



The Tenterden Terrier



Number 27

Spring 1982



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

The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

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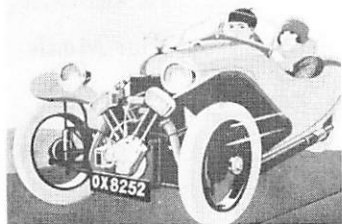
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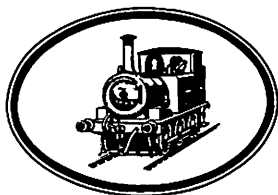
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The Tenterden Terrier



Number 27

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Contents

- 3 Editorial
- 4-13 Lineside News
- 15-16 Tickets Please!
- 17-19 On the Right Track
- 21-23 Stephens 50
- 25-31 Colonel Stephens at Portmadoc
- 33-34 W.H. Austen – An Appreciation
- 37-40 50 Years Ago
- 41 Book Reviews
- 41 Letters to the Editor
- 42 Once Upon A Time
- 45 At Last

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Editorial

Twenty-One Years On

On 13th May 1961, the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society was inaugurated at a public meeting, held at the Rother Valley Hotel, Northiam; inevitably, doubts were expressed at the time as to its likelihood of success. A correspondent to the *Railway Magazine* wrote, "If we could turn the clock back a quarter of a century and preserve the delightful Colonel Stephens engines, the ramshackle rolling stock and the locomotive yard at Rolvenden, nobody would contribute more willingly than I . . . but what we are being asked to preserve is just another British Railways goods branch." What would this writer think of the Railway today? A goods branch it is definitely not; delightful – to many people, yes; ramshackle, in some ways, perhaps, but proud of its long history and of its heritage. After 21 years of preservation in name and ten years of running trains, 1982 is maybe a time for reflection on past and present achievements. We have many 'firsts' to our credit – charitable status, the bond issue, pullman trains, the Steam & Country Fair, to mention some. The commemorative dinner on 21st May will be a fitting climax to an era which began with high hopes, then experienced many years of disappointments, but was ultimately crowned with success.

FRONT COVER

*SANTA SPECIAL Maunsell rounds
Orpin's curve amidst light snow flurries on
12th December 1981 (Brian Stephenson)*

Lineside News

Compiled by Paul Sutton

One of the priorities for private railways in the 1980's is covered workshop accommodation for (at least) locomotives and rolling stock. This organisation is fortunate that it now has both, and it is good to see that with the second extension to the Loco Department workshop complete, the Tenterden end is being enclosed in a manner which will enhance the steel framed asbestos clad building. Likewise the timber cladding on the east wall of the carriage and wagon shed is a pleasing sight and we look forward to track being laid in later this year. The completion of both projects will give much encouragement to our working members and make some of their onerous tasks more bearable, and hopefully swell the ranks of recruits to the departments concerned.

Locomotives

Work at Rolvenden in recent months has been confined to the following locomotives:

No. 10 – The locomotive has been extensively dismantled. All boiler fittings have been removed, together with cladding, lagging and the top half of the cab, etc. ready for the boiler to be lifted from the frames. All the tubes have been taken out and are awaiting inspection of the boiler by our insurance company, which

will be followed by a visit by boilermiths to obtain quotes for its possible repair or replacement.

No. 11 – An ultra sonic test of certain parts of the boiler has been recommended by our boiler inspector. A fair amount of work has been carried out on the frames and cylinders including axle boxes, piston rods, etc.

No. 12 – is awaiting preparation for her annual inspection.

No. 21 – Cladding and lagging have been removed from the engine and the Loco Trust is arranging for cleaning and painting of the boiler on a care and maintenance basis.

No. 22 – Piston valves have been removed, and the rings freed off and refitted; hopefully this will rectify the blow at the front end which has dogged Maunsell since it re-entered service last year. It will also require preparation for its annual inspection before recommencing services this season.

No. 23 – In service and performing satisfactorily.



“Northiam” lined out in Rother Valley Railway blue livery at Rolvenden, 17th January 1982.

(Paul Sutton)



*Lawrence Donaldson (left) with one of the two new piston rods he has made for the 'P' class.
Paul Norrington supports the other end.*
(Paul Sutton)

No. 24 – This loco has been stripped and the boiler exposed for its ten year hydraulic test, in preparation for lifting for removal of the wheels for retyring.

No. 25 – Following its brief entry into service during the Steam & Country Fair weekend, painting and lining was completed and it hauled a chartered lunchtime Wealden Pullman train on Wednesday 30th December.

Diesel No. 40. – The BTH diesel electric project has shown good progress in recent months and we welcome the new members to the project team; Mike Hart a director of Resco (Railways), Derek Dunlavy our former Traffic Co-ordinator and Operating Manager, Clive Lowe our former Diesel Maintenance Foreman and Matthew Jeffery one of the younger Rolvenden members, now make a total of nine.

The bodywork has been improved by the fitting of two new laminated windows at the front end of No. 1 cab and three out of four safety glass windows in the body sides of the engine compartment. The air pipework has been substantially modified and numerous valves have been fitted to adapt the existing airbrake system to interwork with the new vacuum brake also being fitted. An electric powered motor and exhaust set are being fitted to create the vacuum necessary for the working of the brakes of our present coaching stock. Several air reservoirs have been removed, since we no longer need an air supply to operate hopper doors on wagons, as was the case at the Ford Motor Company's works at Dagenham.

In the area of the fan compartment, metal platework has been replaced and everything cleaned, derusted and painted. The radiator is having a new header tank fabricated by courtesy of Mike Hart and Resco to replace the original which was corroded and beyond practical and economic repair. Wiring and electrical fitting out is continuing in the engine compartment and No. 1 cab, together with a new floor in the cab.

Resco (Railways) have loaned an ex London Transport accommodation bogie to put under the locomotive while the project team overhauls each bogie in turn. Finally, if any other members feel they would like to assist with No. 40, they will be made welcome as it is the intention to work on the locomotive most Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year.

The Sutton Locomotive Association had a very successful inaugural meeting on 15th October and there are now about 30 paid up members. So far approximately £800 has been donated by individuals, societies and companies and with Steam & Country Fair profits the total in hand amounts to around £11,000. The committee meets every 4 – 6 weeks and is concentrating its efforts on the Transport & Model Railway Fair which it is organising as part of the London Homes and Gardens Show at Croydon Airport on May Day Weekend (29th April to 3rd May). The Fair will cover the widest spectrum of transport including waterways, aviation, road and, of course, rail. Some 6000 square feet will be available in the marquee and a further 25000 outdoors. A selection of societies and

commercial organisations are being invited to attend. The railway will be providing 'Marcia' and a publicity stand and any members who can assist are asked to contact Marshall Vine, 88 Bicknor Road, Maidstone, as soon as possible. Volunteers are bound to be in short supply due to the clash with the Gravesham Exhibition, where we also have a strong presence, so please help.

Further social events are planned including a Transport Film Evening organised by John Huntley at Fairfield Hall later in the summer and an outing on the Wealden Pullman; the whole train is booked for 15th May. Transport by coach will be arranged from Sutton so anyone who would like details of this, or any other aspects of the Association, should write to the Chairman, Pat Saunders, c/o Civic Offices, St. Nicholas Way, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1EA soon.

Carriage and Wagon

The LMS 12T goods van M515184 received prompt attention on the two weekends following the Steam & Country Fair. A party of cyclists had booked a return trip to Wittersham complete with 20 machines on 10th October

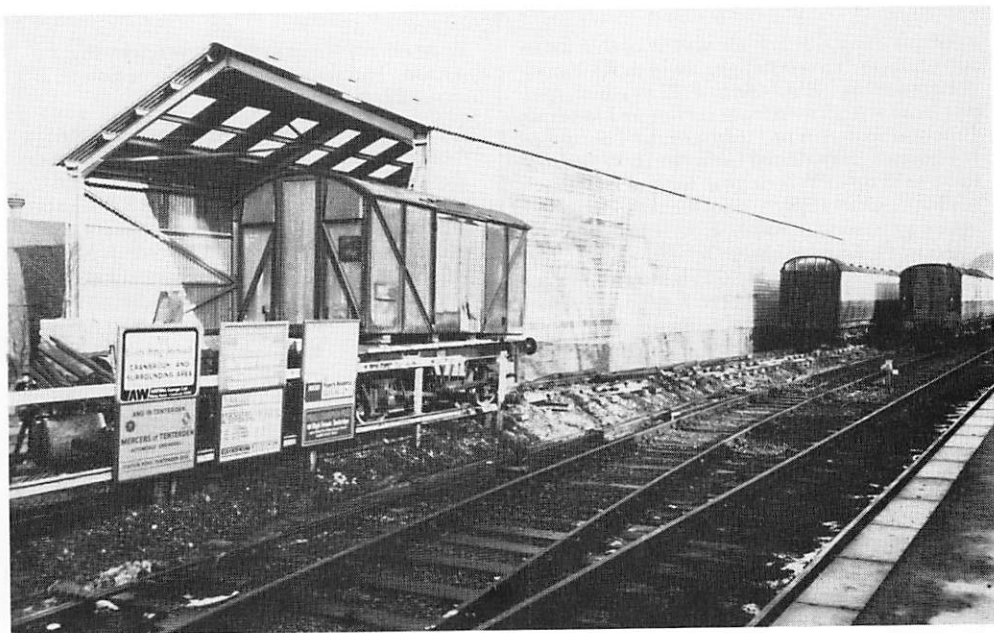
and as we had no suitable passenger vehicle to accommodate them, it was decided to use the van, which had originally been vacuum fitted. It had been standing at Rolvenden for over a year minus all brake gear and with a set of temporary axlebox springs. A vacuum brake cylinder was fitted along with the main train pipe and a complete set of brakegear. Both ends of the van were jacked up, a new set of axlebox springs fitted and the bearings were checked; a new end ventilator hood replaced one crushed when it was delivered. The body needed little attention except for spot priming and it has been painted bauxite red with the later style of LMS lettering. A full vacuum brake test was carried out prior to the van being attached to the 11.45 train from Tenterden on 10th October and it proved to work perfectly with no signs of leaks. The Operating Department must have been pleased to have a vacuum braked vehicle at their disposal, as it remained coupled to the service set, working passenger trains for the remainder of the month. It has since returned to Rolvenden and taken up its intended duties as breakdown jack and packing van.

Work on the restoration of coaching stock has



Restored L.M.S. van attached to the 11.45 a.m. at Tenterden Town 11th October 1981 the day after the cyclists' special

(Paul Sutton)



The Carriage & Wagon shed at Tenterden, now with side cladding complete, 17th January 1982.
(Paul Sutton)

been suspended and all efforts concentrated on constructing the new carriage and wagon shed. At the end of October the services of a bricklayer were employed to construct the four feet high double skin wall on the station side of the building, which took two and a half weekends. A 7.30 a.m. start was made each day to provide labour and a ready supply of mortar for our "brickie" who worked non-stop all day, finishing at 5.30 p.m. Three long angle irons were then welded between staunchions of each bay to provide a frame to attach to the side wall. Vertical timbers were bolted at 16 inch intervals to these angles, requiring a total of 560 holes to be drilled. Finally the side of the shed was clad with 7 inch weatherboard, the last ones being fitted at 11.00 a.m. on New Year's Day. A 360 foot trench has been dug and laid with drainage pipes in readiness for when the guttering is fitted to the shed. The area inside the shed at the top end of the yard has been cleared and sited and will be bulldozed level and prepared to accept track for the new sidings.

Five flat wagons received general repairs during December and January; Nos. 113 and 114 were in very bad condition with rotten floors and damaged under-frames and brake gear. Minor

repairs were carried out on the headstocks and buffing gear and the brakegear repaired and adjusted. All rotten floor boards were removed and replaced. Both vehicles were jacked up at each end to enable the grease axle-box bearings to be cleaned and examined. Nos. 115 and 116, originally tank wagon underframes, have been fitted for the first time with wooden flooring. The end staunchions have been removed and the brakework overhauled and adjusted. No. 108, the underframe of an LMS banana van, whose body was removed in 1976, has had a brand new timber floor fitted; missing brake gear has been replaced and a hopper shute, which was fitted during its days in Hodsons Mill, Robertsbridge, removed from the underframe. All vehicles have been painted black with white lettering and are now being put to good use carrying rails and sleepers for the track relaying work towards Hexden Bridge.

During the early months of 1981 a small group of Carriage and Wagon members decided to mark the Year of the Disabled by providing a specially adapted coach for disabled passengers on the K & E S R. As we had nothing readily available to convert, Dave Sinclair wrote to British Railways' Chairman, Sir Peter Parker,

asking if a suitable vehicle was available for us to purchase. To our delight, British Railways donated a Mk1 BSO coach E 9254 which had just been withdrawn from service at Llandudno Junction with free rail transport to Tonbridge. It was duly despatched from North Wales, only to be held up at Warrington for seven weeks while the Operating Authorities decided the best way to send it South. E 9254 finally arrived at Stewarts Lane in early October as the Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer of the Southern Region had agreed for the conversion work to be undertaken by apprentices in the carriage repair shop. All the seating has been removed and the guard's compartment stripped out in readiness for conversion to a lavatory for the disabled. Two partitions in the passenger saloon and all side panels have been removed. The whole interior will be repanelled in mahogany faced plywood. Externally the coach is in very good condition, requiring repairs to rust patches in only a couple of places. It is hoped to have this vehicle in service on the K & E S R during this summer.

Clearance

The target of Hexden Bridge by Christmas was not quite reached as, for only the second time in living memory, the clearance group had to be cancelled for bad weather.

On November 22nd 15 scouts from Guildford, led by David Hill, spent more time travelling to and from Wittersham than on working there, so they intend returning in the Summer and camping for a weekend. Grateful thanks to all the youth groups who helped us in 1981 and we look forward to welcoming them back in 1982.

There is one sour note to report – in October our PMV body at Wittersham Road was broken into and all the good tools and sharpening equipment stolen. We hope that our insurance will cover this loss, but in the meantime we would be grateful for donations of small saws, machetes, etc.

This year has started with work on the St. Michael's Extension! The extension of the headshunt at Tenterden has necessitated clearance of the very wet and overgrown cutting towards St. Michaels for about 150 yards so that it can dry before track laying. For the rest of the year the Group's work will continue on the extension project towards Northiam.

Signals & Telegraph

Despite the inclement weather a full effort is being made to complete the installation at

Wittersham Road for the new operating season. The structure of the box is now virtually complete.

An opportunity was taken to acquire some more redundant signalling gear from British Rail and Pete Lawrence organised a gang to recover materials at Putney. The S & T stores has been sorted and relocated adjacent to the track of the headshunt at Tenterden. Members who wish to dispose of old engine oil are welcome to come and spread it liberally over the cranks, pulleys, etc.

Marketing

This year has seen a fresh approach to the timetable leaflet with the design being done by Andrew Blake a 3rd year student from the Medway College of Design. The finished product is certainly very attractive and eye catching.

The "Seven Wonders of the Weald" group promotion is now gathering speed and received a good deal of interest on Tuesday 12th January at the Excursions '82 Exhibition in London. An attractive leaflet has been printed and is now, with the timetable and bar card, being distributed over a wide area.

During 1981 a "Heart of Kent" tourist association was formed and the railway has become a member. Following Tony Hocking's departure the Buffer Stop Shop has been renamed Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop. A Commercial Manager to run this and also be responsible for catering, the Wealden Pullman and general activities was being recruited early in the New Year. Interviews for the position were held at the White Lion Hotel on Saturday 23rd January.

The Great Danes Hotel at Hollingbourne near Maidstone will be having several "Steam Weekends" this year. Guests will visit the Bluebell Railway on the Saturday afternoon, dine on the Wealden Pullman in the evening and take a trip on the R.H. & D.R. on Sunday.

The official naming ceremony for "Northiam" will be on Saturday April 3rd at 14.30 hrs – come along and see who the V.I.P. is.

To commemorate the 21st anniversary of the inaugural meeting of the K & E S R Association a dinner will be held at the Town Hall, Tenterden on Friday 21st May at 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Seating will be limited to approximately 125 so early booking is essential. A reservation form is enclosed with *The Rooter*.

Filming contracts have been somewhat quiet over the last few months, but by their very nature enquiries turn into firm bookings very quickly and Thursday 14th January saw Tenterden occupied by "Maunsell" and 3 coaches including "Barbara". George Wright, Mark Stutchbury and Charlie Masterson made up the crew for a train hired by a film promotion production company, which included the pop group Visage, whose lead singer is Steve Strange. The film was being made to promote Steve's new record and should have appeared on Top of the Pops earlier this year.

The filming went on until the early hours of the following morning. Some fantastic effects were created in the frosty night air by extra lighting and smoke machines.

While on the subject of films, it should be recorded that we were hosts to ITV in January 1981 for 3 days shooting a production called "ViceVersa". The two birdcages and the BY provided the stock requirements and Sutton 'headed' the train with No. 24 actually providing the motive power. The seven part series which starred Iain Cuthbertson was shown during April and May, the railway appearing in the first and last episodes.

Plant

The Plant Department has been working on various jobs for different departments during the last few months. We have had problems with machinery, including diesel fuel continually freezing in the unusually cold weather.

The Wetherill loading shovel has been used constantly for the coaling of locomotives as well as the movement of parts and equipment at Rolvenden, with only a few minor problems. The Nuffield tractor and trailer have also been very useful moving pieces of equipment about the railway. At the Steam & Country Fair they were invaluable for distributing straw bales and ash to the areas where they were needed. After the Fair they were utilised for several days on the extensive clearing up programme. All this work has more than justified the purchase of the trailer earlier last year.

The Whitlock digger was dismantled during November because it needed extensive repairs on account of insurance and safety regulations which could not be justified on commercial grounds. Some of the parts were disposed of for scrap, but most were kept as spares for other machines.

In the last few weeks the department has been concentrating on clearing the area backing "the Palace" for the erection of the St. Mary Cray police station building which will be used as a plant workshop. This has involved much work in moving a lot of staging, spare loco parts and miscellaneous material and the emptying of the old diesel workshop of its parts and equipment followed by dismantling the building itself. The area was then levelled ready for erection of the new workshop which is considerably bigger than the old one. Building work will start in a few weeks. Recently we have been removing our equipment from Tenterden to improve the station appearance for the public.

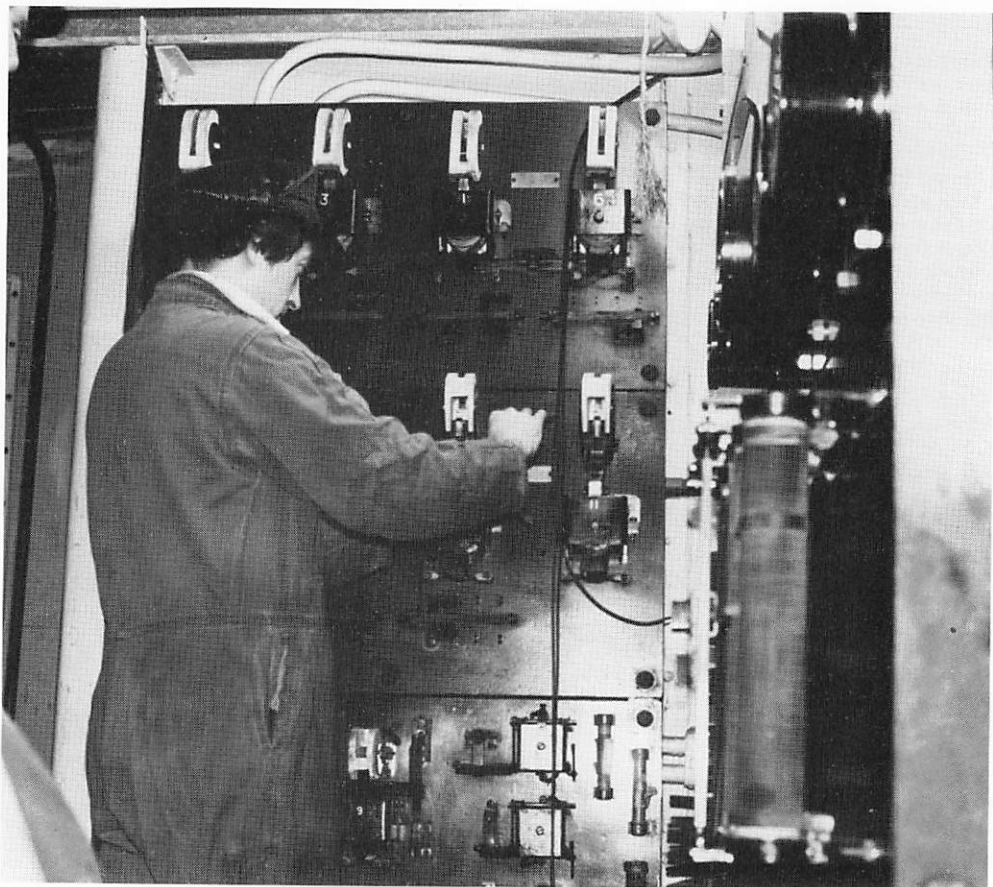
Just after the new year we transported a wagon body from Charlier Builders in Coombe Lane to the area in front of the carriage shed. The Permanent Way's air compressor's fuel injection pump is in need of a new governor and parts for this machine are hard to obtain as it is now out of manufacture. Currently we are servicing all the department's equipment to keep it in trouble free running order and in due course we will be assisting in the building of the new plant workshop and the clearance of the car park site at Tenterden.

We are very grateful to Kenning Tyre Services of Ashford who have generously donated a quantity of calcium chloride for use as anti freeze in the tractor and shovel tyres which are water ballasted. Alan Jones has now assumed responsibility for looking after the pump trolleys which are used for special events at Tenterden and Bodiam. Nick Wellington who last year restored the motor trolley No. 7438 has acquired a two seater Wickham motor inspection trolley from the Western Region, No. T.R.1.

Building

The balance of the Rolvenden shed fund is being used to brick up the end of the shed complete with a pair of arched doors. The work is being carried out by a professional bricklayer and one of our members is giving financial and practical help for some of the electrical tasks in the workshop and getting some of the machine tools into working condition.

At Tenterden the side of the carriage and wagon shed facing the platform has now been clad with 1.8 km of pressure treated timber weather boarding to comply with the Council's planning requirements. This was carried out with the assistance of the Carriage and Wagon Department. The next job is to lay the track



Andrew Webb adjusting one of the control contactors on the B.T.H. diesel electric locomotive, 19th July 1981
(Geoff Silcock)

within the shed and then work on the new doors can commence. Planning permission has been received for a workshop on one end of the shed and work will start on this very soon.

AREA GROUP NEWS

Ashford. As well as the film shows and talks which have been arranged for the evening meetings every third Wednesday in the month, a visit has been organised to the Post Office underground railway in London during May. This will of necessity be a daytime visit and at the moment the actual date has not been fixed – see *The Rooter* for more details. As this tour will be restricted to about 20 people, book your

place as soon as possible with Eric Graves on Ashford 23687.

East Kent. The last two meetings of 1981, held at 43 High Street, Wingham, ran correctly to programme. On November 11th Les Holness and Steve Whiteman gave a two-part talk under the heading “Lock and Block”. Les described, with the aid of diagrams, the art of placing the required signals on a specimen layout and Steve then explained the not-easily-grasped principles of running an adequate service while keeping the trains apart!

On December 9th Bert Reynolds gave a show of railway films, including Steve Whiteman’s record of the K & E S R in which many of the audience were able to identify themselves. It

was not clear how the final films of Tom and Jerry fitted in, but they seemed to be appreciated nevertheless!

At the A.G.M. on January 4th the following officers were elected: Chairman and Hon. Treasurer – Les Holness, Hon. Secretary – Steve Whiteman Committee Members – Dave Holton, Bert Reynolds. The 1982 programme was also formulated and this is detailed in the *Rooter* Diary.

Maidstone. The box trailer for waste paper, appealed for in the last issue, arrived at Tenterden in December and has already proved a good investment – 12½ tons of paper delivered to the mill in early January. However the siting at Tenterden appears not to have met with universal approval, nor has its colour! The most likely position will be the weighbridge, but the colour may be a problem. Apparently some people want it blue and others green – a compromise of alternate stripes may emerge!

More seriously, the Income & Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31st December 1981 was presented to the last committee meeting; from an opening balance of £646, funds were entirely exhausted at the year end. However, the railway benefitted as follows: Purchase of PMV £462, contribution to cost of low-loader £232, tractor trailer £125, Telephone kiosk £90, Donation to Sutton fund £74, restoration of Row Boat £107, waste paper box trailer £343, materials for pump trolley and trailer £30, chain saw for lineside clearance £150. These amounted to a grand total of £1,613. Most of the income came from the waste paper collection – please keep it coming.

Marcia and the pump trolley already have several bookings for 1982, beginning at Gravesend at the Spring Bank Holiday.

Meetings at the Community Centre, Brewer Street, restarted in January and the full programme can be found in the *Rooter* Diary. Contact has been made with T.V.S. and we hope to build on this during the year.

Sussex. Meetings are well attended and despite sudden cancellations by booked speakers, a varied programme has been possible. For future meeting dates and venue please see the *Rooter* Diary.

The working days at Northiam are also proving popular and the new wooden floor in the booking hall should soon be finished; the walls

have also been relieved of 20 years of grime. New faces are always welcome at working parties which take place on the last Sunday in the month commencing at 10.30 a.m. It is planned to open Northiam Station as an information point from the Spring Bank Holiday onwards. The group's popular bus rally, in aid of Northiam Restoration, will be held on Sunday 25th July at the new venue of the "Car Park Field" at Tenterden. A Railway mania weekend is planned for the end of April at Westham in order to publicise the railway in the Eastbourne area and to give a boost to early season running.

Tenterden. The idea of forming an Area Group "at home" had been in the air for some time and in consequence a pilot meeting was held in November of last year. Sufficient interest was kindled at this to go ahead with a monthly series of meetings which started in January. These are being held in the Glebe Hall, Church Road, Tenterden at 7.30 p.m. on the last Friday in each month – see the *Rooter* Diary for full details. John Miller is acting Chairman of the group and he sees its role in recruiting local people to join the Railway and volunteer their services for the shop and catering departments.

Thameside. Work on the extension to Hexden Bridge has been the Group's major project since September 1981. Good progress has been made by a small gang under the leadership of Kevin Jarvis. By December approximately quarter mile of track had been relaid using new wooden sleepers and standard British Rail track fittings.

The railway intends to run trains on the extension, initially to a point 400 feet on the Northiam side of Hexden Bridge. In connection with this, the group was asked to undertake the replacement of about 40 concrete track panels laid during the mid 1970s. These will be utilised in the new carriage shed and associated sidings at Tenterden. However, commencement of work on this phase of the extension was severely hampered by poor weather conditions in December and January together with the untimely breakdown of the railway's only crane. Work started on the reclamation of these panels in mid January using new wooden sleepers and rails recovered from Batchelors' private sidings in Ashford.

Preparations are in hand for the now well established Steam at Bodiam events which this

year will be held on 30/31st May and 29/30th August. Again No. 12 "Marcia" will be used as motive power to haul the district coach and the L.N.W.R. brake van between Bodiam platform and the Junction Road headshunt. The diesel railbus will ply between Bodiam and Dixer

Halt, a service which was very popular with the public at last year's events. Admission prices will remain the same as in 1981, i.e. 75 pence adults, 35 pence children, entitling the visitor to entry to the event and one ride on either the steam hauled train or diesel railbus.

Locomotive Milage's										
No.	Name	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	Total
3	Bodiam	643	782	75						1500
10	Sutton	278	53	445	1216	600	1125			3717
11	Pride of Sussex									
12	Marcia						10	60	140	210
17	Arthur	96	36	18						150
19	Norwegian Mogul	321	246	1078	275					1920
20	G.W.R. Railcar	76	189	98	96	136	192			787.
21	Wainwright									
22	Maunsell	543	800	27					2962	4332
23	Holman F Stephens	195	544	1046	1960	516		1899	1826	7986
24	William H. Austen			6	1193	748	2076	2767	167	6957
25	Northiam								131	131
26	Linda									
27	Rolvenden									
29	R.S.H. S/Tank		27	89	153	951	2780	276		4276
40	Ford Bo-Bo									
41	Baglan						197		80	277
42	Hunslet						391		460	851
43	Fowler								274	274
44	A.C. Railbus							136	729	865
Annual Totals		2152	2677	2882	4893	2951	6771	5138	6769	34233

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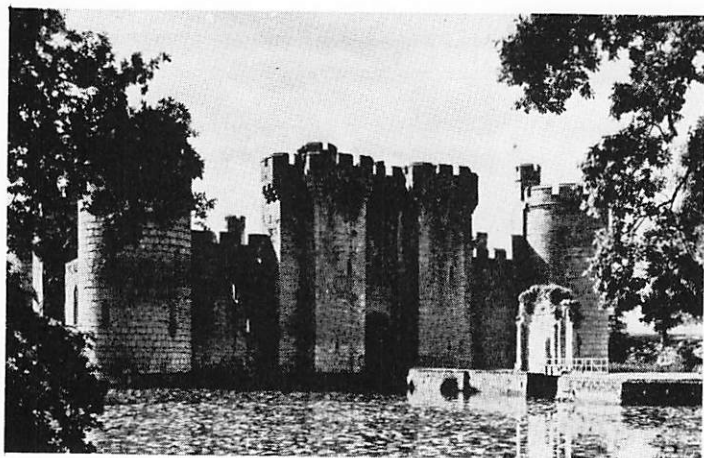
Application forms are available at

Tenterden station or write (S.A.E. please) to John Weller, New Members Secretary, 7 Rock Road, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Schedule of Wagon Stock January 1982

K. & E.S.R. No.	Type	Condition
102	S.E.R. 6w brake van	In traffic. To be painted in correct S.E.R. livery
103	S.R. brake van	In traffic. Due for general repair
104	L.N.W.R. brake van	In traffic. Restored to L.N.W.R. livery.
105	G.W.R. goods van	Restored to G.W.R. livery. Used as Loco Dept. Stores at Rolvenden.
106	L.N.E.R. Banana van	Awaiting restoration. In store at Northiam
107	L.M.S. Banana van	Awaiting restoration. In store at Northiam
108	Flat wagon	In traffic
109	Smith crane	In use.
110	3 plank d/side open	Damaged underframe. Awaiting repairs.
111	3 plank d/side open	Damaged underframe. Awaiting repairs
113	Flat wagon	In traffic
114	Flat wagon	In traffic
115	Flat wagon	In traffic
116	Flat wagon	In traffic
117	Bogie side tipper	Awaiting heavy repairs. In store at Northiam
118	Tank wagon	Restored in Shell Mex livery. In store at Bodiam
119	L.N.E.R. brake van	Awaiting restoration. In store at Tenterden
120	B.R. Iron Mink	Restored to Barry Railway livery. Used as Plant Dept. stores at Rolvenden
121	L.N.W.R. Flatrol	Restored to L.N.W.R. livery. In traffic
122	Dropside open	Restored to K. & E.S.R. livery. In traffic
123	L.N.E.R. ballast hopper	In traffic. To be painted in L.N.E.R. livery
124	S.N.C.F. (M.o.S.) steel open wagon	Awaiting restoration. In store at Bodiam
125	L.B.S.C.R. goods van	Awaiting restoration. Used as C & W stores at Tenterden
126	Flat wagon	In traffic. Restored to K. & E.S.R. livery
127	L.S.W.R. gunpowder van	Awaiting restoration. Used as C & W stores at Tenterden.
128	L.M.S. goods van	Restored to L.M.S. livery. Used as jack and packing van, Rolvenden
129	L.S.W.R. goods van	Restored to L.S.W.R. livery. Used as C & W stores
130	Compressor wagon	In traffic
131	L.N.E.R. goods van	Awaiting restoration. Used as C & W stores, Tenterden.

Note: 101 renumbered 67 October 1978 – Woolwich Coach
112 flat wagon, withdrawn June 1979.



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.

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.



Tickets Please!

How we did in 1981 and what we plan to do in 1982

1980					1981				
	Op. Days	Trains	Passengers	Av per Train		Op. Days	Trains	Passengers	Av per Train
April	10	47	4896	104		10	44	2913	66
May	12	60	4490	75		13	60	4327	72
June	13	60	5178	86		12	48	3490	73
July	24	100	7140	71		31	104	7663	74
Aug.	31	129	10406	81		31	124	8336	67
Sept.	8	35	3825	109		12	54	3665	68
Oct.	8	28	885	32		9	36	917	25
Nov.	5	15	408	27		5	15	169	11
Dec.	10	36*	310	163*		9	29*	54	191*
	<u>121</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>37538</u>	<u>85*</u>		<u>132</u>	<u>514</u>	<u>31534</u>	<u>72*</u>
Excess fares			1738					1110	
Wittersham			1020					505	
Rolvenden			900					1033	
Santa Specials			5572					5493	
			<u>46768</u>	<u>92</u>				<u>39675</u>	<u>77</u>
Wealden Pullman			2085	61				1980	64
Fare paying passengers			48853	90				41655	76
Privileges & passes			1663					1786	
Total			<u>50516</u>	<u>93</u>				<u>43441</u>	<u>80</u>

* includes Santa Specials

Note

The statistics for 1981 include a total of 898 single journeys made by fare paying passengers (1980 – 589) otherwise all bookings are returns. Special charter trains have been excluded. 34 Wealden Pullman trains were run in 1980 and 31 in 1981. No steam trains were operated in the month of November. Minor revisions have been made to the data for 1980 previously published.

Passenger numbers declined by 15% in 1981, although there were slightly more trains run during the year. The fall was consistent throughout the year, due partly to the bad weather in the early months, but the recession and pressure on incomes undoubtedly affected business as the year went on. The small drop in Wealden Pullman numbers was not significant and these trains have been fully booked throughout the year.

The average number of passengers carried per train remains disappointingly low and prompts the question as to why we consistently roster 4 coach trains when numbers rarely exceed 70 per train. A greater degree of flexibility would undoubtedly reduce operating costs and add greatly to the variety and interest of services. "One coach" trains during the month of October would seem to be all that is required,

after all we are a "light" railway.

No sooner has 1981 finished than we have to get ready for our new season! All of you who helped last year – a big thank you – it was a difficult year and not as successful as we had hoped. This year we are having an increased marketing effort and have instigated the setting up of the "Seven Wonders of the Weald", a group tourist attraction in our area, to make the whole day out trip more attractive to coach operators and group organisers. No prizes for guessing what is the most wonderful wonder!

We also have to contain the costs of running the trains – with coal now £65 tonne (£1300 per lorry load). We will make more use of our railbus on off-peak Saturdays; we have changed our mid-week operating day to Thursdays in June and July (to avoid the early closing day),

although we will still run on Wednesday in July to cope with the schools. Daily running has been confined to 5 weeks in the main holiday period – 1st August to 5 September and of course, Wealden Pullman features in our programme, with some Friday “extras” already booked.

On railbus services, we will provide a guide who will give passengers a description of the route and escort them round Rolvenden depot. To make more efficient use of staff, the guard will be issuing tickets on all railbus services and no booking clerk will be rostered. Similarly, except on peak days, only one ticket collector will be rostered and the guard will need to help with collecting fares; only one ticket collector will be rostered for steam trains and the guard will need to assist as required.

Operations at Bodiam end of the line, organised by the Thameside group, on 30 and 31 May and 29/30 August, are being supplemented by an experimental railbus service on Sundays only between Bodiam & Dixter between 4 July and 22 August. The publicity for these trains will be kept low key

and confined to the Castle and western areas, so as not to detract passengers from Tenterden. The plan is to introduce the Railway to new customers, and get them to ride on our steam trains at Tenterden on a later date.

Our objective this year must be to improve our image and the overall impression of the Railway gained by our visitors.

Because it should be easier to do so at Tenterden from the end of the year, 1982 has been declared the ‘Year of the P’

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P for PRESENTATION – Please be smart and look the part

P for POLITENESS – At all times to our customers

P for PRIDE – IN OUR RAILWAY

P for PHILIP AND PAUL – Providing progress reports on the above in the *Tenterden Terrier*.

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On the Right Track

Peter Davis reviews progress made on the permanent way in 1981 and looks forward to the extension of the operating section to Hexden Bridge in 1982

When the Editor asked me to write this article I accepted only after some persuasion, as I have already explained the problems with our permanent way in the last two issues of the *Router* and it is difficult to avoid repetition. Therefore I have decided to set out in detail some of the work carried out by the P.W. Department since I assumed responsibility for it in late May 1981.

My first problem was people, there being no department as such to inherit; I had to borrow or "press gang" a few helpers from other duties in order to tackle a number of critical defects without delay. The principal inconvenience was that weekend operation was in full swing and daily operation just over one month away, so line occupation was out of the question at virtually any time that volunteers were likely to be available.

We started by laboriously hand packing the severe slacks, or dropped levels, above and below Cranbrook Road, some three Sundays being spent with three or four helpers. For those unfamiliar with the art of packing I will explain the procedure. First, 15 tonne ratchet jacks are positioned under one rail at intervals of about four to five sleepers, the rail is then jacked up to the required level, which is determined by sighting along the railhead. The resulting voids under the sleepers are filled from both sides simultaneously by forcing ballast into them with shovels, care being taken to pack no more than about 10" each side of the rail. It is important to leave the centre and ends of the sleepers unpacked to prevent breakage when they settle under loading. When one rail has been lifted and packed the same procedure is applied to the other, when cross levels should be checked. The ballast is then trimmed and the equipment moved to the next job. All this has to be carried out between trains, so every 30 minutes or so all equipment has to be moved clear and the track made safe.

Lifting and packing has continued on an irregular basis since then and will remain a Forth Bridge type commitment until the formation is properly drained at the trouble spots, in fact the Cranbrook Road slacks have been packed twice since last May. In addition to the visually obvious slacks a number of dropped joints were dealt with, generally we were advised of their whereabouts by loco

crews and the equipment was taken out by service train. These were sometimes dealt with on weekday evenings by volunteers but our two employees Dave Levett and Paul Hatcher spent six weeks at the latter end of the summer doing emergency packing. Where a joint has been dropped for some while it is not uncommon for the rail ends to be bent. This is difficult to rectify but in some cases we have achieved an acceptable result by supporting the rail ends on packing and rolling with a loco!

After the abortive mechanical tamping exercise in the Spring we were left with ash ballast up to the railhead for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from Wittersham Gates to the Oxney Straight. It was particularly important to clear this from the loop at Wittersham in order to restore an orderly appearance to the station area. This piece of track is the original main line and when the platform road was constructed to an easier gradient it was left at a lower level by some three feet. It had been intended to lift the loop at the level of the platform line in easy stages as material could be made available. The Matissa exercise was to have been the first stage of the lift but the machine involved proved unsuitable for this. Therefore following the procedure already described the loop was jacked and packed by hand, the maximum lift being about 10". The subsequent performance of this packing is proof that the ash used has adequate bearing, binding and drainage qualities. This material comes from Tilbury and West Thurrock Power Stations and is graded specifically for lightweight concrete block production. It costs £7 per cubic metre delivered, compared with £30 per cubic metre for limestone and for obvious reasons it has now been decided to standardise on ash ballast.

Throughout the year development has continued on the permanent way depot at Wittersham Road and this facility has proved invaluable for handling some 1500 sleepers, of which 700 concrete ones recently became unexpectedly available at a very reasonable price. The installation of a siding and road access was financed by the Northiam Extension Fund as it was considered essential before work could be started on the relaying project. The turnout for the engineers' siding was installed last Winter but the yard at that time was three feet below track level and completely

waterlogged. Back in March a Hymac excavator arrived on site and within a week had completely transformed the scene. The retaining bank at the back of the platform was reshaped and given a 45° slope, various small piles of infill material that had been dumped around the site were concentrated alongside the running line to provide a formation for the siding, which trails in the Rolvenden direction. An 18' wide, 450' long access road was laid from the station car park to the siding and a small yard area prepared for unloading and turning lorries. This was achieved by spreading 400 tonnes of minestone about 1 ft deep directly on to the clay and compacting it with the excavator tracks.

Minestone is a polite name for colliery waste or shale; ours came from Snowdown Colliery and is graded to a maximum particle size of 150mm. It contains some gritstone, but is mainly siltstone, which is a laminated material similar to slate. The principle of its effectiveness is that it splinters under compaction, becoming interlocked and then further degrades by weathering until the surface is completely sealed by fine material. This results in a very stable bed, impenetrable to clay and which will support vehicles up to maximum highway axle loading. Our road is not the smartest job around but the whole project including the bank regrading was completed for just under £2,000.

During the Autumn a further 100 tonnes of minestone was used to extend the yard area further along the siding and it is intended to expand both as suitable fill becomes available and further expenditure on fill material can be authorised. Ultimately the siding will extend the full length of the lower yard and will parallel the running line. The siding was gradually put together during the Summer and utilised various scrap materials which were lying around the yard; it is only long enough for five vehicles at present but consists of L.B.S.C.R., S.R. and L.M.S. chairs and several short pieces of bullhead rail of varying sections. It presently ends three feet above a sea of mud but the return of the Hymac and a bit of hard work will see it doubled in length by the Spring.

Many minor tasks have been carried out including re-keying in some areas where keys inserted from opposing directions were causing sleepers to twist out of parallel during heat expansion and contraction. This causes tightening of the gauge and may also result in broken chairs if not rectified. In fact your

Editor, more used to the gentility of the Wealden Pullman, blistered his hands and suffered near sunstroke while assisting with just such an exercise!

The notorious landslip near Morphew Curve was removed in early June by a dextrous Hymac operator who was able to work from the adjacent field by passing the arm of the machine under the telephone wires and over the fence, without damage to either. Further drainage and stabilisation work is required to complete this job.

Northiam level crossing was rebuilt in 1980 but by last Summer the rails had worked loose causing the tarmac to break up, thus creating a hazard to road traffic. During 30th September and 1st October Dave Levett and Paul Hatcher assisted by Jo Roesen and myself carried out repairs. The East Sussex County Council were kind enough to provide traffic lights so that we could deal with each half of the road in turn without undue disruption to road traffic. A one foot width was broken out of the tarmac beside the running and check rails in order to expose the chains. The old wooden keys which had worked out and in some cases disintegrated were replaced with new steel ones well driven home. After removal of loose material the road surface was reinstated with well compacted hot tarmac. Although it is normal practice to use hardwood keys for level crossings it was decided to try the steel ones in view of our unfortunate experience with the latter. Happily the crossing seems to be performing satisfactorily and no further movement of the rails is apparent.

By the end of 1981 much had been achieved towards our goal of reopening the three-quarter mile to Hexden Bridge by the Spring. It should be explained that the railway west of Wittersham Road has not been maintained since 1961 and total reconstruction is required. For the first 300 yards out of Wittersham Road the line climbs at 1 : 80 through a narrow cutting and this had become completely waterlogged because the clay sides had encroached over the formation and destroyed the drainage. The first tangible work on the extension was when Martin Phillips started digging out at the top of the cutting in July, since when hundreds of man hours have been spent ditching and there is now an effective drain down one side of the cutting and the best part of one on the other. It is intended to install porous pipes and we will probably utilise some

9" pitch fibre ones already in stock by the simple expedient of drilling holes in them.

Having successfully drained the formation it was found that the ash bed was in quite good order and it was possible to start relaying with chaired concrete sleepers from Wittersham Gates westwards. We have 1000 of these available and they were being lifted in singly with the Smith crane until gearbox trouble put it out of action in November. Fortunately I was able to borrow a handbook for the ancient Brockhouse transmission which eventually ended up on my bench at home, a place more familiar with the delicate innards of racing cars! Brockhouse were able to supply the necessary spares and the gearbox was refitted towards the end of January so that relaying could get under way again.

Beyond the section with concrete sleepers the Thameside Group are installing wooden ones and excellent progress has been made. A redundant culvert at the beginning of the Hexden straight has been demolished and back-filled with ubiquitous minestone. The final $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to Hexden Bridge is at present laid with 75 lb. flat bottom rail on light, siding standard, concrete sleepers and it has been

decided to reclaim these materials for the carriage shed sidings at Tenterden. The 95 lb. bullhead rail recovered last year from Batchelor's sidings at Ashford will be used in replacement and has already been laid out on site together with new sleepers and S1 chairs taken from stock. It will be necessary to raise and reshape the approach embankment to Hexden Bridge before relaying and a further redundant culvert immediately after Hexden Bridge will be removed. Most of the ballast required for the extension will be reclaimed from the excess still lying in the four foot to the east of Wittersham Road.

There is still a great deal to be done but the Thameside lads are scheduled to be working every other weekend from now until the project is completed, while Dave and Paul will proceed steadily with the concrete sleepers.

I have so far refrained from making my usual pleas for assistance but you all know the score and the situation has not altered. All the work described above has been carried out by very few members, to whom I am sincerely grateful. Much has been achieved in 1981 and much more needs to be achieved in 1982.



The Author with members of the Permanent Way department at work on Wittersham Bank after a snow storm, 20th December 1981.
(Paul Sutton)



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Stephens 50

Photographs by Brian Stephenson

On 3rd October 1981, Directors of the Festiniog, Kent & East Sussex and Snailbeach District Railways paid tribute to the 'Father of Light Railways', the late Lieutenant Colonel H.F. Stephens on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death (actual date 23rd October). These three lines are the sole independent survivors of the Stephens Empire.

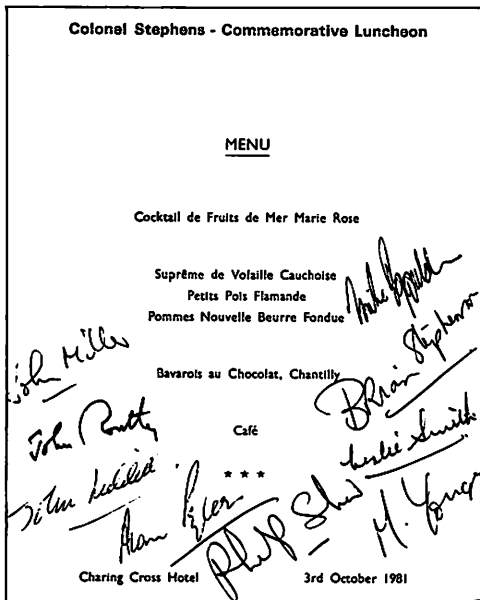
The party met at the Charing Cross Hotel in London for a commemorative luncheon at which speeches were made by the respective Company Chairmen, Mr. E.J. Routly, Mr. M.U. Yonge and Mr. M.J. Iggulden.

Praising Colonel Stephens' entrepreneurial skills and his contribution to light railway development in this country, Mark Yonge, who proposed a toast to the late Colonel, pointed out that he had held his own Board meetings in this very hotel and the party could therefore feel close in spirit if not in presence. It had to be admitted that Colonel Stephens' highly individual operating methods did not always endear him to his staff, but running a light railway in North Wales, for instance, from offices in Tonbridge could not have been the easiest of tasks. Mr. Iggulden, who seconded the motion, referred to the Colonel's engineering skills which had kept the various

lines operational and although he was a somewhat severe taskmaster, yet on occasions could be very generous. In reply, John Routly first thanked the Kent & East Sussex for their initiative in arranging the commemorative event and referred to Colonel Stephens distinguished past in the 150 years of Festiniog history; in particular his meticulous attention to detail. For instance, if the insides of the locomotive driving wheels were not clean, that member of the staff responsible would be fired! No wonder the Welsh staff had a code to warn of his arrival; the drivers of any train carrying him would stroke their beards as a sign that the Colonel was there! Nevertheless, he was also extremely human and gave credit and warm appreciation when it was due. After the luncheon, the party moved on to the Brompton Cemetery to lay wreaths on Colonel Stephens' grave on behalf of their respective railways. A two minutes silence was observed and short speeches were made at the graveside.

On 24th October, a special commemorative 'Wealden Pullman' train was run in connection with the same event, on which Mr. & Mrs. Routly, Mr. & Mrs. Iggulden, and Kent & East Sussex driver, Jack Hoad & Mrs. Hoad, were the invited guests,

P.D.S.

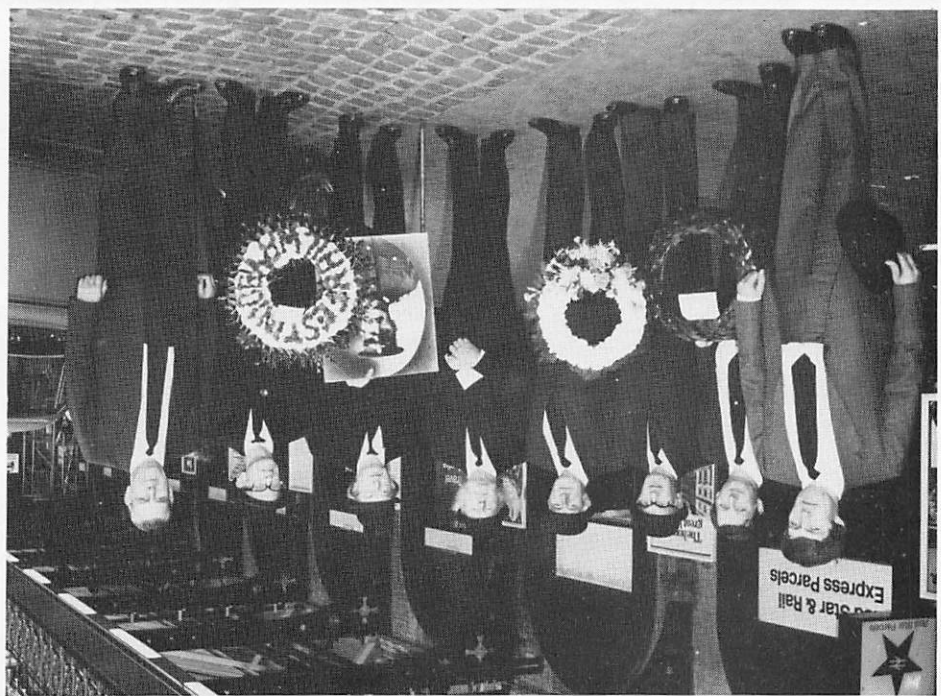
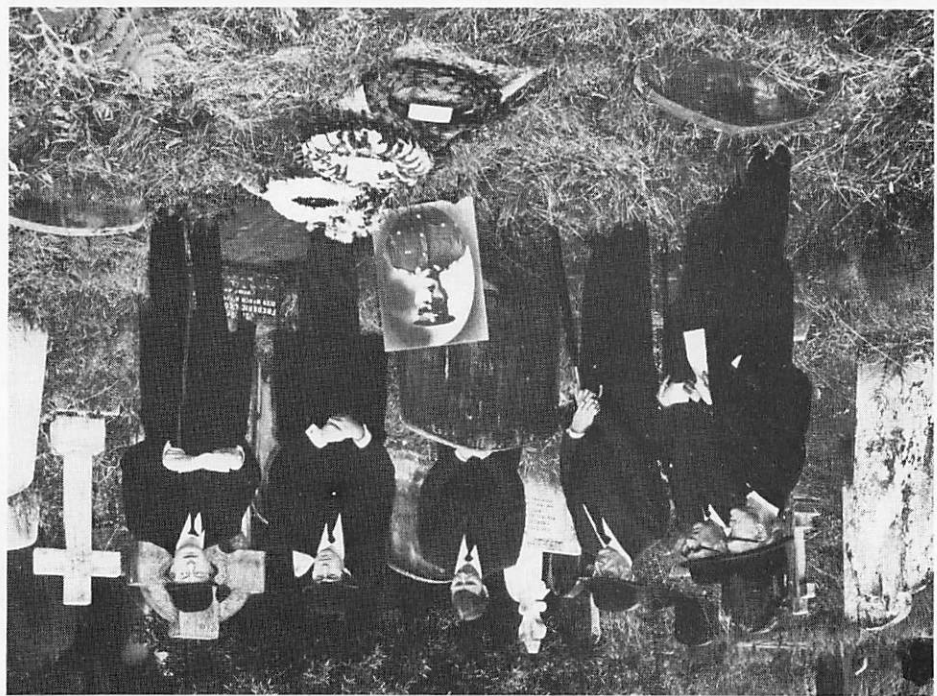


Outside the Charing Cross Hotel, 3rd October 1981. left to right: Mark Yonge, John Miller, Michael Iggulden (Snailbeach), Leslie Smith (Festiniog), Alan Pegler (Festiniog) Philip Shaw, John Routly (Festiniog), John Liddell.

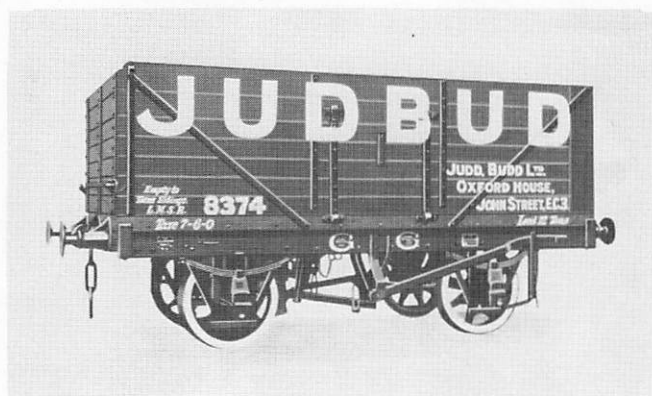
Wreath laying ceremony at Colonel Stephens' grave, Brompton Cemetery, 3rd October 1981.

Interior of dining car, Stephens 50 Wealden Pullman train, 24th October 1981. Michael Harris, Editor of Railway World, is seated at the first table on the right facing the camera.

Cutting the cake on the Stephens 50 Wealden Pullman train. Left to right: Mrs. Hoad, Jack Hoad, John Routley, Mrs. Routley, Mike Iggulden, Mrs. Iggulden.







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Colonel Stephens at Portmadoc

The Festiniog Railway Company commemorates the 150th year of its incorporation in May this year. For seven years of its long and momentous history, this most famous of all narrow gauge railways was run by Colonel Stephens, in his own inimitable way, from Tonbridge.

"The Book says, when a man gets very old, a man gets indecisive. I suppose we are suffering from this in direction of output . . ."

In common with many other minor railways, the Festiniog emerged from the period of the Great War and government control in low ebb. Services had been curtailed due to coal shortages and much of the works had been given over to munitions between 1915 and 1918. By 1920, the rails were badly worn, sleepers defective and ballast poor; locomotive maintenance had been sorely neglected. Slate and goods traffic still accounted for over 54% of total receipts, but annual slate tonnage had declined from 83,000 in 1913 to 53,000. Nevertheless, operating inefficiencies were such that the amount of shunting required to deal with the lower level of business had increased by no less than 44%! Passenger numbers had dropped by 10% over the same period.

It was against this background of acute financial difficulty that in 1921 proposals were put forward by the North Wales Power and Electric Traction Company, led by its Managing Director, Henry Jack, for amalgamating the powers of the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway and the adjacent Portmadoc, Beddgelert & South Snowdon Railway and transferring them to a new company, the Welsh Highland Railway and entering into a working agreement with the Festiniog. The Traction Company had owned the two first named lines since before the war and amalgamation had been suggested at an earlier date, but its recent acquisition of a controlling interest in the Festiniog had added a new dimension to the proposals.

The necessary light railway order was obtained on 30th March 1922 and McAlpine, the contractor started work on building the link sections and reconstruction work that would bring the Welsh Highland into being. Finally, on 30th January 1923, the Festiniog obtained powers to make a connecting line to the Welsh Highland at Portmadoc and to work its existing line as a light railway. This was formally opened on 2nd June 1923 with a through train from Blaenau Festiniog to Dinas, a distance of some 35 miles.

It was at this point that Stephens arrived on the Festiniog scene. The exact nature of his introduction does not appear to have been recorded, but he had been active in the formation of Associated Railways – a body formed to further the interests of all minor lines in the immediate post war period. New management was needed to ensure that the enterprise got off the ground and on 1st April 1923, H.F. Stephens was appointed civil engineer and locomotive superintendent of both lines, operating from his offices at Tonbridge, whilst the secretariat and most of the senior general administration was transferred from Portmadoc to Jack's own offices at Dolgarrog. The existing General Manager, S.C. Tyrwhitt, remained at Portmadoc until September when he was due to retire anyway.

In addition to Tyrwhitt, management staff at Portmadoc included Robert Williams, the former Festiniog Locomotive Superintendent, who stayed on in a junior capacity; Robert Evans, general factotum cum accountant, who had joined the company as a booking clerk as far back as 1894 and H. Nevitt, who reported on engineering matters on a part time basis, visiting the line about twice a week. Stephens had little regard for either Williams or Evans but of necessity most of the day to day correspondence was conducted through the latter, liaison with Dolgarrog being confined to important matters.

Despite tackling the job with his usual energy and enthusiasm, Stephens ran into difficulties from the start. Not being a director of either company, he lacked the authority to take policy decisions on matters which he considered necessary to ensure the viability of the undertaking; furthermore traffic did not develop as had been hoped.

When Tyrwhitt retired, he was replaced, on a temporary basis by John May, who was given the new title of Traffic Superintendent. After consultation with Jack, Stephens put forward a number of proposals for reducing costs such as abolishing porters and changes in signalling.



"Palmerston" and train at Portmadoc, probably in 1927. This postcard was sent by Audit Accountant, Arthur Iggulden, to his son Michael at Tonbridge, whilst on a visit to the line in August 1935.
(Tenterden Railway Co.)

However, May was critical of some of the suggestions made and made it clear that he was unwilling to implement them. In the event, he left on 31st August 1924 to become Manager of the Ashover Light Railway, which was due to open at that time; it was probably coincidental that this line had also been engineered by Stephens. In May 1924, E.H.R. Nicholls (an ex G.W.R. man) joined the company as Managing Director, based at Portmadoc; probably with some degree of relief, Stephens gave three months notice of his intention to resign as engineer. Writing to Nicholls immediately after his appointment, Stephens commented "after 14 months experience, my great trouble is to get Williams out of the groove he has got into and to start anything fresh. Of course you will realise I have not had a free hand in these matters or in fact any matter, no doubt for very good reasons, bearing in mind the financial position of the Company". Nicholls, however, made very little impact at Portmadoc, despite being given full executive responsibility. It seems that the appointment was in a part-time capacity as he still remained an employee of the Great Western.

A Board minute of 5th September 1924 confirmed that "all officers of the company are under the control of and directly responsible to the Managing Director with powers of appointment and dismissal" Nicholls resigned and disappeared suddenly at the end of 1924 – in February 1925 Stephens was still unable to make contact with him. A further complication

was that Jack had offered his resignation at the Festiniog A.G.M. in the previous April to take effect from November 1924, following shareholder criticism which, in effect, blamed him for the poor trading of the combined ventures.

The way was now open for Stephens to assume full executive control; he joined the Festiniog board on 20th November 1924 and was appointed Chairman & Managing Director on both companies with effect from 1st January, 1925, at a salary of £400 per annum. He immediately set about implementing the cost cutting measures, including reducing station staff, which he had advocated earlier.

Stephens was not as popular with the staff at Portmadoc as he was with the shareholders; his military style of management involved making flying visits from Kent (or sending his assistant W.H. Austen) followed up by long lists of instructions, mainly to Evans, threatening dire consequences for any one who did not comply. He had little affinity or patience with the Cymric race, "the F.R. people are quite different to our people" he wrote to Austen in 1926, "they can't help it, it's their nature, we have got to put up with it whilst we have the job". As year followed year, correspondence with Portmadoc, usually vitriolic, but often scintillating, became increasingly prolific. "You had better tell Morris Jones (fitter at Boston Lodge) that it is nearly time to get the Baldwin tractor to work or else send in his resignation" he wrote to Evans . . . "I confess I

am tired of Morris Jones and his delays and troubles and as Nevitt seems disinclined to move and incur the men's displeasure I suppose I shall soon have to move. The book says, when a man gets very old, a man gets indecisive. I suppose we are suffering from this in direction of output."

Between 1925 and 1928 Stephens conducted a lengthy dialogue with Evans on the subject of carriage cleaning. Fortunately the letters, together with copies of Evans' replies have survived and they illustrate, if nothing else, the problems of communication over long distances, when the use of the telephone was an expensive luxury.

10.8.25 Why are the windows of the 1st class compartment allowed to be open during heavy rain; letting the windows down for air does not mean letting them down for rain to beat in . . . You seem to have some perfectly stupid people to deal with or people who are not properly looked after.

Your first train for passengers purposes is 8.00 a.m. Surley you can get a woman to come on at about 5.30 a.m. to 6.00 a.m. for a few days to have two hours scrubbing . . . Now will you take this as a direct order to get this work done and let us have no more trouble.

26.8.26 *re your letter of 25th inst, the carriage cleaning is being done by coalman T. Morgan and the porter at Portmadoc. All the carriages were scrubbed out in May*

this year, do you wish for them to be scrubbed out again?

27.8.26 Yes, I want the carriages scrubbed out again; surely my letter of the 25th inst. stated this. Why give me the trouble of writing another letter.

8.8.27 Have you a woman carriage cleaner? if so what does she do?

10.8.27 *We have no woman carriage cleaner on either the F.R. or W.H.R.*

12.8.27 Why have you no woman carriage cleaner? Can you get one? Can you use the Perfectol carriage cleaner?

15.8.27 *The only time we had a woman carriage cleaner was when on your instructions the carriages were washed inside. We can use the Perfectol carriage cleaner.*

(The guard remarks on his journal for 8.00am on Saturday, "passengers refusing to go into 3rd class compartments, too dirty, had to put them in 1st class")

16.8.27 Take on a woman carriage cleaner temporarily on the best terms that you can arrange.

19.8.27 *I am unable to get a woman carriage cleaner . . . there is a young man about here, a sailor by trade, and he is unable to get work, who I could put on to clean the carriages.*

20.8.27 You had better take on the young sailor



"Russell" (left) and the ex-W.D. "Baldwin" at Beddgelert, Welsh Highland Railway, 1930.

(Lens of Sutton)

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SUPPORT THE LOCAL LINE

TIME TABLES—From July 7th to September 20th (inclusive) 1930

DOWN TRAINS

		p.m.
Barnmouth dep.		
Harlech "		
Portmadoc arr.		
"		
Swilhel dep.		
Afonwen "		
Cricieth "		
Portmadoc arr.		
Portmadoc (New Stn.) (for GWR) dep.		
Pont Croesor "		
Ynysfor "		
Croesor Junction "		
Hafod Garregog "		
Hafod-y-Llyn "		
Nantmor "		
Bodgellert arr.		
" dep.	4 45	
Hafod Ruffydd "	A	
Pitts Head "	A	
South Snowdon arr.	5 14	
" dep.	5 20	
Quellyn Lake "	5 31	
Plas-y-Nant "	A	
Salem "	5 43	
Bettws Garmon "	5 51	
Waeafwr "	6 1	
Tryfan June. "	6 10	
Dinas June. arr.		
Dinas June. dep.	7 31	
Afonwen arr.	8 20	
Swilhel "	8 45	
"		
Dinas June. dep.	6 31	
Carnarvon arr.	6 40	
Bangor "	7 5	
Llandudno "	8 40	
Colwyn Bay "	8 40	
Rhyl "	9 8	

UP TRAINS

		a.m.
Rhyl dep.		10 44
Colwyn Bay "		11 5
Llandudno "		11 0
Bangor "		11 50
Carnarvon "		12 10
Dinas June. arr.		12 18
Swilhel dep.		10 25
Afonwen "		11 5
Dinas June. arr.		11 50
Dinas June. dep.		12 22
Tryfan June. "		12 35
Waeafwr "		12 47
Bettws Garmon "		12 52
Salem "	A	
Plas-y-Nant "	1 27	
Quellyn Lake "	1 47	
South Snowdon arr.	1 15	
" dep.	1 18	
Pitts Head "	A	
Hafod Ruffydd "	1 44	
Bodgellert "	1 19	
Nantmor dep.	1 58	
Hafod-y-Llyn "	"	
Hafod Garregog "	"	
Croesor June. "	2 14	
Ynysfor "	2 19	
Pont Croesor "	2 28	
Portmadoc (New Stn.) (for GWR) arr.		
Portmadoc dep.	3 28	
Cricieth arr.	3 45	
Afonwen "	4 2	
Swilhel "	"	
Portmadoc dep.	4 38	
Harlech arr.	5 3	
Barnmouth "	5 35	

NOTES. A—Stops if required. D—Stops to set down only

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Passengers booking at intermediate Stations can only do so conditionally upon there being room in the train.

Portmadoc, June, 1930

Support the Local Line

H. F. STEPHENS, Manager

you mention on half time to start with. You should pay him at the rate of 40/- per week so that he will draw £1 per week as he is on half time.

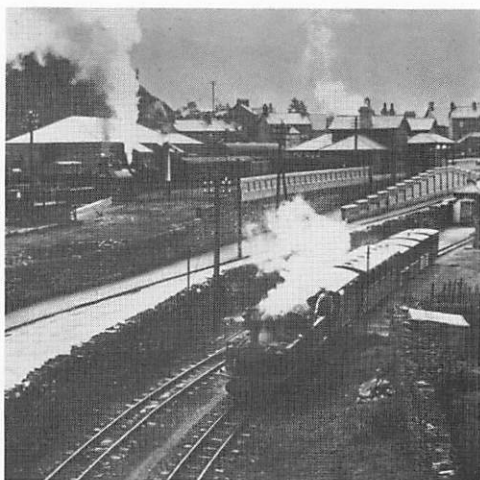
13.12.27 How are you off for Perfectol for carriage cleaning please?

15.12.27 *We have a supply of Perfectol. I am sorry that when this is used it takes the paint off the carriages, especially the yellow paint.*

28.12.27 If the Perfectol is used properly it will not fetch the paint off. It shows you are using it too strong.

20.1.28 Letter from a Capt L. Davies to Colonel Stephens "I herewith return free pass which you granted me last year and I beg to acknowledge pass for this year . . . I used it once last year . . . I should mention that after leaving the carriage I looked more like a sweep than a first class passenger".

The correspondence continued in similar vein for the rest of the year, with apparently no answer to the problem. There was, however, a softer side to Stephens nature, a genuine concern and respect for those employees who had worked loyally and hard. "I understand that one of the drivers is ill, very ill," he wrote to Evans. "Can you send him some fruit or soup, or something from me."



Blaenau Festiniog station, 1920's. Note L & N.W.R. station on the left.

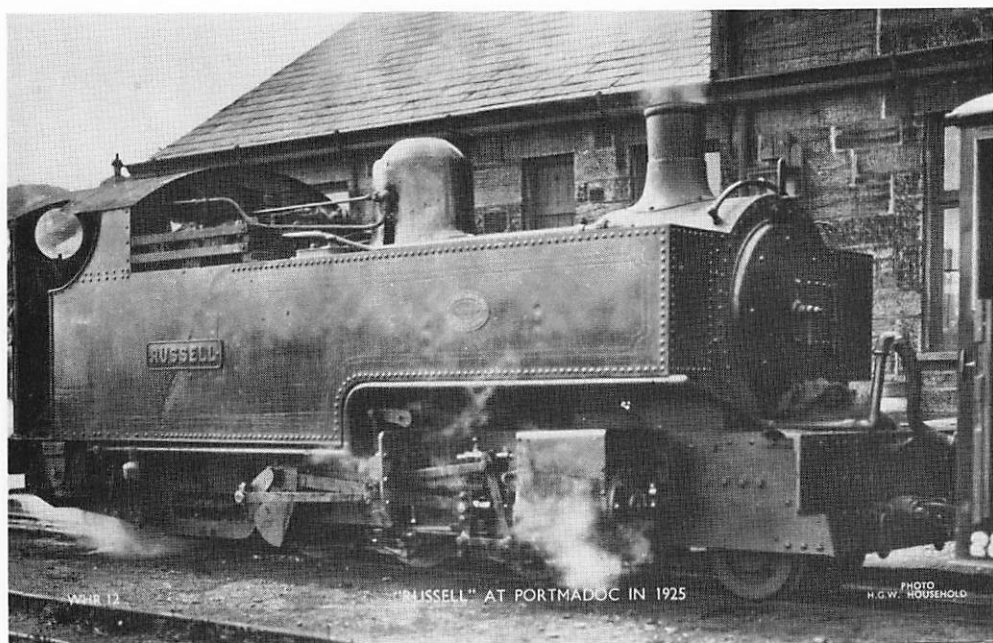
(Tenterden Railway Co.)

Stephens remained Chairman and Managing Director of the Festiniog until his death on 23rd October 1931 and Receiver and Manager of the Welsh Highland, to which he had been appointed in 1927.



"Merddin Emrys" and train at Blaenau Festiniog, 1920's.

(Tenterden Railway Co.)



“Russell” at Portmadoc, 1925

(H.G.W. Household)

However, after February 1930 his involvement in a practical sense was minimal, following a series of strokes, which eventually completely incapacitated him.

It is recorded that he did visit the line in April 1931, during a period when he made a partial recovery.

Stephens did much to try and encourage new traffic to the lines; bus services had commenced between Bleanau and Portmadoc in February 1923, but tourism was growing in the area. The “Five Valleys” circular tour was introduced in conjunction with the L.M.S., enabling passengers to travel over the Conway Valley line to Blaenau, thence over the Festiniog & Welsh Highland to Portmadoc and Dinas, returning to their original point of departure via the L.M.S., Caernarvon and Bangor. Sadly, poor timekeeping often resulted in lost connections – disastrous for such a marathon trip. Nevertheless, publicity was good, albeit perhaps a trifle eccentric. “Visit the wonderland of Wales in comfort” said the handbills “Travel across country in safety away from the dusty and crowded roads, seeing beautiful scenery not visible from the highways on home-made steel instead of on imported rubber, by home produced coal instead of by

imported oil and Support the local lines”. Stephens attitude to the technical press was less euphoric; when J.F. Gairns, the then Editor of the *Railway Magazine* applied to Evans for a pass “to renew my acquaintance with these lines”, the matter was referred to Stephens, who replied, “I do not propose to issue passes to this gentleman . . . I should discourage any time being spent showing him round . . . between ourselves the *Railway Magazine* and the *Railway Gazette* are no good whatever to the small companies. If they were daily newspapers, of course, one’s attitude would be different.”

On the freight side, attempts were made to revive coal traffic at Portmadoc from Whitehaven, which had existed prior to the War and Stephens was prepared to finance personally a collier, similar to the one that he had in use on the Weston, Cleveland & Portishead Railway. However, the quarries, tired of delays and inefficiencies, were all trying to lessen their dependence on the railway and showed little interest. The combination of poor coal, an apathetic workforce and inadequate money to maintain the locomotives and permanent way, all combined to produce impossibly unreliable services. Experiments

were tried with internal combustion engines and a Simplex petrol tractor was purchased for shunting purposes in July 1923, to be followed by others, including the Baldwin (Moelwyn) and an Austro-Daimler from the contractors of the North Devon & Cornwall Junction Light Railway, which had just opened and which was engineered by Stephens. Problems with fitting continuous brakes thwarted attempts to use these on passenger services on the Welsh Highland in winter, hauling a single coach.

Festiniog passenger numbers peaked at 199,304 in 1925 and thereafter went into steady decline; slate traffic held up well, until the depression of 1930, when it suffered a major drop. Stephens wrote to Evans in March 1929 on the subject of Festiniog Railway finances; "The Company takes about £14,000 per annum, which is, roughly speaking, £270 per week. The wages cheque each week comes to about £150, which leaves a balance of, say, £120 per week or £480 per month but we never have £480 per month to pay accounts, etc. Can you offer any explanation? As a rule, when you take about double your weekly wage bill on these small lines you can get along fairly comfortably, but we are, certainly far from being comfortable". Evans explanation, if there was one, has not survived.

After Stephens' death, W.H. Austen took over as Engineer and locomotive Superintendent, but the influence that he exerted was considerably less than his predecessor. Evan R. Davis became Chairman and Managing Director, although Evans continued as the man on the spot. In September 1936, Evans wrote to Austen indicating that the Company had decided to reduce further the permanent way

staff and dispense with the services of the boilermaker. Austen considered that this was reducing maintenance to an unacceptably low level and tendered his resignation. His final words were "My 40 odd years of railway experience does not either appear to be appreciated or considered and as long as the wheels turn round today that is all that matters, no consideration for tomorrow." It was the end of an era, but even then the links with Tonbridge were not finally severed. Arthur Iggulden continued to act as Audit Accountant from Salford Terrace until the outbreak of War.

Looking back on Stephens' period of office, it is easy to be cynical; what were his achievements? – the railways entered the 1930's in an even more precarious state than when he took over in 1923. The Welsh Highland was in receivership and traffic generally was on a downward trend. Yet the problems he faced from every angle were probably insuperable and he did provide the continuity of management that the Companies so desperately needed at the time of Jack's and Nicholls's resignations, despite being 300 miles away. What is certain, however, that Stephens left his own highly individual work on that 150 years of history; a colourful era which did little to cement Anglo-Welsh relations, but which will never be forgotten!

Philip Shaw

The Author would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Chairman, Directors and Archivist of the Festiniog Railway Company in giving permission to inspect the Company archives and for their courtesy in showing him the line.

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W. H. Austen

An Appreciation

It is with much sadness that we have to record the death of William Austen on 11th October 1981, in his eightieth year.

Bill Austen was a much loved member of the Kent & East Sussex Railway and a well-known figure at Tenterden, having given the organisation the benefit of his wisdom and advice almost from the inception of the preservation movement. His links with the Railway go back almost fifty years; from the time he joined the staff of Salford Terrace in 1932 until the closure of the offices in 1948, he was involved with way and works on many of the Stephens lines – in particular the Kent & East Sussex, East Kent, Festiniog and Welsh Highland and the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire. His unrivalled knowledge of the K & E S R on matters ranging from locomotive liveries to permanent way has not only provided a wealth of information for the historian, but has been on occasions of practical value in running the Railway today.

William Holman Austen was born in Tonbridge on 12th July 1902 and was educated

at Sir Andrew Judd's School and Dulwich College. From there he went to the Crystal Palace School of Engineering and was subsequently articled to a firm of consulting engineers in North London. In about 1927 he joined the Southern Railway at Waterloo, where he was engaged on permanent way and bridge works. After the death of Colonel Stephens in 1931, whom he met on frequent occasions as a boy, Bill Austen joined his father at Salford Terrace, who had just taken over as the Colonel's successor. This was in 1932 and "Holly" as he became known to the staff at number 23, was involved in the outdoor administration of the various lines, in particular permanent way. Essentially a practical engineer, he was nevertheless a versatile man as is evidenced by the fact that he designed and superintended the building of staff bungalows for the East Kent Railway.

In 1936 he was seconded to the Snowdon Mountain Railway as resident engineer, but this was never intended as a permanent appointment and he returned to Salford Terrace in 1938. On nationalisation of the

Bill and Phyllis Austen at Tenterden on the occasion of the naming of No. 24 and the presentation of the model locomotive, owned by Holman Stephens as a child, to the Museum, 16th July 1978.
(Brian Stephenson)



remaining parts of the Stephens empire in 1948 and the closure of the offices, Bill Austen became a B.R. employee at the engineer's office at Ashford. Not surprisingly the beaucroatic workings of a monolithic nationalised body had few attractions for him and he soon returned to private practice with a consultancy firm involved in a new drainage scheme for Brighton Corporation at Peacehaven. Finally, he worked as a civil engineer with Tonbridge R.D.C. until his retirement in 1965.

In private life Bill Austen was a man of many parts and talents. A perfectionist in all his activities, albeit a master of improvisation – an essential prerequisite for any one brought up in the Stephens tradition. He was a founder member of the Tonbridge Model Engineering Society and set out the original track formation and subsequent extensions of the passenger carrying model railway in the Tonbridge Sports Ground – probably the finest layout of its type in the South of England. His own constructed models of locomotives 'Northiam' and 'Lion' regularly ran on the line. He designed and built a powered river boat which he used on the Rivers Rother and Medway and was skilled in the repair of ancient timepieces,

in particular grandfather clocks. He was one of the founders of the Tonbridge Arts Group, where he painted landscapes and a member of the cast of the Southern Railway Operatic Society. Active right up until his last days, Bill Austen was constructing a third model locomotive at the time of his death.

An eloquent conversationalist, some of the stories he told of the Stephens lines were legendary. The writer recalls being presented with a tobacco tin full of rather muddy P.S. & N.W.R. tickets, which Bill Austen had personally removed from the ghostly station ticket racks, whilst accompanying his father on an inspection on the line, some twenty years after closure, prior to its reconstruction as the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire. These and many other items were donated by him to the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum at Tenterden.

Bill Austen and his wife were due to join the special "Stephens 50" commemorative pullman train on 24th October 1981, as invited guests. Sadly, they were unable to be with us and our sympathy goes to Phyllis in her great loss – we shall miss him too.

P.D.S.

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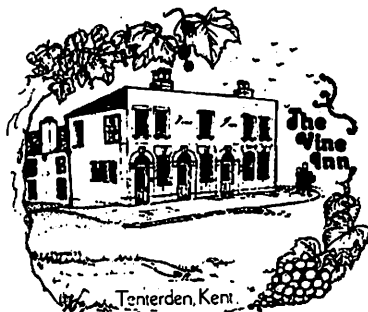
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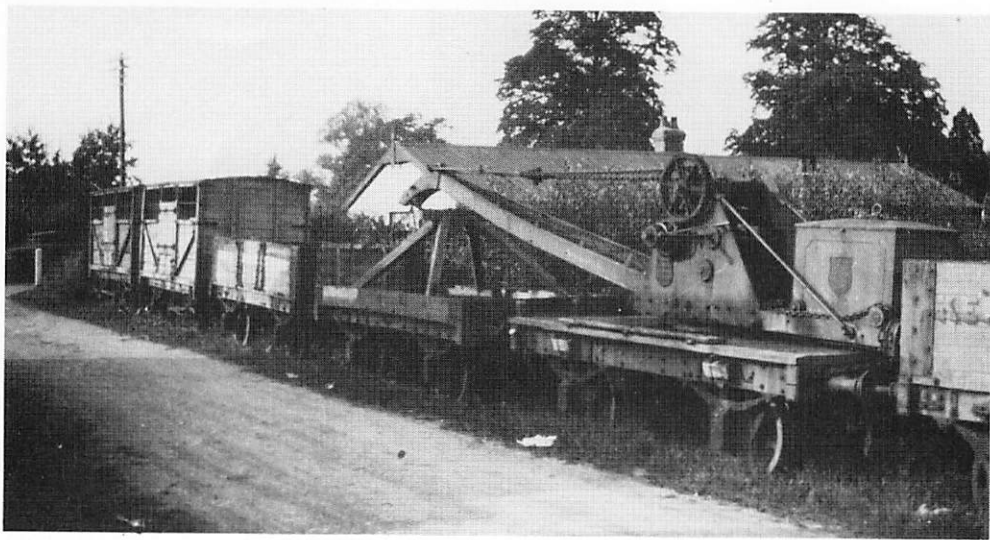
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Fifty Years Ago



Goods and service stock at Rolvenden, 16th September 1932

(R.W. Kidner)

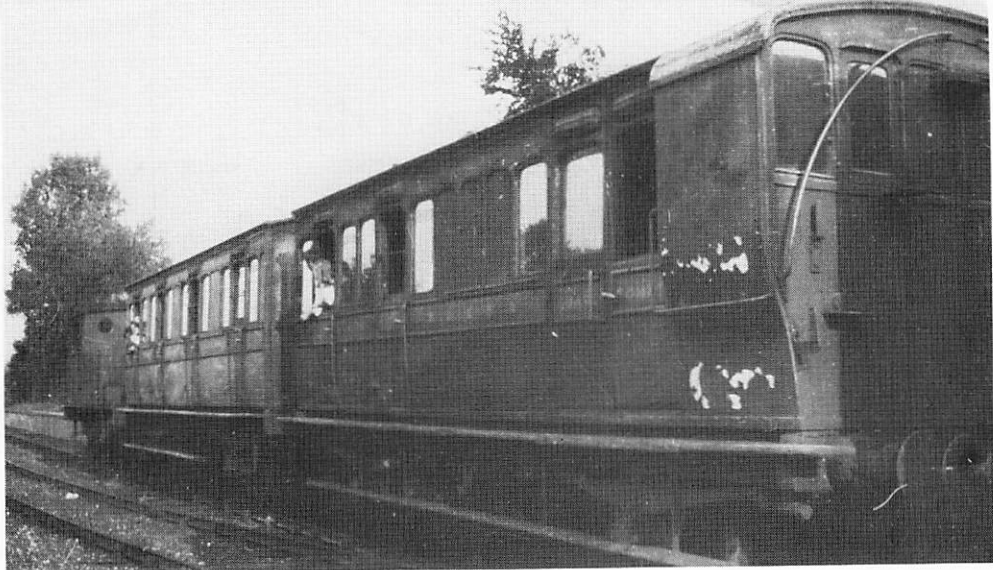
1932 was an important year in the history of the Kent & East Sussex. It was the first full year of management by Colonel Stephens' successor, W.H. Austen, and it was the year in which the Railway bowed to the inevitable and went into receivership. It was a year in which traffic figures plumbed new depths and in which train services, already pruned, saw further cuts. It was, however, also the year in which the first signs of a more businesslike approach to running a railway became apparent. It was almost certainly this which enabled the line to survive the immediate crisis of the Depression and to go on surviving long enough to be rescued by preservation.

The death of Colonel Stephens in 1931 had meant the loss not only of a managing director for the Kent & East Sussex but also of a benefactor without whose support many must have feared that the line would soon close. Mr. W.H. Austen, who succeeded him, had been with Stephens almost from the start of Stephens' railway career and certainly knew the railways that Stephen controlled just as well, if not better, than Stephens himself. Although Austen lacked Stephens' financial and social contacts he seems to have come to the task of management with a clear appreciation of the practical problems facing the Kent & East Sussex and the other lines which Stephens does not always seem to have grasped.

The immediate problem facing the Kent & East Sussex in 1932 was that it owed a great deal of money. The last dividend had been paid in 1929, a princely $\frac{1}{4}\%$, and the following years had seen a frenzied juggling of bank accounts, sales of consols and war stock to pay off loans and fuel bills, and the systematic setting aside of cheques to be paid out only when there was money in the bank to support them. Wages had been cut, staff laid off and working arrangements rationalised. The fact remained that when 1932 dawned the line could not pay its bills. The question of the day must have been which of the line's creditors would lose patience first.

In the event it was almost an act of benevolence when the Southern Railway, owed £270 interest on £13000 worth of debentures, and the Excess Insurance Company, owed £120 interest on £6000 worth of debentures, brought a petition before Mr. Justice Eve in the Chancery Division on Thursday 15th March for the appointment of a receiver and manager of the Kent & East Sussex. Austen was nominated as Receiver and Manager by the petitioners and this was confirmed by the judge.

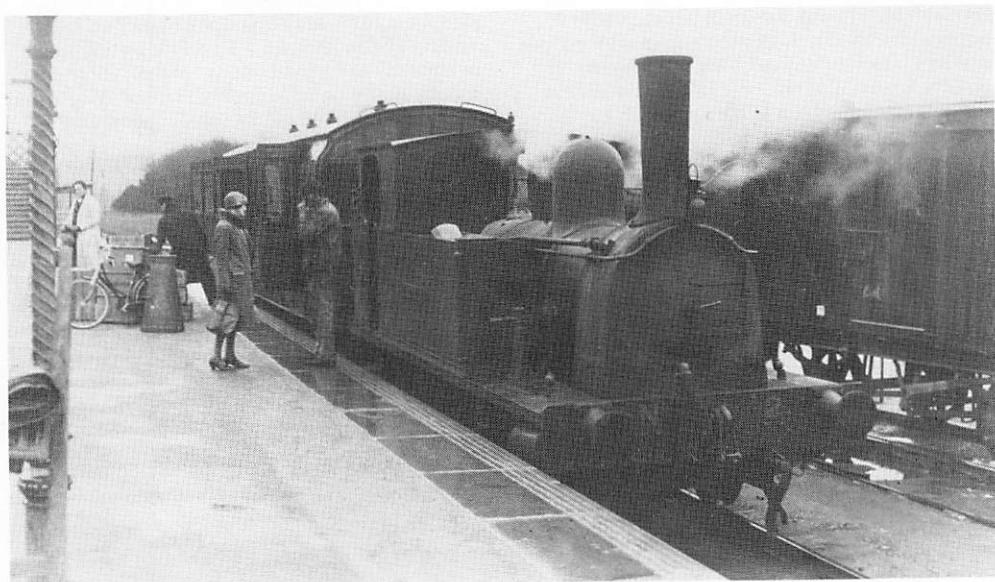
In fact Austen and the Excess Insurance Company were no strangers as the Company had been describing themselves as proprietors of the Weston Clevedon & Portishead Light Railway since placing that line in the hands of



No.1 "Tenderden" at Tenderden Town Station with Great Eastern carriages, No's 20 and 22, 16th September 1932.
(R.W. Kidner)

a receiver as early as 1909. Austen had long had dealings with the W.C.P.L.R. and had succeeded Stephens as Locomotive Superintendent on that line in 1931. Nor was Austen a stranger to the role of receiver as he was already serving in that capacity on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway

and was to play the same part on the East Kent Light Railways later in 1932. Further light was cast on the inter-relationship of the various Stephens lines in 1932 with the death in April of one of the Kent & East Sussex directors, Jeremiah MacVeagh, as he was also a director of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire, East



No.2 "Northiam" at Robertsbridge, with L. & S.W.R. 6 wheel carriage, No.9 in 1932.
(Dr. Ian C. Allen)

Kent and the West Sussex Railways. The latter concern had also gone into receivership in 1931 with a Mr. Owen Walker as receiver but with Austen taking over responsibility from Stephens as Engineer on his death.

Under receivership the Kent & East Sussex was relieved of the immediate necessity of paying off the debts that had accumulated and could turn to taking steps towards making the line pay its way. A reduced timetable was one step taken. In 1931 five trains had run on weekdays between Robertsbridge and Tenterden and four from Tenterden to Robertsbridge as well as five trains in each direction between Tenterden and Headcorn. The pattern introduced in 1932 was of three trains each way on weekdays between Tenterden and Robertsbridge and two trains each way on weekdays between Headcorn and Tenterden. Additional trains were run on Wednesday and Saturdays in the Summer as had previously been the case. Whilst these might seem drastic reductions it must be borne in mind that in February 1931 the Directors had considered abandoning passenger trains entirely and replacing them with mixed trains twice daily. Moreover there was one slight improvement with the re-introduction of two trains each way between Robertsbridge and Tenterden on Sundays during the Summer, there had been no Sunday service in 1931.

It is not possible to tell whether the continued decline in passengers over the Kent & East Sussex in 1932 was a result of the timetable reductions or would have occurred anyway. What can be seen from the Annual Reports is that although locomotive mileage only fell from 34660 in 1931 to 32062 in 1932 there was a drastic reduction in railmotor mileage from 32064 in 1931 to 12418 in 1932.

Even with the reduced timetable the Kent & East Sussex had a rolling stock problem. The yard at Rolvenden was filled with stock but little of it was serviceable. Both the Terriers and one of the 'Ilfracombes', No.7 'Rother', were out of use and likely to remain so from their derelict appearance. Both 'Hecate', the Hawthorn Leslie 0-8-0T, and the steam railmotor had not turned a wheel for years under their own power. This left only Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No.8 'Hesperus', 'Ilfracombe' No.9 'Juno' and the two original Hawthorn Leslie 2-4-0Ts 'Tenterden' and 'Northiam' whose usefulness for heavy goods traffic was limited. Of the petrol railmotors, one car of the 1923 Ford set was withdrawn in 1932 which left

the 1925 Ford set and the Sheffield set. This was ample for the lighter services but the railmotors were not popular and their use was diminishing.

The availability of carriages was even worse. The only serviceable stock seems to have been a handful of Great Eastern four-wheelers and London & South Western four and six-wheelers. The bogie carriages rebuilt from the original Rother Valley stock had long been out of use and although the 1848 Royal Saloon was still available for 1st class passengers it was hardly suitable for everyday use. It is little wonder that pleas such as the following made by Austen to the readers of the *Kent Messenger* fell on stony ground: "It is up to the general public to patronise the line in order that it may not be closed. . . . If the public are left entirely dependant on road transport they will not enjoy the same facilities they do now." What the public were beginning to think of the 'facilities' can be imagined.

July 1932 did in fact see an ingenious improvement in the rolling stock position. The 0-8-0T 'Hecate' had contributed little to the running of the line since its acquisition in 1904 apart from the rental earned when it was on hire to the East Kent from 1915 to 1919. Austen now took the opportunity of putting this white elephant to good use by exchanging it with the Southern Railway for an ex-London & South Western 0-6-0ST No. E0335, two ex-L.S.W.R. bogie carriages and a spare boiler and other spare parts for the new engine to be delivered as and when required. The arrangement also included the transfer to the Southern of three Kent & East Sussex carriages. These cannot be identified yet but were valued by the Kent & East Sussex at £366. Since the Southern recorded them as having no monetary value and expressed the intention of breaking them up after the exchange it is not really clear why they were included unless it was for book-keeping purposes.

The new locomotive arrived after a thorough overhaul in Southern black with red safety valve levers and a polished dome. Amidst the faded and rusty wrecks at Rolvenden it must have made a splendid sight. It took the number "4" left vacant by 'Hecate' but never acquired a name. Although inclined to be temperamental in later years No.4 proved a most valuable acquisition and played an important part in keeping the line going through the war years. Nationalisation in 1948 found No.4 exhausted and it was cut up at

Ashford in that year. 'Hecate' did not leave the Kent & East Sussex straight away as the Southern had difficulty moving it but when eventually overhauled it put in many years of useful shunting work at Nine Elms and Clapham Junction before being scrapped in 1950. It retained its name on the Southern and bore the number 949.

Equally cheering a sight to the waiting passengers must have been the newly arrived bogie carriages. These were hardly new, having been built in 1892, but had been refurbished before delivery. Numbered 2 and 3 on the Kent & East Sussex they were, respectively, a five-compartment brake third, Southern No. 2640, and a five-compartment brake composite, Southern No. 6413. Clear photographs of No.3 are rare and it is not certain whether this carriage ever ran on the Kent & East Sussex as a composite. In later years it appears to have run as third-class only. Inevitably the lack of covered accommodation for these carriages took its toll and No.2 required a complete repaint in 1937 but for 1932 at least they must have provided a more comfortable journey than passengers had come to expect.

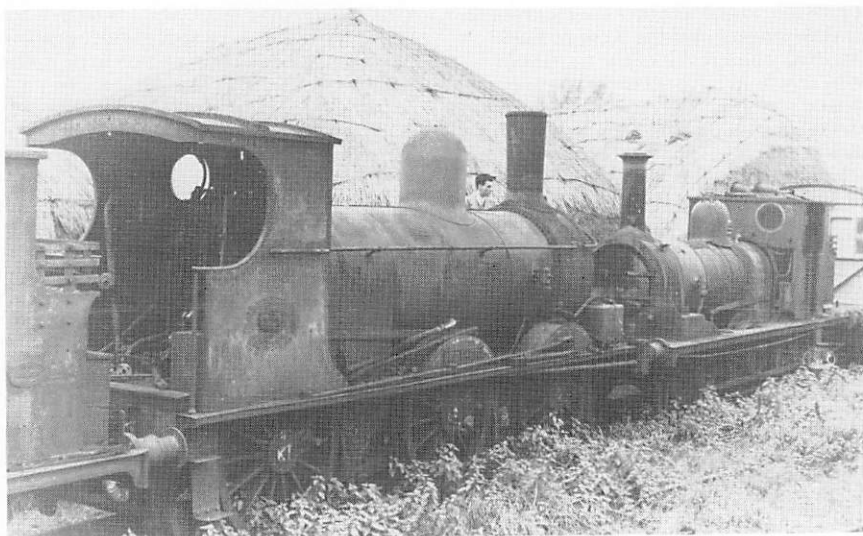
Only one other rolling stock change is definitely known to have occurred in 1932. This was the reduction of the line's stock of cattletrucks from five to four. Whether any use at all was being made of the cattletrucks at this time is doubtful

as they were far too decrepit to have been accepted over the tracks of the Southern and there seems to have been little internal movement of livestock on the line to warrant their use. Open wagons remained ten in number, though five of these were awaiting repair, and the remaining item of goods stock, the G.W.R. brakevan, was virtually derelict at Rolvenden.

Little major work seems to have been done to the track, structures or buildings of the line in 1932. Similarly parcel and goods deliveries continued to be made in the line's two carts with the aid of a hired horse. The horsebus continued to slumber in its shed. However, improvements had begun and under Austen's management the following years saw considerable improvements made to most aspects of the line's equipment.

The events of 1932 can be summarised as the regularisation of its finances, a reduction in services and the first steps towards re-equipping its rolling stock. Traffic fell but the line was being prepared to cope with increased traffic when it returned. In 1931 Sir Herbert Walker of the Southern Railway had regretted that the position of the Kent & East Sussex was hopeless; 1932 showed that all hope had not been lost.

Stephen Garrett



No.7 "Rother" and No.5 "Rolvenden" at Rolvenden in 1932. Note haystacks in the background.
(Dr. Ian C. Allen)

Book Reviews

THE WESTON, CLEVEDON AND PORTISHEAD RAILWAY by Christopher Redwood. Published by Sequoia Publishing in association with Avon Anglia, price £9.95. A limited edition of 750 copies. 160 pages of text, 16 pages of photographs plus maps and drawings.

This work has been eagerly awaited by railway enthusiasts and Col. Stephens devotees in particular. They will not be disappointed as Christopher Redwood has produced a first class volume on this West Country light railway. Much fresh information on the line has appeared, resulting from his diligent and painstaking research conducted over some nine years with many local people, including former employees and their descendants. The fortunes of the W.C. & P.R. paralleled the pattern of most light railways and branch lines of a very few successful and profitable years followed by a longer period of depression and cost cutting. It was run by Stephens and then by W.H. Austen on behalf of a receiver between 1910 and 1940. An indication of troubles ahead was given by the Board of Trade's refusal to sanction opening in 1897 until a number of unsatisfactory items were attended to, including the replacement of rotten sleepers! The chapter on accidents detailed some very "hairy happenings", sometimes with tragic outcomes. Throughout the book there are references to the people involved in the railway

at all levels of operating and management and it is this that has helped to make it a most enjoyable and informative work.

The only serious error noted is on page 121 where the author states that Col. Stephens introduced railbuses to the East Kent Railway – a line on which they never appeared. Unfortunately some of the photographs in the copy reviewed have reproduced poorly but there are useful drawings of stock at the end of the book which will appeal to modellers.

P.C.S.

TENTERDEN TOWN GUIDE Published by Tenterden Town Council. 120 pages including photographs and advertisements. Price £1.

This very interesting book was produced in 1980, the year of St. Mildred's Church Octocentenary. As well as giving a history of Tenterden there are sections on surrounding villages, country footpaths and of course the Kent & East Sussex Railway. The front and back card covers feature a water colour by Graham Clarke of the oldest part of the High Street. Normally available from Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop, the Tenterden & District Museum and stationers and bookshops in the town.

P.C.S.

Letters to the Editor

Diana

Sir – It seems the Directors of Kent & East Sussex Pleasurail Limitless have used commercial judgement again in naming the ex-B.R. restaurant car "Diana". In the July *Pullman News* the possibility of 'christening with a very topical name' was mentioned. In the August *Rooter* an apparent fait accompli appeared in a mention as "R.U. Kitchen car 'Diana' ". No, Sir!

Far better for a passenger carrying vehicle of special character, if to be named, to carry a topical name as timeless as the light railway itself: 'River Rother'.

When Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales present an heir, may the AC Cars railbus be spared a catchpenny naming!

Ospringe, Faversham, Kent. R.J.E. Bayliff

50 Years Ago

Sir – A report in the *Railway Magazine's* article 'Fifty Years Ago' states that on August 20th 1931 a Robertsbridge – Headcorn train consisted of a 'P' class 0-6-0T and an ex L.B.S.C.R. bogie brake third coach (formerly a Newhaven boat train second class) and some goods wagons.

It would seem that Southern locomotives worked over the line some years before the generally published mid-thirties.

Is it known if this stock was on trial for a possible purchase or to cover an acute shortage of stock?

Bexhill on Sea, Sussex

P. Carey

Once Upon a Time....

One gloriously sunny day over a year ago I found myself stranded in Tenterden; having missed cycling colleagues at the stated rendezvous, not knowing the town, I meandered about somewhat lost. "Steam train departure 2 p.m.," or something like that, said a white board in the High Street. So I took my first view of the K & E S R.

What a damned nice lot, I thought after my journey (bike and all) to Wittersham, I wonder if they'd like some help? Tentatively I filled in the form at the back of a timetable, convincing my spouse it was £4 (at that time) well spent. The membership secretary seemed to sit looking at my cheque for about a month, but eventually a nice big envelope came through the letterbox with my first 'Terrier' and accompanying 'Rooter'. They were consumed avidly. Ah ha, I was right, they don't just want my lifesavings – they want my body as well, and seemingly a group called the Thameside were to be the vultures, with the spring Bodiam Fair the venue. I approached 'Marcia' and Co on the 24th of May, wondering just what kind of reception I was going to get.

"Good afternoon, 75 pence, please," said the man behind the entrance gate desk.

"Well, er, I'm a member, and I was wondering . . ." Before I could say more he broke in, "I'm pleased to hear that chum, but it's still 75p," a big grin going with it.

"I was wondering if I could help?" I said tentatively. You would have thought then that I had hit him with a sleeper. He looked at me mouth open for a minute till he realised, yes, he had heard right.

"Come this way Sir," he said, nearly embracing me. "Charlie, Charlie, where the hell are you? There's a bloke here come to HELP. The 75p had vanished from his mind.

Now, me being of unknown quality to them, they played safe.

"Could you man that gate, and keep cars from going in or blocking it, do you think?"

"Sure," I replied, feeling rather menial without even an orange vest. However, they must have been impressed by the ten pence pieces I cajoled the public to put into the 'donations gratefully received' box by my gate. "... allow me madam to unfasten this horrible rusty gatebolt for you . . ." and "... mind the mud luv . . ." seemed to help. 'They' next suggested I relieve people of a few more official 10p up at

the Welling & District model railway rides for children. "... that's it dearie, sit on it like a horse. There you are, I'll put your ticket down your wellie' then you'll still have it when you get home . . ." I didn't even have a hat this time, to go with the ticket machine.

"Jock", ('they'd' cottoned on to my nationality by the second day), would you relieve one of the entrance gate crew?" Here it was THE big accolade – dealing in 75p's.

Sitting down beside a friendly sort, who said: "What's your name?" "Iain," I said. "So is mine, where are you from?" "Edinburgh", I said. "So am I". Soon I cottoned on to the 'flexible' admissions, and us 'Jocks' made up our own spell to go with the tickets proffered and price asked.

So ended my first stints with the K & E S R, to whom I hope I had been of some help. I know I got a lot, lot more out of it than the couple of 'staff' train rides. But each day, I dearly wished I could have convinced quicker the kind lady who was dishing out really handsome hot meals, that 'workers first' DID include me!

Postscript: This introduction to 'They' was my first chance to observe our enthusiasts at work, and I pass on to those ears who should hear it, the public's appreciation of not only the sight of the brakevan guard whirling his brakewheel as rivulets of sweat streaked his face, but also in contrast the serenity of the dapper-suited gent driving the diesel railbus, the impeccable actions of the signalling crews, the soft entreating voice of the 'station announcer' with a good PA system, the nesting starlings on the station roof edge, being fed by mother bird in between the engulging chuff-chuffs of 'Marcia', but also too, of Charlie who was holding it all together. As one old lady said to me, "He should have a ringmaster's costume on – he's got the figure for it . . . !"

So much for the Thameside Circus.

Iain Pringle

Dick Harffrey

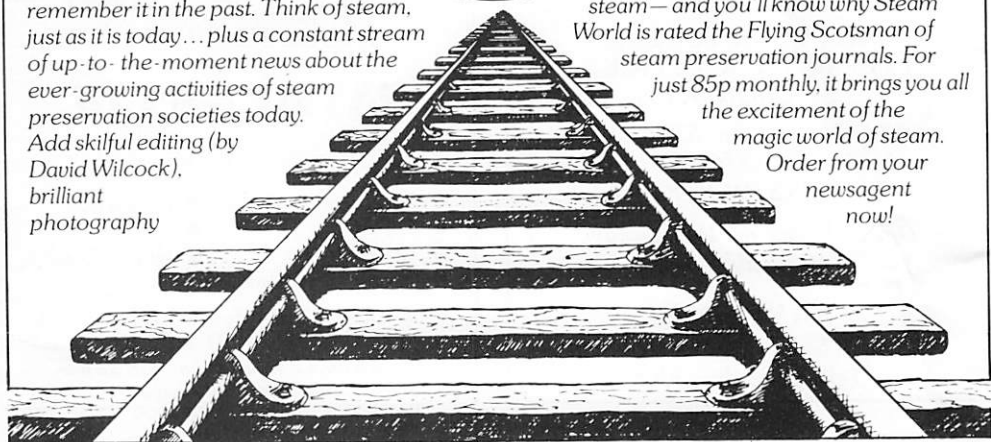
It is with much regret that we have to record the death of Richard Harffrey, on 8th November 1981 aged 85 years. Dick Harffrey was formerly stationmaster at Wingham, Canterbury Road, on the East Kent Light Railway. He was interviewed for the *Tenterden Terrier* by Mark Yonge in the Spring 1976 issue.

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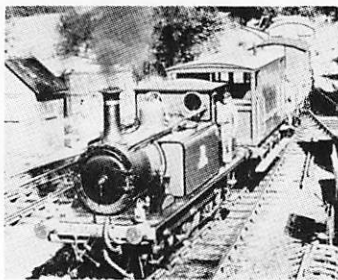
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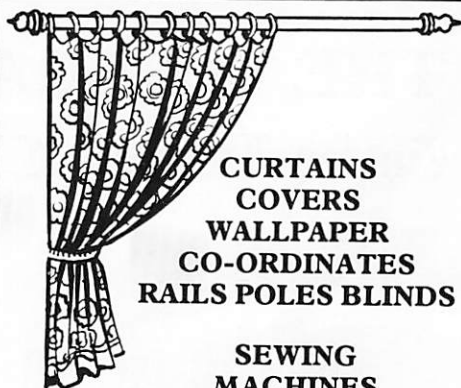
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At Last



Yes, it's back, or to be more truthful, a replacement has appeared. After some years and repeated requests by the Tenterden Railway Company Secretariat and representations from Tenterden Town Council, a new "Station Road" sign was fixed to the wall at the top of the road at the end of November. Older members will recall that the original sign disappeared when the fire station was demolished and the road widened. In these days when so many Station Roads in country towns have either a boarded up building or a flattened site to justify the name, it was particularly galling to have an active station in an "unsigned" Station Road – Welcome Back!

P.C.S.

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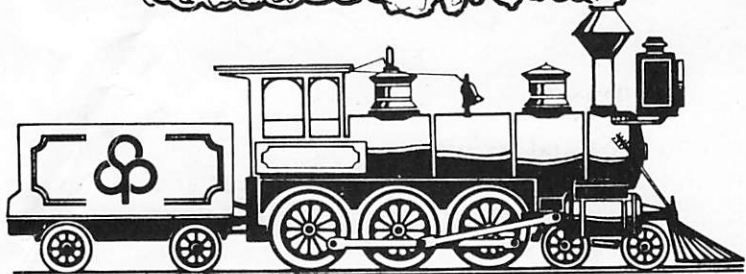
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