

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 18

Spring 1979



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

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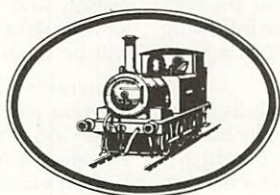
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The Tenterden Terrier



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Editorial

Whatever happened at Wittersham Road

The news that passenger numbers jumped by one third in 1978, despite a poor summer, was particularly satisfying following all the hard work that went into getting Wittersham Road ready by early summer. It was always assumed that a terminus station would add to the attractiveness of the line – after all, a railway should go from somewhere to somewhere. Curious, then, to find that less than 2% of the total carried during the months of June to November actually booked tickets from there, despite the publicity of the opening ceremony. Hopefully, better road signs and the provision of a picnic area will encourage more travellers to venture into the countryside in 1979, but if not, the scope for generating business from our next (slightly less remote) stopping point, Northiam, looks limited. Bodiam should prove to be a major attraction, with its medieval castle nearby; but even here, there must be nagging doubts as to whether people will want to go “all the way” by a slow train from Tenterden, or settle for a shorter hop to Northiam. This would certainly result in traffic at both ends of the line – but still leave Wittersham as a station without passengers!

FRONT COVER

*'Twixt Rolvenden and Newmill.
No. 26 heads a train on 16th September,
during the weekend of the Tenterden
Steam & Country Fair.
[Brian Stephenson]*

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Mark Yonge's Notebook

Whatever may be happening in the country at large, there is certainly no evidence of a lack of activity in the various departments of the Railway. Paul Sutton has collected the following reports from the Locomotive and Carriage & Wagon departments:-

Locomotives. As the season drew towards its close, it was left to Nos 10 and 24 to supply the motive power for the Santa Specials, most of which were well loaded. No. 10 (Sutton) had a new set of brake blocks fitted and the steam heat equipment that 24 (William H. Austen) had been equipped with earlier in the year ensured that our customers were warm and comfortable while awaiting the arrival of Father Christmas.

Even though the shed extension has now been completed, giving a covered area of 100' x 40', a hard winter doesn't help to generate boundless enthusiasm for close encounters with cold steel surfaces. The job of renewing the smokebox support in the Norwegian Mogul, referred to in the last issue, has commenced with the removal of the concrete floor, which revealed plenty of thin platenwork and wasted studs; as is often the case with this sort of job, the deeper you go, the more repairs are required.

R.S.H. tank, No. 26, will need 12 tubes replacing. When removing the main steam pipes it was found that all their studs needed changing; both clack boxes are also being removed for servicing.

U.S.A. No. 22 has had its "new" boiler sandblasted and painted. While the locomotive is stripped down, the axlesboxes will be inspected, the frames cleaned up and painted. A new ashpan has been made and dampers will be fitted to improve the draughting. No. 22 will also be given a larger bunker which will resemble the original when the locomotive was built.

On the diesel front, the recent sub zero temperatures have meant problems for R.S.H. No. 27, with freezing fuel.

Hunslet 0-6-0 No. 28 has timing problems which will probably result in a new chain being fitted. It is a pleasure to report some progress on the Ford No. 16; a complete overhaul has been started and is expected to take some 3/4 years to complete. The present position is as follows:- Bodywork: Progress has been made, albeit somewhat slowly, in replacing roof panels, front cab panels, some main body supports and window and door frames, but there is still a lot more to do.

Control gear: The 5 main contractor and relay panels have been overhauled away from the railway and will be replaced once the body is weathertight again. The remaining control gear will be dealt with later in the year.

Generator: This, so far, has been the most exciting part of the project. Following a letter from one of our members, Rodney Coleman, to Dowding & Mills (Southern) Ltd., a well known firm of electric motor and generator repairers, Mr. George Gannon, an Engineer Representative and Mr. Tom Stock, a retired member of the firm, called at Rolvenden and inspected the generator. Everything seemed to be in reasonable order and subsequently Dowding & Mills very generously offered to check and overhaul the generator at no cost to the railway. Although they were happy to come and collect the equipment, it turned out to be more convenient for us to deliver it to D&M's White Post Lane works in Hackney. Many thanks to Mr. Phillips, the Branch Manager, and everyone else there who gave us assistance and advice. The generator should be back at Rolvenden by the time this magazine is published.

Engine: We are corresponding with a specialist company at the moment and it is hoped that a successful outcome will be reported in the next issue; all four traction motors will also be overhauled in due course.

Wiring: This will be completely renewed during the course of the rebuild.

Brakes: As well as a general overhaul, a vacuum exhaustor will be fitted, making the locomotive suitable for work with coaching stock. The handful of regulars who work on the Ford every alternate Sunday will always welcome anyone who would like to give some assistance.

On the running side, Tim Stanger and John Arlet have now been promoted to Firemen. The new lamp store is virtually complete. While the Railcar was operating the passenger service in November, the opportunity was taken to rearrange the water supply in Rolvenden Yard. Under the direction of Colin Edwards and Fred Fisher, the running staff put down firing shovels and picked up digging shovels! The end result was that the water column which stood opposite the platform was moved to a point between the main line and No. 1 road, where locomotive preparations and disposals are normally carried out. At the same time they installed an electric pump, donated by a member, and this is

making boiler washouts much more efficient. The whole job was completed on schedule during the third weekend of November. Finally, vacancies still exist for cleaners. Applicants should be over 16 years and be prepared to get reasonably dirty! Contact **Colin Edwards** at Rolvenden.

Carriage & Wagon. T.S.O. No. 65 entered service for the Santa Specials on 9th December after a lot of midnight oil burning by **John Liddell** and new member **Ken Baker**. Prior to its first public outing, a test run was made to Wittersham Road, accompanied by the recently acquired Birdcage Brake Third No. 1084. To add the finishing touches to the Santa Special train sets, **Paul Ramsden** and **David Dine** repainted some roof destination boards with appropriate inscriptions. The Wine & Dine set will receive "Wealden Pullman" boards later.

Apart from this, work has of necessity concentrated on the wagon side of the Department. The recently built 12 ton, 3 plank, dropside wagon, No. 122, entered traffic in November and was used to remove the spoil from the Rolvenden water column scheme.

Work is progressing on the L.N.W.R. Brake Van, No. 104, recently recovered from Bodiam. It is being put into traffic so that permanent way trains running in the closed period can have a brake at both ends which will save some shunting movements. Work completed so far, includes reglazing of broken windows, installing of lockers, benches and a table and quite a lot of interior painting.

Ex-L.N.W.R. FLATROL T.Y.O. No. 121, was jacked up at one end and the wheels run out. The buffer spring was then removed and very promptly repaired by E.S.M.C. Ltd. of Ashford who renewed 5 plates. The damaged axleboxes were also taken off and transported to Tonbridge where Goodland Engineering Ltd. made a first class job of cast iron welding; "stitching up" the cracked one and assembling the jigsaw parts of the other one. We are very grateful to both companies for their prompt attention and very reasonable charges. The brake rigging was removed and taken down to Rolvenden where it was restored to its correct shape.

Ex-L.N.E.R. Hopper Waggon No. 123 has been generally repaired and the running gear overhauled. Repainting will now have to wait until the better weather arrives. Whilst under repair, the opportunity was taken to remove the extension fitted by B.R. thus reducing the risk of

overloading the vehicle.

When the L.N.W.R. brakevan was brought back to Tenterden it was accompanied by one of the vans at Northiam, ex-G.W.R. 10 ton No. 105. After general overhaul and repairs, it will be used as a temporary store by the Locomotive Department.

In October two members of the C&W Department successfully tendered for an 8 ton ex-L.B.S.C.R. ventilated van. After repairs it will be restored to its original condition. Because it was latterly used as an oil store, its general state is good. It was removed from Crabtree siding, Belvedere, and arrived at Tenterden on 11th November. We are very grateful to Mr. Fitzpatrick, Works Engineer of British Gypsum for his help and co-operation during its removal. A detailed note on this vehicle by member, **George Wright**, will appear in the next issue.

Two other arrivals have been a 4W wood framed Flat from the 14 Command Workshops R.E.M.E. at Ashford, the last A.D. Wagon on their strength. This will be our No. 126 and will be kept in its present form for the time being. The other one is a 16T steel open, built for the Ministry of Supply and sent to France after the last war. Before coming to the K.&E.S.R. it had been used by the N.C.B. Snowdon Colliery near Canterbury. This has been allocated No. 124.

The first person I met on arrival at Tenterden during my visit in mid-January was **Mike James**, who sadly will have left by the time that these notes appear. Mike joined us in October 1977 as J.C.P. Manager, having previously been a Senior Lecturer in Civil Engineering at Birmingham Polytechnic. His influence on the progress of the J.C.P. and more recently the S.T.E.P. schemes was immediate and dramatic, much having been accomplished in the short time that he has been with us. He is returning to the Midlands to join a friend in a consultancy practice and will be succeeded by his assistant, **Dave Levitt**, who will likewise take over responsibility for the Building & Civil Engineering Departmental Manager's job. I asked Mike, in his capacity as Civil Engineering Department Manager, to explain what was happening to the wet cutting between Cranbrook Road and Rolvenden. Apparently, the cutting has been slipping for years and we are attempting to stabilise the cutting slope, where **Colonel Stephens** failed. Clay is always a difficult substance, with the characteristics of a brick wall in summer and lava in winter. We

have enlisted the help of the South Bank Polytechnic to carry out the design work and so far, four trial pits have been excavated and one bore hole sunk to a depth of 13 metres. A crucial factor is the monitoring of the water level in this borehole and until some months of observation have taken place it will not be possible to take steps to rectify the problem. As to Mike James' other department, the S.T.E.P. project, I asked him when would the track relaying work be completed through to Northiam. He explained that work involved had been and was still very considerable. Undergrowth had to be cleared and then the track bed regraded. 247 track panels had been lifted, mostly from Tenterden and transported down the line. It had not been possible to lay the panels in a straight line to start with, as speed was of the essence and some of the panels were ultimately found to be slightly curved when the rails were butted together. Straightening up and reballasting will be the next major task.

I walked down the line and met **Derrick Bilsby** near Cranbrook Road. Derrick has recently taken over the job of Permanent Way Manager from **Philip Rimmer** and I asked him how many people were working in the department at present. He told me that since the beginning of December there has been a very encouraging response and each weekend has seen gangs of between 6 and 12 people at work. During December, packing and re-aligning took place between the top of the wet cutting and Cranbrook Road, but it had been necessary to suspend heavy work at Christmas time because of the heavy "Santa Special" traffic. The recent spell of bad weather has put the whole ballasting programme three weeks behind schedule, but by the time the magazine appears, it is anticipated that the whole of the Tenterden to Rolvenden section will have been completed, with all speed restrictions lifted, except at Cranbrook Road. Once services have been resumed in the Spring, permanent way work will continue from Rolvenden to Wittersham; the lifting of speed restrictions on this section

will depend on the number of volunteers who are prepared to come forward. The Woodchurch Coach Group organised a sponsored re-sleeper exercise all night over the New Year holiday period from 12.00 noon to 12.00 noon and the whole Tenterden to Rolvenden section was spot replaced, notwithstanding the blizzard-like conditions.

I next spoke to **John Miller**, who was taking photographs down the line and asked him how the clearance work was progressing. He told me that by the end of December, both sides of Wittersham Bank had been completed and work on the first straight towards Northiam was well in hand. During December and January, the effort was being concentrated on the section between the wet cutting and Orpins curve, ahead of the permanent way gang. It will be necessary to remove the willow trees at this point as they are leaning in a dangerous manner and distorting the track bed. However, birch, ash and hawthorn will be left in place to enhance the appearance.

My final call of the day was to speak to **Steve Whiteman**, manager of the signals department. He reports that, weather permitting, work will continue steadily on the signal box at Wittersham Road in anticipation of it being completed by the Spring. Many of the departmental workers have joined in with permanent way, to ensure that vital track work is completed in time for the Spring reopening.

Paul Sutton has asked me to convey thanks to David B. Reed of Rush & Tompkins Developments Ltd., who very kindly let us have 20 panels of railing fence from the back of the platform at the site of the old Westerham station. They are of the looped variety as opposed to the spiked type which came from Cranbrook and will be very useful when we extend the platforms at Northiam and Bodiam. Some members will recall that the Westerham line was the subject of a preservation scheme back in the early 1960's. The railings were removed to the K.&E.S.R. in December by a small group of members.

News from Area Groups

Ashford. The group staged its third annual model railway exhibition on 20th January, some 2300 people attended and the expected profit was £350, which will be donated towards the rebuilding of the old Maidstone bus office, at Tenterden station. Meetings are held on the

first Wednesday of each month at the Centrepiece, Bank Street, Ashford, at 8.30pm and all are welcome. **Eric Graves**

East Kent. A small nucleus of members has been formed and those who are interested in joining

are invited to contact Steve Whiteman at Tenterden. Meetings are normally held at Canterbury.

Steve Whiteman

Maidstone. Publicity efforts for the railway continue. The use of an empty shop was obtained during early November and this was used to house Marshall Vine's excellent 20 foot working model of Wittersham Road station, which was accompanied by a recorded commentary. Following this, Chiesmans store agreed to display the same layout in their toy window at Christmas time. A reminder that meetings are held on the last Thursday in the month at the Methodist Youth Centre, Brewer Street, Maidstone, at 7.30pm.

Jack Fox

Medway. The former K.&E.S.R. platform trolley is being restored and will probably make its debut at Tenterden station in 1979. Various visits of railway interest are planned this year and those interested in these and in the monthly meetings are invited to contact Mike Todd at 136 Lonsdale Drive, Rainham, Kent, or Alan Simpson on Medway 33178.

Mike Todd

Surrey. The group has raised over £1000 towards the restoration of the U.S.A.

locomotives from its various exhibitions held in 1978. The 1979 Guildford exhibition will be held at the Holy Trinity Halls on 10th March and it is hoped that as many members as possible will attend.

Richard Halton

Thameside. This group, which was formed last year, but has so far not contributed to these columns, will cater for members in South East London and North West Kent. Meetings are held regularly in a hall behind the Corner Pin public house, Slade Green, and consist of talks, films and slide shows. The group has been responsible for the recovery of a L.B.&S.C.R. fruit van from Crabtree sidings, Belvedere, referred to elsewhere.

Neil Sime

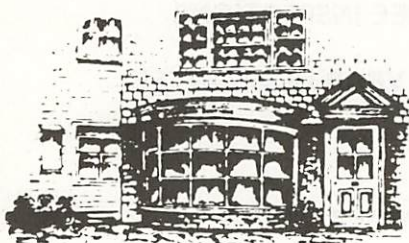
Tunbridge Wells. The sponsored walk held on 15th October from Wittersham Road to Junction Road was supported by about 50 walkers and £380 was raised. On 25th November the model railway exhibition at Tunbridge Wells attracted 1300 visitors and realised a profit of some £350. Events planned, include a model railway exhibition on 31st March at West Kent College, Brook Street, Tonbridge. Details from John Wilber on Tunbridge Wells 20640.

John Wilber

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Passenger Numbers 1978

			1977						1978			
	Adult	Child	Total	No. of days	Av. per day	Adult	Child	Total	No. of days	Av. per day		
March	587	257	844	5	169	2102	1021	3123	6	521		
April	2349	1112	3461	11	315	1624	881	2505	10	251		
May	1126	499	1625	9	181	3300	1593	4893	12	408		
June	2941	2846	5787	15	386	2214	2622	4836	13	372		
July	2957	2439	5396	14	386	4090	3503	7593	15	506		
Aug	5222	2908	8130	23	354	8039	4629	12668	31	409		
Sept	2439	1038	3477	8	435	2949	1279	4228	10	423		
Oct	1256	553	1809	9	201	1172	511	1683	9	187		
Nov	127	41	168	4	42	230	121	351	4	88		
Dec	202	66	268	9*	423*	33	11	44	11*	464*		
	19206	11759	30965			25753	16171	41924				
Wittersham Road			—					441†				
Privileges			965					684				
Promotional and passes			753					163				
Santa Specials			3537					5060				
			36220	107	339			48272	121	399		
Wine & Dine			1140	20	57			1876	29	65		
			37360					50148				

†Adult 247, child 154, privilege 40. *Including Santa Specials

Note: Special charter trains have been excluded from the statistics.

1978 was an all-time record, with passenger numbers just topping 50,000 – a 34% increase on 1977. The year did include 14 additional operating days, mainly due to full-time running in August, but it is particularly heartening that the average daily total was 18% up, notwithstanding a small decrease in the intensity of the service. Numbers carried in the month of November were over double those of the previous year, but this is still by far the quietest month of the year and all trains were operated with the railcar. The popularity of “Santa Specials” was again proved by the 43% increase over last year and the target figure of 5000 was beaten by a small margin of 60.

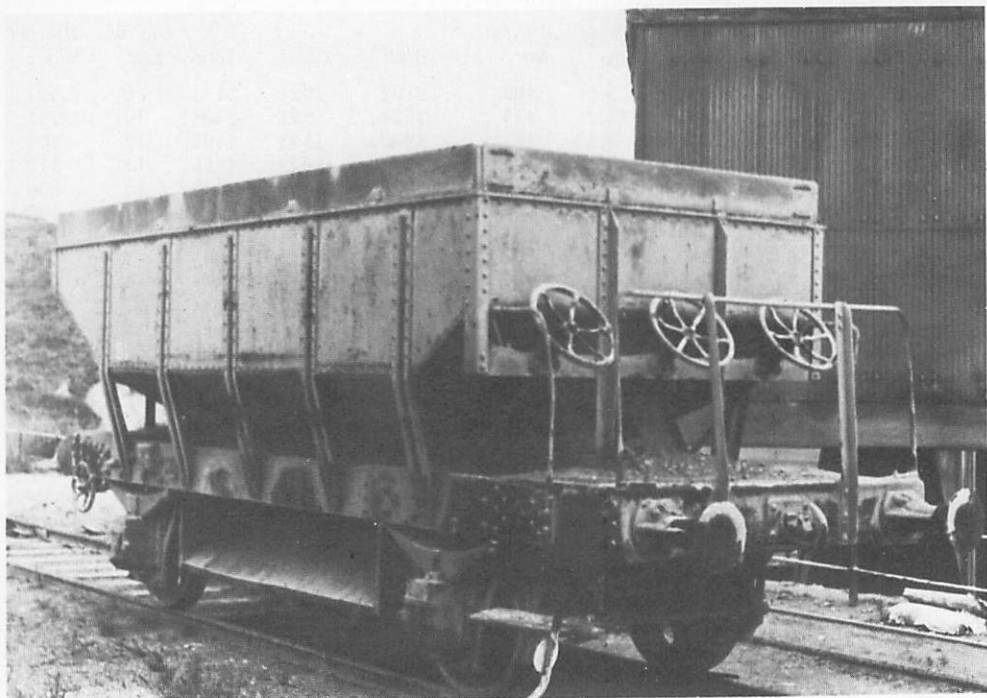
Particular thanks are due to Roger Crawford for his weekday booking facility through The Children’s Shop, to Dennis Weatherley, who baked over 3000 mincepies, and to the present wrappers. “Wine & Dine” passengers increased by no less than 66% due to greater capacity being made available through extra trains and running more with two dining coaches. This created a great deal of extra work for Catering Manager, Dave Fishenden and his staff, who

nevertheless did an excellent job and there were many compliments from the diners. The only disappointment of the year was the lack of business originating from Wittersham Road, since its reopening last June. Wittersham is, of course, a rural by-way, but it does have the advantage of comparatively under-utilised car-parking facilities adjacent to the platform. Next year we hope to provide a picnic area there and perhaps with better road signs and publicity, numbers will improve – that is, of course, until we get to Northiam! The season ended on a quiet note, with only 5 paying passengers on New Year’s Eve and 13 on New Year’s Day; a tailpiece for animal lovers – we carried 344 dogs in 1978, a 46% increase on the 236 carried in 1977 and dog ticket revenue amounted to £68.

Donald Wilson/Colin Deverell

Passenger services for 1979 will repeat the pattern for last year, with a daily service in August, although the total number of operating days (116) and number of trains (478) will be slightly less, due to an extended winter maintenance period. The season should get off to a good start on 31st March, when 400 passengers are expected from Liverpool on the “Wirral Wealdsman”, organised by the Wirral Railway Circle.

Tunnel Freight



L.N.E.R. 25T ballast hopper wagon at Tunnel's West Thurrock works, shortly before final removal to Rolvenden, July 1978.
[Paul Sutton]

There cannot be many instances where organisations such as ours have had the opportunity to acquire a complete freight train from one source! A slight exaggeration perhaps, but we have on the railway an 0-6-0 diesel locomotive, 3 wagons and a goods brake van all from the Tunnel Cement Company's works at West Thurrock in Essex.

Our first contact with this company was at the beginning of 1977 when they agreed to lend us their ballast hopper wagon. A short time after this, Tunnel approached us and said that, due to the cessation of cement production at West Thurrock, the bulk of their internal railway system, which in its heyday boasted 26 miles of track and 8 steam locomotives, was being dismantled and sold, mainly to a railway equipment company. However, there were three wagons which Tunnel felt had a certain historical interest and they were loath to see scrapped; therefore would we be interested in acquiring them? I duly visited the site and amongst a few assorted diesel shunters and

L.N.E.R. 25 ton Engineers Dept. Ballast Hopper Wagon

Built: 1940 to Diagram 231

B.R. Number: DE 544391

Withdrawn at Doncaster Whitemoor Yard 1968

Pre-war colour scheme on these vehicles:
Oxford Blue!

Tunnel Cement No. B1

To K.&E.S.R.: 4.9.1978

scores of chalk tippers the three wagons of interest to us turned out to be an L.N.E.R. 20 ton Brake Van, a G.W.R. type Iron Mink Van and a 4-wheeled Well-wagon. All of these were in good condition for industrial stock and partly preserved by a layer of cement dust! Both sets of doors on the Iron Mink had recently been rebuilt. At the next Board Meeting in March it was agreed to buy these items and they were delivered to the railway during June.



Hunslet 0-6-0 diesel locomotive , jacked up for axle box inspection at Rolvenden, February 1978.
[Donald H. Wilson]

The Hopper wagon was returned to Tunnel (somewhat reluctantly!) in August, but with the promise from them that we should have first refusal if they decided to sell it. Within a week of this we received notification from the Company that 4 of the diesel shunters that I had seen earlier in the year were now for disposal and offers were required by 16th September. Our interest centred on the only 0-6-0 on the list, built by Hunslets in 1948. This was the most suitable for our requirements as, when fitted with a vacuum exhauster, it could be used in emergencies for passenger services. A closer inspection was essential before making a firm order, so Bob Forsythe led a team from the Loco Department and with the aid of borrowed batteries managed to get the engine turned over. Their report was favourable and eventually our price was agreed in December and the loco arrived at Rolvenden on 21st January 1978. Not a lot of work was needed to put it into good running order again and, once

204 hp Hunslet 0-6-0 Diesel Locomotive

Built: 1948 No. 4208

Engine: Gardner 8L

Weight in working order: 31T 16 cwt

Max. Axle Loading: 10T 13 cwt

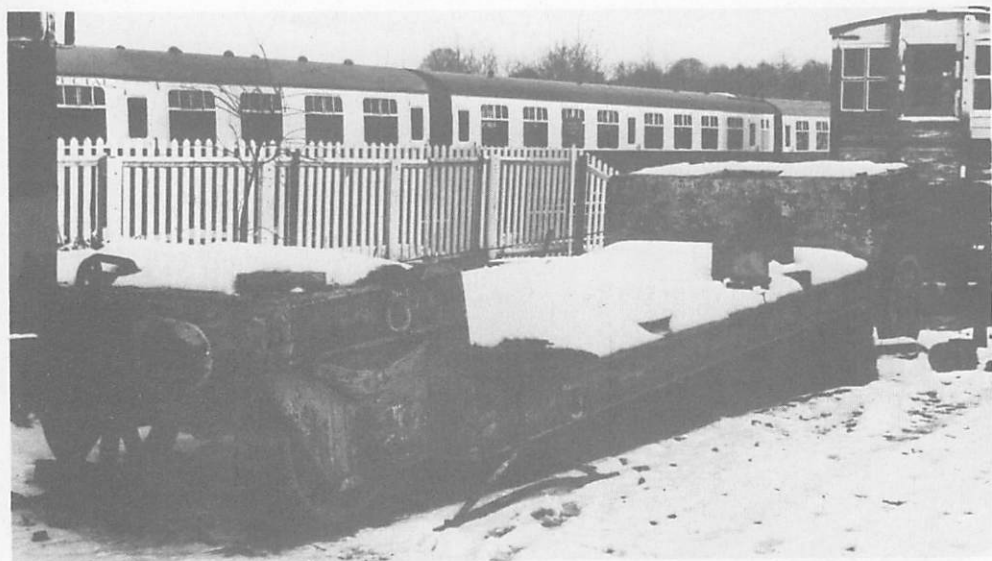
Wheel dia.: 3 ft. 4 ins.

Prior to being at Tunnel's Pitstone works it belonged to John Summers steelworks.

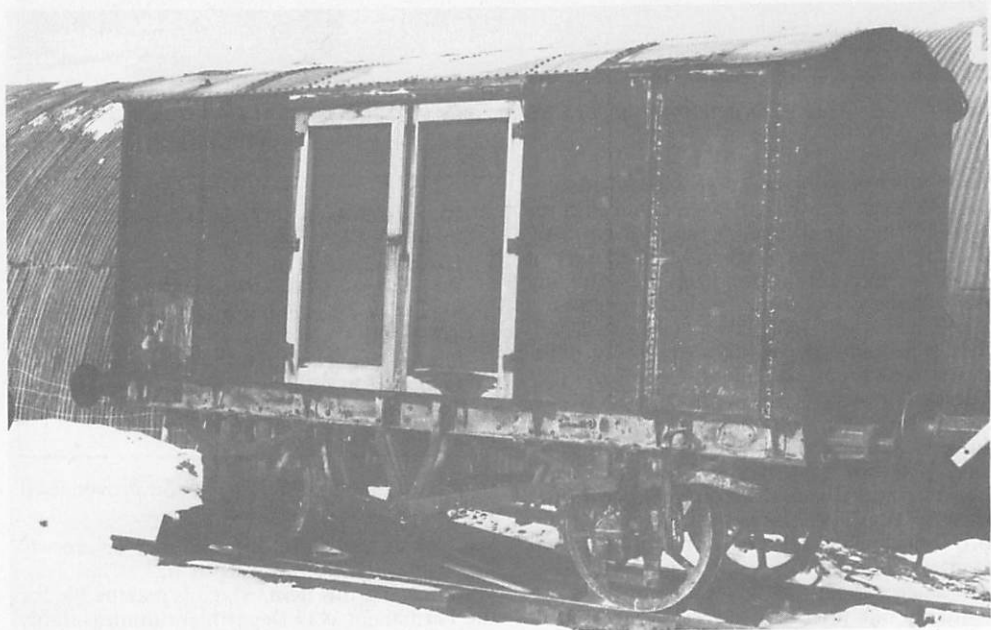
To K.&E.S.R.: 21.1.1978

crews had mastered the gearbox, it proved itself a very useful acquisition.

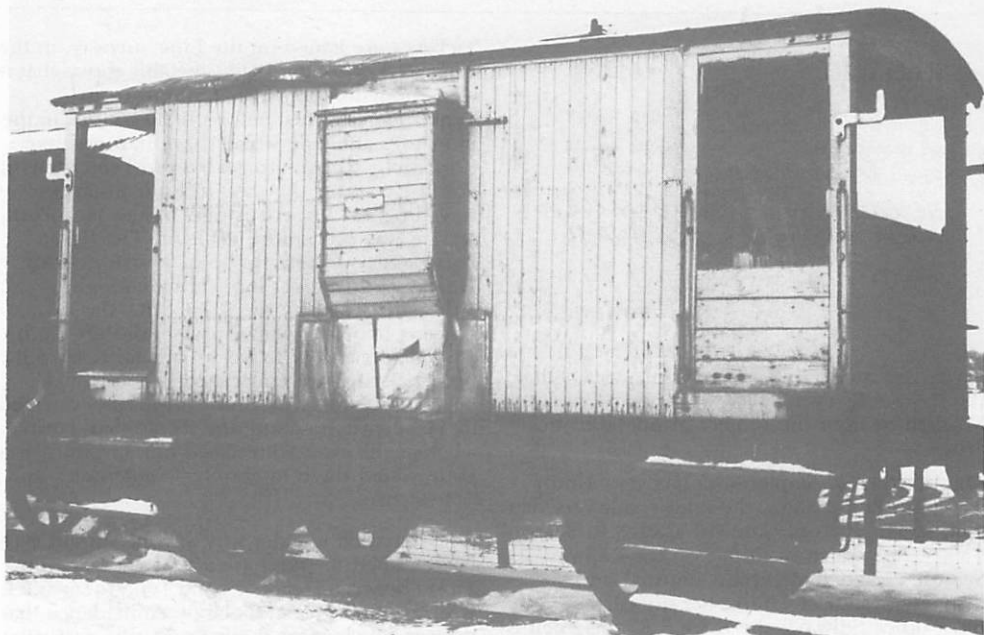
We had to wait until mid-Summer before we heard that the hopper wagon was at last available and this item, which is making life for the Permanent Way Department immeasurably easier became ours in July last year and returned to the railway finally in September 1978.



L.N.E.R. well wagon under repair at Tenterden, January 1979. The repaired axle boxes are in the snow on the bed of the vehicle.
 [Paul Sutton]



Iron Mink "A" van at Tenterden carriage sidings, January 1979. Some of its former owners' initials can be seen:- G.W. and B.R. (Barry Railway).
 [Paul Sutton]



L.N.E.R. 20T brake van, Toad "B" in Tenterden carriage sidings, January 1979.

[Paul Sutton]

L.N.W.R. 4-wheeled 20T well wagon

Type: Flatrol TY0

Built: Earlstown 1911

Gen. Rep.: Earlstown January 1950

To K.&E.S.R.: 10.6.1977

L.N.E.R. 20 Ton Brake Van

Type: TOAD B

Built: Doncaster 1929 No. 157789

Gen. Rep.: Midland Region October 1963

Retains original L.N.E.R. Axle boxes and step boards. Horizontal Handrails missing and ballast weights removed so cannot be used as a train brake at the moment.

To K.&E.S.R.: 10.6.1977

Barry Railway 10T Van

Built by S.J. Claye, Long Eaton Derbyshire, 1913, No. 1151

Renumbered at Swindon by G.W.R. on

16.5.1923 as 37449 Iron Mink A.

Condemned at Cardiff Cathays 5.11.1949.

Tunnel Cement No. 4.

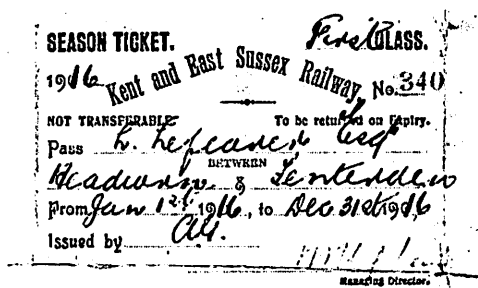
To K.&E.S.R.: 16.6.1977

In conclusion, I would like to thank all at Tunnel Industrial Services Ltd. for their help and forbearance and Paul Ramsden, our Carriage & Wagon Department Manager, for providing me with much of the historical data.

Paul Sutton

From Our Ticket Collection

Commuting in Comfort



An earlier appeal for information as to whether the K.&E.S.R. ever issued Season Tickets has brought to light the subject of my latest ticket article.

Mr. Bourne (of Staplehurst) has very kindly passed to Philip Shaw, the Editor, our very first (and so far, the only known) K.&E.S.R. Season Ticket. As with most things on the Railway, its Season Tickets had certain unusual and distinctive features. Unlike the stiff card used by most other railways, the K.&E.S.R. specimen is printed on what appears to be genuine parchment – a thick, creamy, paper-like material, which looks extremely durable, but which could be (and was) folded into a convenient size for housing in a conventional wallet. The example illustrated was found, still neatly folded, inside Charles Letts' "Season Ticket Case and Note Book" – a smart, pocket size, leather bound volume complete with £1,000 worth of insurance coupons. The ticket itself is printed in red ink, another unusual feature, and it is clear that not many passengers availed themselves of this early commuter facility, since the ticket is only No. 340, and had been on issue for at least seven years, as the original space for the year of validity has been altered in manuscript from "190..." to "1916". With a typical eye to economy, the one blank form is made to serve for all classes, all stations, and all periods of validity – the relevant information being entered by hand in the appropriate space. However, just in case any unscrupulous employee attempted any fraud, each ticket was signed personally by Col. Stephens himself as Managing Director, and was no doubt subjected to close scrutiny before being passed for issue.

It is not really surprising that so few Season

Tickets were issued on the Line, anyway, in the early days, since the 1914 timetable shows that it was impossible to reach London from Tenterden until just before 10.00 o'clock in the morning, and one would have had to leave London by 5.00 pm to get back to Tenterden on the last train of the day, in both instances travelling via Robertsbridge, as the Headcorn service was even more difficult. The ticket illustrated is purely for local journeys from Headcorn to Tenterden; oddly enough, although issued by the K.&E.S.R., the two stations between which it was valid are both named incorrectly as far as official K.&E.S.R. nomenclature are concerned. The printed tickets for local trips almost invariably referred to Headcorn Junction and Tenterden Town, whereas the clerk who issued our specimen has abbreviated these to simply "Tenterden" and "Headcorn".

One may well wonder why anyone should ever have wished to purchase a first class Season Ticket between Headcorn and Tenterden, and it is both unusual and a happy coincidence that the reasons behind the issue of this particular ticket are known. Apparently L. Lefeaver Esq., as he is politely referred to on the ticket (would a Third Class passenger have been Esq., or just plain Mr.?), was an agent of the local rural council, and was employed by them on a part time basis to travel around the council's area collecting the rates owed by the farming community from time to time. It sounds a rather delightful sinecure, and conjures up a vision of a rosy cheeked and portly gentleman, probably with spectacles, sitting back comfortably on the cushions of his First Class compartment (very likely in Queen Victoria's own royal saloon, which was at the time running on the K.&E.S.R., having been retired successively from the L.S.W.R. and P.D.S.W.J.R.). He would have been met at the station by a pony and trap, and would have lunched at the White Lion before proceeding on his leisurely way about his council business. A far cry from today's computerised rate demands dropping through the letter box. I wonder whether Ashford Borough Council, as successor to the old Rural District, has ever considered the cost of a pony and trap as against the capital, loan, and running expenses of their giant computer?

Robin Doust

The Tenterden Steam & Country Fair

Why did we decide to go ahead with the "Steam & Country Fair" – the largest single event that the railway has ever attempted? Well, the two previous "Steam Ups" in 1975 and 1976 attracted increasingly large numbers of people and there was no doubt in the minds of the organising committee, John Miller, Derrick Bilsby and myself that this trend would continue. The fair was planned for the weekend of 16th and 17th September, a time when the end of the operating season is approaching and normal service traffic is tailing off rapidly. Planning commenced in the early Spring, with a decision on the site area. Permission was sought from farmers with land on the northern and southern boundaries of Tenterden station, for the use of their fields. This was generously given and it was decided to have the main event on the field adjacent to the level crossing with some space for car parking, leaving the southern field, to the rear of the carriage and wagon workshops to be used entirely as a car park. A small fair was hired from a contractor for the weekend, which included sideshows, small roundabouts and an inflatable fun castle. In addition, arrangements were made for a galloper roundabout and showman's organ to attend. Traction engines were invited and also vintage cars, vans and motorcycles, to parade regularly in a roped off area in the field and to receive an attendance plaque. It was felt that an exhibition of rural crafts would enhance the atmosphere of the weekend, including bee keeping, spinning, horticulture and straw handicrafts.

One of the most essential back up operations is publicity and this was handled admirably by Tony Hocking, who booked space on 100 Southern Region railway stations and advertising in every local paper in Kent and Sussex. Television advertising was considered and discarded owing to cost, although it will be considered again for future events. Liaison with local interests is essential for good public relations and the Police and local residents were briefed well in advance about the arrangements.

Finally, the weekend dawned and despite weeks

of inclement weather in August and September, Saturday morning dawned bright and the forecast was promising. In the event, it was one of the best weekends of the year, with mainly cloudless skies and warm temperatures. Some 2300 visitors came through the gates on Saturday and traffic congestion was kept to a minimum. However, Sunday attracted no less than 4500 visitors and by mid-afternoon, traffic stretched right up Station Road and into the High Street. This was due to the necessity for continuous opening and shutting of the level crossing gates, either to let the trains pass or for the engines to run round. The fair itself was judged to be a great artistic success, the Ashford and Cranbrook Town Bands and Hartley Morris men adding to the fairground atmosphere. At a charge of 60p for adults and 30p for children, many of those spoken to felt that it represented exceptionally good value for money. Regrettably, for all the effort that was put into the fair, the profit was small – a mere £450 on total takings of £5000. This does not, of course, take into account train revenue or bookshop takings, which were considerable. An analysis of income and expenditure showed that whilst side shows made money, roundabouts did not; catering profits suffered from a considerable amount of wastage due to over-ordering; the cost of posters was also higher than budget and perhaps changes in design could have contained this to a lower figure. Finally, it is probable that with the sheer volume of people who descended on Tenterden station, particularly on the Sunday, a number slipped through the barriers without paying.

So, lessons have been learnt and when the Fair is repeated on 15th and 16th September 1979, it will be administered by an enlarged committee of 10 members, who have already held their first meeting in January. Further details will be given in "The Rooter" as soon as possible. Finally, I would like to thank all those who worked so hard to ensure that everything went smoothly.

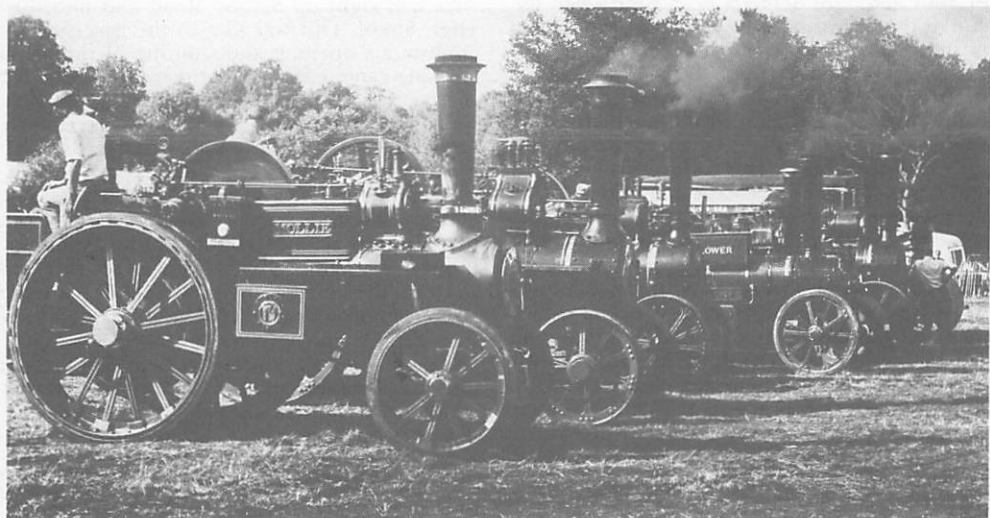
Mark Yonge

PRE-GROUPING & PRE-NATIONALISATION TICKETS FOR SALE

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.

A Day at

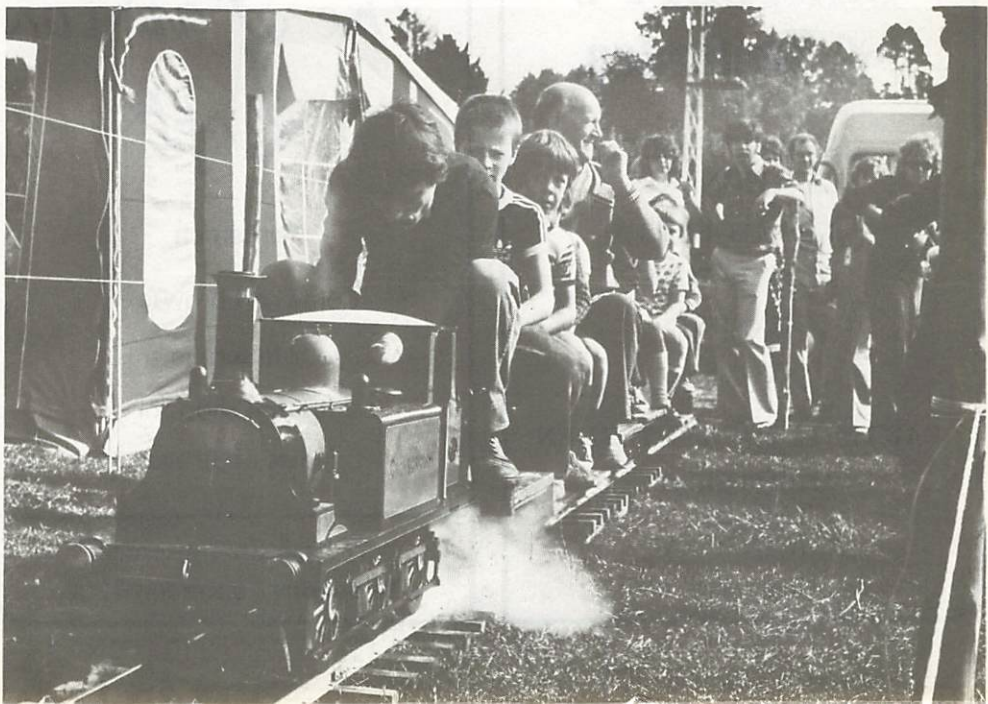
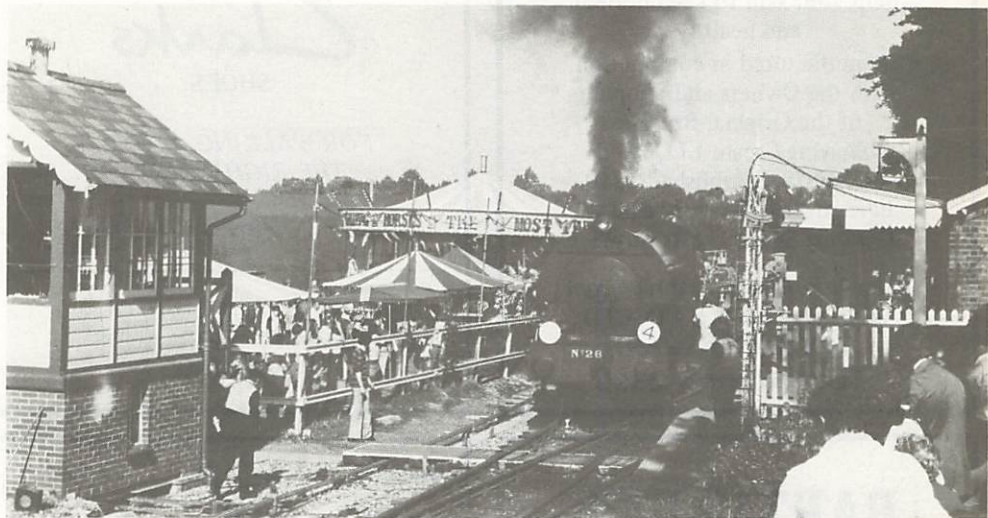
Photographed



t the Fair



by Eric Graves



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New Light on the Headcorn & Maidstone Junction Light Rly.

David Scotney has researched road and rail public transport in the Maidstone area at the turn of the century and suggests some reasons why the proposed light railway was never built.



Messrs. R. & J. Bennett's "Times" horse bus shared similar, if not identical features to that of the K.&E.S.R. bus, now in the National Railway Museum, York. The bus is standing outside Maidstone Town Hall, during the First World War. [South Eastern Newspapers Ltd.]

Neil Rose, in his interesting article on the various proposals for railways between Headcorn & Maidstone (*The Tenterden Terrier*, Spring and Summer 1977) mentions the divided loyalties of one of the promoters of the Headcorn & Maidstone Junction Light Railway, Sir Robert Filmer. This reference reminded me of some research I undertook a few years ago which may further elucidate the clouded history of the project.

In 1904 the principal form of public transport in country areas was the carrier's cart, which was reinforced by small horse-buses on major routes. Maidstone as a market town was a focus for such services and provided a terminal for buses to Cranbrook (daily), Headcorn (Thursday, Friday and Saturday), Sittingbourne (daily), Tenterden (daily) and Wrotham Heath and Plaxtol (Thursday). The Tenterden service

was provided by Messrs. R. & J. Bennett, the principal carriers of that town, and they operated the route from at least the 1870's with a fleetname of "Times". The Headcorn service operated from the 1890's till about 1912 by a Mr. Martin, and was increased to daily from 1905.

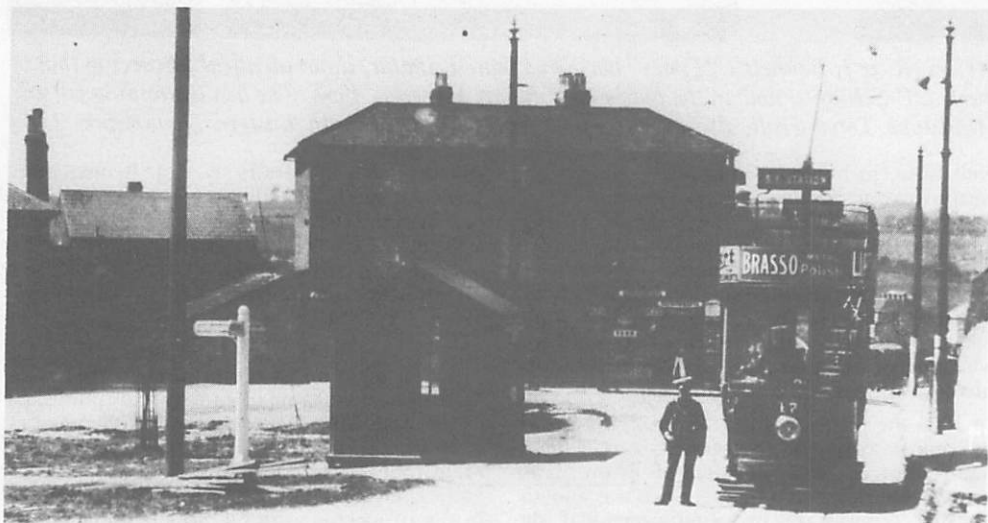
The first mention of motorbuses in the Maidstone area came in a prospectus published in the Kent Messenger for the 10th September 1904 for the Headcorn, Sutton Valence & Maidstone Motor Omnibus Co. Ltd., with an authorised capital of £4000. The directors stated in the prospectus were Sir Robert Filmer, William Richard Ward, James Wood and Jesse Boorman, of which, of course, both Sir Robert Filmer and James Wood were promoters of the H.&M.J.L.R.

A trial trip for press representatives was undertaken on the 27th October 1904, and the actual service started from Maidstone (the Star Hotel) to Headcorn on the 31st October 1904, with a return fare of 3s.4d.

The vehicle mentioned in the prospectus and that which started the service was a steam bus built by Clarkson Ltd. at Chelmsford. In this period there were various experiments with types of motorbus and the Clarkson vehicle had proved successful both operationally and commercially at Torquay and was subsequently operated by a number of firms including the North Eastern Railway, the Great Western Railway, the London & South Western Railway and the London General Omnibus Co. Ltd. The standard Clarkson bus at the time was a sixteen-seater single deck vehicle with a clerestory body and semi-circular driver's cab, the motive power being a paraffin-fired flash boiler, with horizontal cylinders and chain drive to the rear wheels. The Clarkson Company, after various transformations, eventually became the Eastern National Omnibus Co. Ltd. Maidstone Corporation issued an omnibus licence to the steam bus company on the 16th November 1904, and a further licence on the 5th April 1905.

To return to the H.&M.J.L.R., Neil Rose's

article has already noted that a further promotor, Jesse Ellis, besides owning a quarry in Loose Valley, was a successful traction engine proprietor. In actual fact, Mr. Ellis was a typical steam contractor of the period operating in the agricultural, road construction and road haulage spheres with a fleet of some 40 engines at about this time. Mr. Ellis dabbled in steam wagon design and construction after the passing of the Locomotive Act of 1896 from premises in St. Peters Street, Maidstone, and at the Royal Show of 1904 he had four wagons on display, one of which was a twenty-four-seater bus, with a separate smoking compartment mounted on the standard Ellis five-ton chassis. This used a watertube vertical boiler, with horizontal cylinders and an all-gear drive. Alf Smart, an Ellis fitter, has suggested that this was built for the "Maidstone and Sutton Valence Service" (sic.) and was bodied by Beadles of Dartford (shareholders in the Ellis Company). It did not, however, prove very successful and was only used for a short time. Mr. Smart has also suggested that a LIFU bus (an oil fired steam bus manufactured by the Liquid Fuel Engineering Company, East Cowes, Isle of Wight) was also tried unsuccessfully, and that both these buses never descended Sutton Valence Hill. The Jesse Ellis firm ran into financial difficulties in 1906; it operated under



Maidstone Corporation "Light Railway" car No. 17 at Loose terminus in 1909. For a period during the summer of that year, the trams ran to Maidstone West Station, providing a service similar to that proposed by the H.&M.J.L.R.

[Miss E.M. Cole]



*An M.&D "Leyland" bus
on the Tenterden-Ashford
service, c. 1919.*

[Chris Newman]

receivership from 1907 till about 1912 and was formally dissolved in 1914. Mr. Ellis himself died on the 19th July 1914 two days after the dissolution.

Reference was made to the steam bus service at the Public Enquiry into the H.&M.J.L.R. in March 1905, noting that it did not carry luggage, much to the inconvenience of passengers. Local passenger traffic was not, however, seen as of great significance by the railway promoters, although it was suggested that when the railway was opened it would be expected to rejuvenate a stagnating community and to attract new residents to an area likely to become the "suburbs of Maidstone"!

The promoters foresaw the H.&M.J.L.R. fulfilling a need for through communication between Maidstone and the Medway area and East Sussex; the connections into both the S.E.C.R. and the K.&E.S.R. were its great advantages over other local branch lines. Local freight traffic was to come from the stone quarries, which were expected to revive following the opening of the line and the agricultural requirements of hops and fruit "outward" and fruit "inward". Quantification of this traffic potential was, of course, limited, although the use of more sophisticated methods of traffic forecasting has been developed with only moderate success since.

Newspaper advertisements mention that the operation of the service was modified on the 7th November 1904 when additional buses were introduced from Sutton Valence to Headcorn to meet the 09.35 am down train and the 09.43

am up train. For a limited time in early 1908 a competitive service was provided by Kent Motor Services Ltd. between Sittingbourne, Maidstone and Sutton Valence(!). Local directories for 1910 refer to "Sutton Valence Steam Bus Company" operating on weekdays only between Maidstone and Sutton Valence with a single fare of 9d. and return of 1s.3d., and by 1913 this was referred to as 3 times daily.

In 1912 a further operator appeared on the Sutton Valence route – a Capt. E. Neve – and he is believed to have soon taken over the steam bus operations using Leyland buses. Within a year or so a substantial competitor appeared on the route in the form of the Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd. and their operations reached Tenterden on the 1st May 1914. Capt. Neve eventually succumbed to the competition and was acquired by M.&D. on the 3rd June 1916. M.&D. seem to have had an amicable arrangement with Messrs. R. & J. Bennett and used their yard behind the "Black Horse" in Tenterden (now the "William Caxton") from at least 1916 until the present High Street Bus Depot was introduced in 1927. Messrs. Bennett continued to operate buses, albeit of the motor variety, from Tenterden until 25th May 1935 when their operations also passed to M.&D.

Any hope for suburban passenger traffic on the H.&M.J.L.R. must have been dashed by the construction of Maidstone Corporation tram lines serving Loose and Tovil on the 16th October 1907 and 9th January 1908 respectively. Indeed these lines had been

considered by the Corporation in 1900, and application to the Light Railway Commissioners had been made for the Loose Line in November 1904 at the same time as the H.&M.J.L.R. The Loose tram route, subsequently trolley bus and motorbus operated, served the top of Loose Hill; the village itself, however, had no public transport service until the incorporation of the D. Freeman, and subsequently Maidstone Borough, Dial-a-Ride service on the 30th August 1972, further reinforced by the Maidstone Corporation motorbus route extension of the 12th March 1973.

The question posed, therefore, is why was the H.&M.J.L.R. never built? A combination of factors, perhaps, of which the following were undoubtedly of importance:-

1. Mr. Stephens' co-promoters all had parallel interests in other forms of transport en route, and indeed Mr. Ellis, although having a substantial facade, was entering a period of financial difficulty.

2. Passenger traffic between Maidstone and Headcorn did not prove substantial enough to maintain a steam bus service at the time, although this may have been due to technical difficulties with operation on Sutton Valence Hill.

3. Local passenger traffic between Maidstone and Sutton Valence, Loose and Tovil were all catered for in the immediate future by road transport operation to the centre of the town

rather than the peripheral West Station.

4. The only possible substantial freight traffic on the line would have been that generated from quarries in Boughton and Loose, the financial return from which must have been marginal, since it was stated at the public enquiry that they were already "in a state of decay". Indeed little of this traffic would have operated onto the main K.&E.S.R. despite the intimation of the Tenterden Corporation at the enquiry that they would consider replacing their existing Strood (quartzite) supplies with that from Boughton; possibly even more damning, a large proportion of it may only have made the short journey of about three miles northward to interchange at Tovil Sidings with S.E.C.R. A similar problem to the latter was experienced by the East Kent Light Railway with its Tilmanstone Colliery traffic.

Although certainly not a complete analysis, this article may provide a little further illumination to the queries surrounding the Maidstone proposal; however, my notes did remind me of a further line of research which I was not able to pursue at the time. Application was made in May 1899 to the Light Railway Commissioners and granted on the 8th March 1901 for a Maidstone & Faversham Junction Light Railway through Hollingbourne, Wickling, Doddington and Newnham. The engineer for this line was H.F. Stephens and the proposed contractor a Mr. Rigby!

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Letters to the Editor

Where do we go from here?

Sir – Your Editorial (*The Tenterden Terrier*, Winter 1978) comments on the restoration of the K.&E.S.R. and the fact that we must not destroy the “light railway atmosphere”. May I say how much I agree with your sentiment that the environment should not be cluttered with concrete sheds, refreshment rooms and other paraphernalia. Unfortunately, I fear that your plea is too late as far as the operational part of the line is concerned, for we already have a conglomeration of concrete sheds and the proposed refreshment room will be desperately out of keeping with its setting. Really it is only the route of the railway that is preserved; the K.&E.S.R. as some of us knew it has disappeared.

Of course, it will be argued that the viability of the project depends on carrying many more thousands of passengers than the line was originally designed for and the sale of refreshments and souvenirs is an essential addition to income; with this I must agree. However, I do feel that the development of the line could have been more sympathetic to that special light railway atmosphere that set apart the K.&E.S.R., East Kent, Kelvedon & Tollesbury, Elsenham & Thaxted, Mid Suffolk and several other lines from the ordinary railway scene.

After all, is Tenterden Town any more remarkable than, say, Lenham, Harrietsham, Etchingham, Robertsbridge, or a score of other local stations, with its S.E.R. signal box, S.R. crossing gates and hideous standard S.R. signals? It is my opinion that the style of signalling adopted for the railway instantly demolishes its light railway atmosphere. Very few of the light railways had signal boxes, or indeed signals; those that did, operated handsome vintage examples from simple ground frames. The experts will no doubt claim that the signals are necessary for the ultimate development of the line, but I am not convinced. Both the Festiniog and Tal-Y-Llyn railways run an intensive service with absolutely minimal signalling and only two signal boxes, as distinct from block posts, between them. I am sure that even those signal boxes are of dubious necessity.

I think that many people have lost sight of the fact that the K.&E.S.R. was always a separate entity and had a style of its own; it is sometimes hard to define, but with careful research and a little imagination, that style could be

perpetuated and indeed exploited. We are fortunate amongst standard gauge enthusiasts in having a railway to preserve, not a fragment of a main line which must somehow be promoted with an imposing tide, phoney coat of arms and hotch potch of main line liveries. We are the Kent & East Sussex Railway, with 79 years of tradition behind us, our own rolling stock livery, which at least bears some resemblance to liveries previously used by the old company; we are an original and historic light railway.

Please let us stop trying to be a branch of the Southern Railway, or worse, the Southern Region of British Rail; let us restore both Northiam and Bodiam stations as nearly as possible to their 1920's condition and should development be necessary to accommodate present-day traffic, then let it be sympathetic with that style. Perhaps by the time Northiam is reopened, the advance of C.T.C. and abolition of mechanical signalling, will have made the S.R. style stations at Tenterden and Wittersham Road museum pieces in their own right. Perhaps also, the first train at Northiam might consist of the restored “birdcage” set, powered by Nos 3 and 11, at opposite ends, of course. This would be a fine achievement and an acknowledgement of the Company's understanding of past traditions.

Just to run a railway is not enough; steam railways are no longer a novelty and are being operated throughout the country with apparent success, some with drive and imagination, others with a notable lack of these qualities. We have the opportunity of re-creating an authentic light railway, with the correct traditions, environment and rolling stock – that should be our aim. Careful development of these assets will strengthen the unique position that we enjoy and ensure continuing interest from members and public alike, at a time when much of the preservation scene seems to be slipping into mediocrity and dull similarity. Staplehurst, Kent.

Peter Davis

Wittersham Rd - The story of a station

Sir – I read with interest Paul Sutton's account of the “new” Wittersham Road station in the November issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*. Mention is made of the new platform sign and of the great pains taken to achieve authenticity. This problem would not have arisen had those concerned known that I have the original blue and white enamel sign “Wittersham Rd”. (The Tenterden Town sign in the museum is also part

of my collection.) For future reference, should it be required for our "Northern Extension", I also have the original "High Halden Road" sign!

Maidstone, Kent.

Doug Lindsay

Epic Tales

Sir - Although "Ringing Rock's" account of Marcia's first trip towards Wittersham Road was amusing and recaptured the spirit of the early days of the Railway when life had some very hectic moments, I am afraid that time seems to have clouded his memory as far as some of the details are concerned. We must also remember that "Ringing Rock" was second-hand on arrival at the K.&E.S.R., not in best condition and I suppose that many years of hard work and poor maintenance have taken their toll. The rescue operation with "Gervase" took place on a weekday - I recall that it cost me a day's pay - and the repairs to the tank with the cement were successful, the P.V.C. sheet being a dismal failure. Any doubters can inspect the locomotive at Bodiam and will find the cement still in place. The incident where a locomotive ran out of coal involved "Charwelton" at Northiam, some two years later, and I recall

firing on that occasion with the cab at the start knee-deep in coal and the first wagon occupied by six people, a telegraph pole and a saw. On the occasion of the rescue, "Gervase" returned to Tenterden on coal not telegraph poles, the sparks being provided by a large cardboard box which I threw on the fire whilst tidying up the locomotive towards the end of the journey.

"Gervase" was in a class of her own with regard to locomotive management. Although designed for one-man operation, we never succeeded in running her with less than three people - a driver, a fireman and someone to look after the injectors which blew off if the regulator was moved. Once the regulator was opened, the water always disappeared out of the top of the glass. When delivered, the safety valves were set at 240 lbs p.s.i. and we never did succeed in re-setting them to the permitted pressure of 275 lbs p.s.i. Actually, during the rescue operation the safety valves refused to work and the boiler pressure rose to 300 lbs p.s.i. before persuasion with a hammer succeeded. Those were happy days and one day the full story will be told - even perhaps the incidents that were concealed from the management of the day!

Tenterden, Kent. Derek Dunlavy

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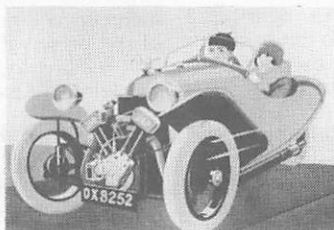
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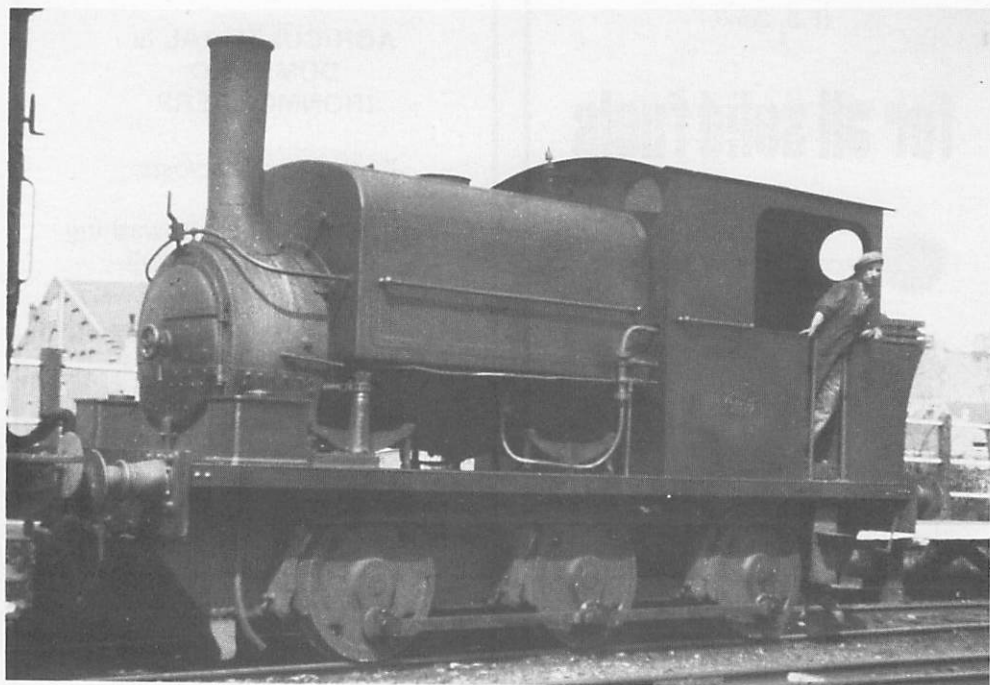


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Personalities of Colonel Stephens' Railways

Stan Plumley of the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway



Stan Plumley on the footplate of No. 5 at Clevedon, 14th April 1939. [Robin Butterell]

The Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway, opened between Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon in 1897, crippled itself financially by extending northwards from Clevedon to Portishead in 1907. Two years later it went into receivership, and in 1911 H.F. Stephens was appointed General Manager, Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent by the Receiver. Stan Plumley worked on the line for twenty years, until closure in 1940 and still lives in Clevedon. He is interviewed here by Christopher Redwood.

CR: When did you begin working on "The Light Railway", Mr. Plumley?

SP: I started in 1920 at the age of 14, under a fitter named Bason. Because I was so small they put me to work on chipping out the boiler of No. 2, *Weston*, which had brass tubes, I remember. That's where I got the nickname of "Nipper", which stuck to me as long as I was on the railway.

CR: Which other engines do you remember from that time?

SP: Well, I've already mentioned *Weston*, which was painted apple-green; and No. 5 was the same colour. No. 5 was quite new then, having been bought only the previous year. *Hesperus*, on the other hand, was bright blue.

CR: Did No. 5 carry a name at first?

SP: Certainly not when I knew her – and I don't remember any trace of a nameplate having been removed. One of the more unusual engines was *Northiam*, which was on loan from the Kent & East Sussex Railway until about 1921 or 1922. I remember she had a screw-reverser, and we retubed and patched her at Clevedon. One of the older drivers, Charlie Jackson, once went through the Bristol Road crossing-gates at Portishead with a load of stone behind *Northiam*.

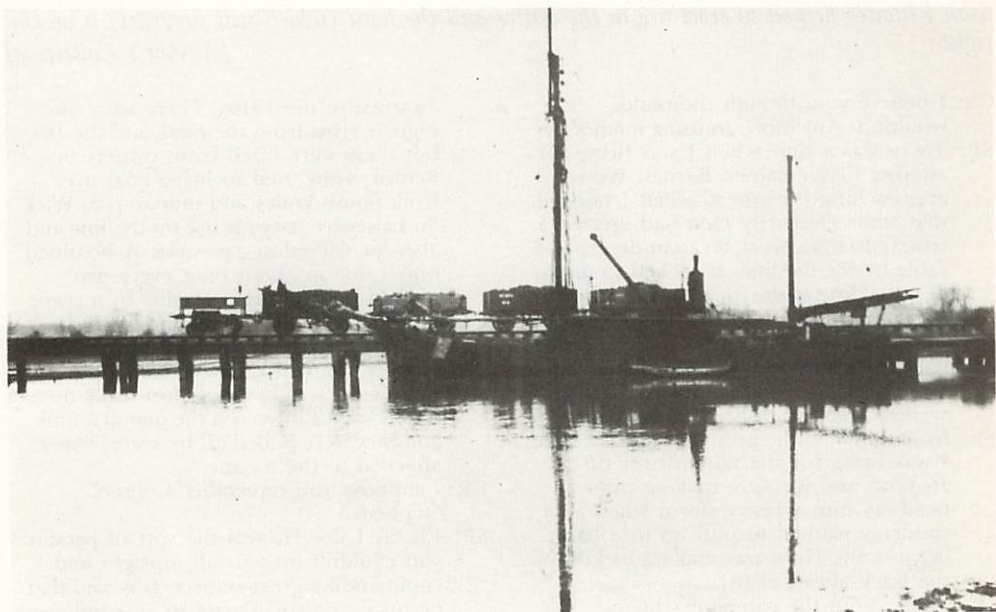
CR: What other jobs did you do?

SP: Oh, I did a bit of everything, especially in the winter when only one crew was needed. I mixed paint under the

supervision of a very good carpenter named Ralph, whose son Albert was a fireman on the line. Then I worked under the very skilled fitters Alf Hill and his son Fred. We erected the new water-tanks at Clevedon depot, and also the wooden hoist at the entrance to No. 2 engine shed. This is the only landmark still to be found at Clevedon: it stands in the middle of the corporation yard which now occupies the site of Clevedon station and depot. This must have been before 1927, for the Hills went on strike for more money in that year and lost their jobs. Later I was trained as a fireman and I always stoked in the summer seasons, right up to the closure of the line in 1940. One of the drivers I fired for, the late Charlie Coles, had been in charge of engine sheds in France during the First World War. He left the Light Railway in 1927, after the General Strike, and went to work on the construction of Portishead power station, driving the old *Portishead*.

CR: That was the one that the Light Railway sold them?

SP: Yes, a Manning, Wardle saddle-tank. She had a cracked tubeplate and was thought to be not worth repairing. She was good enough for the power station contract, though, and they had her retubed. Albert Sharpe (another driver) and I took her up there and sold her for £100, with £1 thrown in to buy ourselves a drink. I think the engine was scrapped when the power station was completed. That wasn't the only adventure I had with Albert Sharpe. Once we were on No. 5 when she was suffering badly from leaking glands. We packed them, and agreed that we would each keep the glands on our respective sides oiled, which sometimes involved going out onto the running-plate when we were in motion. Just as I was straightening up after completing this operation at one point I was astonished to see Albert's face looking at me over the top of the boiler! The next day someone stopped me in Clevedon and said they had seen a train pass through Colehouse Lane crossing with no-one on the footplate!



Wick St. Lawrence Wharf, probably 1925. The company shipped coal to here from South Wales in sailing barges, where it was transferred into trucks by steam crane. Motive power is a Fordson tractor, suitably converted for railway use. [W.H. Austen Collection]



Clevedon depot with the Drewry petrol railcar and one of the "Terriers". The tanks which Stan Plumley helped to erect are in the centre and the hoist (which still survives) is on the right.
[Author's Collection]

CR: I believe you, though thousands wouldn't! Any more amusing memories?

SP: There was a time when I was firing for another driver named Barnes. We were approaching Portishead when I noticed that some electricity men had erected a tent to do some work on an underground cable beside the line. It looked to me to be a bit close to the track, so I shouted to Barnes, "I don't think that tent is clear of the carriage steps". "Isn't it?" he called back. "Then it bloody soon will be!" All I remember after that is looking back and seeing three astonished heads appear from a hole in the ground! Another time I was firing for the same driver on *Hesperus* and we were making poor headway into a heavy storm when suddenly we had to pull up to a halt because the Hunt was making its kill on the track ahead of us!

CR: What about the company's boats?

SP: There was only one, the Ketch *Sarah*, of about 120 tons. She was taken over by Beauforts of Weston-super-Mare after the line had closed, and was lost off

Swansea in the 1940s. There were also regular visits from the *Edith* and the *Lily*, but these were hired from owners in Bristol. They used to bring coal over from South Wales and unload it at Wick St. Lawrence jetty for use on the line and also for Clevedon gasworks. A boatload only came in about once every two months, and it was unloaded by a crane on the jetty which the company owned and was driven by another driver, Tom Hedger, who still lives in Clevedon. Because of weight restrictions only three trucks were allowed on the pier at a time, and they were pulled off by a steel hawser attached to the tractor.*

CR: I suppose you remember Colonel Stephens?

SP: I'll say I do. He was the sort of person you couldn't forget: tall, upright and commanding great respect. It is said that he once gave a cigarette to an employee down at Weston and then sacked him for smoking it on duty.

CR: Do you believe that?

SP: I doubt if it's actually true, but it's the

kind of thing he would have done if anyone took liberties. He was also an extremely clever man: he practically designed the new No. 5.

CR: Designed it?

SP: Well, he ordered modifications to the standard Manning, Wardle design – such as the disc wheels, which he realised would make it much more suitable for shunting because they were heavier.

CR: One final question: I've heard that a train once came up from Weston to Clevedon in ten minutes. If so, this would have been an average speed of nearly fifty miles per hour, or twice the maximum permitted on a light railway. Is it true?

SP: Yes, it is. I should know – I was firing it. The driver was Charlie Coles, and we were both members of the Liberal Working Men's Club. There was a function being held there at 7.30 that particular evening, and our last turn was the 7.20 departure from Weston. When we reached the Bristol Road crossing, just outside Weston, a passer-by opened the gates for us, and the same thing happened at Worle. After that there were

no more gates before Clevedon, and we knew that the man on duty there would have gone home once he heard that we had left Weston, so there would be no-one there to record what time we arrived. By this time we were several minutes ahead of time, so there were no passengers waiting at the halts, and we were able to go flat out. We arrived in time for the start of the function we wanted to attend at the Liberal Club.

CR: Which is where we are sitting at this very moment! I am most grateful to you for talking to me – and now let me fill up your glass!

**Ownership of these boats is rather obscure. According to Grahame Farr in his book "Somerset Harbours" (also quoted by Maggs in his book on the W.C.&P.) "Lily" was registered at Barnstaple in the name of Colonel Stephens personally. Former Salford Terrace employee, the late Archie Judd, was interviewed on this subject last year and stated that "Sarah" was owned by Stephens and not "Lily". It is possible that the Company also owned one or other of the boats. Can any reader throw further light on this subject? – Ed.*



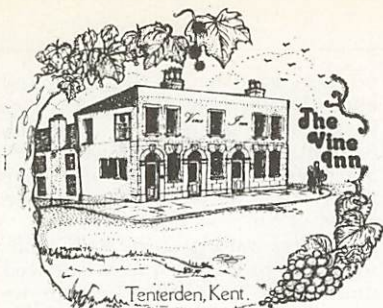
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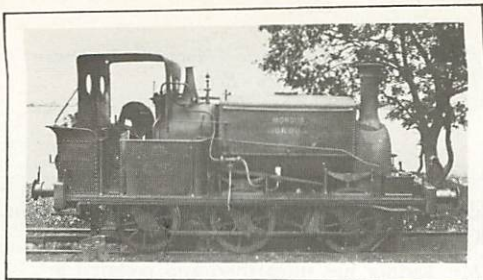
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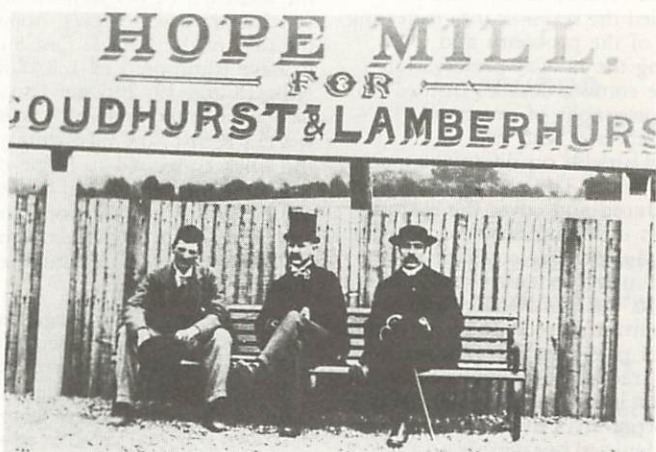
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[National Railway Museum]

You said in a reply to Tim Stanger (*Tenterden Terrier*, Winter 1978) that Colonel Stephens was never ignored. Perhaps I may draw your attention to plate 96 of a book entitled “*Victorian and Edwardian Kent*” by Crouch and Burgess, which shows three people on a platform seat at Hope Mill (later Goudhurst) station. The caption to the photograph reads:- “The Squire, the Parson and a less exalted person sitting beneath the decorative nameboard of Hope Mill Station, which opened on 1st October 1872”. I have a strong suspicion that the “less exalted person” is none other than H.F. Stephens and I would appreciate your confirmation that this is correct.

Orpington, Kent

Bill McNair

You are, of course, quite right. H.F. Stephens does appear on the left of the photograph. He was Resident Engineer of the Paddock Wood & Cranbrook Railway under the Engineer, E.P. Seaton and this photograph is one of several taken on the occasion of the opening of the first section of the line from Paddock Wood to Hope Mill. It was extended shortly afterwards to

Hawkhurst. Stephens, incidentally, was only 24 at the time and this was his first major project.

In the various books on the K.&E.S.R., lists of the Southern locomotives used on the line before and after nationalisation broadly agree, except that M. Lawson Finch mentions “unidentified 0-6-0’s” in 1941 and 1944, S.R. Garrett and J.L. Smith do not and D. Cole says that in 1944, No. 756, ex-P.D.&S.W.J. was on the line and in 1946 No. 2129, ex-L.B.&S.C.R. class E1 0-6-0T. Is there any firm evidence of these engines being on the K.&E.S.R. and how were they used? Both have certainly been in Kent – No. 756 found its way to Dover during and after the War, whilst in 1943-49 No. 2129 was at Tonbridge, according to D.L. Bradley in various R.C.T.S. publications.

Canterbury, Kent

Peter Clark

These sightings have never been confirmed and there have been reports of others; in particular a “Schools” class on the Robertsbridge to Bodiam section. Mr. Cole

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photographic evidence?

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detail as are the Isle of Wight and Isle of Wight
Central Railways.

Mr. Kidner has unearthed and collated a
remarkable amount of information in view of
the difficulty of his subject. Some of his
conclusions are, however, open to question. In
the case of the Kent & East Sussex he appears
to have transposed ex-L.S.W.R. four wheelers
Nos. 18 and 19, and the Hurst Nelson
passenger brakevans which rightly appear in his
K.&E.S.R. list, are surprisingly included amongst
the stock converted to bogie carriages in his
Rother Valley entry. Mr Kidner readily admits to
the possibility of omissions and discrepancies
and hopes that even where his researches are
incomplete they will stimulate others to provide
further information.

To accompany his findings Mr. Kidner has
provided a varied centre section of photographs
which convey the atmosphere of his subject
well. Unfortunately it is here that the only glaring
error in the book occurs where a caption
describes our ex-L.S.W.R. tri-composite as
acquired from the Longmoor Military Railway
— presumably a confusion with our S.E.C.R.
'birdcages' from that source. This is not,
however, a point of any real significance in
relation to the quality of the text and it is to
be hoped that more studies of this nature can
be expected from The Oakwood Press.

'Route Map — London & South Western Railway
Main Lines' by Vic Mitchell. 36 pages, maps
and text. Published by the Middleton Press,
Midhurst, Sussex, price 90p plus 10p postage.

This little book is apparently the first in a series
based on the 1919-1925 1 inch Ordnance Survey
maps, which will eventually cover the whole
railway route of Britain. The publisher apologises
for the lack of clarity in reproduction and
indeed, even the most experienced navigator
would find it difficult to follow the railway by
road, utilising these maps. The accompanying
notes give historical (railway) information
about the places en route.

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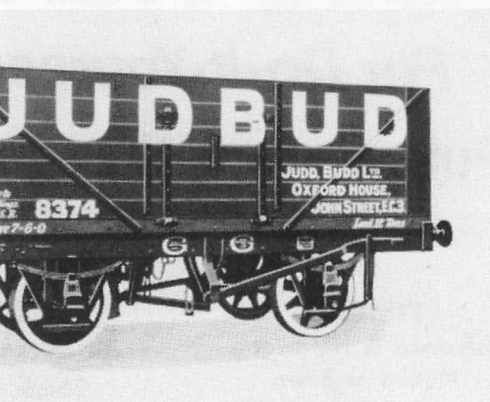
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