

# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 25

Summer 1981



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

# The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered Charity 262481

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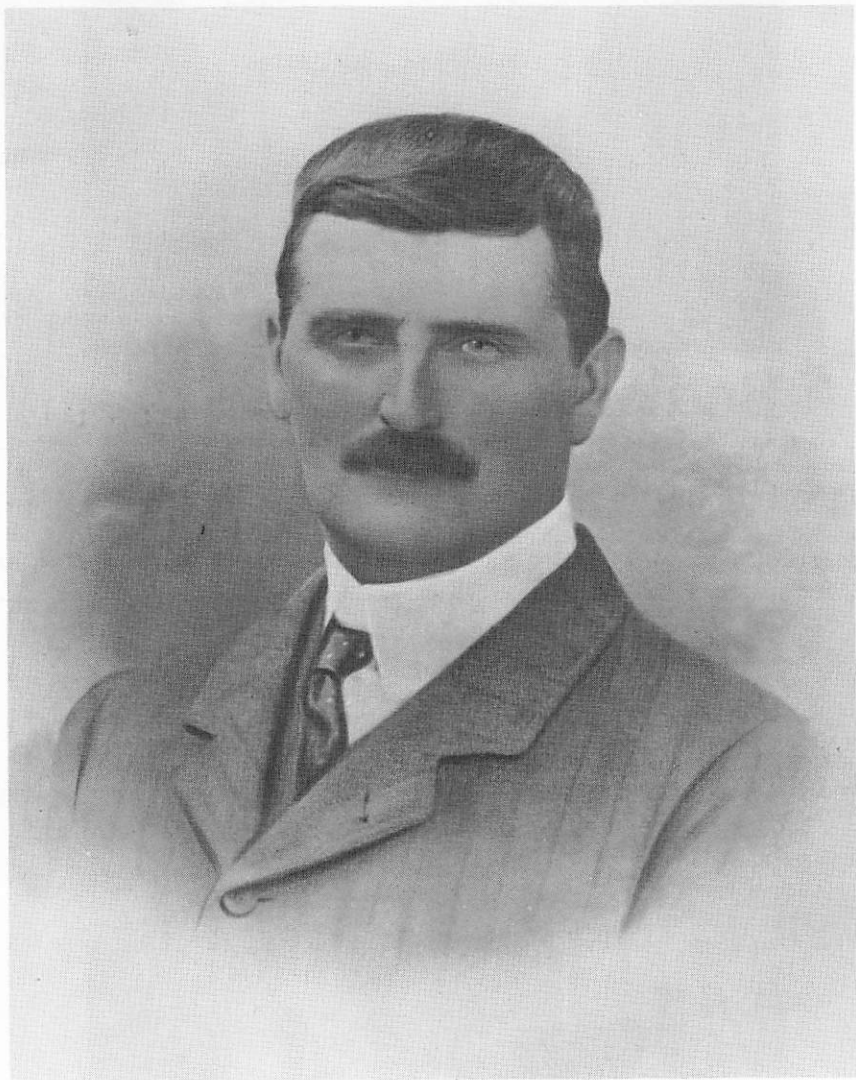
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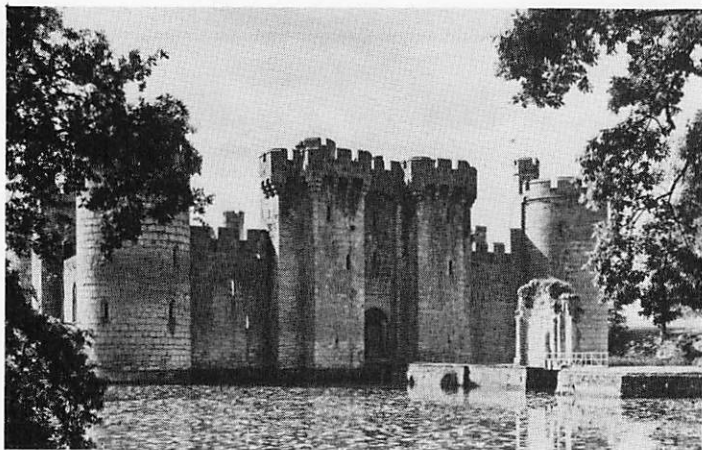
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HOLMAN FRED STEPHENS  
1868-1931

*The twenty fifth edition of The Tenterden Terrier is dedicated to the memory of the founder of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, in this, the fiftieth anniversary of his death.*



## Bodiam Castle *A National Trust Property*

The Castle is open every day, April to October and on weekdays only, November to March, between 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., or sunset if earlier. It is closed on Christmas day, Boxing day and 27th December. Built in 1386 as a defence against the French, ruined in the Civil War, it still has a magical effect on every visitor. There is a public house and cafe in the vicinity, both managed by the National Trust. About 500 yards from the K & E.S.R. station.

A Grand Fireworks display with music on Saturday evening, 22nd August. Bring a picnic supper party.

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## Great Dixter

A 500 year old manor hall house, Great Dixter is open every afternoon (except non-Bank

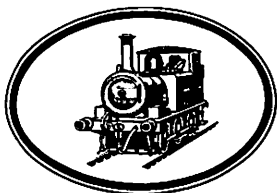
Holiday Mondays) until mid-October, 2-5 p.m. It contains lovely antique furniture and needlework. The famous gardens have many unusual plants, some of which have won awards at the Royal Horticultural Society shows in London. Clematis and other plants can be bought in

the nurseries.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the K & E.S.R. station at Northiam. Follow signposts in the village of Northiam.





# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 25

Summer 1981

## Contents

- 3 Editorial
- 4-12 Lineside News
- 13-14 Holman Fred Stephens –  
An Appreciation
- 17-19 Terriers Go to Ground
- 22-23 Maunsell Returns to Steam
- 25-28 God Bless America
- 29-33 The Hub of the Empire
- 35 Letters to the Editor
- 39-44 Ongar to Hadleigh

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## FRONT COVER

### FORGING AHEAD ON TENTERDEN BANK

*No. 22 'Maunsell' approaches the home  
signal on 4th April 1981.*

*(Brian Stephenson)*

## Editorial

### Boom or Bust?

The Tenterden Railway Company made a nominal profit on operations last year, but it was worrying to find that no less than £22,000 of our net income came from the Wealden Pullman, Santa Specials and the Steam & Country Fair in roughly equal proportions. True, a small amount of general overhead expenditure can be attributed to these events, but it is clear that the Railway would be completely non-viable on the basis of normal service trains alone. Furthermore, passenger numbers fell substantially in the early weeks of the 1981 Season no doubt influenced by the recession and appalling weather.

The message from this could be that the days will soon be gone when the public is satisfied to come to Tenterden and ride from A to B and back again in a steam train with modern coaches and expect nothing else. Innovation, proper facilities and creative marketing are the crucial factors for survival in the eighties – nothing less will do if our customers are to keep on coming.

# Lineside News

Compiled by Paul Sutton

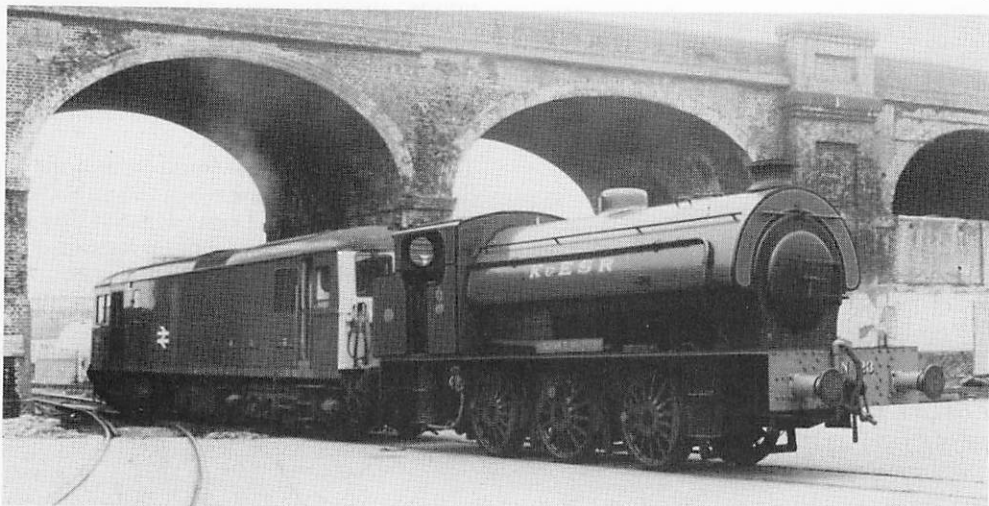
*In these notes there are two references to the passenger figures being down this year so far. Surely we can help to remedy this ourselves? As members we have confidence in, and are proud of our Railway. This must make it much easier to "sell" the Kent & East Sussex as an ideal way for our friends and relations to spend part of a day enjoying themselves on our line.*

## Locomotives

A considerable amount has been achieved during the winter months with a gratifyingly large number of volunteers attending on even the coldest days. No. 10 'Sutton' is residing in the shed awaiting an early start on its boiler removal. When this is completed arrangements can be made for quotations to be prepared covering its repair or replacement. It is believed that other than the boiler, only minor work will be needed to put it back into traffic. This locomotive (and to a lesser extent No. 3) are the subject of a separate article elsewhere in this magazine. It is pleasing to report that some work has recommenced on the 'P' Class. Merlin Dexter has begun to level up frames, line up the motion and check the cylinder bores. Marcia, the little 0-4-0 Peckett recently passed its steam test. The owner, Dick Beckett carried out some work on the left side motion and readjusted bearings and slide bars, ensuring that the loco was in fine fettle for the

first of the Steam at Bodiam weekends. The U.S.A. re-entered service officially on Saturday 4th April, the first day of the new season, although the engine had several running in turns on permanent way trains during the previous weekends. It is running successfully and looks very smart in its new black livery lined out in red. It is a great credit to all who worked on it. Austerity No. 23 has at long last had its tyres turned. It was sent up to Stewarts Lane Electric Traction Depot on Saturday 9th May and returned on the 16th. It was the first "steamer" to be up at the "Lane" for many years and aroused a great deal of interest amongst the staff, so much so that we had to replenish our supply of publicity material during the week. Grateful thanks are due to B.R. Stewarts Lane for all their help and co-operation and Beck and Pollitzers of Dartford who carried out the transportation. Thanks also to London members who helped with the loading for the return journey and also the "faithful" who coped with everything at Rolvenden. The side rods were put back on Sunday 17th and the loco had a satisfactory trip out to Wittersham Road after services had finished for the day. With the return of one Austerity to service another, No. 24, disappears

*(Continued)*



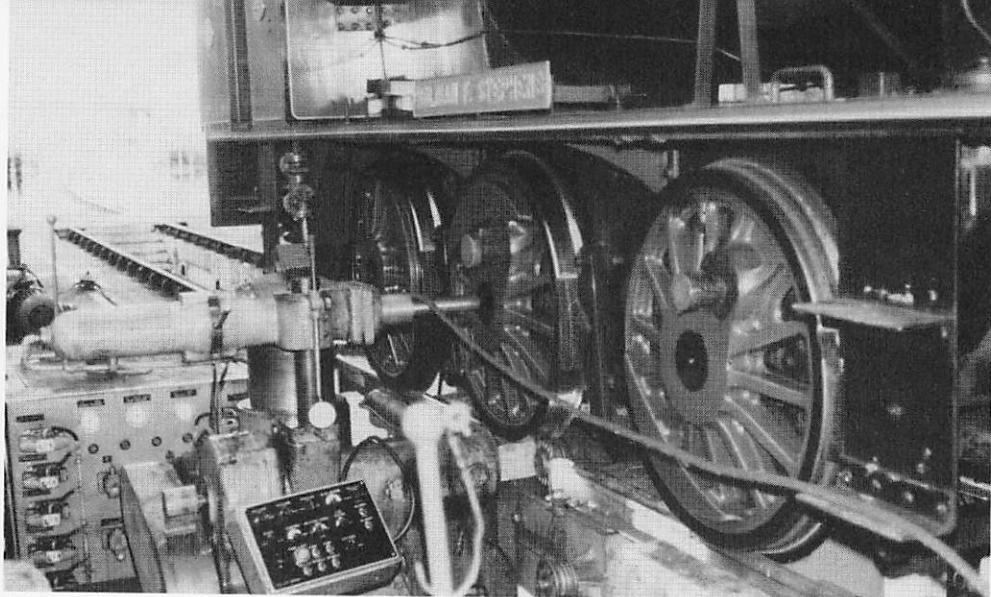
*No. 23 and an unidentified Class 73 at Stewarts Lane just after unloading. Saturday 9th May 1981.*

*(Marshall Vine)*

## Schedule of locomotives, March 1981

K.&E.S.R. Number	Type	Condition
3	L.B.&S.C.R. Terrier "Bodiam"	In store at Rolvenden awaiting 10 year boiler exam and repairs to barrel.
10	L.B.&S.C.R. Terrier "Sutton"	Undergoing heavy boiler repairs, including new firebox, possibly entirely new boiler. Completion late 1983, funds permitting.
11	S.E.&C.R. P. Class	Dismantled. Boiler repairs including restaying & retubing in hand. Heavy mechanical overhaul in progress.
12	Peckett "Marcia"	In service for special events.
14	Fox Walker "Minnie"	In store at Northiam.
15/16/17	Manning Wardles "Rhyl", "Dolobran" & "Arthur"	In store at Rolvenden.
18	Peckett "Westminster"	In store at Bodiam.
19	N.S.B. No 376 Class 21c (The Norwegian)	Undergoing heavy general overhaul at Rolvenden.
20	G.W.R. diesel Railcar	Undergoing body repairs at Rolvenden.
21	USA "Wainwright"	In store at Rolvenden pending general overhaul.
22	USA "Maunsell"	In passenger service.
23	Hunslet Austerity "Holman F Stephens"	In passenger service.
24	Hunslet Austerity "William H Austen"	Withdrawn Easter 1981 for intermediate overhaul (ten year boiler exam, fitting of new tyres, motion repairs).
25	Hunslet Austerity "Northiam"	Due in passenger service from June 1981.
26	Hunslet Austerity "Linda"	In store at Rolvenden pending restoration.
27	R.S.&H. Austerity "Rolvenden"	In store at Rolvenden pending restoration.
29	R.S.&H. 0-6-0ST	In store at Rolvenden.
40	B.T.H. Bo-Bo diesel-electric	Undergoing heavy general overhaul at Rolvenden.
41	R.S.&H. diesel- hydraulic "Baglan"	In service for works trains.
42	Hunslet diesel mechanical	Subject to minor repairs, in service for works trains.
43	Fowler diesel- hydraulic	In service for works trains. Awaiting repaint.
—	AC Cars diesel Railbus	In passenger service. Awaiting repaint.





*No. 23 on the wheel lathe at Stewarts Lane. 13th May 1981.*

*(David Sinclair)*

from the scene to undergo a thorough boiler examination as is now required every ten years; repairs will be made to the motion and new tyres fitted. It will therefore be out of service for some considerable time. Work on No. 25, the third of the ex Army Hunslet's progresses; the saddle tank has been refitted together with the new chimney and the top half of the cab; replating is now complete round the lower half of the bunker and doors have been fitted to the footplate; the big ends have been remetalled, machined and refitted. Trouble was experienced with the metalling of the slide blocks and so as not to hold up progress some more have been borrowed from No. 26. The main steampipe in the smokebox has been replaced and all copper piping has been annealed. Most of the paintwork has been stripped to bare metal, filled and repainted. The inside of the saddle tank has been cleaned and a large amount of rust and scale removed. It is hoped that this locomotive will enter service some time in August.

The A.C. cars railbus has performed satisfactorily on Saturday mornings and also provided a service between Bodiam and Dexter Halt on 24th and 25th May. The Board has asked Philip Shaw to look into the possibility of a Trust being set up to be responsible for the restoration and maintenance of the G.W.R. Railcar. Any prospective trustees and those with constructive ideas should contact Tim Stanger.

### **Carriage & Wagon**

The R.U. No. 69 has of necessity occupied most of the department's time in recent months so that it can be completed to enter public service at the beginning of August. Important items obtained recently were a 'Still' hot water boiler and coffee maker and refrigerator motors all from a similar condemned vehicle at Clapham Junction. Although our R.U. came with a 'Stott' water boiler and coffee maker, spares can no longer be obtained so it was considered prudent to replace them before the vehicle was put into service. The fridge motors were removed whilst the vehicle was at York. All these items have been stripped down and overhauled, insurance tested where necessary and refitted; they have boiled water, made coffee, produced ice cubes and cooled bottles very satisfactorily!

The remainder of work in the kitchen consists mainly of replacing some small fittings and making good damage which occurred when the vehicle was in a condemned state in its final B.R. days. The lighting has been overhauled and partially rewired. The attendants' compartment has now been turned into the public W.C. with the sanitary ware coming from a condemned Mk. I vehicle. Plumbing and panelling is complete, but testing cannot take place until a family of blackbirds has departed from their nest! The original toilet has been refitted and overhauled and found to be satisfactory and will become the staff W.C.

Final external painting is still awaiting some decent weather.

The dining chairs and tables are being recovered and revarnished. The ex L.S.W.R. van, K.E.S.R. No. 129 had some prompt attention during the weekend of May 16th/17th when its roof was recovered and fully repainted in L.S.W.R. dark brown, black underframe and white wheel rims and appropriate South Western lettering. As is now the usual practice, replica glass fibre number plates have been fitted. This is the first time this vehicle has had a repaint since June 1960. Mk.1 B.S.O. coach No. 73 arrived on Wednesday 29th April, having been delivered to Tonbridge by rail from Hitchin. Built in 1956 at Doncaster and delivered to the Western Region as No. W9269, it received its last repaint in 1965 and was withdrawn from passenger service in the early 1970s.

The only alterations whilst in departmental use were the removal of most seating and one

sliding door – all replacement items are in hand. Externally its condition is quite good, although some doors will need renewing from items in stock. The coach has been bought for the railway by the Thameside Area Group with some of the proceeds from last year's Steam at Bodiam event – many thanks to them. When it arrived at Tenterden the vehicle was still in lined maroon with the B.R. coaching stock crests on the sides. Another arrival on the 29th was ex L.N.E.R. 12T covered van from H.M. Dockyard Chatham; Originally No. (E)161278, built in the late 1920s and Navy No. 556. Its last Admiralty duties were as a stores vehicle to H.M.S. Enterprise. It is in very good condition considering its age and the fact it has a wooden underframe. The roof requires recovering and 6 sideboards need renewing. It is intended to restore it to full L.N.E.R. livery as K.E.S.R. No. 131. Running No. 130 has been allocated to the compressor wagon which the greybeards among us will remember as being the original Ruston shunter.



*The Carriage & Wagon shed – basic steelwork complete March 14 1981. (Paul Sutton)*

## Building

Dave Stubbs, with invaluable help from his father, has made a new gate for the South side of Cranbrook Road level crossing; the old one having succumbed to a nasty attack of wet rot some while ago. Fortunately all the metalwork was in a good enough state to refix on the new gate.

Attention is also being given to Rolvenden level crossing where new hanging posts are being made with the welding being done by the loco department. This time the posts are being made from 12" x 12" steel 'I' section which we had in stock. The gates will then be hung the opposite way round, the present hanging posts serving as the new shutting posts. This should stop the problems that crossing keepers have had with the gates bringing them to a sudden and alarming halt against the rough pieces of road, to the consternation of waiting traffic.

Assistance has been given to the permanent staff in cleaning and priming the metal work of the new C & W shed which has risen at Tenterden. the cladding material has been delivered and fixing should be well advanced by the time these notes appear. Side cladding of

the Rolvenden extension was completed during March and the roofing sheets were fixed by Richard Crumpling during the latter part of May.

## Permanent Way

At the time of writing (end of May) Peter Davis had only just taken over as Manager, consequently these notes will be rather sparse. However there is some more up to date news in the *Rooter*, together with an outline of future plans. The visit by the Matissa Tamper during April did not prove as useful as expected, mainly due to the trackbed sub-structure; a visit by a different machine in June will concentrate efforts on the wet cutting, Morphews curve and Wittersham loop. During May we were fortunate in being able to avail ourselves of the services of Anglian Land Drainage who, having completed work in the meadows south of Rolvenden, hired us a machine for 4 hours to remove the slip between Morphews curve and Popes Cottage which has been a constant irritation for some while now. The driver of the machine, a Caterpillar 220, did a very good job and turned out to be Jack Hoad's nephew!



*Loading ash ballast at Tenterden, 14th March 1981*

*(Paul Sutton)*





*Matissa tamper approaching Tenterden after its first day's work – 7th April 1981.*

*(Paul Sutton)*

### Stations

During the Winter months, all the platform seats were repainted by Richard Osborn and Ian Oliver and these look extremely smart in a fresh coat of green. Philip Shaw repainted and thoroughly cleaned the gents lavatory and for the first time since the station was built, a light has been provided. This is especially useful when the Pullman returns at night. John Harman and Bob Gilbert completely rebuilt the small canopy over the station entrance, since the old one was suffering badly from wood rot.

The Tenterden and District Horticultural Society have done us proud with the gardens and they now look better than they have done for a long time. Indeed, the miserable Easter weather could not spoil the splendid display of daffodils, narcissi and hyacinths. Shrubs and bedding plants are still very welcome, not only for Tenterden but also for Rolvenden and Wittersham Road stations.

Tenterden station building will be repainted in the Summer in the old livery of maroon and cream.

At Rolvenden, Station Agent Bill Marshall stood down at the beginning of the year and we are extremely grateful for all his good work last season. Richard Osborn has been appointed to the post in an acting capacity at present. The station has been manned on most operating days; and takings from sales and tickets are good. John Harman completed the sales

counter in the station building in April and after a coat of paint, this now looks very impressive.

Wittersham station will be repainted this Summer by the Weald Area Group. The site now looks much improved with the laying of a roadway behind the platform to the permanent way yard where a turning and unloading area was put in. While the machine was working on the site the opportunity was taken to regrade the bank behind the platform. This has now been grass seeded and more trees planted. Now that several winters have weathered the fences, the station no longer looks 'new'. The lamps and advertising boards have been repainted by Harry Benbow. Problems are being experienced in manning Wittersham Road and any aspiring staff should write to Martin Phillips, the Station Agent, at Tenterden.

### Commercial

At the time of writing the company's audited accounts for 1980 were not available, but a nominal profit is expected. Approximately £22,000 of the Company's net income came from the Wealden Pullman, Santa Specials and the Steam & Country Fair in roughly equal proportions, which highlights the importance of these activities in the context of the overall profitability of the enterprise.

In the early weeks of the 1981 season, a drop in passenger numbers of about 35% was

experienced, no doubt influenced by the appalling weather. The Wealden Pullman continues to do well – bookings have been extremely good with only two trains up to the end of August with any vacant seats remaining. Tuesday May 19th saw the railway playing host to Dupont Chemical Company which is marketing a new range of brushwood and bramble killers. Site trials have been conducted by Selectokil of Maidstone (Dupont's distributors) at Bodiam. Among Dupont's 50 guests were senior representatives from all regions of B.R., the London Underground, the Tyne Metro, S.N.C.F. and U.K. service industries. After coffee at the Castle Inn, Bodiam the party went on to make an ambulatory inspection of the trials and then returned to Tenterden for lunch on the Wealden Pullman. In deference to Dupont's transatlantic origins, the U.S.A. tank provided the motive power.

### Signals and Telegraph

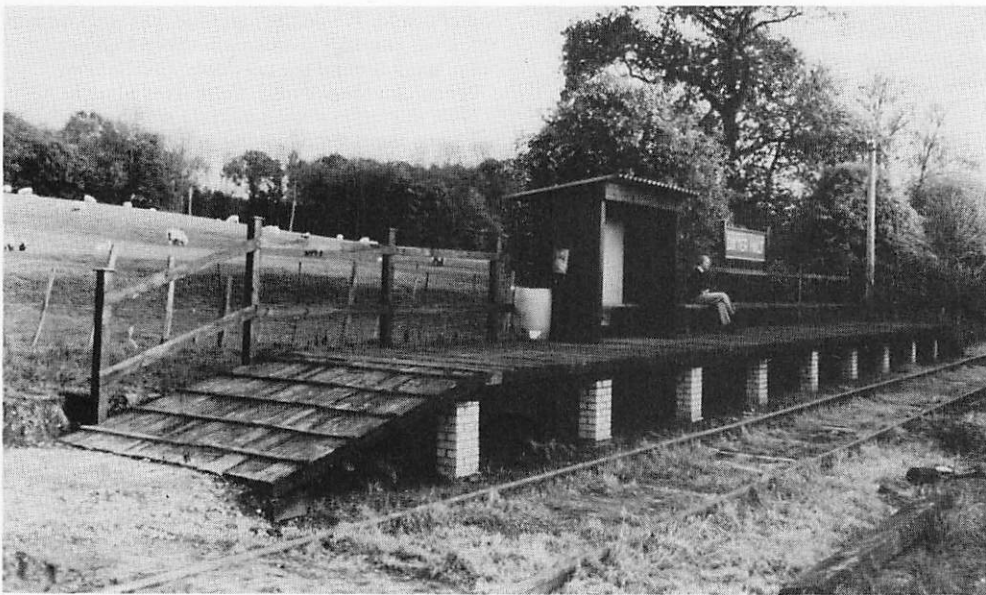
Wittersham Road has been the centre for most of the activities in recent weeks with Bob Gilbert and John Harman completing the roof carcassing together with the board and felting. Dave Stubbs from the Building Department has now been able to slate one hip end and it is

hoped to have the box waterproofed very soon. The lever frame was installed during January and February, mainly by Roger Rowe and work continues on the interlocking.

Paul Vidler and Tony Church have devoted much of their time to the lead away at Wittersham Box. Paul also found time to lead a team to Whyteleafe in Surrey where a fine specimen of an S.R. lattice signal, complete with all fittings, was removed at two o'clock in the morning at the height of a thunder storm! The signal had until recently served as the Whyteleafe South up home. The opportunity was also taken to bring back a number of concrete horses from Caterham which were acquired last November. Bill McNair has started restoration of the L.C.D.R. 20 lever frame which used to be in the box at Herne Bay, with a view to its use at Northiam.

### Clearance

Clearance has proceeded rapidly on the Northiam extension project. Wittersham Bank was cleared two years ago and required only tidying up and by the middle of May work was in hand on the Hexden straight. The rapid progress has been due mainly to the help of 8 youth groups totalling 120 people organised by Tim Stanger. Some visited us more than once



*Dexter Halt before official opening, 16th May 1981.*

*(Paul Sutton)*

and we should like to thank:

Wilderness School, Sevenoaks, East Peckham Scouts, 7th Tunbridge Wells Scouts, Pegasus Scouts, Lutonia Venture Scouts – Dartford, Brighton Venture Scouts, and Ashford and Hastings Rotoract.

Some of these groups intend returning to Wittersham for their Summer Camp and to continue their clearance work.

### **The Northiam Extension**

Three lengths of track immediately West of Wittersham Road level crossing have been relayed with concrete sleepers. Apart from the clearance already mentioned, preparation work has concentrated on Wittersham Road permanent way site access road etc.

### **Area Group News**

#### **Ashford**

The Group donated £500 towards the Northiam extension from their successful model railway exhibition, and also contributed towards the low loader for Marcia. This will attend various Summer events including the Kent County Show, where there will be a model railway and sales stand. The 1981 programme has an excellent series of speakers and films and the meetings re-start for the Winter session on Wednesday, 16th September at the Centrepiece, Bank Street, Ashford at 7.30 pm and take place every third Wednesday in the month thereafter. Eric Graves is still able to supply a few sets of vintage K & E.S.R. photographs at £1.00 a set. Please contact him on Ashford 23687.

#### **East Kent**

The group has recently been reconstituted after a short period of inactivity in which its aims and objects were re-examined. At a meeting on May 11th Les Holness was elected to the chair with Steve Whiteman accepting the post of Honorary Secretary. The new Chairman continues as Honorary Treasurer. No further committee members were elected. The programme for the coming months was then discussed and it was decided that Summer evenings will generally be spent on visiting places of interest whilst the Winter programme will consist of slide and film shows and talks from well-known speakers as well as members' own reminiscences. A circular has been issued to all members in the East Kent catchment area in the hope of reawakening the interest of former participants.

#### **Maidstone**

The P.M.V. mentioned in the Spring issue was collected by members of the group from Bricklayers Arms on Saturday 31st May. Marcia was taken to the Gravesend model railway exhibition and apart from proving a great attraction there, also produced considerable interest during its journey. As a result, further bookings have been made for it to appear at fetes and in carnival processions. Our own model railway exhibition in March raised £254. An article by Jack Fox about the "Never-Stop Railway" appeared in the May issue of *Railway Modeller* and apart from plugging the K & E.S.R. has so far produced one request for Pullman transfers!

Three more loads of waste paper, totalling 15740 Kg, have been loaded and delivered to the paper mills, producing £96 net. Members living in or near Tenterden are again asked to contact Alan Tebboth on Maidstone 676818 if they can help with loading at Tenterden – so far Alan has only one assistant and two or three more helpers would be very welcome. Marshall Vine with some volunteer help has produced four 12' lengths of light weight track for the pump trolley and hopes to make at least four more lengths.

We have helped to publicise the "Steam at Bodiam" event by asking Radio Medway and Southern Television to mention it in their "What's On" programmes; some 40 posters have also been delivered to shops, offices and post offices around Maidstone and Ashford. The Group has authorised the purchase, at an estimated cost of £100, of a light trailer and also contributed £300 towards the purchase of a low loader for transporting Marcia. The total cost of this is also being shared by Ashford and Surrey. A further £100 will be spent on 2 jacks for use on the low loader trailer. The meetings at the Community Centre, Brewer Street, Maidstone on the last Thursday of each month continue to attract good attendances.

#### **Sussex**

Several meetings, on a variety of topics, have been held at Westham. These have all been well attended and the next meeting will be on 21st July when it is hoped there will be a talk on the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway. A number of days have been spent working at Northiam and progress has been made in replacing the floor in the Booking Hall with a view to re-opening the station later this Summer. The



major fund raising event for the group this year will be the Bus Rally to be held at Wittersham Road on Sunday 2nd August; early entries indicate that there will be a wide variety of interesting preserved vehicles so come along with your family and enjoy the day out.

### Thameside

The new Halt at Dixter was officially opened by Mr Quentin Lloyd, owner of Great Dixter House on Saturday 23rd May, a very wet day. A special train comprising No. 12 Marcia, the District Railway coach and the L.N.W.R. brake van conveyed invited guests and group members from Bodiam to Dixter for the opening ceremony. During April, George Wright, Charlie Masterson and other members accompanied a hired flail which drastically cleared much of the overgrown hedge between Northiam and Bodiam. Without this clearance it would have been impossible to take Marcia and the train to Bodiam for the Spring Bank Holiday event. Meanwhile at Bodiam itself John Baker and his wife Molly together with several members of the Sussex Group were very

busy during March and April preparing Bodiam Station and the surrounding area for the Event. They completely transformed the headshunt from an overgrown tangle to a clear stretch of line. Details of the Steam at Bodiam Event appear in the accompanying *Rooter*.

### Weald

The second annual model railway exhibition was held at Bligh's Hotel, Sevenoaks in April. This was fairly successful although numbers attending were down compared with last year. In the same month the Sales Stand also visited Bromley Model Railway Exhibition.

The eleventh A.G.M. of the group was held at the Chequers, Tonbridge on 12th May and the Treasurer reported that payment of £1,800 to the railway to cover purchase of the Restaurant kitchen car had now been completed. A new Chairman, Dr. D. F. Strongitharm, was elected and Secretary, Peter Brown and Treasurer, Richard Brown were returned to office; two new committee members are Fred Noakes and Clive Norman, who takes on as Membership Secretary.

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# Holman Fred Stephens

## An appreciation of his life and works

Holman, Fred Stephens died at the Lord Warden Hotel, Dover, on 23rd October 1931 – 50 years ago; he was in his 63rd year. During his lifetime he built or was associated with some 16 light railways, ranging from the diminutive Rye & Camber Tramway on the Sussex coast, to the Bere Alston and Callington line, with its magnificent viaduct of 12 arches, each of 60ft span and standing 120 ft above the River Tamar; a structure infinitely more graceful than Brunel's, but to this day hardly known.

Stephens was born into a family where art and literature predominated (his father was F. G. Stephens, the Pre-Raphaelite artist and critic) but his interest in railways was apparent at an early age. Having studied civil engineering at University College under Sir Alexander Kennedy, "Holly" Stephens was apprenticed at the workshops of the Metropolitan Railway, Neasden, in 1881 before embarking on a career of light railway construction and management that was to span a period of 40 years.

His first major project was the Paddock Wood & Cranbrook line, where he was appointed Resident Engineer at the early age of 22, under the supervision of Edward Seaton. This line was an offshoot of the South Eastern and one of the few schemes directly involving a major established railway company with which Stephens was to become involved. Stephens was essentially an individualist, who set out to build and operate railways of economical construction in circumstances where the establishment would have felt that the odds were heavily weighted against success. His philosophy was clear and decisive; "it is absolutely essential to have a policy and stick to it", he wrote to his parents in 1891, "if it fails try some other way, I am sure that this is the only way to get on". Failures he did have in the early years; the abortive involvement with the Light Railway Syndicate in the late 1890's in which Stephens teamed up with a Cranbrook solicitor, Edward Peterson, to promote speculative light railway schemes throughout the Country, but which collapsed due to Peterson's inability to raise finance rather than lacking in Stephens' engineering skills. But there were many successes, commencing with the Selsey line in 1895 and the Rother Valley (later the Kent & East Sussex) in 1900 – the first line to be constructed under the provisions

of the 1896 Light Railways Act. Thereafter a whole string of schemes came to fruition – the Sheppey Light, Bere Alston & Callington, Shropshire & Montgomeryshire, Burry Port, to mention but a few. After the Great War, Stephens remained active in railway development where others would have found the environment impossible. The North Devon & Cornwall Junction Light, for instance, constructed in the early 1920's against fearsome odds, both practical and financial. Indeed, if any criticism can be directed against Stephens, it is that he failed to anticipate the arrival of the motor bus and its impact on rural travel.

Nevertheless, he saved the famous Festiniog Railway from bankruptcy in the 1920's and had the Kent coal fields achieved their expected potential they would have been amply served by a network of lines engineered and managed by him. His biggest disappointment was the Southern Heights, a projected electric line in Surrey on which he was working almost up to the time of his death and which failed to come to fruition, largely as a result of the negative attitude of the Local Authorities.

In private life Stephens was an enigmatic, even an eccentric character. A tall, striking figure, instantly recognisable, with a military bearing; an arrogant man, but with immense personal charm and wit, much admired and liked by his staff; his attitude to women always courteous, sometimes supercilious – occasionally mysterious, he nevertheless had few friends outside his business acquaintances and lived a solitary existence mainly in hotels or at his clubs. A lifelong bachelor with no close relatives, he had few interests apart from his railways; his army service was spasmodic, but he attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1916, mainly in respect of services to the Territorial Force, a contact that he maintained throughout most of the 1920's. His interest in classical mythology, if somewhat superficial, is evidenced by the naming on many of his locomotives after goddesses.

Stephens was a man of his time; had he survived the 1930's he would have seen his empire of light railways crumble as surely as they did without him. Ironically, it is the revival of the Kent & East Sussex, the Festiniog and other minor lines around the country in the

motorway era that has created renewed interest in Stephens' life and work. True, these railways fulfil a very different role to the one he envisaged, but railway preservationists today have something very much in common with

Stephens – a tenacity and dedication of purpose that is surely as relevant in 1981 as it was 50 years ago.

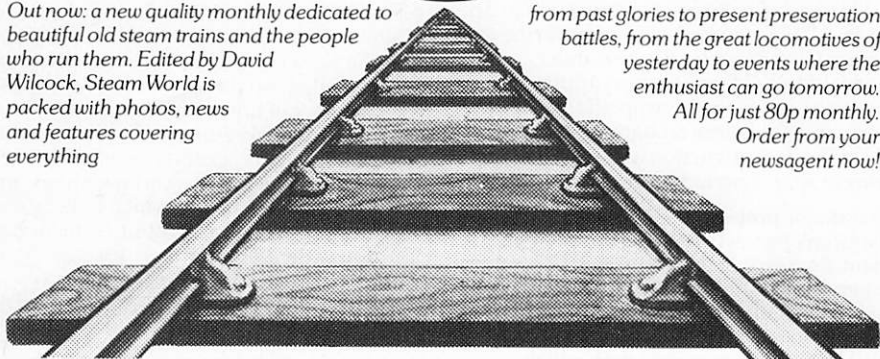
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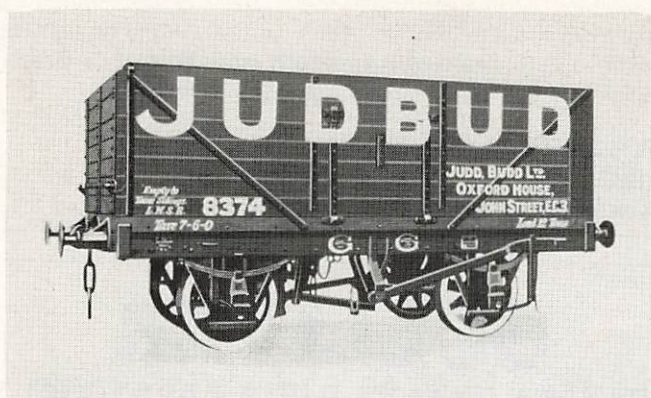
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# Terriers Go to Ground

**Simon Green, Director for locomotive planning and contracts, explains the problems facing our venerable pair and plans to return them to passenger service.**

For readers of *The Tenterden Terrier* 1980 was a sad year. In 1 January the familiar melodious beat of No 10 (ex London, Brighton & South Coast Railway A1X Class No 50 "Whitechapel") was heard for the last time and for the first year since the early 1960s there was no "Terrier" in steam on the line. The knowledge that this situation would continue for some years added to the worries of those responsible in the locomotive department and on the board. The editor of the journal and a number of correspondents were moved to pontificate on our apparent failure to care for our most historic locomotives, perhaps due to insufficient explanation of the technical and financial difficulties ahead. Until the owners had been fully consulted it would have been discourteous to go to press with our plans for reviving their engines but now that this has been done and restoration and fundraising are in hand, a detailed appraisal seems appropriate. As No 10 is being tackled first this article will concentrate on the plans for her with some notes on the situation relating to No 3 at the end.

Like many of the older preservation societies we had the good fortune to acquire both Terriers from British Railways in working order, albeit rather tired and with boilers dating back nearly fifty years. During the sixties and seventies No 10 was in service most of the time with a number of short interludes to attend to various mechanical problems and retubing in 1975. No 10 officiated at No 3's centenary (1972), official reopening in 1974, its own centenary in 1976, inauguration of the new Newmill Bridge in 1977 and re-opening of Wittersham Road Station in 1978. The team at Rolvenden are now engaged in a friendly race with the Civil Engineering Division to ensure that No 10 will be ready to operate the first train to Northiam.

Under current insurance requirements all locomotive boilers have to be removed for a full hydraulic examination every ten years. During 1979 our boiler inspector warned us that we should prepare for the possibility of replacing the inner firebox. One glance at the undulations of the firebox crown showed why he was so concerned. Fireboxes can be patched or new pieces may be welded in (as in the case

of the P Class) but there comes a point when repair is not only imprudent but also uneconomic. The last boiler report also drew attention to serious wasting around the dome, the lower front tubeplate and other parts of the barrel where visible. Such defects can be built up with weld but the possibility of complete boiler replacement had to be considered. We had reached the point which will eventually face all locomotive owners and operators and the scale of money required made every previous locomotive project we had undertaken pale into insignificance. There could be no question of ducking the issue since the existence of the railway would clearly be meaningless without Terriers but we had to prepare ourselves for the project before contemplating a physical start.

Clearly with the possible expenditure of tens of thousands of pounds at stake, formal agreement with the London Borough of Sutton who own the engine was a first priority. Fortunately we have always enjoyed excellent relations with the Borough and, at a fairly early stage in negotiations, the idea of a thirty year lease (considered the economic life expectancy of a boiler before a major rebuild) was accepted by both sides.

First contact on the subject was at Rolvenden in early 1980 where No 10 stood gleaming, apparently ready for immediate service. Later meetings were held in the splendid Civic Offices in Sutton, a pipe dream in 1963 when the Borough of Sutton & Cheam purchased No 32650 to be the centrepiece of the proposed Civic Centre. Throughout the difficulties of the sixties and the successes of the seventies the Borough stood by us and in the more enlightened climate of the eighties neither Councillors nor Officers could contemplate removing their property and 'stuffing' it. They generously decided they would rather give us the chance to carry out the major repairs and have even written plans for an annual 'Sutton Day' into the lease. Most of the terms were agreed by the summer of 1980 and after a few legal hiccoughs (after all it is not everyday that a Local Authority drafts a lease for a steam engine) the Mayor signed the lease on 2 March 1981.

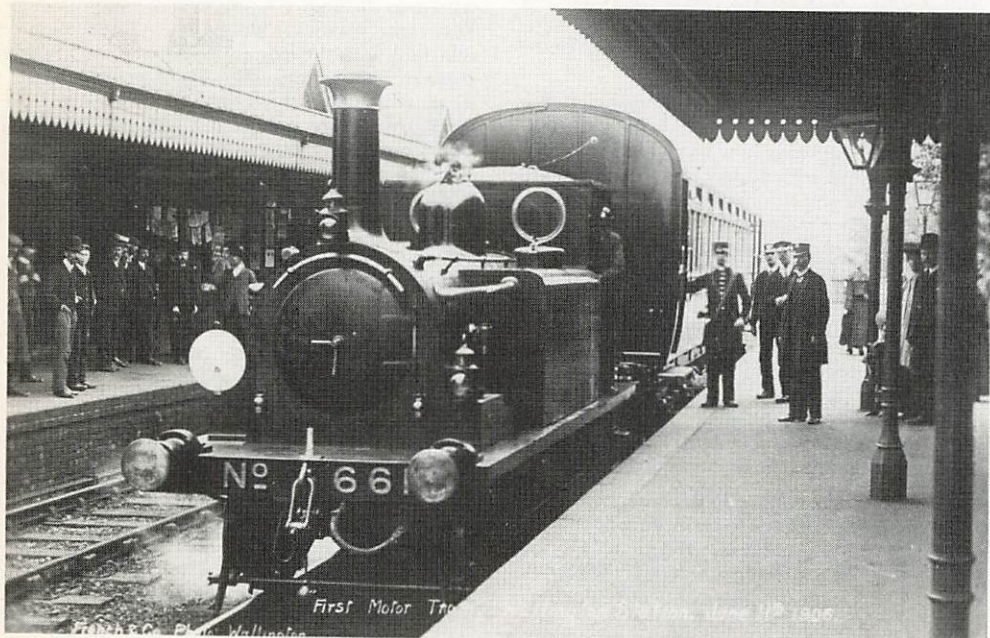


Meanwhile five firms contacted were interested in quoting for the repairs up to a complete replacement. A trip to one of these gave the opportunity to see a new boiler in construction – one of two built by Israel Newton of Bradford for the Isle of Man Railway. Apart from the unusual keyhole firebox (to fit between narrow gauge frames), Isle of Man boilers are within a few inches of a Terrier's in most dimensions. Ultimately the contract will of course go to the lowest bidder in whom we have confidence (one supplier is even in Holland) but it was encouraging to see what can be done. The price was less heartening!

The next task was to put the project into the context of other locomotive department projects. Modern, more powerful engines are essential to run most services and with austerity No 24 due for withdrawal in Easter 1981 and only No 23 in service it was vital to get USA No 22 and the third austerity no 25 running early in 1981. Furthermore the company's 1980 budgets were fully committed. Proposals were put to the Board to start work in 1981 and budget for an initial payment to a contractor at the end of that year with the expectation that

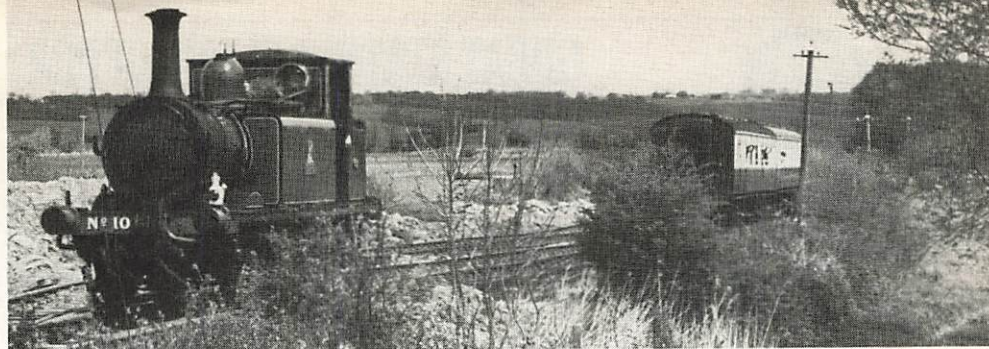
greater expenditure would have to be made in 1982. The Steam & Country Fair Committee made the suggestion that their 1981 profits be devoted to the restoration of No 10 and with nearly £8000 to their credit in 1980 despite indifferent weather this idea was readily adopted. Other means of fund raising are still being developed including a group within the London Borough of Sutton. Whilst government cut-backs rule out any direct support from the Borough, some officers plan to give up their spare time to help organise the group which includes model engineers and other enthusiasts. Needless to say the Company would welcome both ideas and donations, which can be sent to Tenterden Town Station.

At the time of writing (March) a start on stripping "Sutton" down is imminent. First all fittings will be removed and stored and vulnerable openings (eg the steam chest) sealed off. Side tanks will be removed and it is anticipated that some fairly major repairs will be needed to counteract corrosion. Spirax-Sarco Limited, the steam specialists of Cheltenham, have kindly agreed to overhaul the Westinghouse air pump at their



*The original Terrier locomotive 'Sutton' at Wallington Station, 11th June 1906, on the first motor train service.  
(Sutton Libraries & Arts Services)*





(John F. Hendy)

*'Sutton' at Wittersham Road, before construction of the new platform 7th May 1977*

Apprentice Training School. The pump may well date back before 1880 and the battered state of its brass fittings certainly suggests this. We are very grateful to Spirax-Sarco for undertaking the project for the cost of parts and materials only.

The boiler will then be lifted out and the cladding and lagging stripped off. The tubes will be carefully removed for possible re-use either in No 10 or cut down and stored for smaller boilers. (Yes — there are smaller ones, although No 12 "Marcia" was retubed last year.) The whole boiler will be descaled ready for a thorough examination by the insurance company's inspector. Only then will we know whether the existing boiler can be repaired or whether a new one will be needed. However it is unlikely to be scrapped. There have already been suggestions that the copper inner firebox could be melted down and cast into some form of souvenir to raise funds for Terrior restoration (anyone who is interested in organising such a scheme should contact the editor) and some components might be re-usable in No 3.

Contractors will be invited to tender during July with a view to placing an order soon after the Steam & Country Fair when the financial situation is better known. I would welcome suggestions as to any additional firms who may be able to undertake boiler work of this nature.

Whilst the boiler is away, we will take the opportunity to undertake a variety of mechanical repairs and repair any corrosion that may have become evident. We anticipate that the boiler will take about a year to repair or replace so re-assembly could start at the end of 1982 if all goes well. This should permit a return to service at the end of 1983 — perhaps at the Fair. Under all the circumstances the expression 'if all goes well' is of course critical and the above dates should be seen as estimates rather than firm forecasts.

No 3 "Bodiam" was also in regular service until she was withdrawn to have the smokebox repaired in 1977. In the event the lower two thirds were completely replaced but during reassembly a serious defect in the boiler barrel was discovered. The front tubeplate flange, smokebox and barrel are rivetted together in a sandwich and the barrel was found to be very badly wasted in this area. No doubt this corrosion had built up for several decades and even with the most thorough inspection it might have gone unnoticed had the smokebox repair not revealed it. The boiler report shows that No 3 like No 10 has a fairly tired boiler although in most respects it is in slightly better condition. However at this stage it is not easy to know how best to effect a repair within the sandwich. Clearly the boiler will have to be removed, stripped and inspected in the same way as No 10. It may be possible to build up the wastage by welding or to cut it away and weld a new section in although this sounds unlikely. One extreme possibility is to replace the entire front ring of the barrel, perhaps using that from No 10 if it is in good condition and precisely the same size. There is no doubt that experience on No 10 will help in deciding the best course of action on No 3 with a view to keeping costs to a minimum.

Both Terriers have been in our care for eighteen years now (compared with about sixteen years with British Railways) and of course No 3 "Bodiam" spent most of her working life on the line. Without Terriers running something seems to be lacking which our modern engines cannot provide, however capably they may handle the heavier trains. Undoubtedly expenditure on these two locomotives will divert funds from other projects but few could argue that we have any alternative but to make whatever sacrifices are called for to ensure that one day they can be seen and heard at work hauling our more historic carriages from Tenterden to Northiam and ultimately Bodiam itself.





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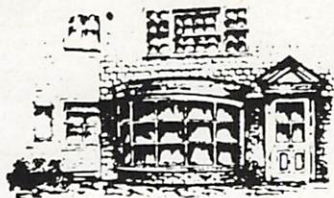
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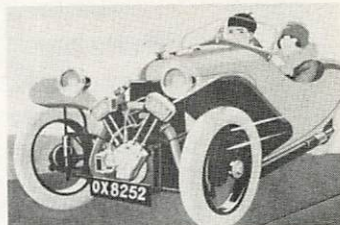
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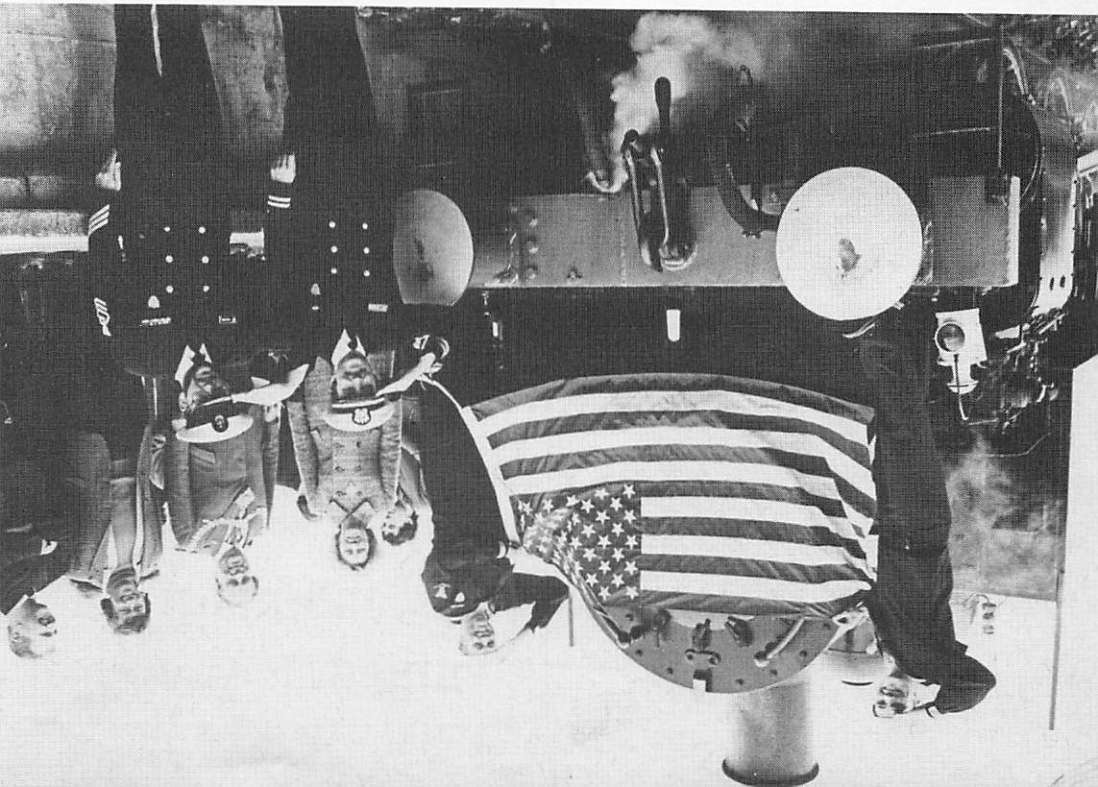
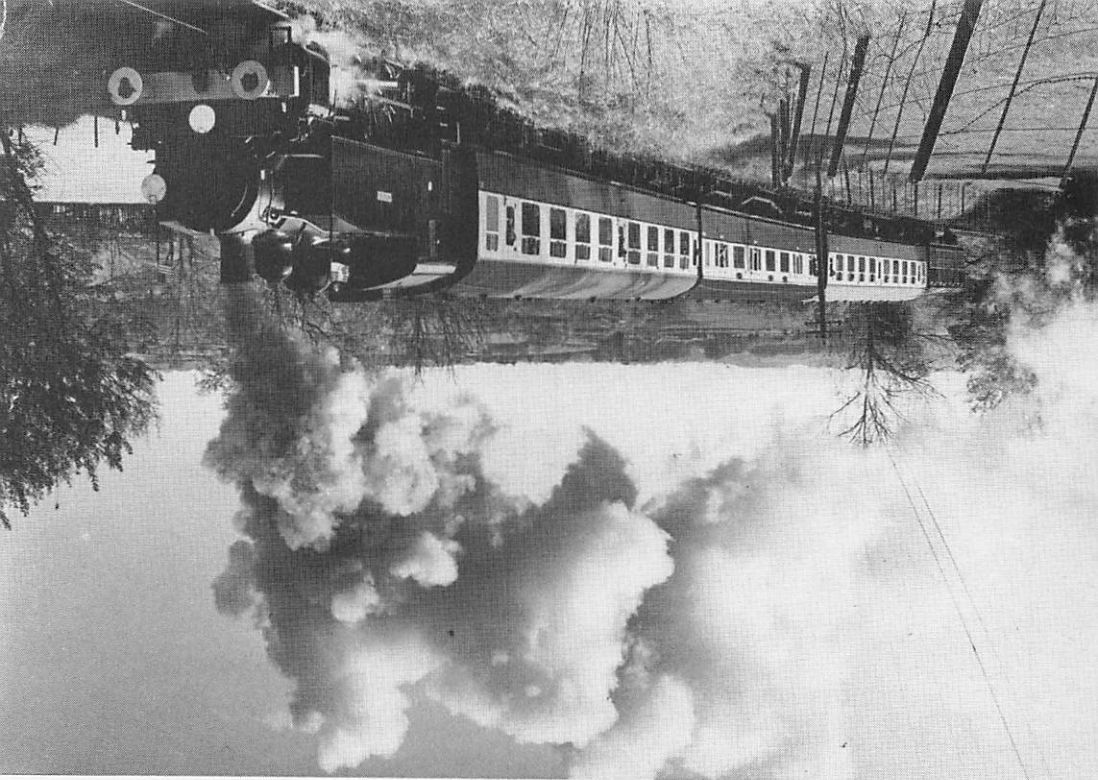
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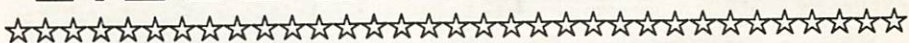
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*The re-commissioning of U.S.A. locomotive No. 22 'Maunsell' on 4th April 1981 was attended by American navy personnel from the destroyer U.S.S. Claude V. Ricketts, currently visiting Chatham dockyard.*

*Photographs: Below – Brian Stephenson*

*Top Left – Jim Berryman*

*Bottom Left – Alan Crotty (18th April 1981)*



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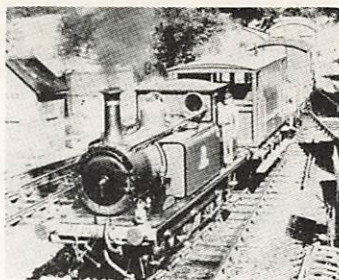
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# God Bless America

## Fireman, Brian Heyes, describes the inaugural trip with locomotive no 22

Once again our U.S.A locomotive "Maunsell" is a familiar site on the line, but the first day of service, 4 April 1981, caused me some apprehension. I was rostered as fireman, but I had never before wielded a shovel on her infamous footplate. My driver, Simon Green, was nervous too as he had never driven her before. However, at least the weather smiled on us, although there were a few spots of rain whilst we were raising steam.

We arrived at Rolvenden at 6.30 am and I made the usual checks on the locomotive; firstly the fire box to make sure that there were no leaking tubes or plugs; next the gauge glass to make sure that there was enough water in the boiler and then the smoke box, also for leaks. From the smoke box I climbed on to the boiler and took the chimney cover off. This cover is placed to stop any rain going down the chimney and causing corrosion in the smoke box, especially the front tube plate. Finally, I checked the water level inside the tanks and found them half full – sufficient for the initial steaming until we could move to the water crane for replenishment.

It was then time to get down to the job of lighting the fire and with the help of Dave West, the cleaner, I collected wood, which was then soaked in old sump oil before being put into the fire box.

No 22 is different from any other locomotive on the line in that it has no dampers to control the amount of air which enters the under side of the fire, but only a gap of about 2 inches between the foundation ring and the ash pan. This means that when the wood is put into the fire box it needs to go right up the tube plate and only cover the front three-quarters.

This helps to stop the smoke coming out through the fire hole door, whilst driving it through the tubes and out through the chimney, until sufficient steam has been raised to turn the blower on. Once the wood was in position, all I needed to do was to put a match to it and then to build with more wood and small lumps of coal. Then there was time to clean, trim and fill the lamps which we carry on the front of the locomotive and give some

special attention to the brass work and copper pipes on the footplate.

The bunker of No 22 is very much higher off the ground than other K & E.S.R. locomotives, so we were unable to coal with the "Nuffield" shovel in the normal way and all we could do was to fill the bucket, lift it as high as possible and put the coal in the bunker by hand. The bunker was all but empty when I started and it took eight buckets – unfortunately our higher-lifting "Weatherill" shovel, undergoing heavy repairs, was due to return to service later on in the month.

At around 9.15 am we had made enough steam to enable us to move the engine for water and for Simon to make a brake test. Due to this being the first day in service, the pin which holds the brake pipe on to the dummy was rather a tight fit and would not come away at first. When it finally responded to my efforts, the pipe came away like a whiplash, giving me a resounding knock on the left knee, which remained stiff for the rest of the day.

The ride to Wittersham Road was very quiet, as it should be with a light engine and the sound of the side-rods and valve gear brought back memories of years gone by when I fired on the Southern Region. On arrival at Wittersham Road we went through the platform, over the level crossing and beyond the "limit of operations" board, where we pulled the large sleeper barrier behind the locomotive. The staff was then conveyed by car back to Rolvenden so that "Austerity" no 24 could proceed to Tenterden and then bring the train, with the invited guests, to Wittersham Road. With time to spare Simon and I settled down to breakfast and to cook our bacon and eggs on the shovel. The difficulty with standing a locomotive for so long is to ensure that it is kept quiet and that there is sufficient fire in the firebox when the real business of the day is due to commence. When the 11.45 am from Tenterden arrived, it was time for us to leave our position of quiet seclusion, to be greeted by the admiring crowds. We passed the waiting train, went over the points and reversed on to the coaches.

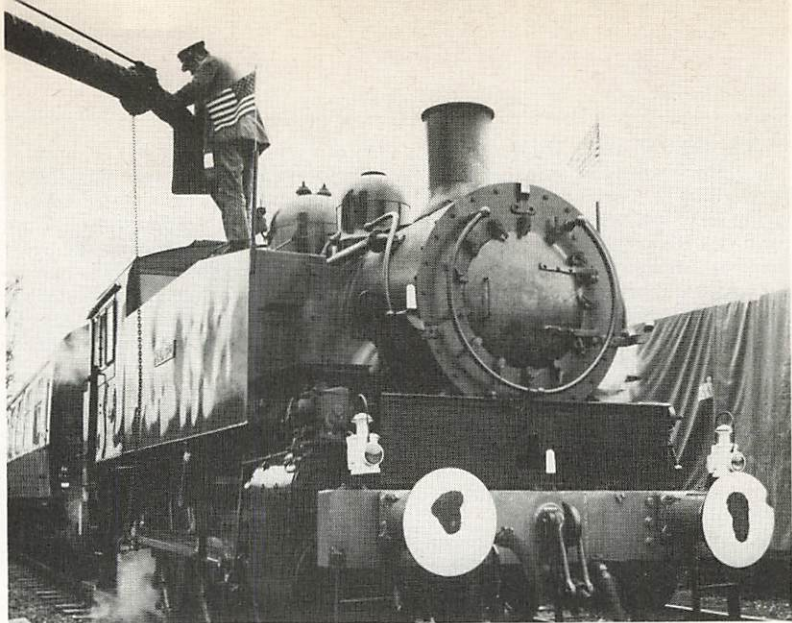
During the naming and dedication ceremony, I

*The Author*

*(Brian Stephenson) →*







*'Maunsell' taking on water at Rolvenden – 4th April 1981*

*(Brian Stephenson)*

was trying to prevent excessive smoke; the art of this is to put coal on one side of the firebox at a time, so that the flame from the other side burns the smoke.

With everybody back on the train and the "right away" from the guard, the steam pressure gauge showed 210 p.s.i.; the fire just waiting to be levelled off by means of a dart (very large poker); then came the "crow" from no 24, to which Simon replied and we were on our way.

I took the dart, pushed it into the fire, closed the door; thick black smoke was coming from the chimney, a sign that there was plenty of coal in the fire box, burning well; the gauge showed 180 p.s.i.

I opened the fire hole door and put two small shovels of coal up each side to the front, two half way and two under the door. Having shut the door, I had another look at the chimney – smoke – which meant that the coal had gone to the right place. As we approached the Oxney straight, I opened the firebox door and filled up with coal under the door and around the back corners. I put on the injector, ready for Simon when he 'shut off' for the 10 mph limit at Newmill bridge. The gauge showed only 150 p.s.i.

Having started "cold" from Wittersham Road, the boiler was slow to make steam and with a brake dragging somewhere on the fairly heavy

train, we were using it faster than making it. Simon nursed the locomotive along gently in the run to Rolvenden, to give the fire time to come round; as we drew into the platform, the gauge was down to 140 p.s.i., a third of a glass of water and reasonable fire. Simon insisted that the gates remained closed until we had full pressure, an enormous fire and three quarters of a glass of water. At this point the guard enquired if we wanted no 24 to come off – we had assumed that it was safely in the siding, but others had thought that we might need some help up the bank. In the event, this took an inexplicable ten minutes and we were soon blowing off steam, amidst some embarrassment.

At last we were given the train staff, the gates were opened and we were on our way. Simon opened up on the regulator in the small valve and the wheels started to turn; later on in the day we were to find that the best technique is to have the large valve half open and the gear lever pulled back to within two notches of mid gear. As we went over the crossing, he notched up the lever; the gauge showed just under 210 p.s.i. I took hold of the dart again, opened the fire hole door and lifted the fire – everything was now going to plan.

I decided to break up some of the coal so that it burnt much quicker – the gauge was showing 200 p.s.i. A check on the water and that was still riding high in the glass. A couple of lumps on the shovel and once again, up each front

corner, down the side and under the door. I glanced at the chimney and saw smoke – at least the fire was burning correctly. However, we were moving very slowly and by the time we reached Cranbrook Road there were anxious faces appearing at carriage windows, clearly thinking that we were short of steam. At that point there was a whisper of steam from the safety valve and then up they went; so, on with the injector – it was a shame to waste steam when it is so hard to come by. When the locomotive had stopped blowing, off went the injector and with another quick round of coal, no 22 was steaming well.

The fact of the matter was that Simon, self-proclaimed “bottom link driver”, was conserving steam by resolutely not opening the large valve of the regulator. He had memories of the summer of 1974, when no 22 regularly stalled on Tenterden bank and was determined to maintain his record of never having run out of steam whilst firing or driving. Catching sight of the home signal which was in the “off” position, the pressure gauge was showing 190 p.s.i. and no 22 had almost completed her first trip of hauling a passenger train since

restoration. As we passed the signal, I put the injector on again; we were showing half a glass of water and the pressure fell back to 180 p.s.i. as we entered Tenterden station. Both Simon and I were very pleased with the way no 22 performed, but Simon was less happy with his efforts and determined to do better next time. As we were running late there was only just time to fill the tanks before we started our next trip.

At the end of the day we berthed the rolling stock at Tenterden and then went light engine to Rolvenden. Now for the job of “disposing” of the locomotive – that is, first cleaning the ash from the smoke box and checking for any leaks. Then, cleaning out the firebox, after spraying the ashpan with a hose to reduce dust; opening the ashpan doors.

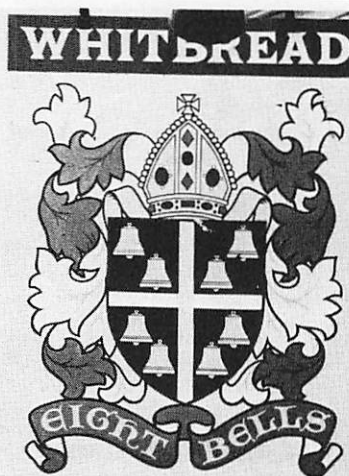
Up on to the footplate to drop the fire by means of a rocking grate. After this, all that was left to do was to fill the boiler, wash down the footplate and return the lamps to the stores.

Finally, two satisfied enginemmen washed the grime off their hands and returned home to Maidstone.

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# The Hub of the Empire

## A. Michael Davies reminisces on the headquarters of Colonel Stephens' far flung group of light railways at Tonbridge.

*"My address is Ashby House, Tonbridge, but Tonbridge is such a small place that the name of the town is sufficient . . ."*

Tonbridge has been on the railway map since May 1842, when the South Eastern Railway reached the town with its line from London Bridge. Later it was to become an important junction on the S.E.&C.R., handling through train services from as far away as Birkenhead and there is little doubt that its strategic location strongly influenced Holman Stephens to establish his practice there in 1895.

Stephens had spent some four years in Kent, mainly on the Paddock Wood & Cranbrook Railway construction, with headquarters in the former town, but by the summer of 1894 his work was near completion and he was seeking fresh employment. Short commissions with the Cranbrook & District Water Company and the Medway Navigation kept him in the locality and the following year he was involved with schemes for railway construction in the Rother Valley, Tonbridge to Hadlow and Yalding and the Rye & Camber, all easily accessible to Tonbridge.

Surviving correspondence indicates that Stephens first took rooms and established an "office" at Ashby House, Priory Road, in November 1895, employing William Henry Austen as his assistant. Austen seems to have first been engaged by Stephens in 1891, whilst he was at Cranbrook and stayed with him throughout his life, eventually to take over the reins in 1931. He retired at the age of 70 upon nationalisation in 1948. In a letter to his father, dated 17th December 1895, Stephens stated (maybe with a touch of customary arrogance!) "my address is Ashby House, Tonbridge, - but Tonbridge is such a small place that the name of the town is sufficient". His telegraphic address throughout the years was simply - "Stephens, Tonbridge station" - where else indeed!

During 1896, following the passing of the Light Railways Act, parliamentary work increased enormously and by 1898 he became foremost consultant in light railway planning and construction; a national telephone was installed at Ashby House and very probably at this time he engaged further assistants to deal with clerical work. In due course the accommodation at Ashby House became too



*Ashby House, Tonbridge, July 1970  
(A.M. Davies)*

small for the growing practice and early in 1900 he rented offices at number 23, Salford Terrace, a pleasing Victorian house a few hundred yards away and close to Tonbridge station. These premises are one of the few parts of old Tonbridge to survive and have changed little externally over the years, even to the iron railings outside - viewed, no doubt, by the East Kent Railway clerks in their basement room, as they compiled the ever-diminishing passenger returns!

Ashby House remained as Stephens' bachelor quarters right up to his death, presided over by his part-time housekeeper, Miss Flo Standen, but business activities were conducted exclusively from Salford Terrace. The Edwardian era saw a steady growth in mileage planned or built by Stephens (there was considerably more of the former) but unlike the major companies, who constructed very little mileage after 1910, Stephens continued to expand and the number of staff at H.Q. rose into double figures. 1911/12 saw the reopening of the Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales as the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire, whilst in Kent, work was proceeding on the East Kent, linking various collieries to the South Eastern & Chatham at Shepherdswell. This line opened in stages between 1916 and 1925; the



immediate post war years witnessed the final expansion, with the construction of the Ashover, North Devon & Cornwall Junction, Weston Point and the acquisition of the Snailbeach. Also in 1923, Tonbridge became responsible for the management & engineering of the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways, operating some 36 miles of 2 foot gauge line in a remote part of North Wales. Thus between 1925 and 1931, Salford Terrace administered some 150 miles of line, together with around 70 locomotives and attendant rolling stock. Fortunately for the historian, some former members of the staff, most now sadly departed, recorded their memories of day to day life under the legendary Colonel, and it is possible to portray a fairly accurate account of activity there from around 1914 until closure in 1948.

A visitor to 'number 23' in 1925 would have been confronted with a board outside the front door proclaiming, in gold letters, that the premises housed the offices of the Kent & East Sussex, East Kent, West Sussex, Snailbeach, Shropshire & Montgomeryshire, Weston, Clevedon & Portishead and Festiniog & Welsh Highland Railways. The premises themselves consisted of a basement and three floors; the basement could be reached by steps directly

from the pavement, crossing a narrow strip of grass (the front garden!) or by stairs from the ground floor. Here, there was one main room looking out across the garden to the pavement wall, its two occupants, W. Wills and his assistant, dealt with the affairs of the East Kent. In addition, there was a plans storeroom in the basement area, a blueprint washing and drying room and two store rooms for the filing of correspondence from all lines.

The principal room on the ground floor was at the front of the house, with access off a passage on the right of the front door. This was occupied by J. A. (Arthur) Iggulden, together with his principal clerk, George Willard and two assistants. Arthur Iggulden was Clerk to the Kent & East Sussex, East Kent, Festiniog and Welsh Highland; Audit Accountant to the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire and Festiniog and Welsh Highland and Secretary to the Shropshire Railways Company. The next door off the passage led to the back room, or inner sanctum, where the Colonel presided and which overlooked the rear of the premises. Stephens' office contained his huge, roll top desk and chair; in the drawers, his fabulous pass collection, which he always showed to visitors; on the top an elaborate writing set – a present from the Canadian National Railways. Elsewhere in the room, his drawing board and bookshelves lined with bound volumes of the proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers. On the walls, a dark rose wall paper with floral design, brown paint and photographs of locomotives around the room; the floor covered with brown linoleum. On the back of the door hung his customary Burberry coat. In the last year of his life, when he was desperately ill, the opening of the door produced a 'clunk' as a hard object in the pocket struck the woodwork. Could this, as at least one member of the staff believed, have been his service revolver?

All rooms at Salford Terrace originally had coal fires and it was the duty of the junior clerks to bring coal or carry ashes to their respective areas in the basement; curiously, female cleaning staff were never allowed on the premises and no doubt to ease the workload, gas fires were installed about 1920. A staircase led upwards from outside Colonel Stephens' door to the first floor landing, whilst the ground floor passage terminated with a door leading to a washroom and toilet. The upper floors were of identical layout, each with a large front room occupying the full width of the house and a



*23, Salford Terrace, Tonbridge, July 1970  
(A.M. Davies)*



somewhat smaller room at the rear. Internal communication was by means of a railway-type telephone, with bell codes for each individual. There was also a private telephone line to Tenterden and Rolvenden.

The front room on the first floor was the general drawing office and civil engineering department, the principal occupant of which was W. H. ("Billy") Austen, who covered the 'outdoor administration' for all lines. He was assisted by W. H. ("Bungy") Corke, the other occupants being K & E.S.R. stores Superintendent, Fred Willard and the general clerk to the West Sussex Railway, Albert Osborne, who also assisted in the drawing office. Osborne was also the Colonel's batman during the Great War. The back room was the preserve of John Ashworth, the Colonel's civil



*W.H. ('Billy') Austen*  
(*W.H. Austen Collection*)

engineering assistant for all lines, whose services were terminated after Stephens' death and the collapse of the Southern Heights scheme.



*Albert Osborne, circa 1916*  
(*Tenterden Railway Co.*)

Finally, to the second floor, where the front room was occupied by Cyril Hewitt and his assistants, Archie Judd, John Elcombe and another clerk. Hewitt was Secretary to the

Shropshire & Montgomeryshire and Snailbeach and chief clerk to the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead. Elcome was Secretary to the West Sussex line. The back room was the K & E.S.R. audit office, occupied by the audit clerk, Tommy Edwards and a rates and general assistant. The total staff numbered around 17 at this time, a number which remained fairly constant until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Sometime after 1920, Stephens purchased the freehold of the Salford Terrace offices and on his death in 1931 it was sold to W. H. Austen, to ensure their continued tenancy, each of the representative railways paying an annual rental to cover the maintenance of the property. With the nationalisation of the Kent & East Sussex and East Kent in 1948, only the Snailbeach remained, as the other lines had closed by the outbreak of war, although civilian goods traffic on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire continued to be handled throughout the war years, despite the fact that to all intents and purposes the line had been taken over by the military in 1941.

Clearly this was insufficient to maintain the offices and on 7th June 1948 there came to an end half a century of light railway history and administration. Of the dozen or so remaining staff, six elected to be transferred to the Southern Region and W. H. Austen retired. Several lorry loads of papers, plans and other material were sent for pulping, although some were rescued by British Railways archives and by well wishers. Today, the offices are occupied by a firm of architects – the basement, a hairdressers, the nameboard with its gold lettering, long disappeared . . .

No account of Salford Terrace would be complete without a reference to some of the incidents which helped to contribute to the atmosphere of this unique establishment and for much of this information I am indebted to my friend, the late Arthur Iggulden, who worked there from 1914 until closure. Iggulden recalled that Stephens loved to please his friends and acquaintances by sending them free passes for his lines or with gifts, mainly of a culinary nature. Amongst these was Rudyard Kipling, who lived at Batemans, near Etchingham and who often travelled with Stephens on his visits to London. In January 1925, Kipling wrote to Stephens, "the faithful pass has duly arrived and though I am not likely to use it, I am always grateful that you

remember me, though after the last month or six weeks I have got an idea that it would be more to the point if you had given me a free seat in a motor boat, punt or barge from Robertsbridge to Paddock Wood!"

Food would arrive at Salford Terrace in large quantities; at one period a butcher at Llandiloos, noted for his Welsh lamb, would despatch a half a dozen legs to Tonbridge, which would, on arrival, be despatched by parcel post according to Stephens' directions.

Similarly, there was an arrangement with the station agent at Crew Green, on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire to send salmon to Salford Terrace; stags heads and lobsters were sent down from a contact in Oban.

Stephens was frequently away from the offices visiting parts of his railway empire but immediately on his return, be it day or night, he insisted on being briefed on events that had occurred during his absence. A terse telegram to Iggulden's Tonbridge home worded "Arrive Tonbridge 10 pm" would necessitate his return

<p><small>Kent &amp; East Sussex Rly. Shropshire &amp; Montgomeryshire Rly. Weston, Clevedon &amp; Portishead Rly. Salisbury (West Sussex) Rly. North Devon &amp; Cornwall Junction Rly. East Kent Rly. Gower Rly. Eyre &amp; Cumber Rly. Western Point Rly. Ashover Light Rly. Snailbeach District Rly. Preston Rly. Welsh Highland Rly.</small></p>	<p><b>Salford Terrace,</b></p> <p><b>Tonbridge Kent.</b></p> <p>.....192....</p> <p>Telegram: STEPHENS, TONBRIDGE STATION. Telephone: 161, TONBRIDGE.</p>
<p>Our References. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><small>H. F. STEPHENS, M.I.C.E.</small></p>	
<p><b>Dear Sir</b></p> <p><b><u>ANNUAL PASSES, 192...</u></b></p>	
<p>I should feel obliged if you would kindly issue Passes over your line in favour of the Officials named on the fly-leaf hereof.</p>	
<p>I shall be most happy to reciprocate, if you will favour me with a list of the Officers of your Company for whom you desire passes over these Railways, if not already sent.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">I am,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yours faithfully,</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

to the office for consultation, maybe into the small hours of the following morning. There was little social contact between Stephens and his staff, the only outing being a dinner at the Criterion Restaurant, followed by a visit to the Lyceum theatre, on 4th February 1916, probably to mark the occasion of Stephens' return to full-time railway work after he gave up his military commitments.

Although Stephens kept on his rooms at Ashby House until his death, he frequently stayed for extended periods at the Lord Warden Hotel, Dover, and, in fact, he died there in October 1931. His usual routine was to catch an early train to Tonbridge, call in at the office and then make his way to Ashby House. In the meantime, one of the Salford Terrace clerks would call at Catley's cafe nearby, collect a specially prepared breakfast and carry it across the road to Ashby House. After this, work would commence for the day.

During the general strike of May 1926, Stephens found himself marooned on the K & E.S.R., but fortunately his own staff remained

loyal. For many years he had rented rooms from a Mrs Reeves in Station Road, Robertsbridge, although nobody could remember him occupying them after 1914. However, during the strike period they proved to be a real boon and became a temporary headquarters, with Iggulden going over there daily on his motor cycle to convey messages.

Certainly working at number 23 was no sinecure; pay rates were below those of the main line companies, overtime was expected and not paid for and it was quite out of the question for a member of the staff to join a trade union.

Nevertheless, faithful service was rewarded by generous tips and in the case of four staff members, they shared equally in his estate of some £30,000 at his death, there being no surviving relatives. It is fortunate that some of the most important archive material, including the Colonel's pass collection has survived and some may be seen in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum at Tenterden, in this the 50th anniversary of his death.



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# Letters to the Editor

## Serving the customer in style

Sir – May I be permitted, through your column, to comment on the letters published in *The Tenterden Terrier* resulting from the article by George Hubbard on his life with the Pullmans in the previous edition. Being an ex-Hastings Line Pullman attendant, I would like to clarify a couple of points.

Firstly, regarding the letter from Harry Reeves and the customer we had on the line who 'insisted' that *Barbara* should be on his train. This gentleman was a Mr Morrison, who, as far as I can recall was a diamond merchant in the City, and used to travel to and from West St. Leonards. It was my duty, in those days as a junior attendant, to meet him at the barrier at Charing Cross, take his case and escort him to his seat in the Pullman for his return journey home on the 3.25 pm down service.

Secondly, as regards Tom Chalmers letter, and his query on the routing of Pullmans from S.E.R. to the 'Met', I feel he misunderstood George Hubbard's article in as much as the *cars* did not transfer but *George* did!! As he stated, the Metropolitan had the two unique non-vestibuled cars, *Mayflower* and *Galatea* on which any Pullman staff could be rostered when spare, but the Main Line stock never ventured on to the Metropolitan lines at all. Hastings, East Sussex. Tommy Ball

## Tow-roping at Junction Road Halt siding

Sir – While reading the Sectional Appendix to the October 1960 Working Timetable recently, I was curious to note that Junction Road Halt was listed as one of two places within the South Eastern Division of BR Southern Region where the towing of vehicles was authorised: the other location was Ham Street. According to the Appendix, the tow rope for use at Junction Road was kept at Robertsbridge. Why, I wondered, was tow-roping permitted here when it had disappeared as a general practice many years before?

A chat with Jack Hoad soon revealed the answer. Jack, as many readers will know, is a former employee of the old Kent & East Sussex Railway and was a driver over the line up to closure in 1961; he still drives regularly as a hobby. He reminded me that the siding at Junction Road was on the up side of the single line with access by a trailing connection for up trains. Thus, in the usual manner of working, it would be necessary to take any wagons for the

siding from Robertsbridge at least as far as the first run-round loop, at Northiam, in order to shunt them back into the siding. With the aid of a tow-rope it was possible to detach wagons and leave them in the siding off down trains. The wagons were positioned nearest to the locomotive and, on arrival at the siding, were detached from the rest of the train, the tow-rope attached between them and the locomotive which then hauled them smartly into the siding. Few problems were encountered at Junction Road for the siding was parallel to the main-line. Tow-roping also took place at Bodiam where the job was rather less easy since the sidings diverged away and it was necessary to get up a good turn of speed if the wagons were to be properly berthed. At Bodiam the tow-rope was usually kept lying alongside the running line ready for use.

It would be interesting to know whether any photographs exist of this long-gone aspect of operation on the Railway.  
Wadhurst, East Sussex

Neil Rose

## The District line carriage

Sir – I am most impressed with the District Railway carriage, which is apparently a rebuilt body mounted on a modern steel underframe and running gear.

It occurs to me that it would possibly be prudent for the Company to purchase a number of B.R. standard 4-wheeled covered carriage truck underframes as such vehicles are currently being withdrawn.

The equipment could be stored pending finance being available for construction of new hard-wood carriage bodies of suitable 'period' design, similar to those that have been manufactured for the Talylyn Railway. I feel that 4-wheeled compartment stock would be more in keeping with the type of railway that we wish to portray than B.R. Mark 1 corridor coaches; they would weigh considerably less per passenger seat and in the long term be cheaper to maintain than steel or steel panelled coaches.

Lewes, Sussex

D. G. Ware

*It is part of the longer term plans for the railway to create a 'train' of 4 and 6-wheeled carriages. In addition to the District line carriage, on loan from Resco (Railways) Ltd, the Company has three other similar vehicles from North London, London Chatham & Dover and Great Eastern Railway sources, earmarked for eventual return to service – Ed.*



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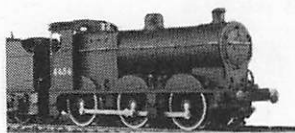
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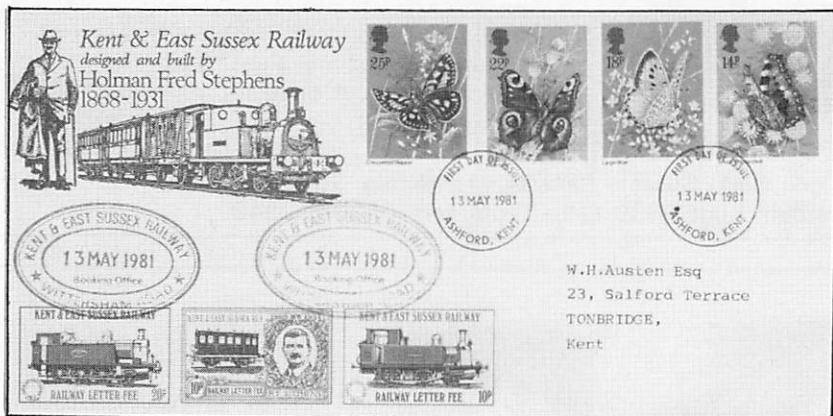
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# From Ongar to Hadleigh

## Some 'Stephens' Lines that might have been

It has been considered that the Light Railways Act 1896 came twenty years too late. It was intended to make it easier for railways to be built in those areas still without rail transport by permitting lighter permanent way, steeper gradients, sharper curves and less stringent signalling, fencing and accommodation requirements though at the expense of lower permitted speeds. In appropriate cases there was even the possibility of Treasury grants or loans to encourage such enterprises.

Unfortunately the severely depressed state of agriculture in the country areas combined with the far more profitable alternative areas for investment in the City to prevent the Act producing more than a mild surge of light railway developments. Those lines that were built found it hard to survive the unforeseen competition from the roads that came with the development of the lorry, bus and car.

For Holman Fred Stephens, however, the Light Railways Act was well timed. With the experience of engineering and supervising the building of the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway between 1890 and 1893 and his

subsequent work in planning the Rother Valley Railway he was well qualified to undertake the design and construction of the sort of economical railway envisaged by the Light Railways Act. As a result, between 1897 and 1900 his services were sought in planning lines as far flung as Land's End, the Gower Peninsula, the Isle of Sheppey, Selsey, Orpington and Faversham as well as continuing his work on the Rother Valley line and serving as Engineer to the Upper Medway Navigation. As if all this were not enough to keep him occupied he became closely involved in a series of schemes which, had they succeeded, would have produced a substantial chain of light railways across Essex.

Strangely the origin of Stephens' involvement with Essex appears to have been on the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway. From 1890 to 1910 a solicitor, Edward W.I. Peterson, was practising in the neighbourhood of Staplehurst and it is to be presumed that this is how he and Stephens became acquainted. The result of this acquaintanceship was the involvement of Stephens in a body known as the



*Ongar station before electrification – The Central Essex Light Railway would have continued through the embankment beyond the station.*  
(Lens of Sutton)



Light Railway Syndicate, incorporated in 1895, and in a related concern, the Economic Railways Company, incorporated in 1898. Peterson was Solicitor to the Syndicate and a director of the Company. Stephens held a substantial share in the Syndicate but was only a nominal shareholder in the Company although one of its initial subscribers. Nobody else held shares in both companies; the majority of the shareholders in the Syndicate were from the London area whilst most of the Company shares were held by residents of Bath and its vicinity. These two concerns were not solely interested in Essex; the Syndicate was the instigator of the Sheppey Light Railway and various other lines whilst the Company waged a protracted and ultimately unsuccessful contest with the Railway Development Company for the right to build a light railway in furthest Cornwall. However, it was in Essex that the Syndicate and the Economic had their highest hopes.

The Great Eastern Railway and its predecessors had never been particularly responsive to requests from local communities for branch lines unless the building of such a line would keep a competitor out of its 'sphere of influence'. As a result there were substantial areas of rural Essex without easy access to rail transport and it was to these areas that the Light Railways Act drew the attention of Peterson and Stephens. The presence of an independent line, the Colne Valley Railway, in the heart of this territory may have served as an encouragement though the fact that this concern had gone into receivership as early as 1874 should perhaps have served as a warning instead.

There were two schemes proposed by the Light Railway Syndicate. The first was a Central Essex Light Railway running from Ongar at the end of the Great Eastern line from Epping and Stratford to Great Dunmow where the Great Eastern line from Witham to Bishop's Stortford would be crossed and then on to Great Yeldham on the Colne Valley Railway. The second scheme was for a Hedingham & Long Melford Light Railway which would have continued the Central Essex from Yeldham to Long Melford on the Great Eastern line from Marks Tey to Bury Saint Edmunds with an alternative route from the Central Essex some two miles short of Yeldham sweeping south to Sible Hedingham and thence north to rejoin the direct route to Long Melford at North End.

In the event, when the public enquiry into these proposals was held the direct route between Yeldham and North End was dropped altogether.

Linked to the two Syndicate schemes was the Kelvedon, Coggeshall & Halstead Light Railway promoted by the Economic. This would have left the Great Eastern main line to Colchester at Kelvedon and headed north through the ancient but reduced town of Coggeshall to join the Colne Valley Railway close to Earls Colne. From here running powers were requested over the Colne Valley line not just to the textile town of Halstead but over a further six miles to link up with the Syndicate lines at Sible Hedingham and Yeldham. Nor was this the full extent of Stephens' involvement in the area for he and Peterson were both employed in the promotion of a Long Melford & Hadleigh Light Railway proposed by local interests to link Long Melford and the Great Eastern branch from Bentley to Hadleigh. Had all these schemes come to fruition there would have been an independent line of rails some 57 miles in length from Ongar to Hadleigh with a 15 mile branch over the Colne Valley line and via Coggeshall to Kelvedon.

That these schemes did not proceed as intended was due in part to the intervention of yet another scheme in the area. This was the Bardfield & Sible Hedingham Light Railway which was an extension of a proposed Elsenham Thaxted & Bardfield Light Railway. Originally promoted as a 2' 6" narrow gauge railway by local interests who had despaired of interesting the Great Eastern in the area this proposal had been promised a Treasury Grant if satisfactory arrangements for working the line could be reached with the Great Eastern. The plans had then been altered to standard gauge and while negotiations proceeded with the Great Eastern this extension to Sible Hedingham had been mooted. The problem for Peterson and Stephens was that the Bardfield & Sible Hedingham cut right across their route from Dunmow to Yeldham. It is certain that the deletion mentioned above of the direct route from Yeldham to North End was a result of concentrating the Syndicate's resources on a route to Sible Hedingham to fight off the Bardfield & Sible Hedingham proposals.

The sequence of events in all these proposals was as follows. The Central Essex application was made in November 1897, the Hedingham



*Thaxted Station, possibly on opening day, 1st April 1913. The Great Eastern's idea of a light railway closely matched Stephens' own designs.*  
(Lens of Sutton)

& Long Melford, Bardfield & Sible Hedingham and Kelvedon, Coggeshall & Halstead applications were made in May 1898 and the Long Melford & Hadleigh application was made in November 1899.

The Kelvedon Coggeshall & Halstead was an early casualty. Few objections were raised against the first two miles from Kelvedon to Coggeshall except from the owner of most of the land affected but beyond Coggeshall little was found in favour of the scheme. The *Essex County Chronicle* summed up the vehement opposition of the Colne Valley Railway in these words: "It sought to tap the Colne Valley Railway at the most vital part of their system and rob them of the little – the very little – which enabled them to pay their preference shareholders . . . It was a London-promoted enterprise and a predatory enterprise." In vain did Mr Gollen on behalf of the scheme urge that far from taking traffic from the Colne Valley it would in fact increase trade in the area to the benefit of both concerns. The Colne Valley's main source of traffic was from Courtaulds' mills at Halstead and it could clearly see that a more direct route to London would have a drastic effect on its freight receipts.

The view of the Enquiry was that no public advantage had been proved for the line beyond Coggeshall and since this portion of the neighbourhood was at no point more than three miles from a railway there was no need to sanction more than the length of line between Kelvedon and Coggeshall. A Coggeshall Light Railway Order was duly granted in 1899 with

three years given to complete the line. There is no indication that any serious effort was ever made to exercise the powers under this order and no application was made for an extension of time when these ran out. Cut off from the main scheme and with little prospect of more than a very modest local traffic it is not hard to see why no effort was made to persevere with the Coggeshall Light Railway.

The Enquiry into the Central Essex and the rival Hedingham schemes was more complicated. For the greater part of the Central Essex the Commissioners recognised that there was a real need for rail transport through the Rodings and between Dunmow and Bardfield. Beyond Bardfield there was clearly no need for three separate schemes in such close proximity. The Hedingham & Long Melford scheme, though fervently supported by a local brick manufacturer, Mr Gentry, had little to commend it between Hedingham and Long Melford whilst its initial course from the Central Essex to Sible Hedingham was so closely duplicated by the Bardfield & Sible Hedingham as to be rendered redundant; each line in fact accused the other of plagiarising its plans. An equally important point was that the Colne Valley would not permit access to its lines, Stephens would not build a bridge across the Colne Valley line and the Commissioners were naturally reluctant either to force the Colne Valley to accept the Hedingham & Long Melford on its lines or to permit the two lines to cross on the level. The Hedingham & Long Melford was therefore rejected in its entirety.

To resolve the problem of the proximity of the



*Long Melford Station in July 1961.*

*(Lens of Sutton)*

Central Essex and the Bardfield & Sible Hedingham an ingenious compromise was reached by the Commissioners. The Central Essex would end at Bardfield, the Bardfield & Sible Hedingham would be approved subject to the satisfactory conclusion of negotiations between the Elsenham Thaxted & Bardfield and the Great Eastern while the Central Essex would be given running powers between Bardfield and Sible Hedingham though not over the Colne Valley to Halstead and Haverhill as the Central Essex had audaciously requested.

The plans of the Light Railway Syndicate were obviously coming unstuck. Although the Sible Hedingham enquiry was held in 1899 it was not until 1901 that a Central Essex Light Railway Order was granted. This was because of the difficulty of reaching an agreement between the Elsenham Thaxted & Bardfield and the Great Eastern. It would seem though that Stephens was not entirely discouraged as his plans for the Long Melford & Hadleigh, deposited after the rejection of the Hedingham & Long Melford appear to have anticipated success in linking Hedingham and Long Melford at some date in the future. It is difficult to explain, otherwise the reason for Stephens placing his passenger terminus for the Long Melford & Hadleigh to the west of Long Melford Station and thus necessitating a bridge over the Great Eastern line before heading eastwards to Hadleigh. This seems to have been a great extravagance for a light railway which was to have a goods connection to the Great Eastern on the eastern side of Long Melford Station anyway. How Stephens justified this to the local promoters of the line or whether they too had intentions of building a link to the Central Essex will probably never be known.

The enquiry into the merits of the Hadleigh scheme was held at Long Melford in March 1900. There were a number of objections from

landowners but these mostly related to details and were met by promises of deviations and adjustments. The Great Eastern made a number of objections to the form that junctions should take at Hadleigh and Long Melford and also alleged that the new line would attract traffic away from their own. Since the whole point of the line was to provide a convenient link between two Great Eastern lines it is hard to see how the Great Eastern could have lost by such a proposal. There were also objections from the local population, not to the principle of a railway but to the fact that it would only be a light railway. The Commissioners were pleased to recommend that the scheme be approved and the Long Melford & Hadleigh Light Railway Order was duly granted in 1901. Unfortunately that is as far as the scheme ever got. Whether the costs proved beyond the means of the promoters or they lost heart for some other reason does not appear on the records. The five years for the purchase of lands passed without any application for the extension or revival of powers.

Before returning to the progress of the Central Essex it is instructive to compare the Long Melford & Hadleigh, a locally promoted venture, with the schemes prepared by Stephens for the Syndicate and the Economic. All schemes bore his hallmark of following contours where he could but plunging with a minimum of earthworks over those contours that could not be avoided without undue expense; fortunately Essex is not a county of great heights or depths, though by no means as flat as many appear to believe. In other respects there were major differences between the schemes. With the Long Melford & Hadleigh objections were met by deviations and even the building of bridges where level crossings aroused concern. With the other schemes there was far less willingness to compromise and objections were resisted rather than

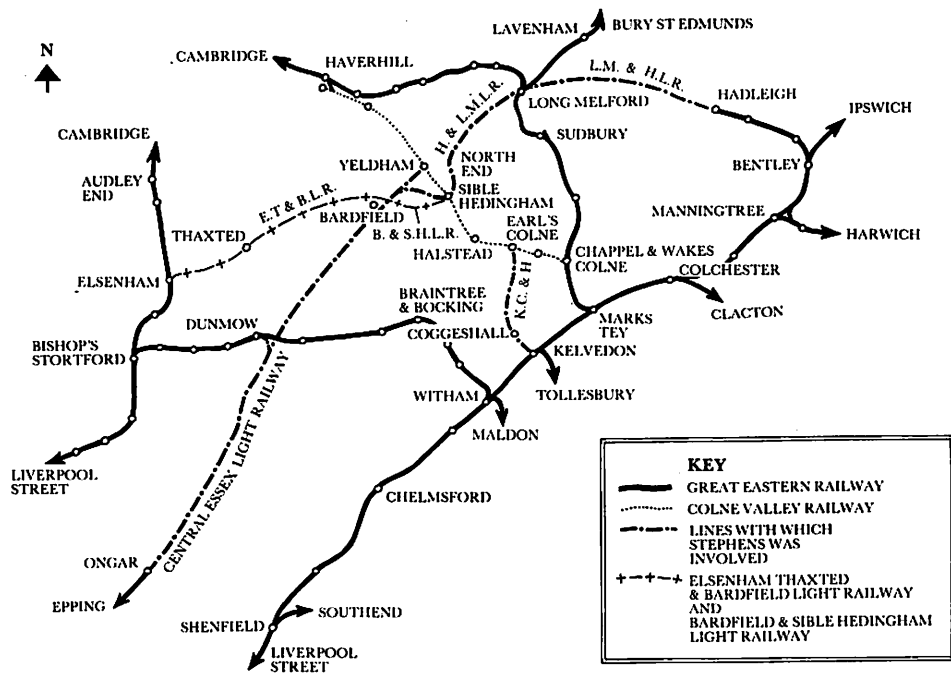


accommodated. In each scheme except the Long Melford & Hadleigh Stephens requested a maximum speed of 35 m.p.h. and to be exempted from the use of continuous brakes on trains of three or fewer carriages; the Commissioners insisted on 25 m.p.h. and continuous brakes. Above all the Commissioners repeatedly complained of the high estimates of capital required for the schemes for the Syndicate and the Economic, a point also made by the Colne Valley and other objectors. A passage in the report on the Long Melford & Hadleigh draws a comparison with the other schemes: "The Capital proposed is . . . about £7000 per mile. This is a remarkable difference from the former proposals as to the capital of lines with which Mr Stephens is concerned. For in this case the Capital is only about £1250 per mile in excess of the estimate whereas in former cases the excess asked for has been as much as £4000 per mile."

So by 1901 Orders has been granted for the Central Essex as amended, for the Coggeshall and for the Long Melford & Hadleigh. Chronologically the next event seems to have been the disposal by Stephens of 476 of his 526 shares in the Light Railway Syndicate to a New

General Traction Company about which little else is known. This happened in 1902 and it seems that Stephens was losing interest in Essex or at least taking a more realistic view of the chances of these schemes than his fellow shareholders. Besides his 50 remaining shares in the Syndicate he also held one share in the Economic whose assets were reported in 1903 by Peterson as the possession of "... a Light Railway Order authorising the construction of a line 2½ miles in length. The compulsory powers for the acquisition of lands have run out and a sum just over £1 in the bank." The Economic was dissolved the following year. Although Stephens retained his shares in the Syndicate until its end he appears to have played no further active part in its affairs. The Central Essex Light Railway was, however, far from dead.

In 1905 the powers for the Elsenham Thaxted & Bardfield lapsed. The promoters had been unable to meet the conditions laid down by the Great Eastern though a modified scheme was eventually built as far as Thaxted in 1911. To get the Great Eastern to build and work the line the local promoters had to provide the Great Eastern with the Treasury Grant and half the



costs of construction as well as agreeing to forego any return on their investment. With such terms it is not surprising that the original scheme foundered.

For the Central Essex the failure of the Elsenham Thaxted & Bardfield cleared the way to apply for the Bardfield & Sible Hedingham powers. The Central Essex (Amendment) Light Railway Order 1905 gave these powers to the Central Essex as well as granting an extension of time. By now the line's Engineer was a F. Leslie Jeyes.

A further extension of time was sought and granted in 1907 but no progress was made and Peterson was back to request a further extension in 1908. He explained that in 1907 he had expected investment from a group who had failed to obtain consent to build a line in the Cape Colony. They had found it more profitable to put their money on deposit but now "certain persons" had come forward to build the line and he was assured of their good faith. Correspondence between the Colne Valley Railway and its solicitor at this time reveals that they had no expectation of the Central Essex succeeding but that if it went ahead they must be prepared to take on the working of the line rather than let it fall into the hands of the Great Eastern. The identity of the "certain persons" never was revealed but the Commissioners granted an extension to 1910. The engineer at this time was George Attwood.

It is at this stage that Stephens and Peterson leave entirely for in 1910 Peterson was adjudged bankrupt and in 1912 the Light Railway Syndicate was voluntarily liquidated. In 1911, though, a fresh group of promoters had taken the reins of the Central Essex and with a S. W. Yockney as their engineer successfully sought a further extension of time to 1912. The Commissioners would probably have let the Central Essex powers lapse in 1912 but for news that a contractor, not named, was delivering plant to the site and preparing to start work. What became of this contractor is not clear for in 1913 Sir Douglas Fox & Partners appear on the scene as new contractors with a request for a further extension of time to allow for an application for a Treasury Grant. In 1914 it is the turn of a Mr E. J. Wills, Director and Acting Secretary, to apply for and gain a further 12 months. In the meantime landowners and the Essex County Council whose lands and roads respectively

have by now been blighted for some 14 years by the scheme are beginning to complain.

In 1915 events took a final and bizarre turn. Describing himself as Chairman of the Central Essex Light Railway an application is received by the Light Railway Commissioners from one R. C. Temple Bt. not only for an extension of time but also for powers to extend the Central Essex from Yeldham (sic) to Long Melford, thence via Lavenham to Haughley where the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway would be acquired and extended to Halesworth where in turn the Southwold Railway would be acquired and converted to standard gauge thus bringing the Central Essex from Ongar to the sea at Southwold, some 113 miles in all. The Commissioners do not seem to have been impressed despite the subsequent submission by Temple of a letter solicited from the War Office saying that under certain circumstances the line might have military value. Two months were granted for a proper application to be made. When Temple returned in June to seek a further extension of time it was refused.

Even then the ghost of the Central Essex lingered a little longer. In 1919 a proposal was made for a Braintree & Marks Tey Light Railway which would have passed through Coggeshall and the same promoters put forward an Ongar & Shenfield Light Railway. The following year a Mid-Essex Light Railway was proposed over that portion of the Central Essex between Ongar and Dunmow by a group known as the Essex Light Railway & Property Company. These schemes were, however, essentially dependent on obtaining Treasury Grants and got no further than the application stage.

Today the Colne Valley Railway has itself disappeared with the exception of the short section preserved around the rebuilt Castle Hedingham Station. The Hadleigh Branch has gone and both Dunmow and Long Melford have lost their railways. At Ongar the line from Epping hangs on by the skin of its teeth. Would Stephens, at one time apprenticed to the Metropolitan Railway, have seen any irony in the fact that the one station to have survived on the route of the Central Essex is now served by London Transport?

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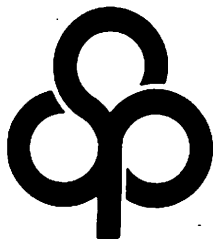
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