

# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 14

Winter 1977



Journal of the Tenterden Railway Company Limited  
Proprietor of the Kent & East Sussex Railway

# The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

*(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)*

Registered Charity 262481

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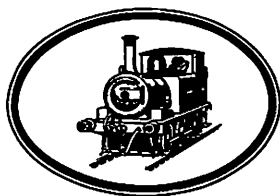
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# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 14

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## Contents

- 3 Editorial
- 4-6 Operating Notes
- 7 The Detling Extension
- 9 Keeping the passengers moving
- 11-12 The Last Day, Part 2
- 13-15 Steam Up — 1977
- 16-17 Letters to the Editor
- 19-22 Oh, Mr. Porter!
- 23-25 The Hesperus Quads
- 26-27 From Our Ticket Collection
- 29 Boats on Newmill Channel

## Editorial

### DINNER IN THE DINER

The astonishing success of the "Wine & Dine" trains has been the major story of 1977; trains originally advertised to cater for 40 diners have, on a number of occasions, had to be doubled in length to meet the demand and our catering staff have served as many as 80 hot dinners in one sitting — no mean achievement in view of the limited facilities in a pullman kitchen. What then, is the secret of their success? Perhaps it is that in these days of plastic cups and even more plastic food provided by our rather larger competitor, the traveller finds it a unique experience to prop up a traditional bar and then sample traditional fare on a moving train, served in the traditional way. Soon we shall be moving into the season of Christmas dinners and then . . . perhaps we should resurrect that other long lost British Institution, cucumber sandwiches and the railway "Afternoon Tea"!

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The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

## FRONT COVER

### DOUBLE HEADING ON TENTERDEN BANK

*Locomotives Nos 23 (Holman F. Stephens) and 10 (Sutton) haul a 5 coach train near to the wet cutting, Tenterden Bank on 18 September 1977 [Brian Stephenson]*

\*\*\*\*\*

The Membership Secretaries would like to remind all members to advise them at the earliest possible opportunity of any change of address. Apparently, a great deal of mail is returned to the station marked "gone away".

# Operating Notes

Compiled by Mark Yonge

*These notes were current at 30th September 1977*

## Locomotives

The latest addition to our locomotive fleet is Army Hunslet Austerity No. 197 "Sapper", which was moved from the Central Ordnance Depot, Bicester, in September. Works number 3797 was built in the same batch as K.&E.S.R. Nos 23 and 24 and worked at various depots, but has been in store for a few years. It has recently been transferred from No. 1 Railway Group, Royal Corps of Transport to the Junior Leaders Regiment R.E. at Dover who have kindly agreed to place it on the Railway so that it may remain in active service rather than becoming a static exhibit. This strengthens our ties with the Junior Leaders Regiment, whose members pay regular visits to the line to further their trade training. Although the locomotive is vacuum fitted, it will require a complete re-tube and some work on the big ends and eccentrics before being returned to service.

As far as the other locomotives are concerned, No. 3 (Bodiam), now beginning to show her antiquity, was due to take part in the Steam Weekend, but owing to a wasted tube flange plate, had to be withdrawn. Remedial work may necessitate removing the boiler, in which case an early return to service is unlikely. No. 10 (Sutton) has performed well this season and the Westinghouse air pump has been overhauled. Work progresses on No. 11 (Pride of Sussex) in tapping out the stay holes and fitting studs and boiler mountings. No. 17 (Arthur) is having its side rod bushes built up prior to refitting and should be ready for service next year. No. 19 (Norwegian) requires extensive work and until more helpers can be found, is unlikely to see an early return to service. Austeries Nos 23 (Holman F. Stephens) and 24 have proved reliable over the summer period and have operated the bulk of the services. On bank holidays, 5 coach trains have been hauled with ease. No. 26, which was in service over the steam weekend, is in a good state of repair and one or two minor jobs that need doing will be carried out this winter. The G.W.R. railcar underwent trials in September following an overhaul, but although mechanically sound, cannot be returned to service until bodywork repairs have been carried out. The department has recently been reorganised under new management and is looking for new members with skills as boilermakers, fitters and mechanics.

This is an interesting and satisfying weekend occupation and we would like to hear from you if you feel that you can assist. **Bob Forsyth**

## Carriage & Wagon

The activities of the department are the subject of a full length feature article in this issue and are therefore omitted from the operating notes, to avoid duplication.

## Permanent Way

The department has been hampered by a shortage of labour which resulted in speed restrictions being placed on the operating section during the summer months where track packing has been required. However, sleeper replacement and packing has been proceeding on a piecemeal basis. Once passenger services have ceased for the winter months, priority will be given to the track realignment at Wittersham Road station and this will also include the addition of an engineer's siding which is part of a long term plan for the establishment of a civil engineer's depot there. Once the track at Wittersham has been brought up to the required standard, it is intended to concentrate efforts on Newmill Bridge, where additional ballast is required following settlement of the approach banks. General rebalasting will be kept to a minimum because of the high cost, but two areas that will be tackled soon are those between Cranbrook Road and Rolvenden and a section near to Pope's Cottage permanent way hut. The job creation staff have laid over a quarter of a mile of concrete sleepered track panels and are progressing steadily on the relaying programme. One problem that has to be overcome is the ruts caused by the passage of lorries over the formation during the removal of the old track materials. **Philip Rimmer**

## Clearance

The department reached the summit of Wittersham Bank during August and is now well on the way down the other side towards Northiam. This traditional stretch of jungle now has a very pleasing landscaped effect and will considerably enhance the appearance of Wittersham Road station. The north side of Wittersham station has been cleared of undergrowth and trees in readiness for the laying of a land drain and the infilling of a ditch, 14 feet in width and this amount of



space will be added to the area of the car park and yard. During January and February, when train services are suspended, work will be concentrated on the operational section, particularly between Rolvenden and Pope's Cottage, where unwanted bush and tree growth has become something of a problem. Spraying took place during June in order to kill patches of mares tail, which is a perennially troublesome weed and the opportunity was taken to spray unwanted trackside bramble growth with brushwood killer.

**John Miller**

### **Signals & Telecommunications**

The Tenterden Town up home signals are now carried on a 24' bracket signal rebuilt from a similar Southern Railway structure, enabling the new post to give improved sighting when running into either the platform or the loop line.

Work is now well under way on rebuilding the signal box for Wittersham Road Station. Fortunately most timbers appear to be sound, the only necessary work being the recutting of joints, although at present it seems that one pine member measuring 12" x 9" and 16' long will have to be completely replaced.

The nature of the signalling at Wittersham Road is now under discussion, the main consideration being in producing an economical installation which allows for all foreseeable traffic movements and at the same time does not restrict access to the engineer's siding.

To eliminate a lengthy rod run up to the up loop points which lie at a level considerably below that of the box, a Westinghouse type "M" point machine has been purchased from British Rail.

The telecommunications section continues to extend the galvanised line wire towards Northiam whilst maintenance on the operating section continues as normal.

There are vacancies in this department and anybody who is interested is invited to contact Nick Patching at Tenterden or on Maidstone 55929.

**Nicholas Patching**

### **Commercial**

The Railway has had a busy summer season, culminating in another successful "Steam Weekend" at the end of September, although overall numbers have not recovered fully from the fall experienced earlier this year. For the first time, we operated for 16 consecutive days at the

beginning of August and as the results were encouraging it is planned to run every day in August 1978, thus making the line attractive to coach operators. The popularity of the "Wine & Dine" trains continues unabated and with very little advertising the 20 trains run this year have been fully booked, often weeks in advance. To cope with demand an extra coach has had to be attached to five of these trains, making eighty seats altogether. This year's target of 1000 tickets has been exceeded and for 1978 it is planned to run 80 seat trains as a regular feature. With this in mind, the second Maunsell B.S.O. is being renovated and will be "turned round" so that the brake compartment does not appear in the middle of the train. Preparations are well in hand for the usual Xmas activities; "Santa Specials" will run in December and on 10th and 17th December, Xmas luncheon trains will depart at 12.00 noon. Tickets for the luncheon trains at £7, inclusive of wine, are available from the Commercial Manager.

**Donald Wilson**

### **Appointments & Acknowledgements**

Once again this year, the tables on the wine & dine trains have been beautifully decorated with floral arrangements, which added considerably to the attractiveness of this highly successful part of the Railway's operations. We are most grateful to Mrs Benbow and her many helpers who gave their time, flowers and skill every Saturday throughout the season.

The Directors would like to welcome the following people to their new appointments:

**Robert Forsythe** — Mechanical Department Manager

**Michael James** — Job Creation Programme Manager.

### **News from Affiliated Groups**

**Ashford.** This recently formed Group has now established a management committee, with the following officials: Eric Graves (Chairman and Treasurer), Roger Hughes (Programmes), Derek Drage (Projects), Bob May (Research), Edith May (Canteen). The programme for 1978 is now virtually complete and the next major event will be the Model Railway Exhibition, to be held at the Centrepiece, Bank Street, Ashford, on Saturday 28th January 1978. All K.&E.S.R. members are welcome at the meetings which are held at the Centrepiece on the third Wednesday in each month at 7.30pm.

**Eric Graves**

**Maidstone Extension.** Thanks to a member's donation of a caravan with awnings at the back and front, the sales and railway Bric-a-Brac stand both enjoyed covered accommodation at the Kent County Agricultural Show. Gross receipts from donations and sales realised well over £400 and, in addition, about 2000 leaflets were distributed. At the invitation of Radio Medway, live interviews were broadcast by "Marcia's" engine crew, George Wright and David Brailsford and Marcia joined in when the interviewer was driven along the track over several detonators.

The window display was in the Canterbury branch of the Bradford and Bingley Building Society for most of August and two displays appeared simultaneously at the Hastings & St. Leonards branches of the Hastings & Thanet Building Society for the first three weeks of September. These displays featured the Steam Weekend and undoubtedly helped to draw the crowds as witnessed by the winners of the raffle which featured several people from the area, including the first prize.

The displays are now at other branches of the same building society in St. Leonards and Rye.

Although the group has not undertaken a major fund raising scheme this year, the very successful Model Railway Exhibition will be repeated in March next year and there is the possibility of a rail tour next April.

It has been decided to keep one pump trolley for use at fetes and similar functions in 1978 and the film and slide meetings held on the last Thursday

of each month at the Methodist Youth Centre, Brewer Street, Maidstone, are still proving to be very popular.

**Jack Fox**

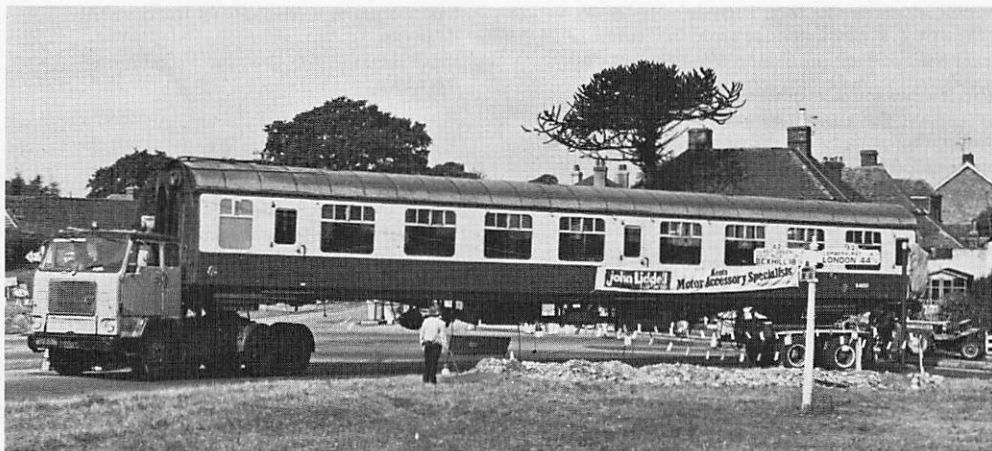
**Surrey.** The group reports a successful year despite the poor weather which led, on occasions, to problems particularly with traction engine events. 16 events were covered and gross takings are expected to be in excess of £1000. Arrangements in hand for next season will once again include the popular Model Railway Exhibition at the Holy Trinity Halls, Guildford, on 11th March. Before that date the Group will have attended the Model Railway Exhibition at Farnham on 22nd October and the Great Western Society Model Railway Exhibition at Reading on 12th November.

**Richard Halton**

*(Although small in numbers, the Surrey Group has consistently raised large annual sums of money for the Railway from its many activities. So full is their calendar that the members rarely have a chance to visit the Railway to see the results of their efforts. Their dedication is very much appreciated — Ed.)*

**Tunbridge Wells (T.W.A.G.).** The Group attended no less than five events in August/September, as far widespread as Peterborough and Crowborough, raising nearly £400 for Company funds. Apart from several more exhibitions this autumn, the main fund raising event will be a 14 mile sponsored walk from Wittersham Road to Junction Road and back along the track bed. A full programme of meetings is planned for the winter.

**Robert Searle**



*"En Route" for Rolvenden. BR Mark 1 Coach No. S4037 passing through Flimwell on 26 July 1977*

*[Donald H. Wilson]*



# The Detling Extension

Simon Green describes how we took the Railway to the Kent County Show in 1977

It all started at a meeting of the Maidstone Extension Committee. During discussion over representation at the County Show and how we might improve on the previous year, when locomotive No. 12 "Marcia" proved to be a popular exhibit. I happened to remark that if model railways could be taken to village fetes, it might be appropriate to take a full size railway to the County Show at Detling. The idea snowballed; the County Show committee were enthusiastic and after consultation offered us the largest "stand" ever to be staged at the show — at no charge. The Manpower Services Commission gave their blessing to sending a number of J.C.P. Employees to the show; our suppliers were most generous with their support, donating transport and craneage either free or at minimal charge. By the time the three day show opened on 14th July, an enormous amount of material had been moved to Detling showground, five miles north of Maidstone. This included "Marcia", flat waggons No's 115 and 116 (specially painted for the event), Wickham trolley No. 4, Wickham flat and air compressor, two pump trollies, seven pre-assembled panels of 75 lb flat bottom track with concrete sleepers and sufficient 95 lb bullhead rail, chairs, sleepers, fishplates, etc., to lay 180 feet of track. Kent County Council lent

us sufficient snow fencing to surround the entire site. Over the three days "Marcia" ran up and down the 250 foot stretch of the flat bottom track, shunting the two wagons and at other times, simmering between two temporary sleeper platforms so that the public could examine the footplate. In addition to watching tracklaying demonstrations by J.C.P. teams, the public were able to ride up and down the bullhead track on the pump trolley recently restored by the Maidstone Extension and the "Skillcentre" at Gillingham. Over 1600 people paid 5p each for the pleasure of being Buster Keaton for a few minutes. The Maidstone Extension had a sales and publicity stand and profits from this and the pump trolley just covered the few unavoidable costs of the operation. Radio Medway broadcast three separate interviews with participants in the display. A great deal of hard work went into planning and preparing for the event which is another "first" for the Kent & East Sussex Railway, but the effort seems to have been well worth while in terms of publicity and good will.

*We would like to thank all our suppliers, members and supporters who generously gave their services or time to make the event such a success.*



[Donald H. Wilson]

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# Keeping the Passengers Moving

Paul Ramsden outlines the work and the objectives of the Carriage and Wagon Department

1977 has been a poor year for weather and hence a difficult year for Carriage & Wagon, for at present, most of the Department's work has to be carried out in the open. Nevertheless, 1977 has been a year in which more has been achieved than in any since the Railway reopened and the planned work programme for the remainder of 1977 and 1978 is equally ambitious.

At the beginning of the year it was apparent that after 3-years of continuous service, a major programme of restoration work would be necessary on the existing Maunsell rolling stock if it were to remain in service at all after 1977. In addition, the pullman car "Barbara" used on the highly successful "Wine & Dine" trains was in need of external renovation and the 2 "birdcage" coaches could not be placed in service as alternative vehicles until the roofs had been re-canvased, the interiors and exteriors refurbished. The reconstruction of the track and station at the Wittersham end of the line and beyond meant that "goods" vehicles for carrying materials would also require regular maintenance.

The complete restoration of Maunsell B.S.O. coach No. 54, started last year, was completed in time for it to re-enter service at Easter and more recently, work has been completed on the Pullman, despite the fact that it has to remain in service on every Saturday night on the Wine & Dine trains. The pullman repairs necessitated replacing rotted timber panels at the kitchen end of the vehicle and re-plumbing the kitchen, a task not made any easier by the curious method of construction of the car, which had been built from the frame upwards, with the mahogany cladding morticed into the frame rather than affixed to it. After repainting the exterior in the pullman livery, signwriting of the words "Pullman" and "Barbara" was made as authentic as possible by adopting a style of lettering obtained from a tracing of that on similar vehicles then situated at the Clapham Transport Museum and the Ashford Steam Centre. The brass passenger grab handles have been re-instated at the door entrances and 4

authentic pullman crest transfers have been applied to the body panels.

Work has also started on re-canvasing the rooves of Maunsell coaches Nos 53 and 55 and "birdcage" coach No. 60, so that these will at least be weatherproof this winter. Repainting of these and also of Maunsell coach No. 56 and "birdcage" No. 61 will be put in hand as soon as possible but it is likely that they will be out of service for much of 1978, as extensive renovations are also needed on the interiors. Planning application for a 2-road carriage repair shed at Tenterden, some 75 feet long and 45 feet wide, was submitted in August and if and when this can be erected, the work programme will be able to proceed irrespective of weather conditions generally.

In order that services could continue in 1978, it was therefore essential to acquire additional rolling stock and earlier this year the Company successfully tendered for three 64-seat "Mark 1" coaches, on behalf of private owners who were prepared to lend them to the Railway. Details of these vehicles, together with a Southern Railway four wheel passenger brake which it is also intended to use on passenger trains with non-brake coaches, are contained in the table at the end of this article. The passenger brake will be fitted with a Midland-type gangway before it is used for its intended purpose.

Getting the Mark 1 coaches into service is therefore top priority, although all that is needed is to repaint externally in Kent & East Sussex livery and letter out in yellow and this will be done before the commencement of the 1978 season. On one or two occasions this year it has regrettably been necessary to press one of these into service in the B.R. livery in which it arrived; by and large, passengers have tended to refrain from travelling in it, wherever possible, preferring to ride in the shabby magnificence of the Maunsells. This will act as a real incentive for us to keep our vintage rolling stock in working order during the years to come, for keeping our visitors happy is an essential part of keeping the passengers moving.

## Rolling stock delivered to Tenterden on 26th & 27th July 1977

<i>B.R. No.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Built</i>	<i>Withdrawn</i>	<i>K.&amp;E.S.R. No.</i>
M25446	C.K.	Wolverton, 1957	April 1977	63
E3753	T.S.O.	Doncaster, 1953	March 1977	64
S4037	T.S.O.	Swindon, 1955	Jan. 1977	65
S440S	Brake	Eastleigh or Lancing, 1937	May 1977	66

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# The Last Day

Peter Davis concludes his reminiscences of the events leading up to the closure of the Railway to passenger traffic on 2nd January 1954

*The Author has joined the last day "special" from Headcorn to Robertsbridge at Biddenden station and has settled down to savour his last journey on the line . . .*

As I had no intention of giving up my precious seat, I had to be content with what could be seen from the carriage window. At that moment a curious ceremony was being enacted beneath the station awning; a platoon of Dad's Army had been paraded under the command of a bristling major while a gold-braided railway official, presumably in charge of the special, solemnly inspected them. Actually, this was a detachment from "E" Company, 23rd Battalion Home Guard (The Buffs) under the command of Major F.J. Parsons; apparently they had been responsible for patrolling the line during the War. Perhaps today, the ill assorted selection of elderly gents in baggy battle dress and large, shapeless berets would have provoked hoots of laughter, but in 1954 the Home Guard was still taken very seriously and no doubt they had given sterling service to the line during the dark days of the conflict. Soon the troops were fallen out and installed in their reserved compartments and the be-wreathed "01" blasted away from Biddenden, whistling continuously, whilst a local farmer fired a shotgun salute from the lineside. At High Halden Road, a large party dressed in traditional mourning dress and carrying a draped coffin, squeezed themselves into the train and two boy scouts played the last post as we departed. After a pause at the lowly and seldom used St. Michaels Halt, we arrived to a civic reception at Tenterden where the Mayor, Councillor S.J. Day, dressed in silk topper and attended by the Town Sergeant, signed autographs, posed with Driver Hills of Ashford, said a few words and squeezed into the train for the last journey.

The train was by now hopelessly late and darkness had set in by the time Rolvenden was reached and where a complicated engine changing procedure lost even more time. Rolvenden yard, from an operating point of view, was the same then as now and 31064 was replaced at the head of the train by "Terrier" 32655, with Driver Hazel and Fireman Blair. The terrier then had to draw the six coaches clear of the yard before 32678, with a St. Leonards crew, could be attached to the rear. It was apparently a source of great regret to the K.&E.S.R. enginemmen that neither

they, nor No. 3, figured more prominently on this day. Eventually we proceeded to Robertsbridge, sliding uneventfully through the Rother Valley, the dimly lit stations thronged with sightseers and yielding even more passengers. Under the circumstances, a 30 minute late arrival was quite reasonable.

After darkness had blotted out the passing scene, I turned my attention to the proceedings within the dimly illuminated coach. It seemed that a distinction could be made between the enthusiasts who had come to "do the line" for the last time and the local folk to whom it was no doubt a regrettable occasion but nevertheless one to be celebrated with a certain amount of abandon and jollity.

So while the locals attacked their crates of beer, hot drinks and food, told jokes, sang songs and generally enjoyed themselves, we enthusiasts sat in forlorn huddles bemoaning the imminent end of the line. Little did we realise that more than 20 years later, people would be eating, drinking and enjoying themselves as they too meandered through the Rother Valley in dimly lit Maunsell coaches! Lawson-Finch, author of the first history of the line, was squeezing along the crowded corridors selling copies of his publication from a large suitcase. I believe he sold all the remaining copies that evening and was probably delighted to have done so as the book had been published for six years by then. I had bought a copy second-hand the year previously for four shillings, today a mint copy may fetch six or seven pounds! Strange that publications are sold in the coaches of the K.&E.S.R. in 1977 — what price a present day guide or stockbook in the year 2000?

At Robertsbridge everyone was turned out of the train while it was shunted to enable the engines to be watered. At least 1000 people were crammed on to the narrow platform, including the mourners, the Home Guard and sundry persons in fancy dress. Harrassed railway officials, reinforced by a solitary railway policeman who was travelling on the line, did their best to keep people off the main line, a potentially lethal situation, but happily even the most enterprising trespassers survived. Meanwhile, T.V. cameramen were busy capturing the scene with the aid of magnesium flares. Eventually the banner waving, wreath carrying, auld lang syne signing crowd were shoe-horned back into the train; Porter, Algy

Bean handed Fred Hazel the staff and the very last public train left Robertsbridge, the panting of the hard working terriers being punctuated by traditional detonator explosions.

At each halt and station, travellers left the emptying train for the last time, more quietly, and soberly now, their reluctant parting compounding the delay as they said final farewells to the train crew. Of course, my round trip ended at Northiam and as the last of the travellers and sightseers trickled away, I stood on the platform sadly listening to the two terriers drawing away across the marsh. I waited until the gently swaying tail light disappeared into the night – yes it had been my favourite line; a pity in a way that the last day had been so untypical of its delightfully leisured existence.

#### Author's Postscript

The train took on the "01" again at Rolvenden, but was banked by 32655 as far as the summit near St. Michaels tunnel, the terrier returning light engine to Rolvenden, a highly suspect manoeuvre, as apart from line occupation considerations, it is presumed that the engine was not coupled or continuously braked to the train. Arrival at Headcorn was 65 minutes late and as far as passengers were concerned that was very definitely the end of the Headcorn Extension. However, at about 9.00pm that night, one of the terriers worked from Rolvenden to Ashford via Headcorn with the three coaches allocated to the line and the extension was then officially closed, together with Rolvenden depot.

I believe that the remaining 2 terriers were also worked to St. Leonards that night in preparation for the freight-only roster which commenced on Monday, 4th January and was based at the old West Marina shed. The staffs at the Headcorn extension stations remained for a few days in order to clear up outstanding commitments and were then re-deployed elsewhere on the Southern Region. The goods yards on the extension were all cleared of wagons during the last week of operations. Demolition of the extension was carried out during the summer of 1955, with class "01" locomotives, numbers 31064 and 31065; I believe that George Cohen were the contractors. In the first year of freight-only services, Bodiam, Northiam and Tenterden retained their staffs, but eventually only Tenterden remained manned, with my old friend Bill Rann from Northiam as the incumbent and rejoicing in the title of Goods Agent, a position he held until final closure. At first, it was necessary to run two freight trains daily because of the concentration of traffic that had originally come in from both ends of the line. This was aggravated by the loading restrictions on the terriers of 30 axles, including the brake van. By 1961, a single daily working was adequate to handle the diminishing traffic brought about by the discouragement of wagon load consignments and a general reduction in the domestic coal market. Complete closure was inevitable with the announcement that the Southern Region coal deliveries from the area would, in future, be concentrated at Staplehurst for distribution by road.



*Last day, 2nd January 1954. Locomotive "01" class number 31065 has just arrived at Tenterden from Headcorn with the 12.30pm train and stands alongside the 12.30pm from Robertsbridge. Note the rather curious alignment of the platform. [Author]*



# Steam Up - 1977

Mark Yonge

The Railway's second annual steam event took place over the weekend of 17th and 18th September. Locomotives No's 10, 23, 24 and 26 were in service and to ensure variety and interest, motive power was changed at both ends of the line and most trains were double headed. On one train each day, three locomotives were attached, two at the front and one at the rear. Pullman car "Barbara", well stocked with drinks, was included with the four other coaches on every train and spectacular steam performances were witnessed on the return journeys as the trains climbed the steeply graded Tenterden Bank into the station. Peckett 0-4-0 No. 12 "Marcia" carried out shunting duties at Tenterden between departures and arrivals and gave the public an opportunity to see our freight and lesser used coaching stock. In the yard adjacent, traction engines, vintage cars and buses, the skaters organ and a miniature railway were on display and added to the atmosphere and to visitors' enjoyment. The success of the event was witnessed by the fact that 4347 people came to Tenterden over the weekend and gross takings were in excess of £4000.

The photographs of the "Steam Up" on pages 14 and 15 were taken by Brian Stephenson on Sunday, 18th September.

*Left:*

*No. 12 "Marcia" heads the "Sundays only" afternoon train from Tenterden Town to Headcorn Junction.*

*Right:*

*Locomotives Nos 10 and 23 head a 5 coach train out of Tenterden Town station for Wittersham Road.*

When visiting the Railway, come and see:—

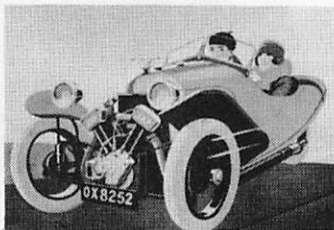
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# STEAM UP-1977

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# Letters to the Editor



*"Morous" at Selsey*

[H. Smith]

## **"Morous" and "Morus"**

Sir — The names bestowed on his locomotives by Holman Fred Stephens have long fascinated me and the recent articles and correspondence in "The Tenterden Terrier" have stimulated that fascination. Of the mythical names, "Morous" has never really been identified and Mr. Tonks's reference to the Welsh bard is interesting. In his book on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, Mr. Tonks records that until 1939, there existed at Kinnerley a pair of "Morus" nameplates and it is clearly conceivable that the locomotive was named after the celebrated Cavalier poet, Huw Morus (in English Hugh Morris) also known by his bardic title "Eos Ceriog" spent his long life at Pont Y Meibion, above Glyn Ceiriog and in 1909 there came to this remote spot many thousands of Welshmen from all parts of the globe to commemorate the bi-centenary of his death and unveil a memorial obelisk. Whilst Kinnerley and Glyn Ceiriog are ethnically worlds apart, both are within two hours walk of Oswestry and both share the Oswestry press. Huw Morus would therefore have been a talking point in the locality at the time the old "Potts" railway was being revived by the

Colonel as the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire and Mr. Tonks's suggestion cannot be lightly dismissed.

Bowdon, Cheshire

A.M. Davies

Mr. M. Lawson Finch has also written on this subject; he points out that the Glyn Valley Tramway ran up the Ceriog Valley and the Engineer to both this line since 1885 and to the Snailbeach District Railways, nearby, since 1877 was a Mr. Henry Dennis, who also joined the Snailbeach Board of Directors when Colonel Stephens acquired an interest in that line in 1920. In the circumstances, Mr. Lawson Finch thinks it likely that Stephens was well acquainted with the history of the Ceriog Valley and hence with Hugh Morus. As to the nameplates, Mr. Lawson Finch suggests that the "Morous" plates may have been cast in error due to a misunderstanding of the local pronunciation and that the "Morus" plates which Mr. Tonks observed at Kinnerley were replacements which nobody got around to fitting!

*(An entry in the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway's Directors minute book for 22nd February 1932 refers to an offer by the West*

*Sussex Railway of £50 for "Moros" which had been on loan to that line since 1924. W.H. Austen suggested a higher offer of £60, but the original sum was eventually agreed upon, payable in monthly instalments of £5! — Stephen Garrett)*

*(Yet a third claimant may have been "Moros", a personification of fate and a son of Nyx, the Greek Goddess of night, who, appropriately, originated from primeval chaos! — Ed)*

### **Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Musings**

Sir — The recent article in "The Tenterden Terrier" (Summer 1977) concerning the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway has reminded me of a conversation I once had with a retired driver, now passed on, of the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway. He told me that when a fireman he

was sent one Sunday to King's Lynn with a senior driver to "bring back an engine" to Spalding. They went to Lynn by pony-trap as there were no trains on a Sunday and to their astonishment found it was "Gazelle" they had to fetch. She kept running out of steam and what with the necessity of manually opening the crossing gates on the way they had only reached Sutton Bridge by the time night fell and they had to leave the small engine in a siding where she remained for some days. Two other men subsequently brought her into Spalding where, after an overnight stay, she was taken on to Lincoln by Great Northern men. It is strange to think that among the locomotives that ran in one capacity or another over the M.G.N.J.R. it should be tiny "Gazelle" that has found a place for posterity in York Museum and by such a strange route as the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire!

Spalding, Lincs.

R.S. McNaught

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# Oh, Mr Porter!

Mark Yonge looks back at the famous Gainsborough picture of 1937 with the help of 2 people who were involved in making it

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Original Story by FRANK LAUNDER

Directed by MARCEL VARNEL

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VAL GURST	
MARRIOTT EDGAR	Editing
	R. B. DEARING
Casting	Scoring
ALFRED MOORE	VEITCHINSKY
Recording	Musical Director
W. SLATER	LOUIS LEVY

William Porter	WILL HAY
Jeremiah Harbottle	MOORE MARRIOTT
Albert	GRAHAM MOFFATT
Mr Trimbleson	SEBASTIAN SMITH
Mrs Trimbleson	AGNES LAUCHLAN
Superintendent	PERCY WALSH
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*"Oh, Mr. Porter, whatever can I do,  
I want to go to Birmingham,  
and They've taken me to Gress!"*

WILLIAM PORTER has been responsible for dozens of mishaps like the one in the song but the Superintendent dare not fire him - though he has longed to for twenty years - because William is related by marriage to the Managing Director.

Eventually the Superintendent offers him a small position at Aberdeen or Inverness but William is determined to be a Station Master no matter where. The Managing Director and the Superintendent find a vacancy at Buggleskelly, a small market town on the Southern Railway of Northern Ireland.

The superstitious Irish believe there is a hoodoo on Buggleskelly. The sole staff of the demeter station are the ancient Jeremiah Harbottle and his assistant Albert who have not been paid for months but live quite comfortably by stealing and by paying for goods with railway tickets.

William tries to modernise Buggleskelly by arranging an excursion and a one-eyed man buys all the tickets for the football team. William sees them off at 6 a.m. while Harbottle and Albert are sleeping off the effects of a brawl at the Inn. Harbottle and Albert refuse to believe Will has really sent out an excursion and tell the signman to let through an express. To William's surprise there is no crash: his train seems to have disappeared!

The villagers declare Will's one-eyed Irishman was a ghost but he does not believe it and sets off with Harbottle and Albert in an ancient engine, "Gladstone", to see whether the train is in a tunnel on a disused line. They find the train and the one-eyed Irishman and his men leading it up with cases of krum. They are gun-runners! William, Harbottle and Albert are chased up a hill to the top of a windmill where they escape by climbing out on to the sails.

Uncoupling the excursion engine and strutting "Gladstone" to the other end of the train they dash along the line, through tunnels with the gun-runners aboard. Not daring to stop, lest the men should get away Harbottle suggests throwing out a message in a bottle to warn the police. Unfortunately "Gladstone" is by now out of hand and dashes into the terminus.

William is congratulated by the Superintendent for capturing a notorious gang and modestly pines the laurels on to the old engine "Gladstone", but alas! the train has been so much - it bursts with pride!

Oh, Mr. Porter! is a film that will always evoke interest for Kent & East Sussex enthusiasts, for it featured the line's locomotive No. 2 "Northiam" in addition to the popular comedy team of Will Hay, Moore Marriott and Graham Moffatt.

By 1937, Will Hay and his colleagues had already starred together in several films, but it was Oh, Mr. Porter! that proved to be their most successful venture and even today, is regarded as one of the all time classics of the cinema, with frequent revivals both on television and elsewhere. The film was made in the summer of that year on the now defunct Basingstoke & Alton Light Railway, which had closed in 1936 and indeed, in many of the scenes the demolition gang was working just out of sight of the cameras. The station of "Buggleskelly" was, in reality, Cliddesden although it is obvious to the most disinterested viewer that the opening scenes were not shot on this line. In fact, they were taken between Waterloo and Southampton, where the third electric rail is apparent and the engine

is travelling on the wrong track! Sadly, when the writer decided to research the background to the film, he discovered that most of the people involved in making it or featuring in it were deceased; Will Hay, star of 18 films, died in 1949, Moore Marriott a year or two earlier and Graham Moffatt in the early 1960's; the Director, Marcel Varnel, was killed in a road accident in 1947. However, 2 people are very much alive, who remember clearly the making of the film: one is the Art Director, Alec Vetchinsky and the other, Colin Abbott who fired the locomotive during filming.

I first went to see Vetchinsky, at his home in Hove and was surprised to discover that he is still making films. He was not sure how many pictures he had made, "It's about 110, I think, but I particularly remember 'Oh, Mr. Porter!', we had a lot of fun making that one". I asked him how he came into the industry. "By accident really; I was trained as an architect and took a temporary job as a draughtsman with Gainsborough



*Will Hay, Graham Moffatt and Moore Marriott.*

*[National Film Archive]*

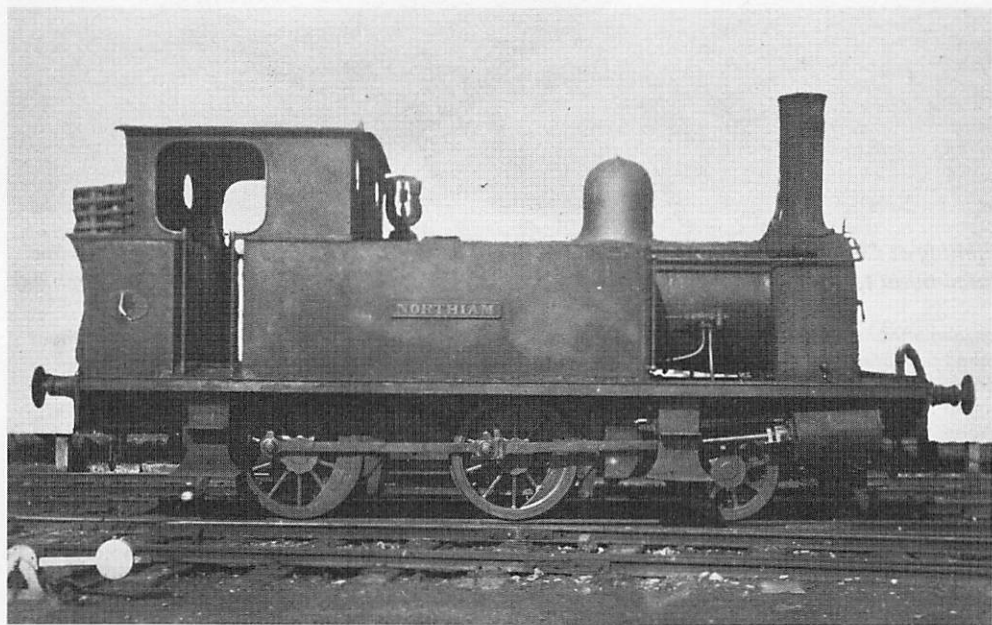
Pictures in 1928 and I never got around to leaving. Railway films always interested me and it was mainly from these that I developed the art of back projection. One of my films, 'The Lady Vanishes' relied extensively for tension on a studio mock-up of a coach with the action filmed from behind. In another film, 'North-West Frontier', I had to build nearly a mile of track in India."

I asked Vetchinsky about the function of Art Director. "Well, it's primarily to visualise the background and atmosphere and then search for suitable locations. With Oh, Mr. Porter!, I needed a disused line near to our studios in London, but sufficiently rural to pass for Northern Ireland. The Basingstoke to Alton Line was ideal and one of the first things I did was to make the signal box at Cliddesden look comical. I had a problem with the tunnel as one did not exist on the line; but I eventually I made a tunnel mouth out of wire and plaster in a cutting and then promptly had to repair it when Graham Moffat put his foot through it during the chase scene when he is on top of the carriage."

I then asked him how "Northiam" ("Gladstone" in the film) came to be chosen. "Well, we asked

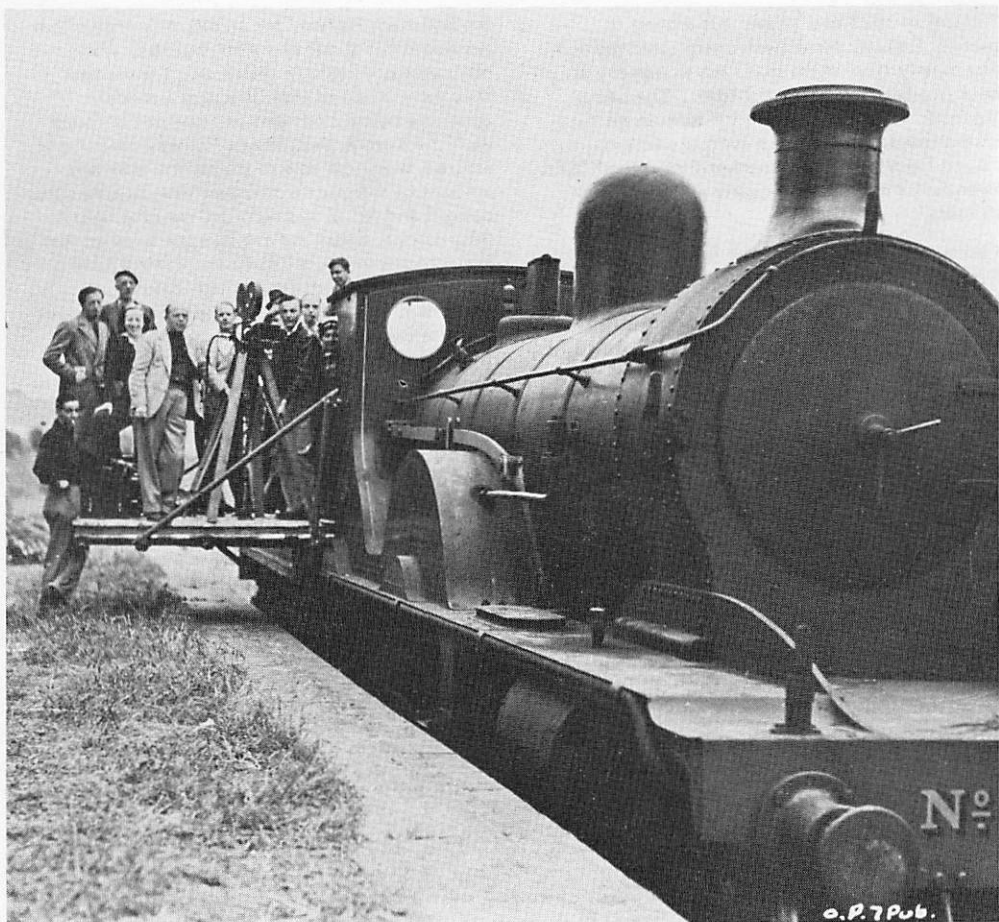
the Southern Railway for an old tank engine that we would cut about and alter, but they were obviously not keen. In retrospect, I think that they were afraid of their image as a modern company being spoilt and so I was put in touch with the Kent & East Sussex Railway who, I was assured, would be able to supply me with any amount of antique locomotives! Mr. Austen duly obliged and No. 2 was recorded running light to Basingstoke, where the cab was cut away so that the actors were more visible and a stove pipe chimney was added. We wanted to buy 'Northiam' from the Kent & East Sussex Railway because we wanted to blow it up at the end of the film, but although we offered a good price, they would not sell. We solved the problem in the final scene by running the train into the buffers at Basingstoke, cutting the film, backing the engine away and then blowing up a pile of metal. We then added some pieces, including the stove pipe chimney and the result was quite realistic."

I then visited Colin Abbott, who lives near Dover and who was apprenticed on the East Kent Light Railway in 1932. "The first I knew about the film was when Mr. Austen appeared at Shepherdswell station, where I worked. He said he



No. 2 "Northiam" at Rolvenden,

[W.H. Austen Collection]



*Filming at Cliddesden with Adams L.&S.W.R. X2 class 4-4-0 No. 657. Vetchinsky is in the foreground to the left of the camera. [National Film Archive]*

needed a fireman for a job west of London and asked the foreman if he could spare me. I was only a young lad with no ties, so I jumped at the job as it was well paid. I teamed up with Nelson Wood, the driver, at Tenterden and we ran the engine light to Headcorn, Tonbridge and Reading, where we took on coal and water. We then proceeded to Basingstoke, where the engine was stabled in readiness for filming. Nelson and I got a bit bored hanging around, so we started to clean the locomotive. Alec Vetchinsky got a bit upset and said he wanted it to look old and dirty and in fact he sprayed it with some artificial grime to make it look worse than ever." I asked Abbott

about the difficulties of firing an engine without being seen by the camera. "Most of the time I ducked out of sight, but for one difficult shot this was not possible. I was dressed up to look exactly like Moore Marriott, it took hours to get me ready and when we had finished filming I was mistaken for the real person by one of the tea ladies, who asked me for my autograph!" The end of the story for Colin Abbott and Nelson Wood was to return "Northiam" to Tenterden after the cab had been rivetted back on. Abbott's final comment on the event, "I don't know why they didn't sell the engine; after all, she was cut up in 1941!"

# The Hesperus Quads

Historians have always taken a special pleasure in the discovery of coincidences and railway historians are no exception. Imagine the delight therefore of the author who, having volunteered an article on four Colonel Stephens' locomotives named HESPERUS but has used up most of his introductory points about the Colonel's penchant for names classical in a previous article ("The Tenterden Terrier" Spring 1977), realises not only that these four locomotives were built within five years of each other and purchased by the Colonel within four years of each other but also that they were all scrapped within ten years of each other. The coincidence may not be particularly remarkable but it will serve, I hope, as an introduction to four remarkably charming engines.

The eldest of this quartet was built by Neilsons of Glasgow (1661/1871) as a 3'6" gauge 0-4-0ST for the East Cornwall Minerals Railway where it ran as No. 2 PENSILVA. In 1891 the E.C.M.R. was purchased by the Plymouth Devonport & South Western Junction Railway who intended to convert the line to standard gauge and connect it with their own line at Bere Alston by means of a viaduct across the River Tamar. This work was not actually commenced until 1905 when responsibility for the gauge conversion was entrusted to none other than Holman Stephens. The works were completed in 1908 and Stephens was appointed Manager of the line in the same year. 1908 also saw the conversion of PENSILVA to a standard gauge 0-4-2ST at the line's Callington workshops with the aid of new axles and trailing wheels from Hawthorn Leslie.

Neither Stephens nor PENSILVA was to remain with the P.D.S.W.J.R. for long. Stephens was the first to go. His many commitments on other railways schemes meant that he was unable to meet his contractual obligation to attend on the line two days a week. When in 1910 five months elapsed without the Directors being able to arrange a meeting with him it was decided to end his appointment. PENSILVA stayed longer but must have lingered in Stephens' thoughts for in 1912 he purchased it for £250 for use on the level and undemanding Hundred of Manhood & Selsey Tramway. Here it was named HESPERUS though it is not clear at what date this took place.

What had hitherto appeared as a graceful if unusual locomotive was transformed by rebuilding in 1921 into one of the oddest looking locomotives to run on the Colonel's lines. The cause of this transformation was the fitting of a



*"Hesperus" at Selsey, Selsey Tramway,  
May 1923 [Ken Nunn Collection]*

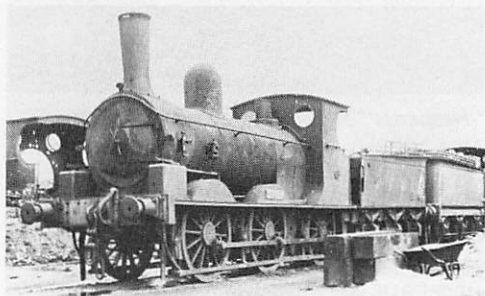
new firebox and saddle which required the boiler to be raised considerably and created a most ungainly impression. The remedial work does not seem to have proved particularly successful as HESPERUS was withdrawn from service in the mid-Twenties and is reputed to have been cut up in 1931. The first HESPERUS to be built thus came to be the first to be withdrawn.

The second HESPERUS was a much larger machine than its predecessor and started life as an "Ilfracombe Goods" tender locomotive built by Beyer Peacock (1517/1875) for the London & South Western Railway as No. 324. This light but versatile class of eight locomotives was intended for use on the North Devon line and all but two ended their careers working for Colonel Stephens. No. 324 was rebuilt with a larger boiler in 1888, acquired a larger tender in 1890, passed to the Duplicate List as No. 0324 in 1900 and was withdrawn in August 1910. After some haggling, including an offer to purchase by instalments of £5 a week, this locomotive was sold to the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway for £700.

Designated No. 3 the locomotive reached its new owners painted dark green with light green lining and the name HESPERUS painted on the centre splasher. Its arrival was not an absolute success as it succeeded in disrupting the first day of public operations by derailing itself and decanting the line's first fare-paying passengers in the vicinity of Red Hill with a three mile walk back to Shrewsbury. Its career from then on was more sedate and it must have proved its worth for Stephens to buy two further "Ilfracombes" for the line. These were L.S.W.R. Nos 0300 and 0283 which became No. 5 PYRAMUS and No. 6 THISBE respectively on the S.&M.R.



HESPERUS was well worn by the mid-Twenties and was stored out of use at Kinnerley until the even greater decrepitude of the rest of the line's motive power led to its retrieval and repair in the Thirties. HESPERUS was still in occasional use as late as 1939 but when the War Department took possession of the line in 1941 HESPERUS was found to be well beyond repair and was cut up at Shrewsbury in November of that year.



*"Hesperus" at Kinnerley Junction,  
Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Rly, 1930's  
[Author's Collection]*

In February 1876 Sharp Stewart supplied a 2-4-0T (2518/1876) to the Watlington Rolling Stock Company, a curious concern that supplied the motive power for the Watlington & Princes Risborough Railway. The W.P.R.R. was taken over by the Great Western Railway in 1883 and the locomotive was numbered 1384 and given the freedom of various branches including the Wrington Vale and the Culm Valley. There was also a period of hire to the Lambourn Valley Railway where 1384 hauled carriages destined in their turn to be sold to the Selsey Tramway and there to be hauled by the Neilson HESPERUS! The Great Western substantially rebuilt 1384 in 1899 but by 1911 it was surplus to requirements and disposed of to the Bute Works Supply Company from whom Stephens purchased it for use on the Weston Clevedon & Portishead Light Railway.

The W.C.P.L.R. was never a wealthy line and for some time 1384 continued to run with its G.W.R. livery and number but eventually funds were found to fit nameplates proclaiming its new identity as HESPERUS. In this guise many years of steady mixed train service were put in until nemesis struck in 1934 in the form of a wooden



*"Hesperus" at Clevedon, Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Rly, 1925 [Author's Collection]*



bridge at Wick St. Lawrence which proved unequal to the locomotive's weight. HESPERUS was retrieved without difficulty but saw little further use before being withdrawn in 1937 and cut up shortly afterwards.

The final HESPERUS was also built in 1876 but by Manning Wardle (630/1876). It was a 0-6-0ST for the Narberth Road & Maenclochog Railway by whom it was named RINGING ROCK (Maenclochog in English). This line became the Rosebush & Fishguard Railway in 1881, changed again to become the North Pembrokeshire & Fishguard Railway in 1884 and was finally absorbed by the Great Western in 1898. RINGING ROCK was numbered 1380 and promptly sent to Swindon for overhaul after which it served mainly in the West Country apart from another spell at Swindon in 1902 when a new boiler was fitted. In November 1912, 1380 was withdrawn and sold to the Bute Works Supply Company. One report has it that it was then sold to the Weston Clevedon & Portishead but this seems to be a confusion with the Sharp Stewart locomotive purchased from the same source. Whatever the truth of the matter it is known that 1380 was certainly in the hands of the Bute Works Supply Company in 1914 for it was purchased from them in that year by Stephens for the Kent & East Sussex Light Railway with the aid of a loan of £550 from the Lincoln Wagon & Engine Company.

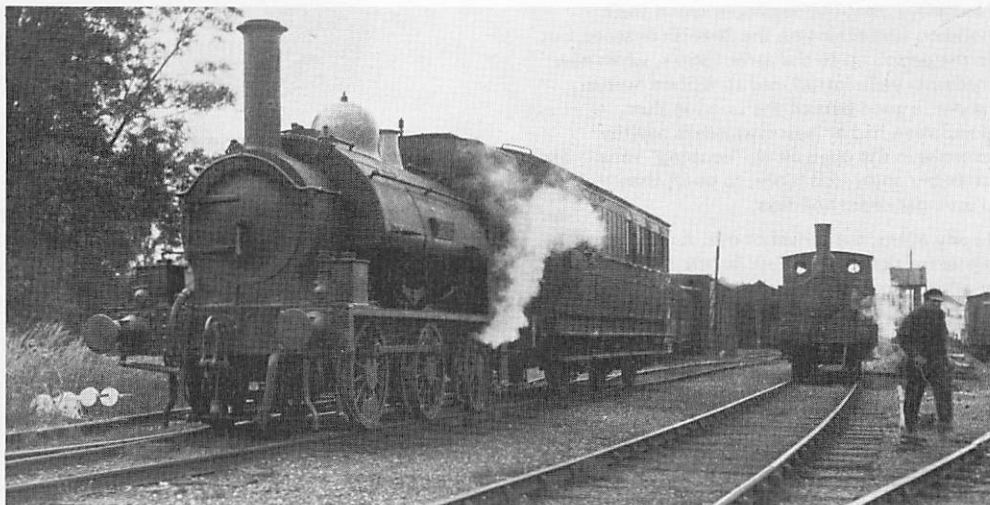
It was long supposed that No. 8, as the locomotive

became on the K.&E.S.R., retained the name RINGING ROCK until derailed by floods after which the name HESPERUS was substituted. Photographs of the accident have, however, revealed ("The Tenterden Terrier" No. 7) that the locomotive was already carrying HESPERUS nameplates and it seems probable that the new name was given when the locomotive was acquired. The RINGING ROCK nameplates did not go to waste as they were subsequently fitted to one of the Selsey Tramway locomotives.

During the Twenties HESPERUS ran briefly as a 0-4-2ST with the rear driving wheels uncoupled, an idea tried on several locomotives by the Colonel. Whether anything was gained from the experiment is not recorded and it was not long before the full coupling rods were replaced.

HESPERUS was considered useful enough to justify an extensive overhaul in 1933 which had the outward effect of removing the nameplates and demoting HESPERUS to the status of plain No. 8. Even without its nameplates the locomotive managed to see the Thirties out but was increasingly frequently prone to boiler troubles. In 1941 No. 8 was cut up in a general clearance of surplus and obsolete stock for scrap. May the seeker after coincidence be excused a chuckle of delight at the realisation that just as the first HESPERUS was the first to go so was the last HESPERUS to be built also the last to be destroyed?

Stephen Garrett



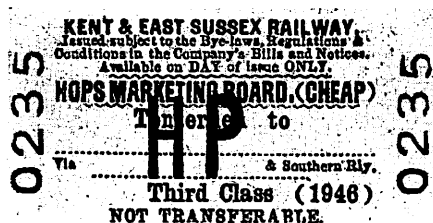
*"Hesperus" at Rolvenden, Kent & East Sussex Railway, c. 1925, No. 1 "Tenterden" is on the right.*  
[Author's Collection]

# From Our Ticket Collection

## Hop-pickers' Holiday

The old Kent & East Sussex Railway was very much a country branch, and like several similar lines, it soon acquired many nicknames, perhaps the most famous being "the farmers' line". Much of the traffic, both passenger and freight, derived from agriculture, and no farming product was more bound up with the Railway than the hops.

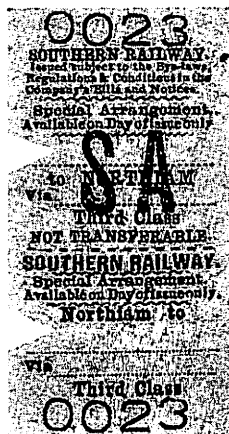
Hops are a seasonal crop, and when the hop vines reached maturity in the balmy warmth of the late summer sun, things occurred down in Kent and Sussex which were unthought of at other times and had the effect of changing the tranquil countryside into a scene of clamorous activity. The occasion was, of course, the arrival of the vast throng of Londoners, mostly from the East End, who made the trek each year to spend their annual "holiday" in gainful employment picking the hops.



Nowadays, those same people spend their holidays sunbathing on the Spanish beaches, but in the period up to the early 1960's, when new machines were introduced to replace human labour, a good part of the London slum population had at least two weeks healthy exercise in the open air at "hopping" time — and probably enjoyed it more, to boot, than today's plastic packaged holidays.

In any event, the arrival of mid-August was the signal for the Kent & East Sussex trains to be swelled from the usual single carriage tagged on to the daily goods to a fully fledged train, often six coaches long, and sporting an engine at each end due to the fear that two engines at the front might prove too much for one or two rather weak bridges en route! These trains, which worked through from Charing Cross, with a change of engines at Robertsbridge, were "specials", and the rowdy crowds of East Enders got special cheap rate fares for the journey, which was, perhaps, reasonable in view of the antique rolling stock often provided for their travel.

At any event, the sudden influx of temporary residents was a source of considerable traffic to the Railways, and several tickets of the two types illustrated were produced for the hop pickers' traffic. The first example was printed for the Hops Marketing Board, which negotiated bulk rate concessions for hop-pickers, and the ticket is slightly unusual, as it was printed by the Southern Railway in 1946, but bears the Kent & East Sussex Railway heading, although it is in pure Southern Railway style. The second example is one of the so-called "posthumous" tickets, printed very soon after Nationalisation, but before British Railways had settled on a standard ticket design. It was therefore decided to allow



tickets to continue to be printed bearing the old Company names, and this occurred for more than a year after British Railways took over. In most cases, these posthumous issues are indistinguishable from the pre-nationalisation printings, but because the K.&E.S.R. was merged into the Southern Region in 1948 tickets printed for the Line at that time began to appear with the Southern Railway heading — a quite remarkable example of tickets bearing the name of a defunct company for use over the lines of another defunct company which had never been owned by the first one! This last is of the more common "Special Arrangement" type, which was held in booking offices all over the Southern, and could be purchased at concessionary rates by any sizeable group of people travelling together, providing they made prior arrangements. In the

case of the K.&E.S.R., the hop pickers were probably the only people in the area who travelled in groups large enough to qualify for the concession, and both tickets come from the Sussex end of the Line, where the Guinness hop farms provided employment for a very large number of people.

Both specimens are standard Edmonson cards, the first in green and the second in buff, and neither has actually been issued.

It is, perhaps, interesting to recall that the hop pickers were the last regular passengers to use the Line before its closure, as the "hoppers' specials" continued to run in the season right up to 1958, four years after the regular passenger service had ended, and even after that a diminishing hoard of Londoners continued the annual journey, but by road in a convoy of coaches. I clearly remember back in 1962 or 1963 spending a week's holiday on the Railway, during part of which, I camped out with two other volunteers in the station at Bodiam. At that time, the station windows were boarded up, and after bedding down for the

night in the somnolent peace of the Sussex countryside, we were astonished to awake the next morning to the sound of what appeared to be a small army tramping round the station building. We emerged in due course, to view with amazement a vast concourse of excited humanity milling about all over the area. The hoppers had arrived, and a row of parked buses were eloquent testimony to the passing of the Railway. Our astonishment was nothing to the amazed expression registering on the faces of the visitors, as we emerged from the sealed fastness of the derelict station at 6.30 in the morning. I'm sure they thought we were tramps, and they quickly edged away from us as though we were contagious! After a short time, they were moved away to their billets, and we saw them no more, and as I do not recall seeing them again in subsequent years, I suspect that it may have been the very last "hopper invasion" of them all, and the only seasonal disturber of the peace today is that impersonal juggernaut, the hop-picking machine.

Robin Doust

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# Boats on Newmill Channel

Photographed by Brian Stephenson

Sailing boats were in evidence on the Newmill Channel when "Austerity" locomotive No. 23 "Holman F. Stephens" was hauling the 12.15pm train along the Oxney Straight, returning from Wittersham Road on 21st August 1977. This section of the line came into use at the beginning of the 1977 season, with the extension of

passenger services to Wittersham Road and is scenically a very attractive feature of the Railway, particularly now that undergrowth has been cleared from the lineside. On summer Saturday evenings, the Wine & Dine trains pause on the Oxney Straight, so that diners can view the countryside across the Rother Levels.



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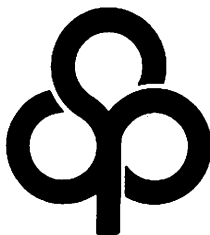
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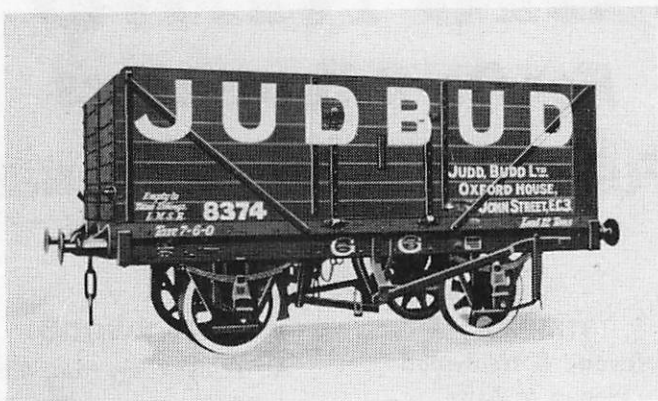
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