



The Tenterden Terrier



Number 17

Winter 1978



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)

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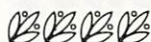
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Number 17

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Contents

- 3 Editorial
- 4-6 Mark Yonge's Notebook
- 7-9 Trial Trip — Part 2
- 10 All Together Again
- 11-16 Wittersham Road — The Story of a Station
- 18-19 What you think of The Tenterden Terrier
- 21-24 Shropshire Sidelines
- 25-26 Letters to the Editor
- 27 Book Review
- 28 Morous

Editorial

Where do we go from here?

With Wittersham Road now open and traffic seemingly expanding at an unprecedented rate, the question is one which will need careful thought in the coming months. Should we push on to Northiam regardless — or pause a while to improve facilities to encourage even more passengers and keep our hard pressed locomotives in working order? Whatever the outcome, let us ensure that in the march of progress, we do not unwittingly destroy what we have set out to preserve. The Kent & East Sussex was Britain's first light railway — it is now one of the last, in the true meaning of the term; saved from destruction against fearsome odds by a small but dedicated band of enthusiasts. If the environment were to be cluttered with a conglomeration of concrete sheds, refreshment rooms and other paraphernalia which may be seen elsewhere in the railway preservation scene, we shall have achieved nothing — except a gigantic funfair for the benefit of those who care nothing for the Railway's past and little for its future.

FRONT COVER

FIRST TRAIN FROM WITTERSHAM

The first public passenger train to depart from Wittersham Road after reopening, returning to Tenterden on the afternoon of 16th June 1978.

[Brian Stephenson]

Mark Yonge's Notebook

As I was totally involved with preparations for the Steam & Country Fair in September, I am grateful to my colleague **Paul Sutton** who compiled the following notes relating to the *Locomotive* and *Carriage & Wagon* departments:-

Locomotives. Five weeks of continuous operation was achieved satisfactorily in August, due in no small way to those who worked hard at weekends and evenings to make sure that there was a locomotive available to go off shed every morning.

No. 10 returned to traffic at the beginning of August after having had some work done to the Westinghouse air pump and routine examination repairs.

"Marcia" went to the Gravesend Model Railway Exhibition in May and took part in the Steam & Country Fair in September. A visual examination has revealed that she will require a retube at the end of the year and specialist welding to build up thin areas in the firebox around the mud hole doors. The bottom half of the smoke box is now so thin that it requires renewal.

No. 24, recently named "William H. Austen", had a spring changed in July but otherwise continues to turn in the reliable and economic performance that we have come to expect from Austerities.

No. 26 has been in regular use; a spring hanger bolt sheared on the last up service one Thursday in August, but this was rectified the next day. A visual examination due at the end of September will reveal that the tubes have not much more life in them.

The amount of work devoted to the Nowegian Mogul has increased of late. Jobs still outstanding include a new smokebox support, renewal of two stays and recaulking of others; the superheater elements to be tested and the boiler will require an hydraulic test in the frames before returning to traffic.

The main boiler swop for the two U.S.A. tanks 21 and 22 took place on 18th September under the direction of **John Sinclair** who continues to make steady progress with No. 22, which, with No. 21's boiler fitted should see service again next year.

No. 23, which was withdrawn from traffic in June, should see some work starting on it soon. As it is thought that the boiler has not been removed from the frames since it had a general overhaul at Bicester in 1959, it will require an hydraulic test out of the frames before a new certificate can be issued. While the boiler is out, the wheels will be sent away for the tyres to be reprofiled.

"Bodiam" is unlikely to see service again for some

while; the bottom flange of the front tube plate requires some attention and is also a candidate for a boiler lift.

The P-class, No. 11, has work on the boiler progressing slowly but surely under the direction of **David Brailsford**, assisted by **Richard Crumpling**.

Hunslet 0-6-0 Diesel, No. 28., has more than justified the small amount of money spent to put it in complete working order and provided the motive power for the track relaying trains and most other works movements as well.

No. 27, the 0-4-0, has acted as standby to No. 28. Its weight precludes operating over the relaid section from Wittersham to Northiam at the moment. As mentioned in a previous issue of the "Terrier" its tyres will need reprofiling before it can be allowed to range over the whole of the railway.

Both Ruston 48 h.p. diesel shunters have been sold and should have been removed from the line by the time these notes appear.

The U.S.A. boiler swop already referred to will release space for the J.C.P. to complete their work to the shed extension. When completed it will give us a two road building measuring 100' x 40' which will make life much more comfortable for winter maintenance and repair work.

The *Building department* will be renewing the drainage system in the yard generally and a new pump for the pit is being bought which will also improve working conditions.

Carriage & Wagon. With 37 days of consecutive running, routine maintenance of the coaching stock increased to some extent. Our highest mileage vehicle, B.S.O. No. 54, received new brake blocks all round. After the work on the Pullman was completed in June, attention was turned to the other Maunsell B.S.O. No. 53. All the seats had been removed previously for re-upholstering, which is now completed, and this made the tasks of stripping off old varnish and renewing 4 panels in the ceiling and some in the sides, much easier. The outside stripping and painting has largely been done by Sevenoaks Rotary Club and one side is now ready for top coats.

T.S.O. No. 65 should be ready to enter traffic by the time these notes appear. There is some painting still to be completed on the ends, roof and underframe. All varnishing and painting has been completed inside and it now only awaits the return of the rest of the re-upholstered seating. As this was one of the many Mk. I's which in recent

years were fitted with a dual heating system, the opportunity was taken while the seats were out, to remove the electric heating panels. When put into traffic it should look better than when it first rolled out of the Swindon shops in 1955.

In August, a group from the Carriage & Wagon Department was successful in tendering for an ex-S.E.&C.R. Birdcage brake coach. It is a 6 compartment brake composite, lavatory type, S.E.&C.R. No. 1084, S.R. No. 3363, built for S.E.&C.R. by the Metropolitan Railway Carriage & Wagon Co. in April 1910. Downrated to third class in S.R. days and withdrawn to Departmental Service in 1954 as No. DS 22 it was latterly at Stewarts Lane in London as a gauging vehicle and finally condemned in May of this year. Of the six compartments, three are complete, one is without seats and the partition between the other two has been removed. Sufficient seating and equipment is available to restore the "vandalised" compartments. The vehicle arrived at Tenterden in October.

The good news on the wagon side was that we were able to buy the ex-L.N.E.R. 25 ton steel ballast hopper from Tunnell's at Thurrock. This was the one that we borrowed and used very successfully last year, on permanent way work up to Wittersham Road. The Lowmac E.S. at Tonbridge that we tendered for in July we "lost" because B.R. decided to withdraw it from its disposal list. **Ken Duke** continues his good work on the S.E.R. brake van and it should see a return to traffic by the end of the year. The ex-M.R./L.N.W.R. "Flatrol" has been withdrawn from service so that attention can be given to the axleboxes, drawgear and brakes. While it is in the shop it will be repainted.

The 3 plank dropside wagon "kit" was assembled at the beginning of September and now only requires end stanchions and planking, adjustments to brake gear, and painting before being put into traffic.

Now that the track is reinstated to Northiam, the three 10 ton vans which have languished there for so long will be brought back to Tenterden in the near future for restoration and possible departmental use.

Job Creation Programme. **Mike James** tells me that his team has completed the marathon task of relaying track between Northiam and Wittersham to a basic standard which will allow stock movements to take place. Elsewhere on the line, the problem of the wet cutting on Tenterden bank continues to plague us and he is looking into the

geology of the area to ascertain why clay should continue to slip. Over the years we have removed many tons of spoil from the slipping cutting on the south side of the track, but without much success. A more detailed report will be included in the next issue.

Nick Patching of the *Signals & Telecommunications* department tells me that the bulk of their work continues at Wittersham Road and the signal box is expected to be completed by next spring. The *Permanent Way* department under **Philip Rimmer** continues the arduous task of packing the track on the operational section and it is hoped that by next spring, all speed restrictions due to the condition of the track will have been lifted. On the *Clearance* side, **John Miller** tells me that most of the spring and summer has been spent on Morghews curve and the section between there and Rolvenden. During the autumn and winter there are plans to deal with the tree growth between Pope's cottage and Newmill bridge and then to proceed with the undergrowth along the Oxney straight; quite a task when one considers how overgrown this part of the lineside is with ditches waterlogged during the winter months.

Donald Wilson has sent me the following report on the *Commercial* division of the railway:-

1978 has been our most successful year so far with carryings up 38% on last year, helped by the daily operation of trains in August which attracted about 400 people each day. The Steam and Country Fair held on 16th/17th September was the most ambitious event ever organised and over 7000 visitors came during the weekend. Unfortunately limited train capacity and the impracticability of running a service more frequently than at hourly intervals, restricted carryings on the trains to only one third of that number. **Mark Yonge, Derrick Bilsby** and **John Miller** are to be congratulated on organisational work involved and for making such a splendid contribution to the Railway's funds.

The "Wealden Pullman" services have carried 1900 diners this year and bookings have reached embarrassing proportions. However, the service has been maintained only by a few hard working members and unless more members are prepared to give up a Saturday evening once a month to help run these trains, this most successful venture will have to be severely curtailed next year. Catering Manager **Dave Fishenden** is waiting to hear from you at Lodge Hill 43121.

We are now getting ready for the "Santa

Specials" and we expect over 5000 visitors during December. Two trains are already fully booked — one for a railtour from the Midlands and the other for CLEO members of the "Kent & Sussex Courier".

In conclusion, I would like to add my thanks to everybody who helped with Steam & Country Fair; an article on this event will appear in the next issue of the "Terrier" including photographs and a full statistical analysis.

News from Area Groups

Ashford. The Group has taken on responsibility for fencing along the whole line and member Geoffrey Strugnall is carrying out a preliminary survey. The fence between Tenterden and the home signal has already been replaced and this will, hopefully, obviate a common problem this year of stray sheep on the line. The next major event will be the Model Railway Exhibition at the Centrepiece, Bank Street, Ashford, on 20th January 1979. Regular meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the Centrepiece at 7.30 pm and all are welcome to attend.

Eric Graves

Maidstone. Locomotive "Marcia" was very much in evidence at the Gravesend Show in May and amongst a number of small exhibits Marshall Vine's Wittersham Road layout was undoubtedly the main attraction. In late July, the use of an empty shop was obtained in the Stoneborough Centre, Maidstone, and the management was so impressed by the publicity display that they have allowed the use of the shop again during 2nd/4th November, when Marshall Vine's layout will be the main attraction. The window display was in Margate during July and August, and as a result of the publicity, the National Bus Company has agreed to run excursions from Margate and possibly other seaside resorts to Tenterden next August. Regular meetings are held at the Methodist Youth Centre, Brewer Street, Maidstone, on the last Thursday in each month at 7.30 pm, with the exception of December.

Jack Fox

Medway. The inaugural meeting on 20th September was a great success and a regular programme of events has been arranged on the third Wednesday in each month, excepting December. These are held at The White Horse Inn, High Street, Rainham, Kent, at 7.30 pm. The next meeting on 15th November is entitled "The Preservation of Southern Mogul 1618". The group has obtained a former K.&E.S.R. trolley from British Rail of approximately 1920 vintage and as it is in need of extensive restoration, help in the

form of labour or finance is needed. It is hoped to return the trolley to service in 1979.

Mike Todd

Surrey. The Group has been very active throughout the year, with stands at various exhibitions and rallies. Future events include the Bracknell Model Railway Exhibition on 25th/26th November and the Railway Vehicle Preservation Group Exhibition at East Ham, London, on 9th December. Looking further ahead, the annual model railway exhibition at Trinity Halls, Guildford, will be held on 10th March 1979. Readers who are contemplating buying model railway equipment, are reminded that they can obtain this through the Group and thereby help the railway at no additional expense to themselves. Please telephone Richard Halton on Aldershot 312276 for details.

Richard Halton

Tunbridge Wells. The Group attended various events this year, including stands at the Bluebell Railway in May and the Ardingly and Polegate Steam Rally in July. A trip was made to Tunbridge signal box during the summer and it is planned to visit Snowdown Colliery (still some steam operation) in the New Year. Those interested are invited to contact John Wilbur on Tunbridge Wells 20640. By the time the magazine is published the annual sponsored walk will have taken place between Wittersham Road and Junction Road, a distance of 15 miles for the return journey. The annual model railway exhibition will take place at the King Charles Hall, Tunbridge Wells, on 25th November at 10.30 am and will include a live gauge "0" layout from Hastings.

John Wilbur

East Kent. A new group is planned for this area and a preliminary meeting will be held at the Railway Staff Club, Canterbury East Station, on 3rd January 1979 at 7.30 pm. It is hoped that all members living within the area will attend. Light refreshments will be available.

Steve Whiteman

An epic tale in two parts by 'Ringing Rock'

PART TWO — 'RETURN HOME'

On arrival at Tenterden on the following Saturday, a quick consultation revealed a consensus on how we were to retrieve our two abandoned locomotives. Indeed, we had little choice, since by the time we had finally decided to drop the fire in "Marcia" and abandon her several days previously, we had practically exhausted her water supply, and since the nearest source of replenishment was a good mile away, there was little hope of steaming her again, even if we were able to discover the cause of her extraordinary behaviour and manage to repair the defect on the spot.

The decision was therefore taken that the only possible way of dealing with the situation was to raise steam in the only alternative motive power we possessed — our second Sentinel, "Gervase". "Gervase" was nominally operational, but had not been used for several months, and was known to be a slightly doubtful proposition from the outset. Having started life as a Manning Wardle saddletank, and having been subsequently rebuilt with Peckett wheels and a 400 gallon water tank where the original boiler had been, the present boiler, of Sentinel vertical design, being situated actually in the cab, "Gervase" was an unconventional locomotive in almost every respect, and it was with some trepidation that she was filled with water and lit up.

It took the best part of an hour to fill her tanks from the single tap which was the only supply of water available at the time — via a leaky hosepipe which distributed nearly as much water over the surrounding landscape as it delivered to the engine, but by about 10.30, "Gervase" had built up a healthy 275 lbs per square inch boiler pressure, and a trial trip up and down the station platform was essayed. Disaster! Immediately the engine moved, a large crack appeared in the bottom of the water tank, and 400 gallons of water cascaded onto the track, necessitating the hurried dropping of the fire, and a subsequent council of war by members of the Locomotive Department.

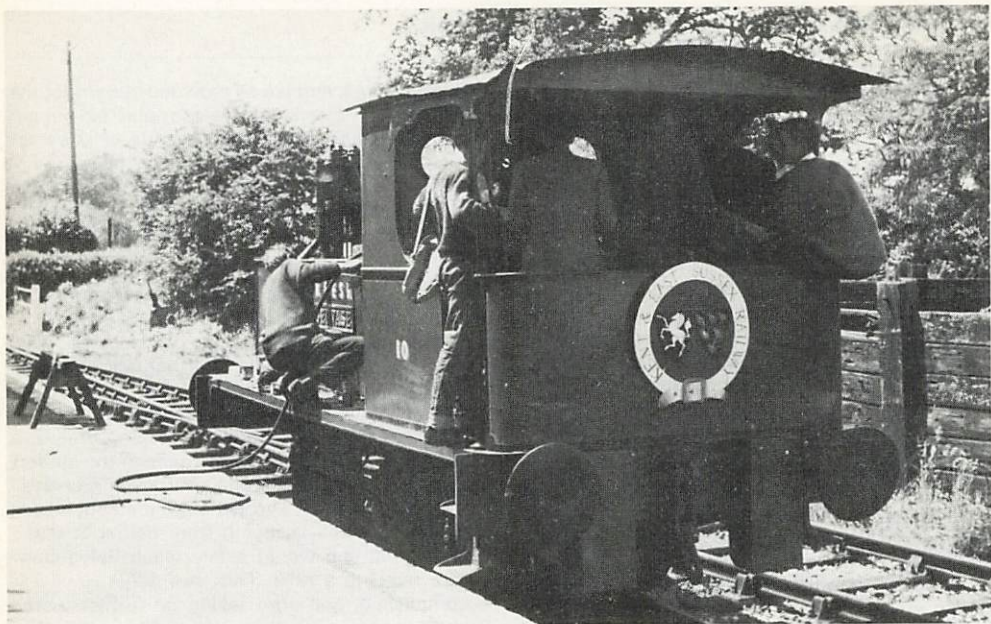
A quick visit to a local builder's merchant ensued, and a quantity of quick setting waterproof cement obtained, which was rapidly applied to the bottom of the offending tank. A nail-biting hour's wait ensued, after which the tank and boiler were refilled, and steam raised for the second time. A quick run in the station environs revealed all was

apparently well, and we all crowded aboard for the rescue run to Wittersham. Catastrophe! No sooner had the engine moved, than sounds of gushing water heralded the descent of a further 400 gallons of water onto the track, which by this time was becoming something of a quagmire. Out with the fire, and back to the drawing board once again!

This time, it was suggested that a temporary repair might be effected if a sheet of thick polythene was spread over the bottom of the tank to cover the leaking crack. A further quick foray to the town secured a suitable piece of material, and for the third time steam was raised in the recalcitrant locomotive and with bated breath, a further series of trial runs was made in the station area. Somewhat to everyone's surprise, "Gervase" responded perfectly, and although a steady trickle of water was still escaping from below, it was decided that she would safely reach Rolvenden before needing a refill. This was duly accomplished, and after taking on further water from the water tank there, progress to the infamous 1029 bridge was relatively uneventful, despite a few anxious moments as she rocked and rolled unsteadily through the overgrown section of track on which "Marcia" had stalled a few days earlier on her eventful trial run which had ended so disastrously shortly afterwards.

Arrival at 1029 bridge heralded the discovery that the steady escape of water from the water tank had seriously depleted the available water supply, and although it was by now quite late in the afternoon, a muddy, coal dust stained and quite weary bucket chain of members went hurriedly to work refilling the engine from the murky waters of the New Mill Channel. Since water was escaping nearly as fast as it went in, this operation consumed a considerable amount of time, and it was nearly evening before "Gervase" finally arrived at the point where we had been forced to abandon "Marcia" and "Dom" several days before. With an eye on the rapidly diminishing water supply, no time was lost in coupling up the two dead engines, and we set off in a race against time to see whether we could reach 1029 bridge before the water finally ran out.

This we achieved — just! — and in the gathering gloom the three engines stood just by the bridge while the bucket chain went to work once more. Feeling that nothing more could possibly go wrong, Driver Beckett turned on the left hand



"Gervase" takes on water from the Tenterden hosepipe. [Author's Collection]

injector to put some water into the boiler for the next section back to Rolvenden — only to find that it would not work. The right hand injector having been found completely blocked on the last occasion the engine was used, there was no alternative but to dismantle the offending left hand instrument and attempt to unblock the cones. This was attempted in what had by now become the stygian darkness of a moonless summer night, lit only by the flickering illumination of a solitary flare lamp. Not entirely surprisingly, during the dismantling process, someone (who shall remain nameless) managed to drop a small but vital piece of brass into the sea of four foot long grass which had invaded the railway banks in the years since the Line closed. A further fifteen minutes grovelling in the undergrowth failed to disclose the missing component, and despair began to grip us all. Were we once again to face the ignominy of abandoning the train in the middle of the line, this time leaving our entire stud of three locomotives irretrievably stranded at their desolate location?

As a last resort, a final attempt was made to get the right hand injector to work, and, miracle of miracles, it picked up immediately and reassuringly, and the water level in the gauge

glasses slowly climbed back into sight. A final top up for the water tank followed — at grave risk to life and limb as members balanced precariously on the edge of the river and various narrow projections on the bridge between water and engine in the by now total darkness.

Eventually, the weary crew and volunteers climbed aboard and we set off through the starlight towards Rolvenden. By this time, dear reader, you might be forgiven for thinking that everything that fate could throw at us had already arrived. But no — the experiences of our epic journey were far from ended. About half a mile short of Rolvenden, our ghostly cavalcade began to lose speed, and anxious enquiries to the front of the train elicited the disturbing news that owing to the protracted nature of the day's activities, we had now run out of coal! By this time, however, we were becoming accustomed to dealing with such emergencies, and in no time half a dozen burly volunteers had dived into the bush beside the track with bow saws, and were industriously chopping up anything burnable into firebox size pieces. The footplate was soon filled with an assortment of miscellaneous pieces of wood (at least one telegraph pole met its end amongst them!), and after a quick check that none of the

members present was being left behind in the darkness, we rolled off once more into the night at a brisk 5 mph.

Arrival at Rolvenden enabled "Gervase" to be refilled speedily with water once more from the main water tank, and with a quick prayer that no further technical hitches would occur, our remarkable train set off on the final assault of Tenterden bank. Flat out, at 7 mph, we attempted to rush the first part of the bank below Cranbrook Road Crossing. Not a chance! After a rousing start on the first 300 yards, "Gervase's" steam pressure dropped rapidly, and we were soon staggering along so slowly that it was obvious that the old lady was not going to manage without help. No sooner said than done, the twenty or so members aboard leaped off and added their muscle power to the efforts of our struggling Sentinel. It seemed to make all the difference, and we progressed in this manner both slowly and painfully, as far as Cranbrook Road Crossing. This section of the trip is indelibly burned into my memory, and I clearly recall looking up into "Gervase's" cab as we pushed for all we were worth up the steepening gradient. The only light came from the famous flare lamp, by the light of which Charlie Kentsley's craggy face was earnestly studying the water gauge to decide for certain whether any water remained in sight, or whether that faint movement visible in the bottom fitting was just imagination. The flickering flame, the faint glow of red from the firegate coupled with the grunts of the twenty straining volunteers all around in the darkness gave the scene a peculiarly demonic air, the atmosphere of which I am sure will remain with me for ever.

In this fashion, we had arrived just short of Cranbrook Road Crossing, and decided to let "Gervase" blow up some more steam (not to mention rest our volunteers, some of whom were distinctly the worse for wear by this time!). Surprisingly, our faithful Sentinel seemed to recover well in a matter of minutes, with steam pressure well up again, and it was considered that we could safely essay to cross Cranbrook Road without risk of stalling on the crossing. Accordingly, with everyone back on board again, the regulator was opened, and the train set off on the final leg of the journey in tremendous style.

Fittingly, the final act in our saga was not without its moments. I must mention at this point for the benefit of most of my readers who will not be familiar with the sound of a Sentinel locomotive in full cry, that due to her peculiar geared drive, "Gervase" has a very rapid exhaust beat in relation to her ground speed. Thus at 7 mph she sounds not unlike a Gresley Pacific doing 90. Coupled to this, and arising from the fact that we were still burning telegraph poles at the time, she was emitting vast showers of brilliant sparks from her chimney. Imagine, therefore, the effect on the good citizens of Tenterden as they sat at home on that memorable day. Wafting on the breeze to intrude upon the Late Night Movie came the unmistakable sound of a steam locomotive working very hard and travelling at a good express speed — all this on a railway which was known to have been closed several years ago! Lights flashed on, doors flew open, and the astonished populace were greeted with the incredible spectacle of three of the most peculiar locomotives ever to grace standard gauge metals, the leading one giving a fair imitation of Mount Vesuvius in eruption as the last of the wood fire went up the chimney, and sounding for all the world as though assaulting the world speed record for steam traction while actually accomplishing a brisk 7 mph in forward motion.

In this fashion, our tired but triumphant cavalcade rolled into a darkened and deserted Tenterden Station, where the locomotives were speedily berthed and the exhausted but triumphant members present finally staggered away home to fall into a deep and dreamless sleep.

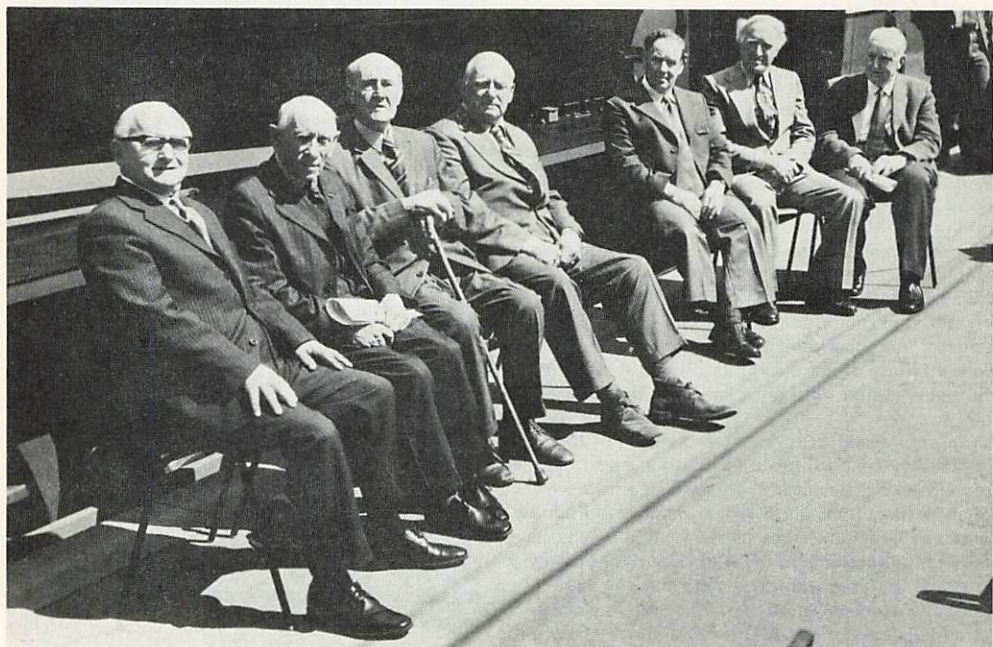
From time to time the Colonel Stephens' railways were noted for the variety which they presented on the railway scene, but I sincerely believe that I saw and experienced that night perhaps one of the most extraordinary sights ever seen in the history of the Railway. It was an occasion which endeared "Gervase" (despite the bad language she engendered at times) to all who knew her as a working locomotive, and it is my earnest wish that, as the first engine to run on the K.&E.S.R. again after its abandonment by British Railways, she will one day be resuscitated to delight a future generation of railfans with her bizarre appearance.

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Wide range of specimens, including rare items from branch lines and closed stations. S.A.E. for list to: Dept. T, Tenterden Railway Co. Ltd., Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent.

All Together Again

(photographs Brian Stephenson)



Former members of the staff of the Kent & East Sussex Railway and of Colonel Stephens' Tonbridge offices were invited to the official reopening of Wittersham Road station on 16th June 1978. Prior to the ceremonies, William Holman Austen unveiled the nameplates on Austerity locomotive No. 24, "William Austen" after his father, William Henry Austen, the former General Manager of the Railway. Mr Austen then presented to Philip Shaw, on behalf of the museum, a small model locomotive with an interesting and poignant history. Originally given to H.F. Stephens by his father, it was subsequently given to W.H. Austen Junior as a child by Stephens. It can therefore almost certainly lay claim to fame as "Colonel Stephens' first locomotive".

left to right

Archie Judd (Salford Terrace)
Tommy Edwards (Salford Terrace)
Arthur Iggulden (Salford Terrace)
Bill Austen (Salford Terrace)
Jack Hoad (Driver, K.&E.S.R.)
Eric Thompson (Driver, K.&E.S.R.)
Arthur Harris (Tenterden station, K.&E.S.R.)

Wittersham Road - The Story of a Station

Project Co-ordinator Paul Sutton, describes the reconstruction of the new temporary terminus for the railway

"I'd like you to be the Wittersham Road Co-ordinator" said the Chairman at the other end of the 'phone. As these words sank in a terrible vision of hundreds of tons of earth surrounded by pools of water and rusty steel sleepers poking out from odd places at grotesque angles, passed before my eyes

However, to start at the beginning: Wittersham Road Station was constructed, with the others on the southern half of the line, between 1897 and 1900. Its principal role was that of a country goods yard serving the farms and estates in the surrounding district. The passenger facilities were even more meagre than the humble comforts offered at the other stations. One small corrugated iron building served as goods and booking office as well as waiting room. There were no electricity, gas or water supplies. The only noteworthy feature was that the building was placed at the end of the platform and at right angles to it. However, it served its purpose satisfactorily and in the early years was, by all accounts, fairly busy. Nevertheless as traffic declined generally on the line, the importance of Wittersham Road shrank even faster. A brief period of glory came during the early part of the Second World War when a 9.2 inch Howitzer battery was stationed there for a while.

When passenger facilities were withdrawn in 1954 the building was demolished and the platform face removed. For the next 20 years the only signs of the old station were the earth bank remains of the platform, with the inevitable K.&E.S.R. hedge at the back; some small remnants of the building; the goods loading dock; foundations of the staff bungalow in David Barham's adjoining field and the two sidings, still laid with original 60 lb. rail. A sleeper-built permanent way hut sat in the middle of the site, resisting all attempts by Nature to remove it.

When the present Organization decided to rebuild Wittersham Road, it was thought that a small platform and building would suffice as its main function would be that of a passing place for trains between Tenterden and Northiam. However, as time went on, it became apparent that Northiam was going to take much longer to reach than originally thought and Wittersham Road would assume greater importance for some time to come. The ideas were further influenced by the Railway Inspectorate's wishes that the new

platform should be capable of taking a 5 coach train.

So Wittersham Road Mk.II was born and plans were drawn up by our then Building Department Manager, Cliff Mason and submitted to Ashford Borough Council, with services expected to resume in March 1977. The plan showed a five coach platform, with a booking office/sales department building built at right angles to the railway and separate from the platform. This was not done purely for sentimental reasons, but as the site was long and narrow, it was the most practical way of siting the building. Car park space would be provided, and the siding relaid for permanent way department use. A signal box was also included as the Signals & Telecommunications Department were going to signal Wittersham Road out at some time in the future.

The main activities beyond the limit of passenger operation at this time (1975) had been the permanent way department relaying exercise using some of the steel sleepers recovered from beyond Junction Road. John Miller's gangs worked hard on clearance and Gordon Laming's London group put in some drains at Wittersham Road, uncovered the old loading dock and worked on the loop site, assisted by Tunbridge Wells Area Group.

At about this time Tunbridge Wells Area Group asked if they could be responsible for supplying and erecting the station building at Wittersham Road. Their scheme was approved and they finally located one at Borth, near Aberystwyth. The initial cost of this building was minimal, but by the time B.R. flagmen had been paid and transport bills settled, the cost had risen steeply. The first tasks, once everything was on site, were to brush preservative on to all the main structural timbers and to renew those which had suffered too much from the ravages of 80 odd Cambrian Winters. The main framework soon rose up on the concrete base and the old cladding (with some new) was refixed to the sides and ends. The windows and doors were now found to be unsuitable for refitting and Dennis Strongitharm, the new Chairman of Tunbridge Wells Area Group, arranged for replacements to be made by students of the Construction Department of the South East London College. The roof had consisted of corrugated asbestos sheets which had fared badly during dismantling and removal to Kent. At my suggestion these were replaced with corrugated steel

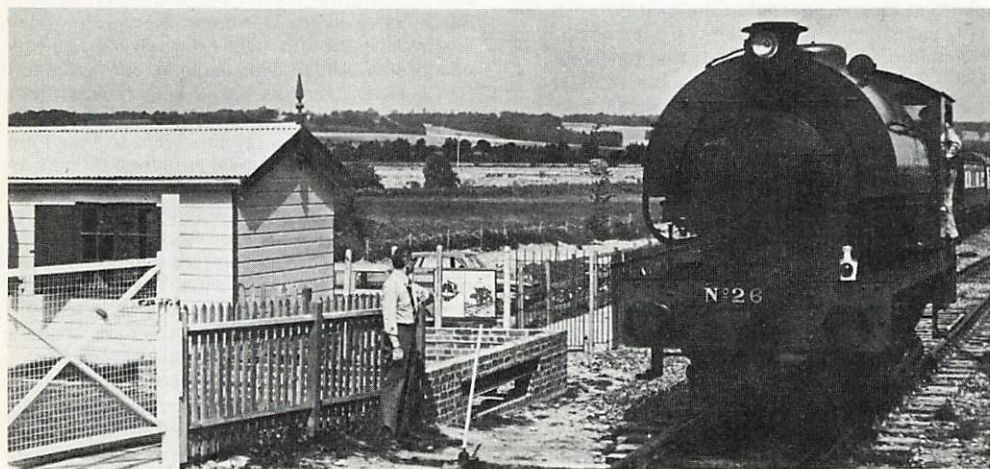
sheets, being a stronger alternative and more in keeping with other station buildings on the line.

During the Spring of 1976 the Company had applied for and was given a grant from the Manpower Services Commission to employ 12 people under the Job Creation Programme. Their main tasks were to be the erection of the Newmill Bridge, relaying the rest of the track to Wittersham Road with the associated permanent way work, laying a loop there and constructing a platform and car park. Everything was to be ready for the start of the 1977 season in March with an official opening ceremony later in the year. Passenger trains ran to Wittersham Road on the due date, but there were speed restrictions on the main line; the alignment of the loop had room for improvement (to say the least) and apart from the main structure of the station building, there was not much more to be seen than hundreds of tons of earth, large pools of water and the odd steel sleeper . . . ! The impetus which had accompanied the completion of the bridge and the track work to the Station site declined somewhat. There was a change in the J.C.P. management and the planned June 1977 official reopening date came and went, although some had never really regarded it as feasible anyway — perhaps that was the trouble. It became obvious that no station facilities were going to exist that year and that the opening of the 1978 season would have to be the new target.

It is worth saying a few words at this point about the platform. Many ideas had been put forward for its construction, ranging from two walls in

blockwork with concrete sleepers laid across and surfaced, to an all wooden structure made from sleepers. For better or worse it was decided to build a mass concrete wall with earth infill at the rear, utilising some of the concrete sleeper pots obtained from the Eastern Region in 1976, bolted at right angles to form the first 6 inches of overhang and putting standard S.R./B.R. platform copings on top of these, making the second 6 inches of overhang. The Ministry requirements specify a 12 inch overhang on all new platforms to provide a safety recess between the rails and the platform base. The casting of the concrete wall sections progressed slowly through the summer of 1977 and some of the earth backfill was put in position; by this time doubts were being openly aired on whether everything would be ready at any time next year, let alone the beginning of the season. It was at this juncture that I was appointed Project Co-ordinator.

Shortly afterwards, John Mallory, the J.C.P. Manager, left us to take up a new post. During John's period of notice someone telephoned to enquire if we wanted any help at weekends, casually mentioning that he was a Civil Engineer and was unemployed at the time! He was interviewed and offered the job of Project Manager which he accepted. Thus Mike James came to the Railway and immediately got to grips with some of the problems. A Drott Excavator was hired and transferred the earth spoil heaps from the middle of the site to the platform area. It also graded and levelled the rest of the site. The transformation acted like a tonic; workers, paid



Wittersham Road Station, looking north

[Donald H. Wilson]

and volunteers alike, were encouraged — some even said that there might be a station there after all!

When it had been decided to use coping slabs to face the platform no one actually knew where they would come from. Investigations were made at Folkestone Warren and Great Chart, near Ashford. At both locations varying quantities of pre-cast concrete platform sections were found, but no slabs. Eventually I decided that a tour of the old Tunbridge Wells-Eastbourne branch (the Cuckoo Line) was called for. Incredibly the up platform at Heathfield Station had virtually all its copings intact. Although that part of the line had been the last to close in 1968, the track and ballast had long been removed and a small stream flowed merrily between the up and down platforms. Despite ten years since closure the area still belonged to B.R. Property Board, the goods yard being used as a commercial vehicle and bus park. Negotiations were opened with B.R. and eventually we were told the slabs were ours for 50p each. Mike James and I surveyed the area one evening and decided that, provided a crane could drive on to the down platform by way of the rear of the goods loading dock, the slabs could be loaded on to vehicles. In case some think that the copings in question are a form of garden patio slab, it should be said that they measure 4 ft x 3 ft x 4 ins thick and weigh 5½ cwt each! The slabs were levered out of the platform surface and moved to the crane slings on rollers and by an ingenious device invented by J.C.P. Foreman, Dave Levitt. After some delays, they were all safely conveyed to Wittersham Road and carefully aligned on a mortar bed on top of the sleeper pots; Messrs Levitt and his assistant David Harris being the leading lights on this thankless job. The redundant platform at Junction Road was utilised for its ramp sections and the 12 standard coping slabs that were on them. The remaining different sized slabs were used on the path to the Station building.

As we were still short of various materials to give the right atmosphere, I thought a visit to my local station, Cranbrook, might yield something. Even though this closed on the same day as the K.&E.S.R. (10th June 1961) I was surprised to find the railing fence at the back of the platform complete and the main platform nameboard still in position. Enquiries revealed that the owners were not far away and they readily agreed to the material being re-used on our line. A further visit resulted in our being presented with a S.E.R. enamel "Gentlemen" sign and an S.R. "Cranbrook

Station" sign. These will appear in the Museum at a later date. While a gang of us was removing the railing panels and sign board I remembered that C.J. Gammell's book "Southern Branch Lines 1955-65" had a picture on the dust jacket of a rose growing up a lamp on Cranbrook platform just to the left of the signboard. Next to a depression in the ground where the lamp had been we found the rose, somewhat old and battered, but alive. At the end of the day it was carefully dug up and given a temporary home in Martin Phillips's garden.

It had been decided to ask a "Big Name" to open Wittersham Road and the date fixed for 26th May. This gave everyone a target to work to. Some jobs had fallen behind their planned completion times; these delays were largely due to the appalling weather through the Winter and long periods of continuous rain since the Drott machine had started earthmoving in November. The Spring saw lots of tasks being completed. The level crossing gates were hung; fencing which had kindly been donated by Sandell Perkins was erected at the back of the platform; the Cranbrook railings were put up on the trackside of the path from the platform to the building. The nameboard, which had been beautifully restored and signwritten by A.T. Palmer of Headcorn came back and was erected. The arrangement and style of the lettering was copied from a 1930's photo of Wittersham Road and Palmers also visited the Museum and studied the Tenterden Town sign. The lamp posts from Cowden and Hever which had languished at the back of the carriage sidings at Tenterden were "planted" and painted. As the amount of detailed work increased, involvement from the volunteer members grew; Dave Stubbs and his buildings department laid the kerbstones along the edge of the road and round into the entrance and also installed a water supply to the back of the signal box. The brickwork of the box was done by Stan Colyer, and soakaways were put in at the same time. An old level crossing gate was utilised for the front entrance and repaired by the Engineering Department of the J.C.P., now led by Paul Hatcher, who found time to straighten iron railings, make latches and hinges for gates and assemble fencing into panels, in between keeping our dubious selection of plant and machinery working.

The feverish activity that was going on 7 days a week in May now caused many people driving past to slow down or stop to look as the transformation since the beginning of the year was incredible. 200 tons of ex-B.R. ballast had improved the loop track both for level and height.

I DECLARE THIS STATION OPEN.... *[Brian Stephenson]*

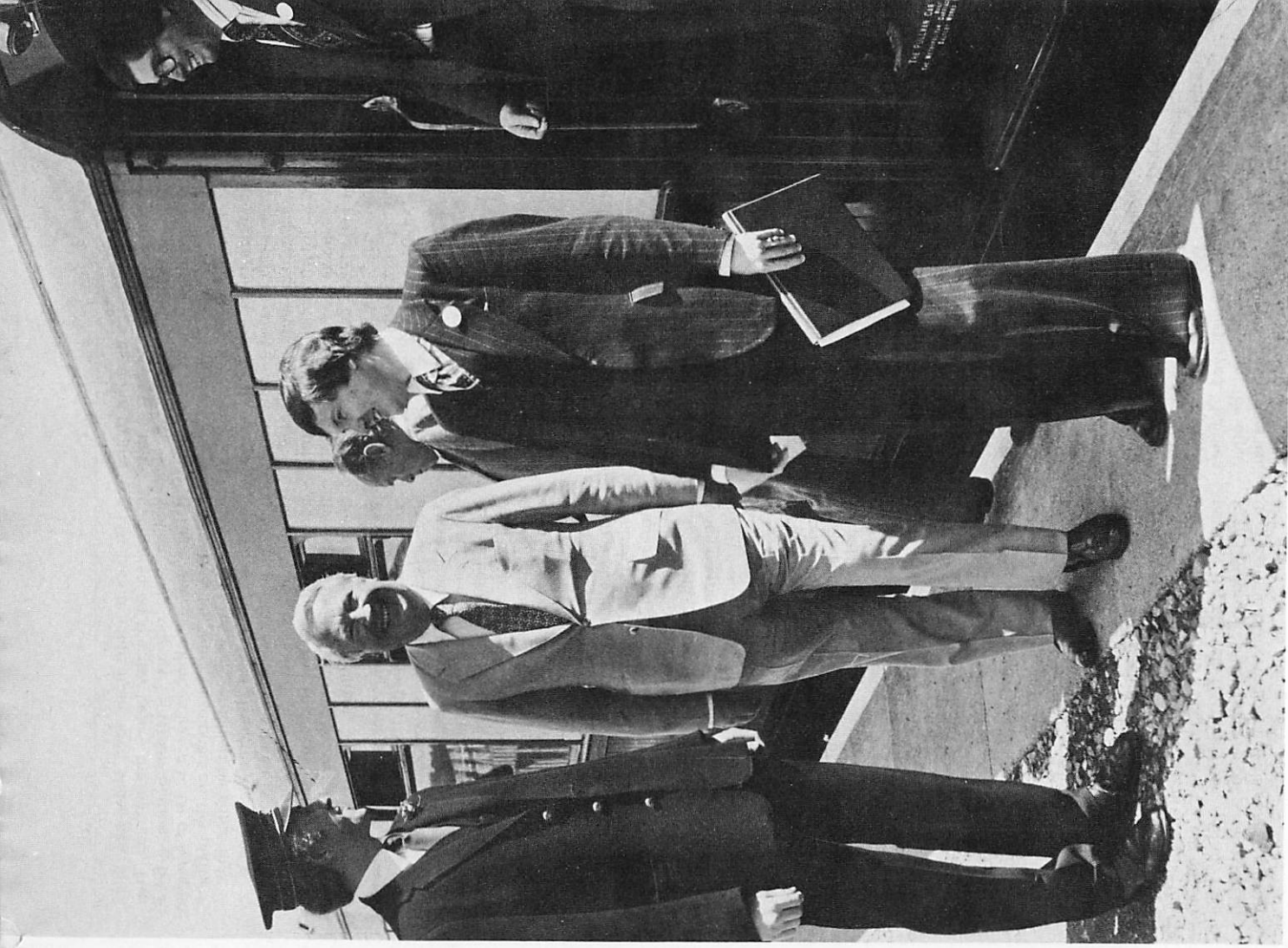
The Rt Hon Edward Heath, M.B.E., M.P., kindly performed the opening ceremonies at Wittersham Road station on 16th June 1978

(right) moment of arrival

l to r Martin Phillips (Station Agent), The Rt Hon Edward Heath, Stephen Bennett (Chairman), Paul Sutton (Director).

(left) The speech is delivered





Clearance tests were done in the platform by the rail car and then No. 23 with 2 coaches. A date was fixed for Major Rose of the Railway Inspectorate to come and inspect the new works. The night before his arrival saw three figures still painting a white line along the platform edge at 10.10 p.m! Major Rose came and was pleased with what he saw — sighs of relief — now for the Opening; it was going to be tight, then came relaxation: due to an International Assignment the Big Name, now revealed as the Right Hon. Edward Heath, could not make 26th May. After hurried consultations a new date was set for 16th June. Our luck was holding, for the alteration came just before the official invitations were to be printed.

Meanwhile, back on the Site, after little activity on the Borth building during the Winter, Tunbridge Wells Area Group's pace quickened as the reopening date(s) approached. The painting was completed inside and out, windows and doors fitted and glazed, the finials applied to the roof. The floor was replaced and a hardboard overlay put down pending the fixing of floor tiles at a later date. The South East London College also made a handsome sales counter and ticket hatch in selected softwood with a natural finish and an ex-S.R. ticket rack was fixed to the wall, together with a date stamp on the counter. The completed building, a credit to those who had worked on its reconstruction, was handed over to the Commercial Department at the beginning of June. The J.C.P. surfaced the platform and flower beds were put in under the direction of members John Miller and Martin Phillips; the latter had now been appointed Station Agent. A trench for the water supply to the former Shrewsbury Abbey tower was dug from the stop cock by the road and down the back of the platform, the pipe put in and the trench back-filled by Colin Edwards. The car park was then cleared and surfaced; the patio area to the rear of the building was finished and a ramp was included to assist those in wheel-chairs coming up from the car park.

Evening working sessions were very pleasant as the weather had now improved and painting was accompanied by the sounds of cuckoos, marsh frogs, partridges and a cock blackbird who had a very individual style of singing. On three consecutive evenings we were entertained by a barn owl which seemed to float along above the drainage ditches. During the final week the last of the painting was done, posters pasted on to newly hung sign boards and notices displayed. The area between the building and road and on the other side of the entrance had been cleared and levelled, top soil brought in and 600 turves were then laid;

a last minute effort from John Miller saw this completed on the day before the opening. Two station seats, one ex-Tenterden Station, a S.E.R. pattern, and the other, believed to be of Midland Railway origin, were positioned on the platform. Further touches were provided by some milk churns, obtained from Headcorn dairy and a luggage barrow which had been repaired and restored by pupils from the Harvey Grammar School at Folkestone. This work was taken on by the boys in addition to their monthly activity with the clearance department.

The 16th dawned bright and sunny and remained so for the rest of the day. Mr Heath arrived unavoidably late and the welcoming party was rushed into Tenterden Station where invited guests were already assembled and Bill Austen had earlier named locomotive No. 24 "William H. Austen" in memory of his father, the former general manager of the Railway; No. 23 simmered at the other end of the train and we were soon on our way to Wittersham Road. The 5 coach formation including Pullman "Barbara" arrived with a sizeable crowd waiting and the flags and bunting flying. Chairman, Stephen Bennett made a short speech and introduced Mr Heath who gave a very entertaining response. After photographs, autographs, chats, introductions and a buffet lunch he returned to Tenterden for a quick visit to the museum. The whole event had gone very well and received excellent coverage on T.V. and in the Press. Everyone had combined to make the project a success, something which at one time seemed impossible. Mike James and his group were responsible for the majority of the work and it should not be forgotten that without the J.C.P. grants we almost certainly would not be running over the Newmill Channel, let alone into Wittersham.

What of the future? The oil lamps will be placed on their posts once the Skill Centre at Gillingham has finished renovating them. The signal box has to be completed and the signalling system installed. I hope we can have a hard surface put on the platform for next year. The Maidstone Area Group will be repairing and erecting the water tower. The Gardens and Estates Department will continue their good work and the Permanent Way Department will establish a yard at the far end of the site once the ground has been cleared. It is hoped that a picnic area can be created at the top end of David Barham's field next to the car park in time for the start of 1979 services. And the rose from Cranbrook? Well, that has been transplanted to one of the platform flower beds next to a lamp and seems to be doing very nicely.

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What You Think of the Tenterden Terrier

The Questionnaire distributed with the last issue was very well supported and 358 members (about 23% of the total) completed the form; 12 forms were received from non-members. An analysis of the replies is shown opposite. On the whole, members seem to be well satisfied with the present content of the magazine and 39% indicated no changes required at all. Inevitably, perhaps, the overall theme was "more of everything", something we cannot comply with at the present time due to financial constraints. About 28% of the replies were in favour of extending the coverage to include topics of a general railway nature (particularly those concerned with other preservation schemes) but this is not deemed to be sufficient to justify such a major change in direction, in view of the limited space available. There was plenty of enthusiasm for the high historical content of the magazine (the Bluebell Railway found a similar demand for nostalgia arising from its questionnaire) both in respect of the Kent & East Sussex and other "Colonel Stephens" material, although a significant number would prefer a greater concentration on current events. As one member put it, "The Rooter is more informative... and exudes an air of optimism. The Tenterden Terrier dwells on the past."; another member preferred "more of a down to earth style rather than a 1930 guide book style"; yet a third wrote, "I feel that the Terrier is written too much for the academic rather than the average practical volunteer and is perhaps at times pompous in style"; saddest of all was the comment "The Terrier is all very nice but it doesn't make the railway for me". Other replies were less critical — "a fine magazine which reflects very closely the ideas and activities of the working membership"; "please do not alter anything — the mixture is perfect" and "can we afford such a high class magazine?" General observations aside, the large number of specific ideas for future material were exceptionally helpful; there was a great demand for more information on the rolling stock and locomotives; technical data on maintenance and operating; the role of the Board and how decisions are made; the people who help to run the Railway and who write the magazine; scale drawings of locomotives; articles on modelling and more photographs. On the historical side, there were requests for information on the coaching stock prior to closure (much research remains to be done on this subject); coverage of the 1948 to 1961 period; freight services and L.C.G.B. Specials; the Headcorn to Tenterden section and the East Kent Railway and Hawkhurst branches. Some people had difficulty in understanding the technical terms

used in the magazine and there were references to the duplication of information in The Rooter. A number of people were interested in production costs, advertising and circulation and a summary of information is contained at the end of this survey

Altogether, the Questionnaire is judged to be a great success and many of the ideas will be incorporated in articles for the magazine in 1979. Perhaps the whole effort was most eloquently summarised by the member who wrote "remember you can't please all the members all the time". Well, perhaps we can't — but we will go on trying!

The Tenterden Terrier has a print run of 2500 copies, of which 1600 are distributed to the membership and most of the remainder sold through the bookshop. Currently, the production cost per copy is 25p, advertising revenue is equivalent to 3p, leaving a net cost of 22p. It is not possible to allocate further funds to the magazine budget at the present time, except to allow for inflation and therefore additional pages and colour printing cannot be considered unless costs are reduced. The only practical ways of reducing unit costs are to increase the membership and raise the number of sales to non-members either through the bookshop or by subscription. Recent attempts to do this by advertising have only been modestly successful. The production cycle for the magazine is approximately six weeks and it is inevitable that news is rather out of date by the time it appears in print. The Rooter, written by the Company Secretary, is printed on our offset machine at the station, usually over one weekend and the cost is fairly negligible. The content of The Rooter is intended to be highly topical, but not necessarily of long lasting interest. Material judged to be part of the permanent record of the Railway is repeated in The Tenterden Terrier.

Contributions to The Tenterden Terrier are welcome from both members and non-members. Historical articles should generally be confined to previously unpublished material. Black and white photographs of scenes, people and events on the Railway are welcome, but colour prints and prints made from colour slides are not suitable for reproduction. It is recommended that photographs are hand developed and printed by a specialist photographer.

THE TENTERDEN TERRIER — QUESTIONNAIRE, JULY 1978

About The Magaine

1. How do you think that the magazine compares with similar publications produced by other railway societies:-

Badly **3** Average **75** Very Well **214** Don't know **78**

2. How do you like the general style of the magazine and the topics covered:-

Not very much **4** Quite well **206** Very much **160**

3. How do you regard the standard of the articles in the magazine in terms of content and literary style:-

Low **3** Average **152** High **215**

4. Would you like to see changes in the content of the magazine:-

Yes **227** No **143**

5. If the answer to question 4 is YES, what changes would you like to see in the coverage of the following:-

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Articles on the K.&E.S.R. post preservation scene | More 114 | Less 8 | Same 105 |
| Notes and news on the K.&E.S.R. post preservation scene | More 115 | Less 8 | Same 104 |
| Historical articles on the K.&E.S.R. | More 113 | Less 24 | Same 90 |
| Articles on other "Colonel Stephens" lines | More 78 | Less 56 | Same 93 |
| Articles of a general railway nature (none at the moment) | Yes 105 | No 122 | |

About Yourself

1. Are you a member of the Tenterden Railway Company Ltd.:-

Yes **358** No **12**

2. Would you continue your membership of the Tenterden Railway Company if "The Tenterden Terrier" was not published (non-members please ignore):-

Yes **283** No **75**

3. Do you regard yourself as primarily:-

| | |
|---|------------|
| A "Colonel Stephens" railway enthusiast | 39 |
| A Kent & East Sussex Railway enthusiast | 154 |
| Just somebody who likes steam trains | 152 |
| A supporter of a worthy charity | 20 |
| Other | 5 |

4. Are you a member of any other organisation operating a preserved railway in this country:-

Yes **166** No **204**

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Shropshire Sidelines

Running trains was by no means the only source of revenue for the economy-conscious Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway. A. Michael Davies and Stephen Garrett have been investigating . . .

Even during those halcyon days when the incomes of Colonel Stephens' railways exceeded their expenses none of his lines were ever really able to consider themselves well off. This was not only apparent in their economical operating methods and rosters of secondhand stock but also in the ingenious ways that each of them found to cut costs and to find supplementary sources of income. Of all the Colonel's lines the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire was perhaps the most inventive in this respect.

As early as 1912 the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire was showing a clear intention of making maximum use of its assets by letting out the shooting rights over the line to a Colonel Hall for £4.10.0d p.a. It would be interesting to know what steps were taken to prevent the running of the railway from interfering with the Colonel's shooting or vice versa. No fatalities appear to have been occasioned so it must be assumed that a satisfactory *modus vivendi* was reached.

Shooting was not to be the only leisure pursuit promoted by the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire. From 1921 until the end of passenger services in 1933 the line's handbills and tourist literature drew the public's attention to the possibilities for boating and camping offered by the Railway's boats and camping huts.

The boats consisted of two heavy ship's dinghies and two light rowing skiffs. These were available at 6d per hour plus a further 6d per hour should the services of an oarsman be required. They were located at Crew Green on the Criggion Branch close to the confluence of the Rivers Severn and Vrynwy and just upstream from the Melverley Viaduct.

The camping huts were introduced for the 1922 season and seem to have been part of a job lot of surplus War Department equipment. They were most unusual circular huts, 15 ft in diameter, made of corrugated iron and making no concession to comfort beyond the fitting of a timber floor



"Mushroom Terrace", Crew Green, c. 1931. The "river" is, in fact, the railway track submerged by floods
[Mrs M. Cadman]

S.&M.4.

Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway.

EXCURSION TICKETS

Are issued daily from SHREWSBURY and other Stations
to various places of interest on the Line.

For particulars see small Bills.

Commodious Camping Huts

Are provided at the following places:

| | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| Crew Green | } | RENT 7s. per week. |
| Criggion | | 10s. deposit on key of Hut |
| Shrawardine | | Season Tickets to Shrewsbury at reasonable Rates. |

Attractions:—Fishing, Rowing, Boating, Bathing, Sketching,
and Hill Climbing.

BOATS

PROVIDED AT CREW GREEN AT
VERY REASONABLE RATES.

Apply to Mr J. TURNER, District Traffic Agent,
New House, Crew Green.

A TEA ROOM is provided at Criggion Station, and Refreshments can
be obtained. -- Large parties should give a days notice, stating
requirements to Mrs. PERCIVAL, Crew Green, or to J. L. WHITE,
Abbey Station, Shrewsbury.

H. F. STEPHENS

Managing Director.

Printed by the K. & F'S. Railway, Kent.

and central stove. Internal partitions made a semi-circular living room and two tiny bedrooms. Today the Company would most certainly have been in breach of the Trade Descriptions Act in offering these as "Commodious Camping Huts".

Initially five huts were located at Crew Green, immediately behind the Goods Store and siding, in the field sloping down to the River Severn. A further hut stood in the field beside the Cafe at Criggion with two or three more close to Shrawardine Viaduct. Only those at Crew Green survived the first season, the one at Criggion later serving as a store for the cafe. An identical hut stood beside the platform at Shepherdswell on the East Kent Railway used originally as a waiting room but becoming a repository for mouldering waybills in later years until its final removal by British Railways.

The Crew Green huts were let throughout their time at 7/- per week, plus 10/- deposit on the key. Additional incentives were special season ticket rates to Shrewsbury whilst the 1922 handbill was particularly keen to draw attention to the many sports and pastimes of this pleasant Montgomeryshire outpost. Known as "Mushroom Terrace" from their black sides and round white roofs they were numbered 1 to 5 and for many years the month of August saw them occupied by the same families from Liverpool, Nottingham, Shrewsbury and Bloxwich. During the lean years of the early Thirties some of the huts were occupied throughout the year by homeless people of the locality and miserable they must have been without water or proper sanitation; at least one child is known to have died from malnutrition there. An "Elsan" at each end of the field completed the "Terrace".

The huts remained in use until the outbreak of war in 1939 although by that time parties arrived at Crew Green by road. However, "Gazelle" and the ex-Wolseley Siddeley railbus body were in great

demand for excursions along the line and one stalwart schoolmaster brought a party of boys from Runcorn every summer by rail throughout to Crew Green. He was obviously a connoisseur of minor railways for it is still recalled that he and the boys would make day trips by train as far afield as Bishops Castle! All lettings ceased after 1939 and one by one they became casualties of the elements, finally disintegrating about 1945.

Responsibility for the management of the huts and boats rested with Mr John Turner of New House, Crew Green. Turner was not an employee of the Railway but combined the duties of District Traffic Agent with those of local carrier, coal and lime merchant and farmer whilst also serving on the parish council and as a magistrate. Mrs Turner let rooms in New House and Colonel Stephens stayed there on several occasions. A renowned pastrycook, having at one time been in private service with Mr Palmer of Huntley & Palmers, it is recalled that she always baked large numbers of fruit tarts whenever Stephens was expected and he was never known to leave one uneaten!

The Turners' nephew, Mr G.H. Williams, still lives at Crew Green and remembers the Colonel's visits very vividly from his military bearing and clipped speech. On one occasion Mr Williams was required to take Stephens from Crew Green to Llanymynech in his uncle's six-seat brake and he was greatly impressed by the array of Cambrian top brass waiting to meet the Colonel to discuss some matter relating to the footbridge at the junction station there. It is notable that Stephens chose to travel in a hired brake rather than go to the expense of ordering a special train.

In 1930 the Company prevailed upon Mr Turner to lease the entire boat and camping enterprise from them for £10 p.a. though he insisted that the boats and huts first be put into good repair. Whether this was done is not clear but the 1931 Directors' Minutes report him as being no longer



Shepherdswell Station, 1930's. The mushroom hut can be seen on the right [S.R.Garrett Collection]

willing to continue at £10 p.a. although prepared to act as agent for the Railway at 15% commission. Mr Turner lived to be 98 and it is incredible to reflect that during his lifetime he saw the old "Potts" come and go, then the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire and finally the Railway controlled by the military.

It should not be imagined that the Railway's ingenuity was confined to dabbling in the early package holiday business. Few stones were left unturned in the search for economies so that in 1930, for example, the Directors ordered engine drivers to avoid using the water tower at Shrewsbury (the one now destined for use at Wittersham Road) except in emergencies as the Water Company was now metering the Shrewsbury supply. This appears to have led to a drastic depletion of the Railway's water resources elsewhere as in 1932 the Directors had to order that the pool at Kinnerley be deepened and urged drivers to stop taking water from the brook!

In the meantime the Railway had sought to increase its dwindling traffic by purchasing a motorcycle for the line's canvasser, Mr Jones. This machine cost the Company £16 but lest other employees should seek to follow Mr Jones'

example it was decided that he should maintain and insure it at his own expense! The only other form of road transport recorded in the Company's annual returns at this time was a donkey which was employed at Kinnerley from 1929 to 1938 to haul the local parcel delivery cart and is still remembered with affection for the rides that he gave to village children in his field.

For all their ingenuity the Directors could not stave off the logical consequences of falling receipts for ever. Passenger services ceased in 1933 though the Company continued to run specials at bank holidays and whenever else suitable opportunities arose. A recovery in demand for stone for road building enabled freight traffic to remain substantial enough for the line to stay open until taken over by the Railway Executive at the outbreak of the Second World War with subsequent refurbishment under Army control. As a parting entrepreneurial move one of the last independent actions of the Directors was to let Shrewsbury Abbey waiting room to the A.R.P. for £1 a week. It's an ill wind . . . !

With grateful acknowledgement for the invaluable help and assistance of Mr G.H. Williams of Crew Green.

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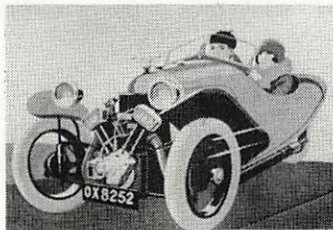
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Letters to the Editor

American Steam in Britain

Sir — Bravo for Simon Green and his campaign for returning "Maunsell" back to service. At last, an interesting machine will interrupt the unending series of pot-bellied Austerities. One thing, however, is to me unacceptable; that the boiler from "Wainwright" be exchanged for the inferior one from "Maunsell". This is not the first time that "Wainwright" is being cannibalised and we will end up in a situation where we possess one magnificent, but cheaply restored locomotive and a heap of scrap. Far better to delay the project and raise the extra cash to repair No. 22 as it stands. Le Havre

Jo Roesen

Bob Forsythe, Locomotive Manager, writes: "Wainwright's" boiler was transferred to "Maunsell" so that this locomotive could be repaired very quickly — probably by next May. It is, however, intended to utilise any surplus funds raised from the Maunsell appeal to restore "Wainwright" as soon as possible.

Signalling the restored railway

Sir — I have read with interest recent letters (Tenterden Terrier, Summer 1978) regarding the way the railway is to be run, in particular signalling. In general I commend the recent

developments on the railway — it is still basically the light railway that Colonel Stephens built. The stations were simple and still are; short of complete rebuilding, nothing can change this. Surely the new Wittersham Road is a perfect example and I think a great deal of trouble has been gone to in order to preserve the light railway atmosphere. However, the original stations Colonel Stephens built were small and there are problems in adapting them to the needs of the present day — lengthening platforms to accommodate "short" 5 coach trains is an example. However, I am sure that it can be done satisfactorily.

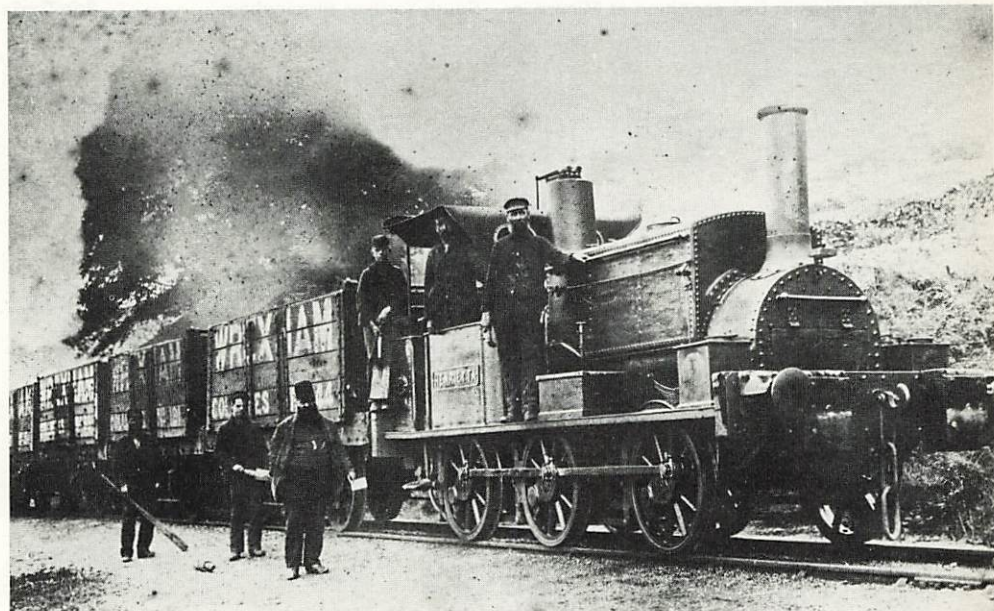
Tewkesbury, Glos.

S.W. Branchett

Selsey Locomotives

Sir — Michael Davies's article on the history of the Selsey Tramway locomotive "Hesperus" (Tenterden Terrier, Summer 1978) has reminded me of some information on another Selsey locomotive which has recently come to light.

On 9th February 1978, I received a request to identify a photograph of an industrial locomotive working at Minera lead mines, near Wrexham, from material in the Clwyd Record Office. Though the Industrial Railway Society had no record of this locomotive being there, there was fortunately



[Author's Collection]

no difficulty in identifying her. She is an inside-cylindered 0-6-0 saddle tank with nameplates "Henrietta" on the cabside and clearly of early Manning Wardle design; the name gave the clue — J.J. Charlesworth Ltd. of Leeds had MW 21 of 1861, which they named "Henrietta" (it was not so named on despatch from the makers). Well, students of Colonel Stephens' locomotive history will already have realised that this is the locomotive that eventually became "Sidlesham" on the Selsey line, and there is enough supporting evidence to dispose of any doubt.

However, as with most of the Colonel's dealings, some queries arise. The engine on the photograph does not carry a Manning Wardle plate, but a Hawthorn Leslie one; presumably she went to Hawthorn Leslie for overhaul at some time, and this could explain how Manning Wardle lost touch with her, as spares enquiries would no longer reach them directly. According to the Minute Books of the United Minera Mining Company in the Clwyd Record Office, the locomotive was in bad condition in February 1899, and appears to have been disposed of shortly afterwards. Edward Griffith, in his book *Selsey Tramways* (third edition) states that she was working at Blagdon Waterworks, near Bristol, soon after 1900, and, after being extensively rebuilt and overhauled by Hawthorn Leslie, was acquired by the Selsey line in 1907. If she was in bad condition at Minera in

1899, she was probably not much better at Blagdon, hence the necessity for the rebuild. Rebuilt she certainly was, but one would have expected Hawthorn Leslie to affix a plate saying so; but the engine in "ex-works" condition on the photograph in Griffith's book (page 43) carried no plate — though one can see where the original Hawthorn Leslie plate had been and also the nameplate, by marks under the new paint.

Consider next the top deck portion; at Minera "Henrietta" sported a stovepipe chimney and a clumsy-looking safety valve. Another photograph on page 19 of Griffith's book shows "Sidlesham" with a neat copper-capped chimney and the old safety valve, while the photo on page 43 shows her with the copper-capped chimney and a nice polished brass safety valve cover. She must have had new safety valves, too, as the originals would not have gone inside the new cover. So it would seem that "Sidlesham" had a later rebuild (at Selsey or elsewhere?) in the course of which the safety valves were changed, and the locomotive repainted; and possibly lost her Hawthorn Leslie plates. This last point perhaps indicates that the rebuilding was carried out by another locomotive builder; whoever did it, the finished engine looked a lot more presentable than "Henrietta", as can be seen from the front cover picture of *"Selsey Tramways"*.

South Yardley, Birmingham

Eric Tonks

Book Review

Light Railways of Britain — Standard Gauge and Narrow Gauge by H.C. Casserley, published by Bradford Barton at £3.95. 90 pages of photographs with captions.

A great debt is owed to the handful of railway photographers from the period between the Wars who took time off from the fascination of the main lines to record the activities of the already disappearing branches and backwaters of the railway system. Particular gratitude is owed to H.C. Casserley not only for his choice of subjects at this time but also for the great quality of his photographic work. It was therefore with some disappointment that this reviewer discovered that the album under review not only consisted of photographs from a number of different sources but also that a number of the photographs used were already familiar as a result of their previous use in other books and periodicals.

However, for the newcomer to the world of "light railways" this album of well reproduced photographs with accurate and informative captions can be heartily recommended. The range of lines covered is wide, the term "light railway" having been interpreted fairly liberally, and the choice of subjects avoids concentration solely on locomotives by including views of stations, rolling stock and other features. The lines run by Colonel Stephens, naturally including the Kent & East Sussex, receive their due share of attention except

for the unexplained omission of both the Snailbeach and the Plymouth Devonport & South Western Junction though the latter is perhaps compensated for by the inclusion of three fine views of the North Devon & Cornwall Junction, a line much neglected in the past.

It is sometimes argued that there are too many albums on the market today coupled with an implication that if fewer albums were produced then more serious railway histories would be published. It cannot be denied, however, that a considerable demand exists for albums and when they are produced to as good a standard as that under review here it would be ungenerous not to applaud. Furthermore, should the album's readers be encouraged by what they see to come and travel from Tenterden then we will owe Mr. Casserley another debt of gratitude.

S.R.G.

Also received — Taking the Train, Railway Travel in Victorian Times by Philippa Bignell, published by H.M.S.O. on behalf of the National Railway Museum/Science Museum. 32 pages of text and photographs. Price 95p.

A well presented and colourful booklet dealing with all aspects of railway travel in the last century in a non-technical way, including some nice illustrations of surviving relics in the National collection.

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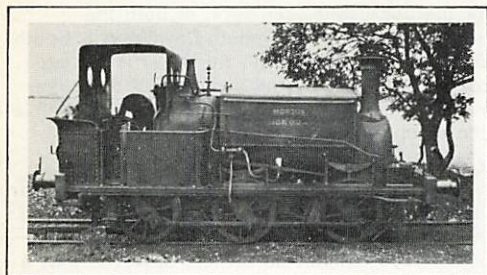
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"Morous" will be pleased to answer your questions concerning Colonel Stephens and his railways

Can you give details of surviving standard gauge locomotives which may be regarded as "Colonel Stephens" engines? The obvious examples are Shropshire & Montgomeryshire No. 1 "Gazelle" at York, East Kent No. 5 on the Bluebell and our own No. 3 "Bodiam". Has Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley No. 2 "Pontyberem" now at Didcot any claim to be included and are there any others still extant?

Ashford, Kent

R. Black

It is most unlikely that any standard gauge steam locomotive other than those that you have mentioned now survives that can be claimed to have worked under the direct management of Colonel Stephens. The only locomotive surviving with any semblance of such a claim must be L.B.S.C.R. No. 54 preserved at Montreal which was purchased by the South Eastern & Chatham in 1904 to run over the Sheppey Light Railway which had been built by Stephens but was always operated by the S.E.C.R.

"Pontyberem" does have a connection with Colonel Stephens as it was he who supervised the rebuilding of the B.P.G.V.R. between 1909 and 1913. However, the Colonel seems to have played no part in the actual management of the line which employed its own Locomotive Superintendent. It would therefore appear that whilst Stephens would undoubtedly have encountered "Pontyberem" in the course of his work on the B.P.G.V.R. there is no real connection between the two.

A number of locomotives survive that have worked on the Colonel Stephens' railways since his death, notably "Terriers" Nos 40, 54, 55, 62, 72 and 78 which, with P Class 1556, alias No. 11 "Pride of Sussex", and O1 Class 65, all ran on the Kent & East Sussex either on hire from the Southern or during British Railways days. No. 65 also worked on the East Kent under British Railways ownership and was prominent in the last

day of operations on the first line constructed by Stephens, the Hawkhurst branch.

Since you confine your question to standard gauge locomotives it is to be presumed that you are aware of the Colonel's connection with the surviving Festiniog, Welsh Highland and Ashover locomotives.

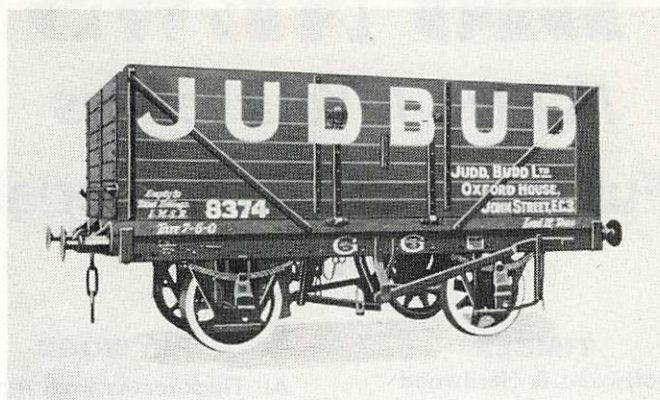
Can you say where Colonel Stephens is buried? I think I have read somewhere that he died at the Lord Warden Hotel, Dover. Is this true? Did the well known personalities of the day attend his funeral or was his passing ignored?

Sevenoaks, Kent

Tim Stanger

Colonel Stephens was never ignored! He died at the Lord Warden Hotel on 23rd October 1931. The funeral service was held at St Peter's Church, Hammersmith, on 28th October, followed by interment at the Brompton Cemetery. The funeral was attended by his personal assistants from the Tonbridge offices and other officials from the railways under his control. In addition, the Southern Railway was represented by R.E.L. Maunsell (Chief Mechanical Engineer), C. Sheath (Director), A. Howie (Chief Accountant), C.H. Barfoot (representing Sir Herbert Walker), John Shaw (representing G. Ellson, Chief Engineer), G.S. Szlumper (Assistant General Manager). A.W. Szlumper, father of G.S. Szlumper, and a former director of the Southern Railway, was also present. Other main line railway companies do not appear to have been represented.

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