10t Taylor Hubbard crane, which had been used to remove a carriage underframe from the 'pointless' siding at Ewhurst. After a lot of shunting (and tea drinking by the crew) the consist left for Rolvenden...

As always the run-of-the-mill work has continued, with Pam and Sheila Stevens clearing up the flower gardens and pots, ready for the next season. Bill Larke has been cutting back the hedges that line the east side of the road from the level crossing towards Bodiam village, so that road users can see the crossing gates earlier and more clearly, while at the same time improving sighting of oncoming traffic for our level crossing

keepers. Much of this was ivy, growing up old fence posts adjacent to the east gate, which took a great deal of effort to clear. Vic Grigg has continued to clear the drainage ditch along the south side of the car park; this very quickly gets clogged up with grass and other plants if not regularly cleared out. Vic's other 'hobby' is to burn all the cuttings, old wood and trees that have been collected from all over the station site.

'Persons unknown' left an old platform weighing machine at the station and Vic, having worked in the trade, is restoring it to its original condition. When finished it will greatly enhance the heritage feel of the platform area.

Although John Liddell cannot get down to the station so much as he used to, he works at home producing signs for the Railway. At Bodiam we now have very presentable heritage signage for posters, direction signs to the toilets etc. and, most importantly, a sign that hangs on the yard gates telling visitors that there are No Trains Today. John uses a computer controlled cutting tool to produce the signs, which can have indented or raised lettering.

Last Christmas 34 of us sat down to lunch at the Castle Inn for an excellent meal and good company. We must be doing something right as quite a few ladies ('other halves') joined us, and enjoyed themselves as well.

We welcome back Freddie Soper, who in the dim and distant past used to work with what was then known as the Clearance Gang in the 1970s, managed by John Miller.

Remembrance Day at Bodiam 2015

– Mick Hoad, *Stationmaster*

The day opened rather murky, but with my wife I had planned to go to the station and support the railway in its welcome to the pupils of Staplecross Methodist School. They were due to take part in a short service of commemoration of the Armistice and the anniversary of the death of Nurse Edith Cavell. Our historic PMV 132 had recently returned from its successful visit to Norwich and was to be the focus of the service at Bodiam.

The weather improved generally throughout the morning. Benches had been set up in the yard facing the Van for the children to sit on, and all that was required was their attendance. Surely they would not be walking down the road from the school on the hill? Yet no coach was to be seen either. To those present at the time though,

the faint sound of youthful chatter was heard over the adjoining farmland. It grew louder and louder (reminiscent of the mountain scene in *The Sound of Music*), until a whole platoon of excited youngsters appeared at the gate by the hop garden, suitably attired in wellies and waterproof jackets, accompanied by their minders.

The first visit of course for those so young was to our 'coal office' and then, having been divided up into small groups, were taken into the Cavell Van for a brief talk by Brian Janes on the history of the occasion. Some of these groups had to await the end of the event before they had a chance to visit the Van. A short service took place with a hymn being sung by all present, then a group of scholars, in position on the steps of the Van, read short pieces appropriate to the occasion. This was followed by the sounding of the Last Post played by the grandfather of one of the children.

This was a well-conducted service with the children, involved and on their best behaviour, being introduced to a history lesson which we at the railway are able to present with the help of our historic vehicle.

The participants were spared the walk back to school when a coach arrived to take them up the hill. Well done the pupils of Staplecross Methodist School, and our thanks to Anna Eastwood for organising the children and the service.

Museum Notes

As always on the Railway, winter work has been intensive behind the scenes. The Victorian Room and the Permanent Way displays have been subject to comprehensive revamps, with other displays subject to smaller additions and adjustments. The Victorian Room in particular has been graced with two excellent new display cases thanks to the carpentry skills of Matt and Dave Stubbs, lit by Dave Brown's electrical endeavours.

More craft skills have been evident in the display in the entrance of a very ornate lamp case, production of which was organised by Doug Lindsay, which now holds the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead lamp burner acquired last year. We have also acquired yet another lamp, again from auction, this one marked Halwill Junction – that remote and now disappeared station in remotest Devon chosen as the improbable destination for Stephens' line from Torrington.

Great progress is continuously being made in the Archive. We have decided that the lists of the

1,000 files and nearly 3,000 artefacts, which have been painstakingly verified and digitised in recent years, will be available on the Museum website. We hope this will encourage even greater interest in the Museum and its contents, both for research and – let's face it – sheer pleasure for those with any interest at all in our illustrious past. The next great effort, which is already well under way, is to sort and catalogue, with digital copies, our very extensive photographic archive; nobody has ever counted but there are many thousands of pictures. This work strains our IT skills and social media experience, and we would particularly appreciate assistance from members with such talents.

The coming season will be one of great change. In order to increase value for money and appreciation of an even greater day out on the railway, it has been decided to brighten the north side of the station site, including free entry to the Museum for all ticket holders. We hope this will increase enjoyment of, and footfall in, the Museum. To make up for the shortfall in income we are in the process of installing more donation boxes; let us hope that our visitors are generous in their appreciation once we have tempted them past the front door. To help achieve this we need more assistance to meet and greet our new visitors. Engaging our visitors can be a very rewarding experience; please consider giving some time towards improving our visitor experience...

Members have of course always had free entry to the Museum but can we perhaps tempt you into buying a book or two to support us further? To encourage you, we are having a very extensive sale in the first few weeks of the season. Nearly half our stock of books has been marked down to just £1! Come and visit while stocks last.

Gardening Report – *Veronica Hopker*

Tenterden Town September and into October was a time for keeping the gardens and tubs around the station tidy. Things start to wind down and the dead-heading of various plants starts to slow. Our tubs created a great deal of interest amongst the passengers, as the Nicotianas seemed to be growing forever upward and then branching out like trees. I think some of this was due to the watering and feeding that Paul Bridger kindly gave them when Jan and I were unable to do it!

During October we cleared a section of the

platform garden by the running-in board and planted a few heathers in the hope they will be able to cope with the acid smoke and dust from the engines sitting in the platform waiting to take their trains off to Bodiam.

In November the troughs on the Pullman Dock and the tubs around the station were cleared and replanted with winter pansies. With the mild weather they have been flowering cheerfully. Doug and Eve Ramsden kindly gave us their spare Sweet William plants to fill a few spaces around the gardens.

Someone kindly left a pack of three different types of bulbs in my pigeonhole in the office (no pun intended –Ed). Thank you very much indeed whoever you are. They have been planted in the various gardens and hopefully will show their heads during the next few weeks.

Plants on 'the mound' were cut back and split, which is all part of a programme to tidy the gardens and prepare for the spring.

Sadly at the beginning of December my 'right hand', Jan LeLean, had a stroke. However I am very pleased to report that, being a real fighter, she is making a good recovery. Within weeks Jan was back on her feet, and working hard at her physiotherapy to make sure she is back at Tenterden in the spring – to keep an eye on me and make sure I do things correctly!

Rolvenden The tubs have been emptied of plants and the watering system turned off. They will be replanted in the spring ready for the start of the running season.

Wittersham Road The planters on the platform at Wittersham Road were kept tidy and the little garden next to the Booking Office tidied. A few primulas were planted.

Northiam Liz Brown and Nell Joint carried out a final seasonal tidy of the picnic area.

The wild flower garden was slow to get going, but by the end of the year a large number of plants flowered. This year we hope it will be larger, and with more blooms. Some wild flowers take a year or more to get established, so we are looking forward to seeing how the garden develops.

Two new trees have been planted in the area outside the Memorial Garden: a Salix Caprea Kilmarnock – a small umbrella shaped willow – on behalf of Mrs Helen Bagg, in memory of her late husband, a volunteer on the railway. The

second is a Liquidamber Worplesdon, which has maple-shaped leaves; it was chosen for its autumn colour.

The tubs on the platform in front of the station building were planted with winter pansies, as the Santa Special engines were stopping for water and running round before returning to Tenterden. Christmas trees were added to some of the tubs with Christmas lights.

A happy and healthy 2016 to everyone connected with the Railway. We hope the New Year will be a prosperous one for us all.

Tuesday Group Report – Graham Hopker

The work on the signal box and station building at Wittersham Road has been ongoing and was finally finished at the end of November – luckily before the weather broke. During the work on the signal box the Tuesday Group carpenters – Ron and Steve Dunn – replaced the window frames and the windowsill on the weather-prone west end of the box.

While at Wittersham Road we renovated all the seats and benches – which involved replacing some of the wooden sections – and repainted them.

Dave Brown, our electrician, carried out several installations at stations around the railway. At Tenterden Town he fitted and wired an LED floodlight at the rear of the new offices, controlled by a dusk/dawn sensor, to facilitate the access to the Catering Department container store. At Bodiam he fitted and wired, with help from Chris Lowry, a distress alarm to the disabled toilet. The same type of alarm has been fitted to the disabled toilet at Northiam.

During the period Doug Ramsden and Mark Taylor continued to assist the Gardening Group by keeping the grass cut in the picnic area and Memorial Garden at Northiam Station.

We had an enjoyable Christmas lunch at The White Hart, Newenden; 20 people, including wives, attended. We now look forward to a dry, sunny, healthy and constructive year in 2016.

Ashford Area Group – Ted Micklam

We continue to enjoy good attendance at our meetings.

Our visit to the CFBS Fête De La Vapeur is on Sunday 17th April; for the latest news contact Keith Mapley at keithmapley@btinternet.com or telephone 01303 269138.

Our indoor programme continues with:

20th April: “Railways of England & Scotland; From the Ground and Above” – Exciting video footage and drone views by Andy Wood.

18th May: “A Dip into Wilf’s Archive” – Wilf Watters; clips from the OnLine video archive.

15th June: “150 years of the Dartford Loop Line” – Tom Burnham; history in the making.

There are no meetings in July and August (to enable us to get on with running the trains).

Indoor meetings are held at The Rail Staff Club, off Beaver Road, Ashford TN23 7RR. They start at 7.30pm and end by 10pm. Everyone is welcome to attend indoor or outdoor meetings. Topics are subject to availability.

Contact Ted Micklam on 01233 503999 or edward.micklam@tiscali.co.uk

4253: List of prizewinners for the 2016 Boiler Grand Draw

1st	Steam-hauled British Orient Express with meals for two	36748	K. Dow
2nd	Steam Traction Engine Weekend, Weald of Kent Rally	31410	B. Moreton
3rd	Scalextric	33576	R. Banister
4th	Hornby train set	18969	J. Field
5th	AA membership	21805	P. Hayes
6th	M&S voucher	20443	A. Bradford
7th	Vodka	12261	C. Downs
8th	Gin	31670	J. Duddridge
9th	Dartington Crystal glasses	30614	S. Masters
10th	Corgi Spitfire model with 4253 picture and mug	21481	T. Ford
11th	Bacardi	06493	S. Leman
12th	Ozzo	27009	H. Jessett

BOOK REVIEW

How a Steam Locomotive Works – A New Guide by Dominic Wells

Ian Allan Publishing, 160 pages. Numerous photographs and diagrams. £25.
ISBN-13: 978-0711038141

This is the second edition of *How a Steam Locomotive Works* and was published in March of 2015. The book has been improved and expanded and provides a very good insight into many of the systems that fit together to make a complete steam locomotive. The simple diagrams are linked with colour photographs of

locomotives showing the exact equipment being described. The book has a lot to recommend it and should be included as one of the base texts for anybody wishing to further their knowledge in the field of railway steam locomotives. The information contained therein is as relevant to a new starter at a preserved railway as it is to somebody with a number of years of experience. On just a slightly negative note it is a shame that the layout of some of the early pages in the book require the reader to search for the correct figures allocated to their diagrams.

David Brailsford

KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY 300 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

September 2015

1st	Mark Stuchbury	No. 024	£90.00
2nd	Nigel & Kathy Moxom	No. 560	£80.00
3rd	Karen Lloyd	No. 149	£70.00
4th	Lewis Potter	No. 266	£60.00
5th	Malcolm Ward	No. 767	£50.00
6th	Terry Hannocks	No. 563	£40.00
7th	Martin Casterton	No. 346	£35.00
8th	Trevor A Palmer	No. 292	£30.00
9th	Lance A T Banks	No. 763	£20.00
10th	Sue Woods	No. 416	£15.00
11th	Mr E Stockdale	No. 593	£10.00

November 2015

1st	Dr Ian Cullis	No. 256	£70.00
2nd	Jean Sugden	No. 705	£60.00
3rd	Mr E Stockdale	No. 663	£50.00
4th	Gillian Davis	No. 682	£40.00
5th	Kent Evenden	No. 192	£35.00
6th	Frank Lambert	No. 150	£30.00
7th	David King	No. 626	£25.00
8th	Mr B Germain	No. 244	£20.00
9th	James Veitch	No. 404	£15.00
10th	Chris M Wood	No. 720	£10.00

October 2015

1st	Mrs M L Farahar	No. 712	£70.00
2nd	Ian Cook	No. 071	£60.00
3rd	Graham Voce	No. 502	£50.00
4th	Tim Spafford	No. 517	£40.00
5th	Roger Chaplin	No. 566	£35.00
6th	Mark Justice	No. 352	£30.00
7th	Mrs June Ward	No. 768	£25.00
8th	Nigal Franklin	No. 062	£20.00
9th	Richard Seddon	No. 678	£15.00
10th	Miss P Stevens	No. 127	£10.00

December 2015

1st	Jack R Treadgold	No. 740	£200.00
2nd	Valery Woolley	No. 078	£100.00
3rd	Jolyan Vickers	No. 314	£100.00
4th	Tony Hutchins	No. 394	£100.00
5th	Linda Shepherd	No. 183	£90.00
6th	Mrs H A Parascandolo	No. 293	£80.00
7th	Doug Lindsay	No. 250	£70.00
8th	Nigel Thomas	No. 175	£60.00
9th	Peter M Cole	No. 282	£50.00
10th	Elizabeth Lambkin	No. 804	£45.00
11th	Meg Gooch	No. 492	£35.00
12th	Peter Glen	No. 240	£25.00
13th	Sue Woods	No. 342	£20.00
14th	John Ascher	No. 574	£15.00
15th	Chris M Wood	No. 720	£10.00

For more information about the K&ESR 300 Club phone Brian Heyes on 01622 744509
or Chris Garman on 01424 441643.

Letters to the Editor

Sir – This time last year I wrote a letter for the *Terrier* which was critical of the fare structure relating to families. I felt, as did many others, that our railway charging £49.50 for a family ticket would deter many from visiting us. I regret that this year's results seem to have borne this out.

However, in fairness to the Board, I should now like to record how pleased and surprised we are that the new rate for 2016 is £38. This will mean, if my maths is right, that apart from groups of adults only or one adult and one child, any combination of a group up to a maximum of five consisting of one or two adults and children will benefit from this remarkable new price. This will compare very favourably with all the other local competitors (unless they do the same).

All we have to do now is to market the product like never before.

Well done the Board.

*Brian Thompson (Chief Ticket Inspector)
by e-mail*

Sir – Charles Lucas is of course correct (*Letters, Terrier* No.128) that the US Military was in no way involved in the evacuation of children during 1940. As someone who was seven when World War 2 broke out, and therefore lived through the

whole thing, I can confirm that evacuations were organised by the Police, the ARP (Air Raid Precautions warden) and the WVS (Women's Voluntary Services) with assistance from school teachers and parents – plus of course many railway managers and workers.

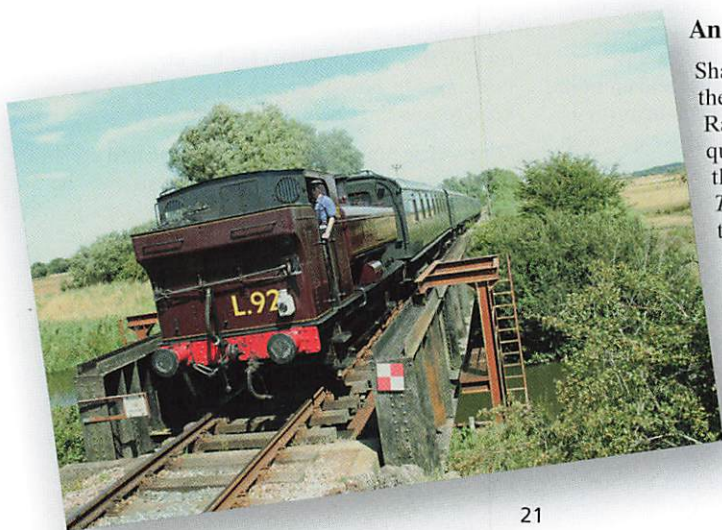
Replicating that lot on our railway could be quite a problem – but definitely no American Army (*not involved in World War 2 until after Pearl Harbor in December 1941 –Ed*). Maybe British Army reenactors could be involved?

Changing the subject, in his bridges article Graham Bessant refers to culvert 2334 on Tenterden Bank, and seems surprised by its massive construction. Back in the early 1980s rainfall cascaded off the field above the line and this almost continuous flow of water and mud was actually pushing the railway out of alignment. (Ballasting wasn't anywhere near its present high standard then.)

Mega treatment was obviously needed and Dave Hazeldine rebuilt the whole thing and realigned the track further away from the field boundary. It worked very well.

There must surely be other members who are able to remember more about this episode and the subsequent reconstruction.

*Chris Wood
St Michaels*



And an Apology

Sharp-eyed readers (including the Editor of the Swanage Railway's house journal!) were quick to inform the Editor that, on page 23 of *Tenterden Terrier* No. 128, we stated that the Swanage line was the normal residence of London Transport Pannier Tank L.92. It is of course the South Devon Railway.

Apologies have already been offered to our colleagues in Dorset and are now extended to those in Devon.

THE NEXT GENERATION: Oli Bournes

Anthony Ramsey continues our series looking at the Railway's younger members of paid and volunteer staff.



Oli Bournes and proud grandparents

(via Oli Bournes)

Members of the Operating Department seem to have a habit of acquiring reputations. One only has to think of Matt Green and tea, or Jasper Pryer and Jaffa Cakes! To that list should perhaps now be added Oli Bournes and amnesia. I already knew of the occasion when he turned up two months early for a Crossing Keeper turn and then failed to appear on the correct day; but even so, when he told me his memory was 'horrendous' I thought he was joking. However, when he also forgot to turn up for the interview for this article, I realised he was telling the truth!

But 'first things first'. Oli is one of those sensible people who have always loved trains. As a child he was thrilled to be brought to the K&ESR by his grandparents, who lived at St Michael's, although at that stage he never imagined joining us. "I thought they were too elite for me," he said. "It was only later I realised that anyone

could be a volunteer." For a time he considered joining the RH&D, but in 2011 he opted for us "because the engines were bigger". (Clearly, for Oli, size is important.) He has always been fascinated by how engines work and thus was keen to join the Loco Department.

"I was expecting it to be quite intense and serious – a bit like those BR training videos," he said, "but it is actually very relaxed. Because it is a hobby, we all enjoy ourselves and there are plenty of jokes." He can still clearly remember his first day. "I started as a Cleaner, along with Ben, Freddie, Jasper, Ryan, Tom and Will. They all seemed to know each other from school, and I was the outsider." But he quickly settled in and enjoys the fact that he has made friends and grown in confidence. "Each year just gets better," he adds. "It is such a privilege to be able to play trains."

What has Oli learned from his time so far as a volunteer? "Lots of things: teamwork, communication, common sense, health & safety. But perhaps the two main things are hard work (e.g. doing a 12-hour shift including disposal on a hot day) and assertiveness (if you don't push, you don't get the signatures in your logbook). Plus," he adds, "it's so different from school. Here, age is just a number, and I have ended up training people who are much older than me."

Are there any drawbacks? He smiles ruefully. "It's not much fun after a very early start kneeling in a puddle on a cold day cleaning a loco. What's more, trying to juggle everything at once on the footplate can be mentally demanding. But I think I must be a good luck charm, because no loco has ever failed while I've been on it!"

He also refers to the difficulties he experienced (like so many other younger volunteers) in getting to the railway before he acquired his own car. His limited free time is the reason he has not yet qualified as a Steam Raiser, but he hopes to have completed this by the summer and then progress to passing out as a Fireman.

Away from the railway, Oli (who is 17) is

studying for an AS-level in Further Maths and A-levels in Maths, Physics and Chemistry at Highworth Grammar School in Ashford, and hopes to go on to study engineering at university. He would love subsequently to work on the Big Railway, while continuing with K&ESR as a hobby. He is keen on both sport and music and enjoys football, cricket, golf, fishing and playing the saxophone and the guitar (on which he is self-taught). He has a part-time job at the Ashford Beefeater, where he is a member of the front-of-house staff doing one weekday evening and one weekend daytime shift per week. He also has a 3x3m 00 gauge model layout in his loft, and enjoys visiting other heritage railways.

For my final questions, I asked Oli what advice he would give to other volunteers. "Be proactive. Talk to people whether you know them or not." And to anyone interested in joining? "Just do it!"

So, if you would like to spend some time with a young man who is enthusiastic, knowledgeable, amusing and sociable, book a day with Oli. Just don't expect him to turn up unless you've sent him repeated reminders!



This matchstick model of a locomotive was built for Meg Gooch, our Wealden Pullman chief, by an anonymous well-wisher

(Bradley Bottomley)



*The Cavell Van formed within the Vintage Train behind No.32678 at Tenterden Town on 1st November 2015
(Hugh Nightingale)*

*No.32678 ascends Tenterden Bank, passing through the Wet Cutting, with the Vintage Train and Cavell Van, also on 1st November 2015
(John Wickham)*





1st July commemorates the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. In memoriam, here is the interior of the Cavell Van as photographed on 5th June 2012, the official holiday to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, adorned with just over 60 fresh poppies
(Hugh Nightingale)

People in Profile

Chris Fautley interviews new K&ESR Chairman Jamie Douglas

Jamie has been a Director of the Kent & East Sussex Railway since October 2014, although he has been a volunteer since "some time before 1990". He was elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees in December. Professionally, he works for Balfour Beatty Rail. He is 32, is married and has a three-year-old child.

CF *You've worked your way up through the railway, from a teenaged Pullman waiter to Company Chairman. Does it all seem a bit surreal sometimes?*

Jamie Quite simply – yes! I can honestly say that the role of Chairman is not one which I can look back and say that I saw myself occupying in the future. However, I took the view that it wouldn't be very fair for me to keep sitting back and criticising others giving it their best, unless I was prepared to put myself forward, and give it my best.

CF *What have been your roles to date on the K&ESR?*

Jamie I began many years ago assisting the Signal & Telegraph Department, initially helping to mix mortar to re-point the brickwork at Wittersham Road signal box. I remember then helping to paint the under-frame (the part of the signal box lever frame which is hidden below the signal box floor) at Wittersham Road – because at the time I was one of only a few people able to climb amongst the various parts to paint!

Then I recall assisting at Tenterden, back when the S&T workshop was a tumbledown, ramshackle shed behind the buffet. I cleaned and painted bits and pieces of what is now Wittersham Road ground frame, and the shunting signals which were going to be worked from it. After this I seem to recall discovering football and so don't remember helping out too much for a couple of years. However from about 1994 I got involved with helping out on the Pullman and the 'Rother Valley' Sunday lunch service. I remained heavily involved with working on the various dining services throughout my teenage years, but I also began volunteering in the Permanent Way department, and then as a cleaner in the Operating Department. I became a fireman shortly after my 16th birthday, and a steam driver not long after my 21st birthday. In 2010 I took up the reins as manager of the

PW department, before standing for election as a Trustee in October 2014.

CF *What is your priority as Chairman?*

Jamie To develop the K&ESR into a sustainable business that can afford to continue operating long into the future.

CF *How do you hope to achieve this?*

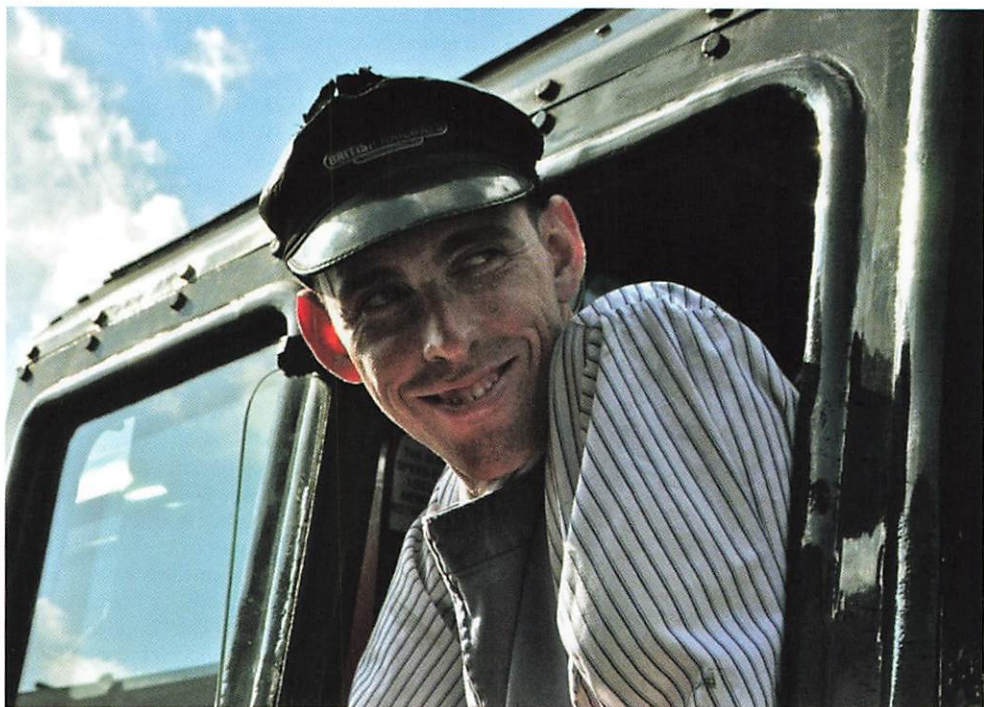
Jamie This really is a multi-pronged attack! There are so many ways that we need to develop to achieve the goal of preserving the K&ESR for future generations.

First – we need to increase our income. We need to attract more people in so that we can tell them our story and make sure that they have a great time in order that:

- a) They spend enough time with us that they want to eat and drink in our catering outlet.
- b) They want to come back and see us again and...
- c) ...recommend us to their friends.

Clearly, if we want people to keep coming back to see us time and again this means that we need to keep our product fresh, and change things around frequently. Why would they want to keep paying good money to see the same locomotives pulling the same carriages up and down the same track and stopping at the same stations? We need to be prepared to have different attractions at different locations, and swap them around once or twice a year; repaint the carriages into different colours from time to time; and the same for the locos.

A coat of paint might, in engineering terms, only be there to stop the vehicle underneath rotting away. To most of us who know a bit about railways, it will tell us something about the history of the railway. To 90% of our visitors it means very little, other than whether we look tatty or smart; but this means that it is our opportunity to educate our visitors about the history of each vehicle/type, the railway companies that built



(Robin Dyce)

them, and about the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

Second – we need to manage our costs better. As anyone who works with railways will know, railways cost a *lot* to run! The national network costs a lot because there is a lot of it, the trains run faster and more frequently and on more days. Heritage railways pro-rata cost almost as much because they use old kit – track, signals, locomotives, carriages, wagons etc. It is all being preserved because it has been superseded by newer, cheaper, more efficient, longer-lasting equipment.

Add in to this that we at the K&ESR effectively run two fleets of locos and carriages – the class 5 locos which will normally haul up to five corridor coaches, and the class 2/3 locos which normally haul the vintage train. Both of these are equally essential to the K&ESR operation, but for very different reasons. The class 5 locos with the five-coach corridor train are really the ‘bread and butter’ of our operation. They provide plenty of seats for our guests, are comfortable, offer on-train toilet facilities (which with a journey time of around 45 minutes, anyone with young children will agree is essential for a family

attraction), and they give us the opportunity to offer on-train refreshments at the visitor’s seat – generating further income.

On the other hand, the vintage train is our opportunity to showcase travel from a bygone time, and it is our representation of the historical K&ESR. However, in purely practical terms it does have its drawbacks. Although some of the vintage train has had its springing modified, much of it offers quite a rough ride. Where most of the seating is in compartments, families will normally prefer to have a compartment to themselves. If they are forced to share because the train is busy, it impacts on the visitor experience. The vintage train does not give us the opportunity to offer on train catering throughout.

In short we need to be smarter about how we prioritise our expenditure. All of these carriages and locos cost a great deal of money to restore and to run, and yet some of our stock spends most of the year out of use in the yard!

Third, and finally – we need to develop a ‘can do’ approach: in terms of doing ‘things’ that will help improve the visitor experience, and changing the way we do them. I have witnessed first-hand

countless occasions across many areas of the railway where people will spend more time avoiding doing or changing something, or finding reasons not to, than if they had just got on and done it in the first place.

There are some outstanding examples of 'can do' around the railway currently – a leading one in my eyes is the incredible progress the 4253 team are making at Rolvenden. Obviously it is sometimes necessary to temper enthusiasm with realism and logistics, but we must be careful not to extinguish the enthusiasm altogether. In short, I would like to think we can empower volunteers to deliver their ideas, without them getting bogged down with endless meetings and bureaucracy until they get bored and give up.

CF *You work on the 'big railway'. Tell us a little about what this involves.*

Jamie As a tamper driver/operator, I work mainly night and weekend shifts – normally across Kent and Sussex, and occasionally further afield. In the past few years I have worked in Newcastle, throughout much of the Anglia and Wessex regions, and in Scotland and Ireland.

Working in the industry brings its own lifestyle – the hours and the nature of the work mean that I have to manage my rest much more carefully than most. But in all honesty, I can't really imagine working in a different industry. As someone who left grammar school with nine A-C GCSEs to take an apprenticeship in plant engineering with Balfour Beatty Rail, I really can't complain about what it has allowed me to achieve. I have an HNC in Electrical Engineering and qualifications in competence assessment and training delivery to name a few.

CF *Can you bring anything from that role to your position as chairman?*

Jamie Of course. I have witnessed some truly bad management techniques in my time with Balfour Beatty Rail, and it is useful to be able to hopefully not make the same mistakes myself!

CF *In all your years as a volunteer, what has been your most memorable experience?*

Jamie Peter Wensley telling me that I had passed my steam driving test.

CF ... and your most amusing experience?

Jamie In all honesty there are too many to list, and some are certainly not suitable for publishing in this magazine!

CF *Do you believe the heritage railway movement is bound by too much legislative red tape?*

Jamie I think that 'red tape' is all too often a convenient excuse as to why something has to be done – or not done. We have to remember that the 'red tape' is there for a reason – normally because something in the past has gone wrong and someone has died as a result. We all get frustrated by 'legislative red tape' from time to time, but we need to accept it and find another way, rather than trying to test the elastic limit of the red tape!

CF *What do you think our greatest strengths are?*

Jamie Cheesy management line time – our people!

In all seriousness, this is absolutely true. I have lost count of the number of times I've seen some of our people go way beyond what might normally be expected of them – whether that be a member of station staff offering to drive a passenger to Bodiam in their car because the passenger missed the last train, or Permanent Way staff out on Christmas Eve chopping up trees to clear the line, or gala volunteers pulling out *all* the stops to make sure the event happens. Without them, we might as well put it all back in the box and find a new hobby!

CF *How should we build on this?*

Jamie As I've set out above, we need to encourage our people to get more involved, and to develop a 'can do' approach – if they've got a good idea, get a group of like-minded people together and do it!

CF *Do we have any weaknesses?*

Jamie Of course – if we didn't have weaknesses then we'd be the UK's top visitor attraction, with all of our historic rolling stock and equipment in state-of-the-art facilities!

To me one of our key weaknesses is our inability to throw anything away. We really are quite brilliant at storing scrap. We hold on to things because they 'might come in handy one day'. 20 or 30 years on, the pallet that item(s) were stored on has rotted away and the item has spent years in the mud, under the weeds, steadily biodegrading until realistically it is beyond economic repair.

Now, each case looked at in isolation is no big deal. But looking at the bigger picture, all of this 'stuff' has to be kept somewhere – and historically this has often been next to the track where it can be picked up by crane when we want

it – in full view of our paying guests. On top of this, when we want to undertake a development, take the new Storage Shed at Rolvenden as an example, we have to spend days on end moving this ‘stuff’ from one place to another – which just sucks up man hours, of which we have precious few anyway. From a customer perspective, it makes it look like the place is unloved and tatty.

CF *How might we address this?*

Jamie We really have got to start being realistic about what we are ever going to use/restore, and dispose of what we’re not – whether that means skipping smaller items, or offering larger items (unrestored carriages etc.) for disposal to somewhere they will get restored.

CF *What, in your opinion, is the greatest thing upon which we need to focus in the short term?*

Jamie Very simply, increasing our income. We absolutely must have a great year in 2016 if we want our railway to continue operating. This means not only getting people in, but making sure they have a good time while they are with us.

CF *And in the longer term?*

Jamie It’s not really long term, but it is further

away than the end of this year: we have got to get our railway Ready for Robertsbridge. There is a great deal of work to be done to prepare for the challenges that operating a longer railway will present. We need to anticipate these as far as possible, and face them head-on.

CF *What do you think is the greatest obstacle to the continuing success of our railway?*

Jamie Apathy – an unwillingness to evolve and develop.

CF *How can we tackle that?*

Jamie It is for the trustees and the managers to carry the staff and volunteers with us through the evolution that must take place over the coming months and years. The trustees need to set out a clear goal of what we want our railway to look like, and then agree with the managers how we go about meeting that goal. The managers then need to implement this. However, it is for all of us to engage with staff and volunteers to carry everyone along with us, while also realising that this is a two-way process in as much as we need to take comments, suggestions and criticisms on board to improve what we are trying to do.

CF *Jamie, thank you for your time.*

OBITUARY Howard Ashton

Longer-standing members of the K&ESR will be sorry to hear of the passing of Howard Ashton on 3 August 2015 at the grand age of just over 102 years. He remained very fit and active for most of his life and after retiring from full-time employment continued to work as a supply teacher for many years – that is to say, he would respond at short notice to requests from schools in the Medway area where he lived to provide short-term cover for teachers who were on leave or unwell.

On starting his railway career Howard served as a Travelling Ticket Inspector to begin with, before branching out to qualify as a Signaller at Tenterden Town Box. He was a very humorous and lively character, who would always bring a smile to passengers’ faces when working as a TTI with his happy disposition and cheerful comments, but his particular forte was his appearance in full greasepaint as the pantomime character Widow Twankey at Santa Special time.

As a signaller he had an invariably positive and capable approach to the job, but stopped short of

accepting an offer to learn Rolvenden Box when it came into service, saying that there were far too many levers down there for him to cope with!

He once surprised me by declaring one Sunday morning, after coming on duty early to deal with an additional engineers train (which in the event did not run), that he was 81 years old and could not be doing with all this! You would never have imagined he was that age, being still very sprightly and active. Nevertheless he continued to serve as a Signaller and Ticket Inspector until the late 1990s, when he felt the time had come to retire. He continued to visit the railway for quite a number of years afterwards, and his family say that he would always become bright and enthusiastic at the prospect of a visit to his beloved K&ESR where he had spent so much of his later life.

It has been arranged for Howard’s ashes to be scattered on the Railway, and a plaque will be placed in the Memorial Garden at Northiam Station in his memory.

Clive Norman

TICKETS PLEASE!

Chief Booking Clerk Chris Baker reports on passenger numbers and news from the booking office. Thanks are due to John Harding and Shaun Dewey for their assistance with the data.

Passenger numbers

The table of passenger numbers for 2015 shows comparisons with the figures published last year.

The total for 2014 was 80,828 and in 2015 this reduced by 5.61% to 76,291.

The comparison is as follows:

2014			2015		Change
	Days	Passengers	Days	Passengers	
January	0	0	0	0	—
February	0	0	4	2,729	—
March	6	4,796	1	325	-36.32%
April	19	6,963	16	5,908	-15.15%
May	19	10,408	21	10,455	+0.45%
June	18	7,754	16	6,156	-20.61%
July	24	10,532	24	10,680	+1.41%
August	31	12,690	31	12,965	+2.17%
September	21	10,650	18	9,109	-14.47%
October	12	4,502	14	4,576	+1.64%
November	0	0	0	0	—
December	12	11,018	12	13,388	+21.51%
Unrecorded		1,515			
Totals	162	80,828	155	76,291	-5.61%

Notes

1. Unrecorded figures are an estimate of passenger numbers when computerised tickets were not issued, e.g. due to system/communication problems at Bodiam. Paper tickets issued on the train are also in this category. For 2015 these tickets have been included in the totals.
2. February: Because of the track upheaval at Rolvenden and the new carriage storage shed, there were no public services in February 2014. The four days shown for 2015 related entirely to Thomas days – there were no other running days.
3. March/April: Out of the total of six days in March 2014, four were Thomas days bringing in 3,784 passengers out of the total of 4,796 for the month. In 2015 there was only one operational day in March and 16 in April including the Easter Steam Up during the first weekend.
4. May numbers include the ever-popular 1940s Weekend.
5. June was a disappointment, with a 20% drop in numbers. There were two fewer running days but the month did include a successful CAMRA Real Ale and Cider Festival when 567 platform tickets helped boost the revenue.
6. July 2014 figures include the three days of Thomas bringing in 2,633 people out of the month's total of 10,532. In 2015 there were two Thomas days when the passenger numbers were 2,731 out of a total of 10,680.
7. August was of course our peak summer month, once again running 31 days and with a small increase in passenger numbers of 2%.

8. September 2014 includes two Thomas days – 1,424 passengers out of the total of 10,650. September 2015 included two days of Thomas – 2,687 passengers out of the month's total of 9,109. Pensioners' Treat was again very popular.
9. October (including 1st November) figures in 2015 were similar to 2014. The numbers include the Folk Festival weekend, and of course the Halloween Fun Week and Fright Night trains.
10. December (including 1st Jan) – In 2014 the total of 11,018 was dominated by nine days of Santa trains out of the 12. In 2014 Santa numbers were 10,713 out of the total of 11,018. In 2015 there were again nine Santa operating days, but the total increased to 12,997 – a substantial piece of good news. There were no other operating days in December but the New Year's Day trains added 391, and are included for comparison with 2014.
11. Travelling Ticket Inspectors sold travel tickets on the trains to the value of £9,763.25 as well as first class upgrades to the value of £9,638.50.
12. The bulk of the on-the-day ticket sales were through Tenterden booking office, with total receipts of £396,402. This figure does not include pre-booked passengers. For comparison, Northiam ticket office issued computerised tickets to the value of £28,441, and Bodiam £53,260.
13. The overall numbers include 865 for the schools' Evacuation Week, 1,409 for charters relating to cruise ships, and 233 for private charters.

Fare Structure

This has been changed for 2016 and the new structure will be operational immediately after February's Thomas Weekend. Last year the structure was simplified; this year the structure is the same but there has been a rethink on the Family ticket which has reduced from £49.50 to £38.00. The special Northiam-Bodiam Family fare is correspondingly reduced from £24.50 to £21.00. This is aimed at encouraging our target market. Adult Rover tickets (now renamed TravelCard) will continue at £17.00, and the equivalent Child TravelCard is retained at £11.50. Fares to intermediate stations are unchanged except for short journeys (one stop) where there is an increase of £1 for return fares and 50p for singles.

Ticket Issue

For a combination of reasons it was difficult to fully staff all three ticket issuing stations in 2015, particularly in the height of summer when we were operating every day. We have had a few new volunteers coming forward but we are still looking for more to join our select band of booking clerks. It's a good job with plenty of customer contact, even dry and warm in the winter months. So, if any of you wish to volunteer, please contact me at the railway.

Internet Bookings

Last year I referred to the trend of more pre-booking of tickets, and this has been

increasing in 2015 – spurred on by our publicity for events and also the discounts available for those purchasing online. This means fewer customers purchase tickets on the day, but the Internet tickets still need to be processed. For this reason we have had two booking clerks on duty at Tenterden at peak times. I expect the new website will accelerate this trend.

2016 Season

You will see from the 2016 timetable there are 'Special' events taking place in most months, including some new ideas that are being tried. Of course the railway would not survive without Thomas and the Santa Specials, but the other events are all very popular and increase the passenger numbers, enhancing our revenue for ticket sales – and not forgetting the shop and catering.



(Bradley Bottomley)

A TRIP ON THE ROTHER

The first of two items this issue about Edwardian tourism in the area around the K&ESR. From the Hastings and St Leonards Observer – Saturday 14th August 1909, as rediscovered by Tom Burnham.

A TRIP ON THE ROTHER.

BY A.M.A.

“Cheap return to Robertsbridge, please!”
“Returning from Rye?” queried the booking clerk.
“Yes, please,” I answered, quite delighted to find there existed a booking clerk who anticipated one’s wishes so promptly. Yet I am afraid that if that query had been put to ninety-nine out of every hundred people, the general idea would have been that the booking clerk aforesaid was a trifle off respecting his mental condition.

Truth to tell, though it does seem like sending a stranger outside the Hastings Pier up to Warrior Square in order to get to the Fishmarket, it is quite possible to take a cheap ticket to Robertsbridge, of which the return half is available from Rye to Hastings. Then for what purpose does this seemingly anomaly exist? Aye, there’s the rub! as Shakespeare says. Well, the fact is that the Railway Companies are discovering that the average Englishman, when he has a day or half-day off, does not want to spend all the time in a stuffy railway carriage on a broiling hot day, and so here and there they combine with other modes of transit on this sphere of ours, and make up what are known by the more or less accurate term of

“CIRCULAR TOURS.”

Certainly we cannot as yet take train to town in the morning, and return by aeroplane in the evening, if fine, but this is only a question of time to all appearances. But what we can do, and what I would have all good folks to know, is this: we can, by arrangements recently made, enjoy the opportunity of a delightful trip on the River Rother without the necessity of specially chartering a boat or launch for the purpose of accomplishing the feat.

Having a desire to test this latest addition to our local attractions, I took the opportunity a few days ago to present myself at the booking office of the railway station a few minutes before two o’clock, and put my request with the words I have already mentioned. It was a delightful afternoon; for two days we had enjoyed a cloudless sky, and although the sun was making his presence felt more sharply

than desired by some individuals, it would have been a very degraded nature indeed that could have complained after his continued absence during the present season. Having secured the coveted pasteboard that should convey me to Robertsbridge, and bring me back from Rye, I jumped “aboard the lugger” – I beg pardon, I mean the train, for the water trip had not commenced yet – and half-an-hour’s journey brought me to Robertsbridge. Why Robertsbridge, I should like to know? Why not Rotherbridge, its ancient and correct name?

At Robertsbridge I had to disembark. Somehow one drops naturally into nautical language over these river excursions. I am afraid I have picked this habit up on innumerable boating trips up this river. Crossing the platform, and boarding the steam liner that runs down the valley, I was just consoling myself with having a few minutes comfort, as the sole occupant of the compartment, when the said compartment was violently besieged by eight juveniles of both sexes, more or less encumbered with parcels of clothing, and a number of bags containing various assortments of fodder, a quantity of which they littered over the floor with lavish hospitality. I was curious to notice that around the neck of each one of them was hung a large label, with different colours according to the locality from which the particular youngster had been consigned. On the label was written the full name and address of the child, the station to which they were to be forwarded, and last of all the name of the individual to whose charge they would be given up on arriving at their destination.

The labelling process appealed very strongly to me, as one that might be generally adopted by railway companies, and secure them a splendid income from the millions of passengers that are always getting into the wrong train, or getting out at the wrong station. Why not let them have an insurance label, and tie it round their necks? Ticket collectors and inspectors would then come along and put them out at the right stations, along with the milk can and other noisy goods.

Immediately the invasion of the juvenile army had ceased, and the remainder had ensconced themselves in other compartments, I asked the invaders if they were members of the

FRESH AIR FUND.

Eight juvenile throats, with a precision that was really wonderful, replied "Yes." I was somewhat amused to notice the great disparity among them in the matter of personal luggage. One little girl had a large wicker travelling trunk, which must have contained several changes of raiment, whilst other members of the same sex had their luggage done up in such a portable fashion that they must have escaped many of the trials and troubles that afflict the ordinary Society lady. In the matter of portability, however, the sterner sex held the field. One diminutive fellow had his little all, which seemed to be comprised solely of one pair of "shorts," wrapped in a portion of a half-penny morning paper, his thoughtful mother having left the ends of the parcel open, no doubt in order to keep the contents well aired. The redeeming feature in this case seemed to me that this particular half-penny effusion was here at last serving some useful honest purpose, which shows that for the worst of us some good may be done in this world. I asked the children if they preferred the country to London. Eight juvenile voices replied as one: "Yes!" There was no hesitation about the answer. For a fortnight these children would romp the hayfields, pluck flowers in the lanes, play with the country children on the village greens, and have a brighter and healthier existence than in the crowded streets and alleys of London City. No wonder that there was no hesitation in their answer. No wonder they loved the country life best.

Arriving at Bodiam, I bade farewell to the juveniles, who had to go on to the next station, as they were to be distributed between Newenden and Beckley parishes. Leaving the little station, I walked down to the River, where I found the motor launch, with Skipper Duffie, resting peacefully close to the bridge. He had brought up about 20 passengers from Rye in the morning, and they were lazily reclining under the shade of the trees, or inspecting the ruins of the grand old Castle. The launch makes the trip from Rye two or three times weekly during the summer, and the arrangements now made by the Railway Company enable anyone from Hastings to catch the early afternoon train to Robertsbridge, and take a

Rother Valley train to Bodiam, have an hour or two exploring the Castle, and then take the trip by motor launch down the River to Rye. As I had nearly two hours to enjoy the beauties of the old Castle, I could not refrain from paying another visit to the interior, and having a camera with me, time passed almost too quickly.

Several visitors were inspecting the ruins, and I was somewhat amused with overhearing an animated conversation between two gentlemen who were re-constructing in their mind's eye the particular apartments of the Castle when it was in all the glory of its splendid youth. There was a difference of opinion as to where the buttery was situated. It is very interesting how words sometimes fail to convey the correct modern meaning. The buttery would no doubt more correctly correspond to the saloon bar of the present day.

The time for starting drawing near, I made my way to the river, and, having a few minutes to spare, I rested on the green bank, and enjoyed

A BASK IN THE SUNSHINE.

Attached to the launch is a good size tow-boat, capable of holding a couple of dozen occupants. By an ingenious contrivance, a portion of the stern has been covered in, and a steward has just enough convenience for a small pantry, wherein he keeps a stove, and by the time the return journey commences he is ready to supply a nice plain tea at an exceedingly moderate price to any that wish to partake of the same. After complimenting the skipper on the completeness of his arrangements, and congratulating him on the improved weather conditions, I took my place on the tow boat and fortified myself for the delights of the river journey by enjoying a good tea on board. With the exception of two others from Hastings, the whole of the passengers were from Rye and district, principally visitors in the neighbourhood, among them being several Americans.

Starting at five o'clock, with a beautiful sun and a sky without a sign of cloud, the river was quite a highway of delight. Summer was here at last, and if one had any doubt about it, they had only to watch the uneasiness of the lazy, meek-faced cattle, whose tails were being slashed to all the points of the compass in their endeavours to keep off the armies of flies that were making up for the time lost through the vagaries of an English summer.



The Dannie Lee – a Rother pleasure craft of the present day

(Hugh Nightingale)

Here and there a boating party, where the costumes of the men vied in brilliance with those of the fairer sex, lent a beautiful touch of colour to the scene. Now and again the wily angler was busy with rod and line, and even if his catch failed to reach his expectations, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his occupation allowed him to feel at peace not only with himself but with all mankind. Haymaking was still being busily proceeded with, although August is with us, but the coarse thick grasses of these marsh districts are always cut later than the lighter crops on the uplands. In about three-quarters of an hour we shot under Newenden Bridge, the most picturesque of the Rother bridges. Tea by this time was finished, and the long narrow table placed down the centre of the boat removed. I have seen Newenden many times, perhaps more than one cares to remember, but I have never seen it look more peaceful than it did as we glided past it the other evening with hardly a breath of air stirring, not a ripple on the stream, and every flower and blade of grass on the banks had its image reflected in the water with a brilliance that vied with the original itself. What a touch the pen of Richard Jefferies would have given to an evening such as this.

On the way down we passed a barge or two, carrying coal up the river, or an empty barge going back to Rye. What a tremendous effort to pull one of these barges along with a towing rope, yet when there is no wind, or what wind there is comes from the wrong quarter, the towing line is called into requisition as the best means of progress under the circumstances. We noticed a bargee drawing his craft along, whilst his mate kept the helm to keep the boat in mid-stream, and it was palpable that the effort was one that called for much physical exertion. I have many a time towed a heavy boat with half-a-dozen able bodied men in it up and down this river, but I think I would see them all in the bottom of the stream before I took the effort on if they wanted a barge thrown in.

From Newenden to Blackwall Bridge you get

THE CREAM OF THE RIVER,

some of the reaches being very pretty indeed. On starting from Bodiam, the skipper had kindly invited me to accompany him in the launch, but wishing to partake of tea, I had taken my place in the tow boat behind, with a promise that I would join him in the launch a little later. At Blackwall

Bridge we stopped to put out two or three passengers, who were evidently staying at Wittersham.

At this point I left the tow boat, and joined the skipper in the launch. The steward had prepared the skipper's tea, which I was asked to take to the launch for him. It consisted of a large plate of bread and butter and cake, and a jug of about half a gallon of tea. In order that he could take this lot aboard comfortably, I took the rudder myself, and sat beside him in the stern, so that he might enjoy his tea in peace. It was a long and arduous struggle, and it lasted almost till we reached the lock at Rye. In the end the skipper won, which only confirms an opinion that I have held for many years, that for sheer downright high-class work in the way of an appetite, give me a tea-totaller. As we neared the portion of the river where the Military Canal joins the Rother, the sun gave us his last rays for the evening, and dipped below the distant scene. Shortly after we reached the lock, and as I assisted several of the ladies to alight from the craft, I heard nothing but admiration of the delightful and peaceful nature of the trip.

The Rother is but a small stream, and from its situation away from crowded towns, with their accompanying hordes of noisy dwellers, it will no doubt remain for a long time the quiet, peaceful stream it has been for centuries. I write of the river under its best conditions and in its best behaviour. I am not unmindful of the fact that I have been up the river at times when thunder, lightning and rain have been in far greater evidence than sunshine and fair weather. Quite recently I enjoyed a most excellent dinner with several good-hearted friends in a boat moored under Blackwall Bridge, all the time the elements were anything but what is termed propitious. Rain descended in a perfect deluge, the artillery of heaven roared out their thunders immediately overhead, but nothing could shake the equanimity of the little lot on board who were "enjoying" a day up the river, and if any slight impatience whatever was shown, it was only when some peal of thunder louder and longer than the rest kept some member of the party waiting a second or two till he could ask his next door neighbour to pass the mint sauce.

I walked from the lock into Rye with a gentleman who was staying in that town. He was delighted with the trip he had taken up and down the river.

Along the Military-road we passed two or three lady artists, working well into the twilight, and as one of them stood up, with her head poised well back, gazing wistfully at the study on the easel before her, she made an even more

BEAUTIFUL PICTURE

than the excellent sketch she was working on. Walking fairly briskly, I got to Rye Station in time to catch the small steam car train which leaves a few minutes after eight. The little engine was steaming and snorting with all the importance of an express engine that was just starting on a hundred-and-fifty-mile non-stop run. A porter accosted me and asked for my passport. I then remembered that half of my coveted pasteboard was still in my possession. I handed it to him for inspection. He evidently took quite a fancy to it, for he placed it between a weapon he held in his hand, and cut a piece clean out of it to keep as a souvenir.

The steam car, tired of waiting, at length decided to start. Opposite me sat a young lady and gentleman, evidently visitors from Hastings, who had been over to see Rye. The young gentleman, thinking the train did not stop till it reached Hastings, was told by the young lady that we should stop at Winkle-sea. Strange, is it not, that so many people coming to stay at the seaside will mix up the names of the coast towns with the denizens of the ocean. At Snailham Halt I noticed one or two old agriculturalists, having borne the heat and burden of the day, were spending the cool of the evening by sitting on the Halt gates to see the trains stop at the Halt or pass through, as the case might be. The marsh mists slowly began to rise, the distant outline of the hills grew fainter and fainter, and presently the lights of the town commenced to show themselves, gathering in number at every moment. A few minutes more, and I found myself on the station platform at Hastings, having returned from Robertsbridge by way of Rye.

My thoughts ran back over some of the pleasures of the delightful trip down the little river, but I could not forget the unanimity of the reply of the youngsters I met in the train between Robertsbridge and Bodiam. They had just come from London, hot, weary, but happy. I had asked them which they loved best, the city or the country. Their eight little tongues had replied as one, "the country." Poor little souls, they were quite right.

Lyn Owen's Collection

The photographs featured on the following pages form a very small part of the photographic output amassed over several years by Lyn Owen. There are over 60,000 images in the collection, although not all of them are railway photos, for Lyn had a wide variety of interests. However the vast majority of the images are railway related, reflecting Lyn's passion for steam trains and, of course, photography.

Lyn would go anywhere to find steam working, and must have spent most of his leisure hours in doing so. The early albums are mostly British based, but after the withdrawal of steam from British Railways, and the subsequent banning of steam from the main line, he turned his attention to those countries where steam still operated – firstly in Europe, and then worldwide. He also started to visit the British preserved railways which were starting to appear. These pictures of the early days at Rolvenden date from the summer of 1968, six

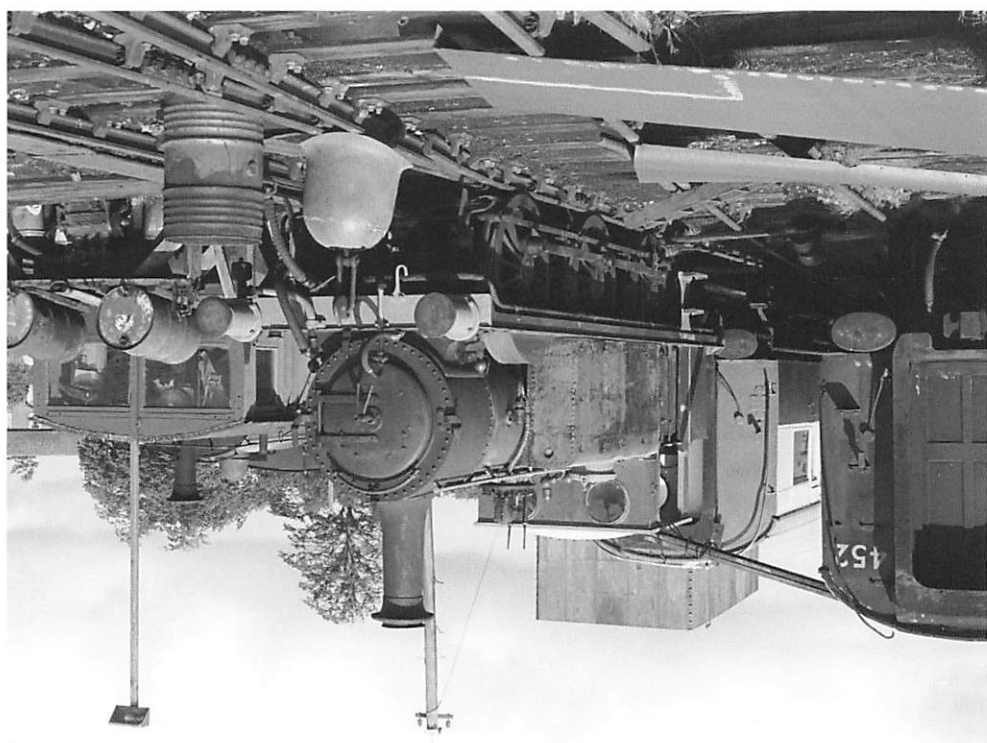
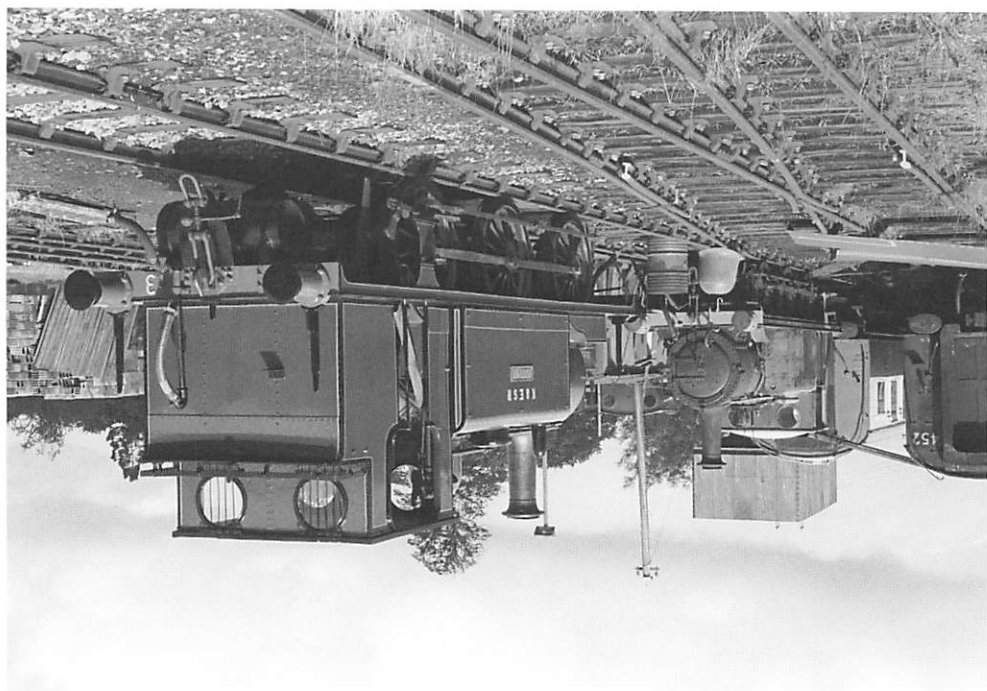
years before public services began, except for the fifth photo which was taken in 1971.

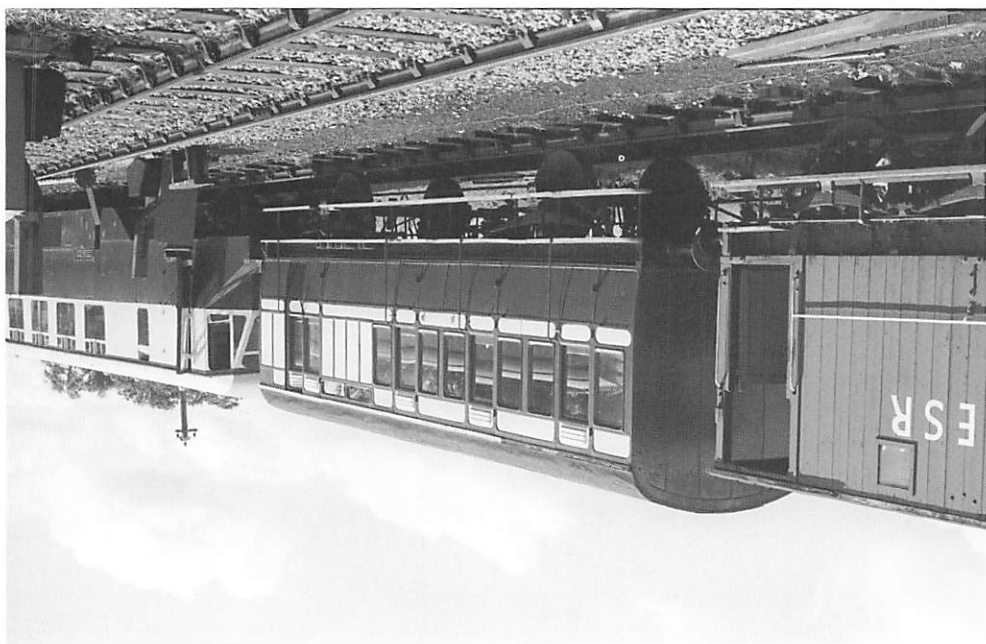
Sadly Lyn died a few years ago, leaving his photographs in the hands of his family. They decided to digitise the collection – which, as you will readily imagine, is a daunting task. Initially his brother David and a cousin started the work, which progressed slowly. About three years ago David asked a local publican, who was a friend of Lyn's, if he knew anybody who was interested in steam railways and might be interested in helping out with the project. The landlord arranged a meeting between David and me, at which it was agreed that I would take on a share of the digitising work. The rest, as they say, is history.

All the images shown are copyright Lyn Owen, and appear in the *Terrier* by kind permission of his family.

Graham Tubb







By Light Railway to the Castle

Excursion traffic to Bodiam Castle featured large in the old Kent & East Sussex Railway company's publicity, and a photograph of the castle often used to appear on the annual timetable poster. Since the K&ESR reopened to Bodiam in 2000, many of our visitors combine a visit to the Castle – now in the care of the National Trust – with a journey on our heritage railway, and there is every reason to expect that it will be an important destination for passengers once the Rother Valley Railway succeeds in re-establishing the link to the main line at Robertsbridge Junction.

Bodiam Castle was a popular destination for tourists long before it was served by rail. In brief, the castle was built by Sir Edward Dalyngrigge in the 1380s during the Hundred Years War, with a licence from King Richard II. It was positioned at the highest point to which ships could navigate the River Rother at that time, in order to guard against attacks by the French. However by the time it was completed England had regained control of the English Channel, and the castle was never besieged by foreign invaders.

The interior of the castle was gutted by Parliamentary forces during the Civil War and later, in 1723, its ruins were bought by Sir Thomas Webster, who also acquired Battle Abbey and Robertsbridge Priory. The castle eventually came down to his descendant, Sir Godfrey Webster, who seems to have been a classic Regency spendthrift and gambler.

The appreciation of Bodiam Castle's historic value might be said to date from 18th September 1828, when John Fuller (1757–1834) purchased it at auction with 24 acres of adjoining land for 3,000 guineas (£3,150) from Sir Godfrey, to save it from being demolished for its building stone. Although John Fuller was known as 'Mad Jack' in his day, it seems to us now that he showed more sense and foresight than many of his contemporaries. During his ownership he provided folding oak gates for the front entrance and rebuilt the postern tower on the south side.

After his death the castle passed to other members of the Fuller family before being sold in 1864 to George Cubitt, the first Lord Ashcombe, who was the son of the builder and property developer Thomas Cubitt. Although George Cubitt carried out further restoration work, the moat had been allowed to become silted up and the ruins were still overgrown with ivy – a feature which was highly regarded by lovers of the picturesque at that period.

In 1916 the castle was purchased by Earl Curzon of Kedleston (George Nathaniel Curzon) who

initiated a programme of archaeological research and comprehensive restoration work, including dredging the moat. He left it to the National Trust on his death in 1925, and it has remained in its care ever since.

The artist J.M.W. Turner sketched at Bodiam in 1810, having been commissioned by John Fuller to paint a series of East Sussex landscapes. The castle soon became a favourite subject for engravings and watercolours, and eventually for photography and filming.

Bodiam Castle was already a destination for outings in the first half of the 19th century and, according to a guidebook by William Ranger, which was "sold by the booksellers in Rye, Hastings, St Leonards, and Battle; and also by the keeper of the castle", and which had a second edition in 1855:

"The whole of this stately ruin is being overrun with ivy, which, while it gives a very picturesque appearance, prevents the curious visitor from seeing so much of the castle as he might desire. The bass-court is covered with a beautiful green sward – with the exception of a gravel walk through from the entrance to the sally port – on which, during the summer months, great numbers of persons, visiting the castle, find recreation in dancing, drop handkerchief, etc. It is due to the proprietor of this ancient place to say that, through his kindness, it is at all times accessible to visitors without charge; but of course, it is expected that the keeper shall not be forgotten. At the top of the castle meadow, directly opposite to the entrance gate, a good echo is to be obtained, which affords great amusement to the numerous visitors, and is worthy of notice as the most perfect echo known in this neighbourhood."

The opening of the South Eastern Railway from Tunbridge Wells to Robertsbridge in 1851 and on to Hastings in 1852 must have made visiting the castle considerably easier, although curiously

*In the setting of the Valley
(via Tom Burnham)*



enough Bodiam is not mentioned in George Measom's *Official illustrated guide to the South Eastern Railway and branches*, published in 1858. A guidebook of the late 1890s describes the route to the castle from Robertsbridge station (three miles by the direct footpath along the river or four and a half miles by road).

Besides viewing the remains, Victorian visitors could play cricket or tennis, hire rowing boats on the Rother or even go shooting. They were also prone to carve their initials on the stonework of the castle, in spite of notices prohibiting this practice. To provide the increasing number of

visitors with refreshment, the Castle Inn was built in about 1885, replacing a former inn, the Red Lion, which was then demolished.

By the late 19th century the castle was no longer accessible without charge. Tickets could be obtained at the school – sixpence, except on Fridays, when the charge was one shilling. A little later the key was obtained from the Castle Inn, still at a charge of sixpence.

When the Rother Valley (Light) Railway company was incorporated in 1897, the prospectus issued by the promoters regarded Bodiam Castle as having great traffic potential.



"A large excursion traffic may also be expected on the line during the summer months from Hastings, Tunbridge Wells and the South Coast towns to Bodiam Castle, which is a fine old Norman ruin, and a favourite object of interest to excursionists from the neighbouring towns. As many as six hundred people frequently visit this castle in one day. At present the visitors are conveyed to the castle in brakes, which drive out from Hastings and St Leonards, the charge for the journey being 4s 6d per head. As the Company, in conjunction with the South

Eastern Railway, will be able to convey visitors for nearly one-half of this cost, there is no doubt that a very large portion of this traffic will fall to this Company, and in consequence of the decrease in cost a considerable increase in the number of visitors may also be confidently anticipated."

The Rother Valley Railway opened in 1900, and organisers of outings were quick to combine a visit to the picturesque old ruins with the novelty of a ride on the new light railway. This article gives details from local press reports of several of these excursions to Bodiam Castle in the line's early days.

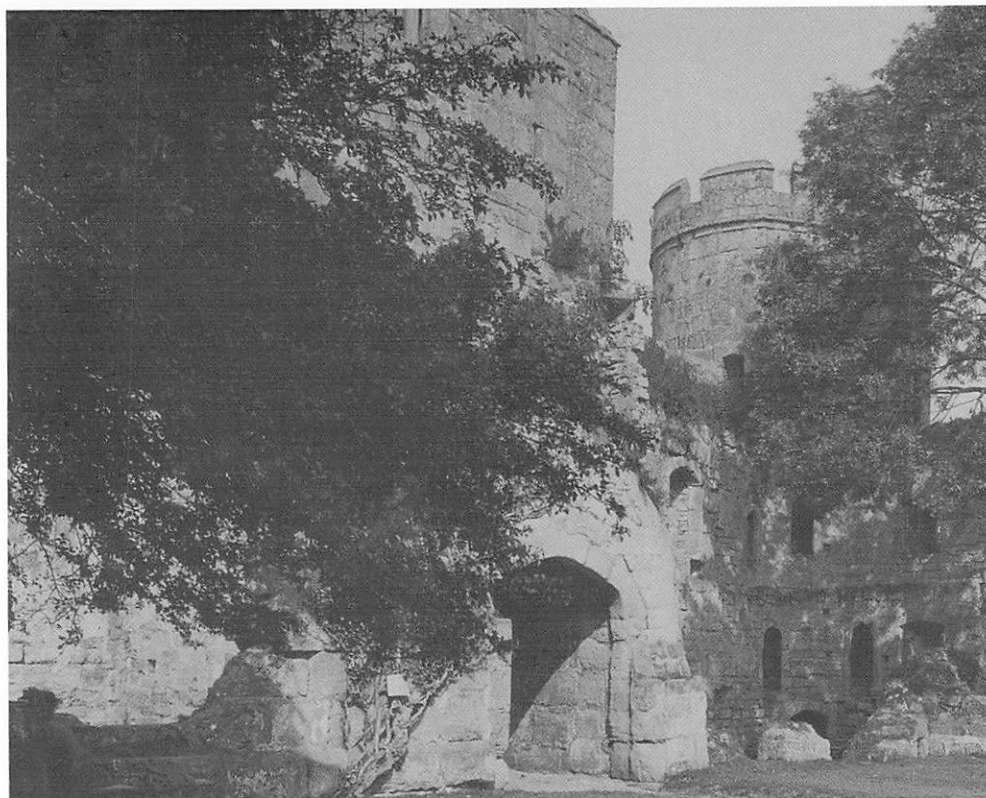
On Wednesday 4th July 1900 about 150 boys of Highbury House School in Hastings, a private boarding school, visited Bodiam Castle with their schoolmasters. Leaving Hastings by train at about 10.30, they changed to the Rother Valley Railway at Robertsbridge. Incidentally, a party of this size must have severely taxed the available rolling stock of the RVR, which at that time comprised only the original six four-wheeled saloons built by Hurst Nelson.

The correspondent noted that the railway “appears to be much used during the summer months for trips up the Marshes to Tenterden”. Arriving at the Castle Hotel in Bodiam, “the lads were soon arrayed at the long tables in the dining hall of the hotel”, where “after Grace a bountiful repast, well served by the servant maids of Highbury House, soon disappeared.” The boys then played cricket or scrambled over the ruins, while the older boys were allowed to hire boats and row on the Rother. After tea in the hotel’s dining hall, the party eventually left for the return journey by RVR at about 8pm to

Robertsbridge, “where the South Eastern system took up the run for home” – a suitably sporting metaphor.

Twenty-two members of the Tunbridge Wells Amateur Photographic Society had an outing to Bodiam on a Saturday in early July 1900, travelling by the 1.26pm train. Arriving at Robertsbridge they found there was a little while to wait, and occupied themselves by a walk round the village, but “soon the party were journeying on the new Light Railway, and much to their amusement found the tickets were issued on the journey, the same as on a tramcar, by the guard, a bell punch perforating the station as marked on the ticket.” A short walk brought the party to the “magnificent old pile”. “Cameras were soon unshipped and work commenced, the weather being very favourable.”

In 1900, even amateur photography was not something to be undertaken lightly. The moat “was covered with white and yellow water lilies, which enticed some of the members to venture



Detail of the entrance, from the interior

(via Tom Burnham)

out in the boat and secure some specimens. Tea was provided by mine host of the Castle Hotel, and the friendly cup of bohea was most refreshing before the short walk to the station, the light railway again conveying the party to Robertsbridge, where the Hastings train brought the reserved carriage kindly provided for them by Mr Frost of the Tunbridge Wells SER station, all delighted with the excursion."

The Hastings & St Leonards Natural History Society had their summer excursion to Bodiam on Wednesday 20th July, when the weather was again fine. Nineteen members cycled, 22 ladies and gentlemen travelled in two pair-horse wagonettes provided by Mr Steers and about a dozen, who were unable to start as early as the others, travelled by train, changing to the RVR at Robertsbridge. After wandering round the ruins and scrambling up some of the towers "a very acceptable tea was partaken of". After listening to a paper on the history of the "noble pile", the group was photographed and then began their homeward journeys.

On August Bank Holiday Monday the choir of the Wellington Square Baptist Chapel in Hastings, a party of about 30, travelled to Bodiam via Robertsbridge and the RVR. They had their luncheon at the castle and their tea at the Castle Inn, where they had a large room for their use. On their return journey a fast train from London was stopped specially at Robertsbridge for them, so that they were able to return to Hastings in good time.

The Castle Inn benefited from the influx of visitors by the light railway, and underwent some improvements. Fred Haines became the landlord in 1907; he had formerly been the bandmaster of the First Life Guards and had conducted their band at various state occasions. However he left Bodiam in 1911 for New South Wales, where he resumed a successful musical career.

The train did not entirely supplant earlier forms of conveyance, and in 1908 the 'Royal Sovereign' horse-drawn coach was running from Hastings to Bodiam every Thursday in the summer season, carrying about 20 passengers, still at a fare of 4s 6d. Starting from Dick Russell's booking office on the sea-front, it would pick up pre-booked passengers at their hotels or boarding houses. After sharing the road with electric tramcars as far as Silverhill, the route lay through Sedlescombe and Staple Cross to the Castle Inn at Bodiam. Other destinations were also served by the 'Royal Sovereign' – for example, Battle on Tuesdays.

The Hastings & St Leonards Natural History Society paid another visit to Bodiam in July 1909, this time in conjunction with the Tunbridge Wells Natural History & Philosophical Society. The Hastings party left by train at about 2pm for Robertsbridge, where they met the group from Tunbridge Wells and continued by train to Bodiam. The combined party was photographed inside the walls of the castle before taking tea at the Castle Inn. After listening to a paper on the history of the castle and a number of speeches, some of the party returned on the 5.40pm train from Bodiam station. Others visited the church and 30 or 40 walked back along the valley to Robertsbridge, pausing at Salehurst for refreshments in the rectory garden.

In less than a decade the light railway had become the transport of choice for visitors to Bodiam Castle, and horse-drawn carriages were now a holiday novelty. According to L.J. Hodson, writing in 1914 in *A short history of the parish of Salehurst (Sussex)*, the light railway was "much utilised by visitors to Bodiam, Northiam, Tenterden, and the numerous other picturesque and interesting places which the opening of the line has made far more readily accessible than was formerly the case".

In another ten years, after the First World War, the situation had reversed. The Kent & East Sussex Railway had started to be looked upon as an antiquarian relic in its own right, while in the season the sea-front at Hastings was lined with motor coaches and charabancs offering excursions to holidaymakers – Bodiam Castle featuring as a popular destination. Rambler Coaches of St Leonards, which celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2014, began operations with a trip from Hastings to Bodiam Castle on Good Friday, 18th April 1924.

The 61 years since the closure of the K&ESR by British Railways have seen Bodiam Castle continue to be one of the most popular tourist destinations in South East England, with nearly 169,000 visitors in 2014, a 5% increase over ten years earlier. As we look forward to the eventual restoration of the railway from Robertsbridge to Bodiam, we can only speculate as to how the castle's visitors will arrive in the coming decades.

Details of the excursions are from the *Hastings & St Leonards Observer* and the *Kent & Sussex Courier*, accessed online via the British Newspaper Archive.

Tom Burnham

PERMANENT WAY AWARDS

For more than 30 years I have been giving presentations about our Railway and related Col. Stephens lines to all manner of groups and societies (see Terrier No.54, Spring 1991), and very often someone attending will grab my attention in the interval or afterwards and reminisce about something or someone connected with the railway in question.

A result of this is illustrated here by the two photographs of gangers on the line and their awards, pictured on the following two pages. These were shown to me many years ago after one such talk in, I think, Robertsbridge or Hastings. I recall it was a lady who brought them to my attention, and I think she was related to one of the gangers – she may even have been a wife or daughter of one of them.

The awards were made to Lengthman C.A. Wood of Gang 5/190, the first of them being dated 1950. It was recorded on 3rd July 1951 by a presentation to the gang on the loop line just outside Robertsbridge station – interestingly the exact location that has recently been re-laid as part of the Rother Valley Railway!

The same gang was awarded a similar certificate the following year, 1951, and this time the presentation took place at Wittersham Road on 2nd April 1952, exactly 52 years after the line was opened to passengers (and two years before closure to passengers!)

Many of the gang appear in both photos. It



Wittersham Road, 2nd April 1952 (Doug Lindsay collection)

would seem that the same person is handing the certificate to 'R. French', and the trilby-hatted 'official' (possibly a District or Civil Engineer's assistant) also appears in both shots. One can only assume that R. French was the man in charge of the gang and that C.A. Wood, the Lengthman, was under him. I am not sure of the various terms of hierarchy in a permanent way gang! Noticeable is the fact that the later (1952) shot shows them in more seasonal 'winter wear' than the earlier one taken in July at Robertsbridge, where most are in shirtsleeves.

I managed to ascertain at the time the names of many of the gang in each photo and perhaps someone may read this and be able to enlarge upon the exploits of the PW gangs in BR days, or even before in independent days. Maybe some members of the gang were formerly K&ESR staff prior to nationalisation?

It is possible that each member of the gang received a certificate and those illustrated belonged to C.A. (Charlie) Wood. Were all members of such a gang known as 'Lengthmen'? In that case one can understand that the photographed recipient was R. French, probably the leading ganger.

It is always a pleasure to obtain something related to our line's history, and these photos showing these presentations – now well over 60 years ago – are a reminder of the real human side of our railway.



Robertsbridge, 3rd July 1951

(Doug Lindsay collection)

Doug Lindsay



SOUTHERN REGION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

C.A. WOOD

WAS A LENGTHMAN

IN GANG No. 5/190

ROBERTSBRIDGE

WHICH WAS AWARDED THE
PRIZE FOR HIGH STANDARD

OF PERMANENT WAY
MAINTENANCE ON THE
CLASS D LINES OF THE

EASTERN
DISTRICT IN 1950

DISTRICT ENGINEER

CIVIL ENGINEER



SOUTHERN REGION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
LENGTHMAN C.A.WOOD.
WAS A MEMBER OF
GANG 5/190
WHICH WAS AWARDED THE
PRIZE FOR HIGH STANDARD
OF PERMANENT WAY
MAINTENANCE ON THE
CLASS D LINES OF THE
ASHFORD
DISTRICT IN 1951

DISTRICT ENGINEER

CIVIL ENGINEER

Notes for contributors

With the coming of the electronic age our printers are set up to receive largely digital text, and this is an advantage to us as it keeps the cost down. This is increasingly important, so please try to follow the guidelines set out below.

Content

The *Tenterden Terrier* will continue to major on K&ESR news, features on aspects of the current K&ESR, and historical articles on Colonel Stephens' and other light railways, particularly those of the South East.

There is only one criterion here, and that is pre-digital: any written or photographic contribution must be interesting to the reader, not just to the writer. It should only exceed 2,500 words if you trust the Editor to do his worst to shorten it – or put in a special plea for a two-parter.

Text

Copy should be sent in electronic form in word-processor format (Word is best). No need to worry about the typeface or size, but please keep it simple and do not include page numbers. Sending by e-mail attachment is the simplest method, but you can send by CD, if carefully packed. Floppy discs are now obsolete.

Typewritten copy can be scanned to extract the words for printing, so can be accepted; but the Editor's task will be easier if you ask a friend to turn it into digital form. Please do not embed photos within text – submit photos separately.

Photos

Prints, negatives and transparencies can always be accepted, but generally speaking negatives and transparencies need to be of particular interest or quality to justify the necessary work.

For news and current events digital is preferred, especially if the picture is as least as good as more traditional formats. Unless used to accompany an article, a low-resolution jpeg copy of the original is initially requested. Typically the longest dimension should be no greater than 900 pixels, or resized as a copy for the web. We will request a full-size image if for possible future use, but please bear in mind that the image/file needs to be typically suitable for cropping to a minimum of 1800 pixels (longest dimension) for A6/half a page or 2700 pixels for A5/full page.

We can also accept pictures saved to DVD-R or CD-R.

Our request for a full-sized image does not guarantee inclusion in the next or any future edition of the *Tenterden Terrier*.

The Kent & East Sussex Railway Company Limited

Registered Charity 262481

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

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