

# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 39

Spring 1986



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

# The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered charity 262481

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# Bodiam Castle

*A National Trust Property*



The Castle is open every day from April till October, but weekdays only November to March, between 10.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. or sundown if earlier. Closed over Christmas. Built in 1385 as a defence against the French, ruined in the Civil War, it still has a magical effect on every visitor. Inside one tower an audio-visual display describes life in a castle 600 years ago, and in another, on video, a warrior is being dressed in a magnificent suit of armour. There is a café in the car park. *About 500 yards from the K. & E.S.R. station.*  
Telephone Staplecross 436.

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## Great Dixter



*Sidney Conroy*

This 500 year old manor hall is open every afternoon (except ordinary Mondays) from 28 March to 12 October, also weekends October 18/19 and 25/26 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. (last admission 5 p.m.). The gardens, well known for the wide variety of plants is open earlier at 11 a.m. on May 25/26, Sundays in July & August, also August 25th. Some of the unusual plants have won awards at the Royal Horticultural Society shows in London. *1½ miles from the K. & E.S.R. station at Northiam; follow the signposts in the village for a very pleasant visit.*

Telephone Northiam 3160.

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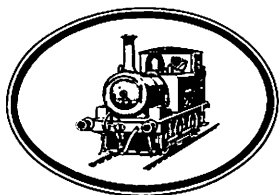
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# The Tenterden Terrier



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## FRONT COVER

*U.S.A. No. 30065 with new identity and  
headboard approaching Willow Curve with a  
Sunday lunchtime Wealden Pullman on 10th  
November 1985.* [Brian Stephenson]

## Editorial

### Then and Now

It is hard to believe that the last freight train traversed the Kent & East Sussex line nearly 25 years ago. Tenterden, then as now, a small town, with its wide tree-lined High Street and Georgian buildings – the jewel in the crown of the Weald. The Railway then, truncated and shorn of its passenger service, an anachronism which had survived the 1940s more on grounds of political expediency than for its usefulness as a common carrier. And now, as a charity serving the community not only as a thriving tourist attraction, but as a protection for the very survival of Tenterden itself. A natural barrier, encompassing the Northern boundary of the Town against unwanted property development in an area of outstanding natural beauty, for ever.

\*\*\*\*\*

Elsewhere in the magazine is advance notice of an exhibition of relics relating to the East Kent Light Railway and Kent coalfields. Archivist, John Miller, would be pleased to have the loan of suitable relics for display purposes during the summer period.

# Lineside News

Compiled by Paul Sutton

*The question of locomotive liveries has always been a hot potato on preserved railways throughout the country, the K. & E.S.R. not excepted.*

*The writer makes no apology for appreciating ex B. R. motive power being outshopped in nationalised colours. The reappearance of A1X 32670 in 1984 and U.S.A. 30065 in late 1985 was a sight for sore eyes and surely has been a contributory factor to the excellent increase in passenger numbers. There is no doubt that many of our visitors come on a "nostalgia trip" and if they are aged between 25 and 50, the locomotives they recall hauling their trains are those painted in the various British Railways liveries used between 1948 and 1968. Ringing the changes on locomotive colours is a very marketable exercise; the only pity is that we have but 5 ex "main line" to choose from.*

## Locomotive Mileages

No.	Name	1985	1984	Total since 1974
3 (2670)	Bodiam	1973	952	4,425
10	Sutton	1608	758	8,535
22				
(30065)	Maunsell	766	1130	9,912
23	Holman F Stephens	914	1490	12,381
24	William H Austen	1570	1076	9,601
25	Northiam	1022	983	6,456
42	Hunslet 0-6-0 DM	—	302	3,369
43	Fowler 0-4-0 DM	347	518	1,239
45	Vulcan 0-6-0 DM	78	749	827
	TOTAL FOR YEAR	8278	7958	
133	Taylor & Hubbard 10T Steam Crane			142 hours
145	Grafton 10T Steam Crane			209 hours

## Locomotives

For the second year in succession, six locomotives were in passenger service. As will be noted from the accompanying chart, 32670 recorded the highest mileage, followed by No. 10 "Sutton" and No. 25 "William H. Austen". However No. 23 is still, just, the only locomotive whose total figures since reopening exceed the 10,000 mark. Total steam mileage for the year was 7,853 compared with 6,389 for 1984, an increase of 23%. However, the diesels figure dropped dramatically, returning only 425 miles compared with the previous year when they recorded a total of 1569 miles.

A new activity for the closed period this year has been the rostering of crews for locomotive cleaning; areas warranting special attention are those between the frames where an

accumulation of the season's grime can build up if it is not dealt with regularly.

No. 32670 had its boiler removed in January so that the foundation ring rivets can be renewed. It should be back in service by the middle of the year looking, we hope, as immaculate as ever.

No. 10 "Sutton" is stored and will require a new brick arch before re-entering service. There is also a weak spring which will need attending to. No. 24 has passed its annual visual exam, but some work will be required at the end of the year, necessitating a boiler lift. The opportunity will then be taken to replace the ashpan and smokebox, using the new door which was fettled and fitted by Martin Weeks and Richard Stannard early in the year.

No. 25 "Northiam" is having a five-yearly boiler exam before the start of the season and a smokebox repaint. The Norwegian's tender tank requires some further work before it can be considered complete.

Bob Forsythe and Lawrence Donaldson have been making steady progress on the motion of No. 26 "Linda". It's good to see Fred Fisher back on the Railway; he lost no time in wielding his scrapers and paint brushes on "Linda's" wheels and very good they look in their Brunswick green topcoat.

The P Class continues to make steady progress, with all work to the motion now complete and, as a result, the frame was taken for a slow trundle along the line just to ensure that all was well. Although the rebuild of No. 11 is a priority job, progress has been reduced recently as labour was switched to work on 32670.

Towards the end of last year No. 22, the "U.S.A." was repainted and outshopped in its old livery of unlined black and early style B.R. crest. A new smokebox nameplate 30065 and shed plate 71-I (Southampton docks) completed the transformation and very impressive it looks. Rumour has it that it may well undergo another slight visual change before being withdrawn at the end of the year for a 10-year boiler exam. A number of new firebars need fitting and attention to the rocking grate, generally, is required before re-entering traffic.

No. 23 still sports its camouflage livery, which seems to be lasting extremely well; it was originally expected to stay like that for only 6 months. This must say something for the skill of

the painters as well as the quality of the paint! On the mechanical side it has been fitted with new piston rings and remetalled slipper blocks which should mean that it will be running much more quietly this season. Like No. 22 it is being withdrawn at the end of 1986 when a 10 yearly boiler exam becomes due.

Loco shed space has been at an even greater premium of late; however, "Ford" No. 40, now being weatherproofed, has been parked outside and this has eased the situation. The Fowler 0-4-0 Diesel has been withdrawn from the disposal list and will remain on the Railway for the foreseeable future; consequently the Diesel Department has fitted it with an electric start and charging system. This is a vast improvement on the old hydraulic pump system which was worn out.

The only ex B.R. 0-6-0 diesel available at the moment is the Vulcan built 04 class No. 45. It has a 10 m.p.h. maximum speed restriction, as it can offer only 3 out of its 5 gears for the moment. Progress on "Drewry" No. 47 has been slow mainly because of lack of shed space and labour.

The bodywork on the B.T.H. diesel No. 40

being almost complete, attention is now focused on the more interesting phase of the project, namely the commissioning of the engine, generator, auxiliaries and traction equipment.

The engine has been subjected to thorough and detailed checking by John Pearson with fuel and oil filters cleaned, fuel system primed and batteries charged. On Sunday 5th January, for the first time in about ten years, the engine was turned over with batteries motoring the generator. Initially it fired on one cylinder, then three, and finally after some minor attention, all 6 cylinders were firing as required. The braking equipment, including the compressor and exhausters, are now being checked prior to the traction equipment functional tests. We must be able to stop before we decide to go!

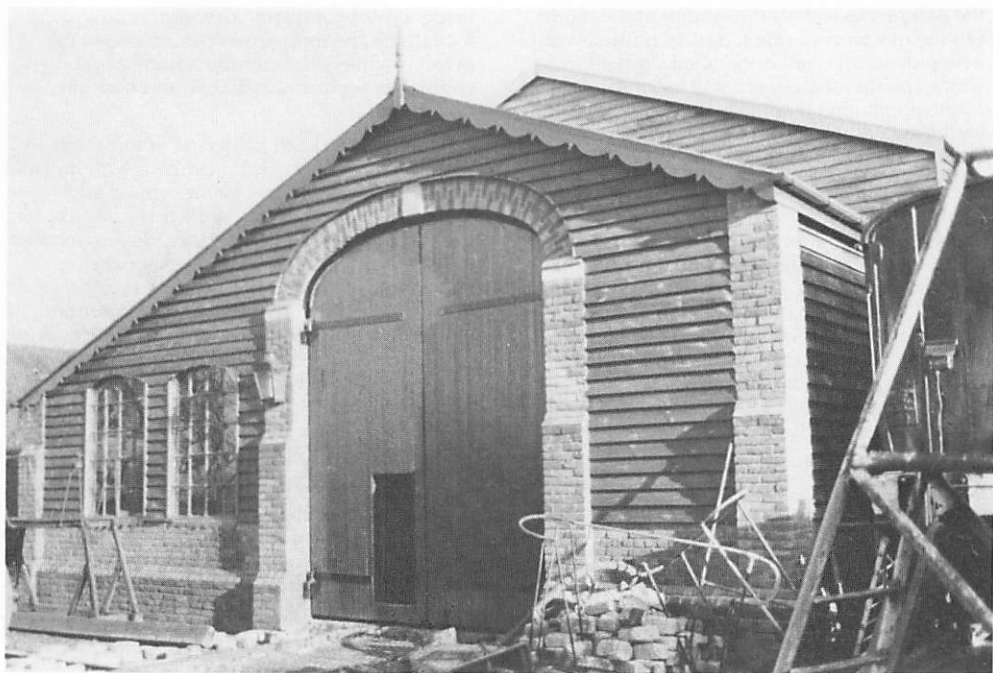
The locomotive will later be involved in road tests, to assist in the running in of motor bearings and axlebox bearings. Following this will be load testing with rolling stock and "tweaking" the engine adjustments, allowing the commissioning team to evaluate the locomotive's abilities.

Finally the commercial and marketing



*The boiler from the K. & W. V.R. Standard Class 4 Tank, No. 80002 sits on the G.N.R. 20T wagon awaiting attention from Norman Payne, 12th January 1986*

*[Paul Sutton]*



*The completed southern end of the Carriage & Wagon workshop. The granite setts await laying, 12th January 1986* [Paul Sutton]

departments are giving thought to a special day to celebrate No. 40's return to service.

### **Carriage and Wagon**

Work was concentrated on "squaring up" the workshop before the end of 1985. The underside of the loft has been fitted with *gyproc* insulation board as have the shed ends and a small remaining area on one of the side walls. Many thanks go to Tom Turk for providing free transport and also to Mr. May of British Gypsum who arranged for us to purchase damaged boards at a very good price. In the loft, a small office has been constructed and a locker room established. Lighting is being progressively installed in the storage area. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, a methodical sorting and tidying of the workshop floor has created much more working space.

S.R. bogie van No. 2339, coded GBL by the S.R., was "shopped" during Christmas week for body repairs and painting. A new roof canvas has been fitted, glazing re-bedded and the body sides repaired and made watertight. It has been painted in light green livery with Southern Railway lettering and number. This

vehicle is used for the sale of railway relics at Tenterden and is known as the Collectors' Coach. After the siding at the back of Tenterden platform had been relaid, it was moved to the space vacated by the S & T vehicle.

On January 4th the workshop was shunted and for the first time it was possible to stable four bogie coaches. During the three-month closed season work is being concentrated on light body repairs and repainting the fleet of Mk Is. Work also continues on Maunsell BSO 54. Progress on the G.E.R. six-wheeler remains steady with compartment partitions being reinstated.

The two ballast hoppers have been maintained with particular attention to the doors and three flat wagons with broken floors have been repaired.

### **Building/Tenterden Site Development**

Although work on the foundations and oversite was due to begin last October it did not, for various good reasons, commence until the beginning of December. The contract was let to Messrs. Antonmanor Ltd. of Tenterden, who gave us a very professional job, with all their

work completed and the site tidied within the agreed five days.

We erected the timber frame side walls by Christmas and despite the appalling weather, this was completed in only seven working days. The roof was pitched during January and quotations are being sought for having the roof felted, battened and tiled professionally. It is hoped to commission the building during the 1986 season.

Thanks go to the Clearance Department who have assisted greatly in this project, it being their last building venture before returning to clearance of the line.

### Catering

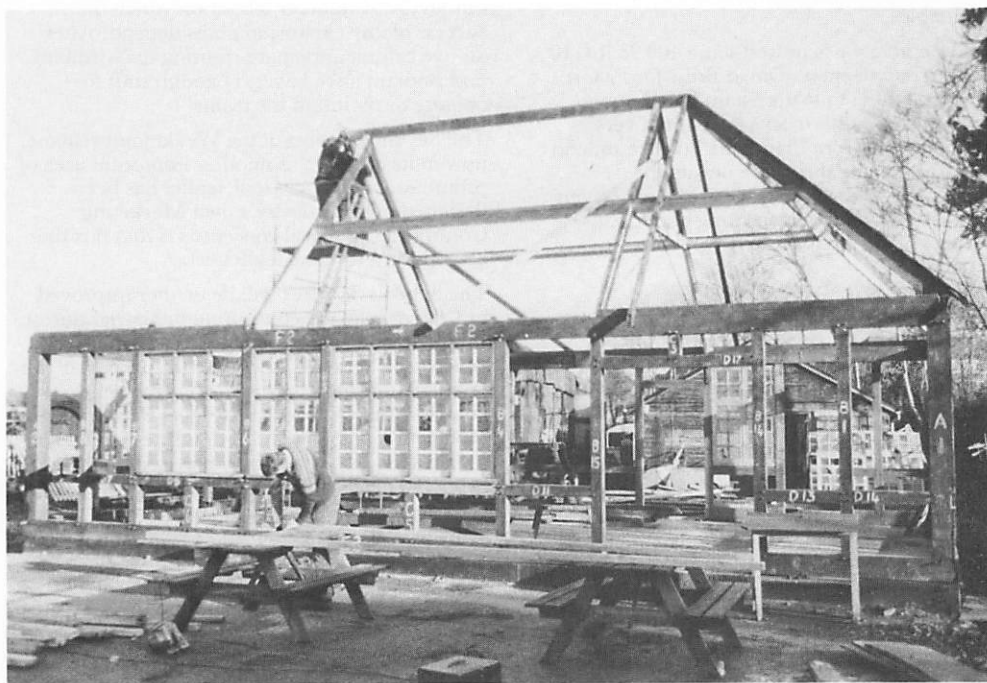
The optimistic comments in the last edition of *The Tenterden Terrier* proved fully justified with gross takings up by 43% to £19,808 compared with the 1984 figure of £13,879. The on-train lunch and birthday party boxes have proved to be very successful and generated an extra £850 of income. The hot soup served during the Winter was greatly appreciated and another innovation last year – filter coffee – proved to be much more popular than the previous Maxpax.

Conversely, ice cream sales melted away from £1,214 in 1984 to £777. However, this only reflects and confirms the fact that the summer was soup and rolls weather rather than knickerbocker glory time! New equipment acquired for this season will enable tea and coffee to be served to passengers at their seats in the trains.

### Clearance

Most of the Autumn and Winter months so far have seen the clearance gang continuing to assist the Building Department with the erection of the bus station building. Hawthorn hedging has been planted on the boundary with the Rogersmead development at Tenterden. The station site boundary with Mercers garage is being similarly treated and when completed a screening hedge will hide this eyesore.

The excellent results of the Wildernesse School's activities in clearance work on the Rother Bridge to Northiam Station section of the extension project can easily be seen, but it must be a bit depressing for Frank Tullet and some of the longer serving members of the school team to see the undergrowth flourishing



*Pitching the roof on the old Bus Station Office, Tenterden, 12th January, 1986*

*[Paul Sutton]*



on land which they cleared just a year or so ago. As a matter of some priority we must get the track relayed so that adequate spraying can control the trackside growth.

The regular workers are eager to return to clearance operations soon. There is some work to be carried out on the Oxney Straight, Tenterden car park and Northiam Station, plus, of course, the extension. Telephone Allan Tebboth on his new number, Tenterden 3011, for details of work programmes.

### **Permanent Way**

The major task during the closed period was the relaying around the Oxney curve and continuing to the small bridge over the flood culvert.

Once services recommence, activities will be concentrated on the Willow Curve to Popes Cottage section where much packing and aligning is required. If the work holds good, then the speed restriction can be lifted.

However, the main requirement at the moment is labour; the more people that can help, the easier all the tasks become. So come on, join the Permanent Way Department and make proceeding to Northiam that much more attainable.

In December we acquired some 400 95 lb/110 lb. concrete sleepers. David Brailsford's lorry delivered them to Wittersham Road in two days. Two fork lift trucks were hired very competitively from Plant and Tools to unload them, and while they were on site the opportunity was taken to tidy up and sort out the yard – involving restacking about 1,000 sleepers of different sorts!

### **Marketing**

1985 ended up as the most successful ever for our railway and demonstrated that our Marketing policy, formulated over 2 years, is indeed correct. There remain some areas of concern which are receiving attention in 1986.

Planning of the 1986 timetable began in August, soon after Mark Toynbee returned from honeymoon! As a result, it was printed in October, many months before most other tourist attractions have their information ready. The aim was to have our timetable in the hands of tour and coach operators before our competitors and we succeeded! We have not been attracting our market share of this business and a concerted effort is being made in the coming year to put this right. An inclusive day tour has been conceived, in conjunction with

Tenterden Vineyards and local tea shops, and details of this have been sent to more than 900 operators, with promising feed-back. Potential clients also receive a visit from a representative of the railway in an effort to turn their enquiry into a hard booking. This is time-consuming work, of necessity undertaken between Monday and Friday in working hours and shows another side of Marketing, often not appreciated.

The Marketing budget in 1986 is larger than in 1985 and it is hoped to turn this display of optimism from the Board into an increase in passengers of 7%. Any upturn in visitors is good news for the shop and buffet whose takings are very closely tied in with our overall success. Indeed the Marketing budget covers not only our passenger train operations, but all our other trading activities.

Attention has been turned to our display material which has not been updated or expanded recently. A sizeable sum is to be spent on improving this with new photographs and associated display boards suitable for fetes, shop windows, etc.

A new membership leaflet has been produced which is just the first salvo in a battle to increase our level of volunteer labour on which the success of any expansion plans depend. After all, we cannot anticipate running to Northiam and Bodiam if we haven't enough staff to operate or maintain the trains!

The Seven Wonders of the Weald joint scheme, now in its 6th year, is another important area of promotion and a new-look leaflet has been designed by the railway's own Marketing Committee. General consensus is that it is the best Seven Wonders leaflet yet.

The Schools Services will be further improved in 1986 despite the continuing industrial unrest. Woolwich Building Society have again most generously agreed to continue to sponsor all the publicity for these, saving us several hundred pounds. A new Teacher's Project Pack has been produced to allow more in-depth research to be undertaken, especially by older students. Kent Schools Television Service has been commissioned to make an educational video for us which will also be shown as an additional visitor attraction in the Study Centre. It had been hoped that the Woolwich would pay for this production also but in the end the cost is to be met from our own resources. The video will be narrated by T.V. personality Andrew Gardner.

Once again, the annual appeal is to all members



*Resting between duties, No. 23 being admired by two cadets from Tenterden A.C.F. on Poppy Appeal Day, 3rd November 1985*  
[Mike Esau]

to do their bit in publicising the railway – distributing leaflets, display cards, etc. Without your help it will not happen! Contact Mark Toynbee for supplies of material.

### **Museum and Archives**

Many thanks to Brian Stephenson's wife Mickey, who kindly donated four steel filing cabinets for archive storage at the end of last year. John Jeffries has now deposited the 45 lever arch files referred to in issue No. 37 of *The Tenterden Terrier* with the archivist, who has had to have floor to ceiling shelves built in his spare bedroom to house the collection, which has now grown to 56 files!

We are most grateful to Peter Thomsett of Burgess Hill who has given a beautifully detailed 4 mm scale (E.M.) model of the East Kent Railway station at Wingham-Canterbury Road set in the 1930s. The diorama is complete with perspex cover and built-in lighting and will feature in the "East Kent" exhibition mentioned elsewhere.

### **Signals and Telegraph**

Plans of the Rolvenden signalling scheme were approved by the Board at their meeting in December. These will now be submitted to the Department of Transport for their approval, possibly in a slightly amended form.

The main activity over the Winter months was the restoration of equipment for the Rolvenden signalling installation. Effort has been concentrated on the cranks and wheels required

for the signalbox leadaways as well as on seven S.R. dummy shunt signals. Good progress has also been made on the construction of the supporting ironwork for the lever frame and leadaways. Over the Christmas to New Year period Ian Legg and Paul Vidler drilled over 240 one inch diameter holes in four girders, using the radial drill in the Rolvenden machine shop. These are required to secure the pedestal wheels and cranks of the internal signal box leadaway.

Once again, Chris Lowry has been in charge of clearance parties which have been keeping the overhead telephone wire route between Northiam and Bodiam clear of vegetation. Graeme Richards has taken over responsibility for routine maintenance of Signal and Telegraph equipment and recently has provided new discs for the S.R. shunt signals at Tenterden. In December, the two Up Home signal arms at Wittersham Road were replaced with new arms of S.R. pattern to match the spectacle castings.

In November, members of the department travelled to New Cross Gate S & T Depot to collect a quantity of surplus cable. Thanks are due, once again, to Kevin and Sue Jarvis for transport. Some of this will be used to replace the existing multicore material between Tenterden station and the Home signal as it does not have sufficient capacity for the future expansion in the number of circuits required. A further supply of cable will be collected from Three Bridges S & T Depot soon. Department

members will also be visiting the closed station at Selsdon to recover redundant signalling equipment, including two lattice signal posts and a quantity of concrete troughing which will be used to hold the new cable to the Home signal at Tenterden.

Thanks are due to Richard De Coverly for the donation of a pair of enamel level crossing gate targets. These were originally in use on the gates at Beltring and Branbridges Halt on the Paddock Wood—Maidstone West line.

During December and January Nick Wellington fitted out Wittersham Road Box with Sugg gas lamps; two angled ones to illuminate the instrument board and one 3 burner – as shown in the photograph – to look after the desk, notice board and sink, etc. At the same time further lamps were fitted in the station building, coinciding with the internal alterations which took place to enlarge the passenger area. Later on a lamp will be fixed on the corner of the box nearest to the road and another one will be mounted on a post at the edge of the flower bed behind the path and near to the signal box steps.

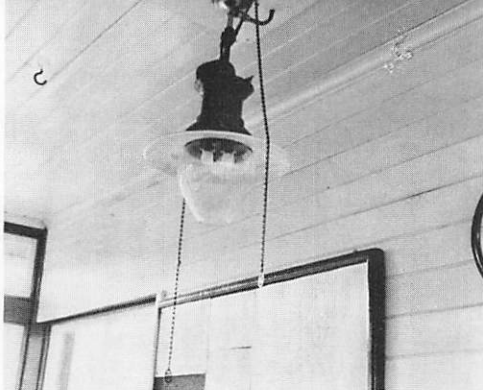
### Stations

Building the new buffet will mean that the surrounding area at the west end of Tenterden Station site, hitherto not seen by our visitors, must be tidied up. The Mess Coach is being repainted, fencing repaired and accumulated rubbish carried away in skips.

Buffet, Pullman Car 'Theodora', is to be repainted and generally smartened up before Easter to improve the visual aspect of the vehicle; though no more than a cosmetic exercise, it will help check any deterioration in the coach.

Station Master Mark Toynbee has struck a deal with Pullman Roster Clerk Richard Osborn that for every station seat repainted by Richard, Mark will work on 2 Wealden Pullmans in the coming year. With 11 seats on the station, Mark hopes that Richard won't be too enthusiastic or else he isn't going to be at home on many Saturday evenings in the summer!

The Summers family have sadly had to give up caring for the gardens at Tenterden because of ill-health. Their efforts are going to be sorely missed, although they will still tend the hanging baskets and flower tubs. The Coombs family from Orpington will continue to visit once a month but more hands are urgently needed to



*The Wm. Sugg 3-burner gas lamp, newly installed in the Box at Wittersham Road, 12th January 1986*  
[Paul Sutton]

look after the gardens on a day-to-day basis. Have we anyone willing? Please contact Mark Toynbee. The last job carried out by the Summers was the planting of 1,000 wallflowers kindly donated by member John Penighetti from Sutton Valence. These will provide a magnificent display.

At Rolvenden, a new Booking Office is to be installed and the existing hut, really too wide for the platform, will be moved to Tenterden to serve as a new ice cream kiosk.

Last Autumn we acquired the former footbridge from Robertsbridge, the erstwhile Southern junction of the K. & E.S.R. with B.R. on the Tonbridge-Hastings line. It was supplied and erected by Messrs. Eastwood Swinger & Co. of Derby in 1894 at a cost of £211.25p. At the moment it is stored out near the waterworks siding and it is rumoured that it will eventually be re-erected at Northiam. Many thanks to Neil Rose for supplying the information on its early life.

### Special Exhibition – Advance Notice

To mark the 75th Anniversary of the opening of the East Kent Railway a special exhibition will be mounted in the Tenterden & District Museum from 12th July to 7th September 1986 inclusive. The exhibition will illustrate the history of the East Kent Railway and its close association with the Kent coalfield. Further details will be given in the next edition of *The Tenterden Terrier* at the beginning of July.

### News from Area Groups

**Ashford.** The two events that Ashford Group is involved in at the start of 1986 are interconnected. Saturday March 8th is the tenth Model Railway Exhibition to be held at The Centrepiece, Bank Street, Ashford, and it should be a better show than ever.



*The footbridge at Robertsbridge, donated to the Railway last year. No. 32678 stands alongside with a mixed train of impressive proportions in the early '50s. [Tenterden Railway Co.]*

The profit from this will be put towards the second project, which is being run in conjunction with the Carriage and Wagon Department, to rescue two South Eastern & Chatham 4-wheel coach bodies. When discovered they had been cocooned inside a bungalow in Ashford for over 60 years. The owner, Mr. John Mills of Lakehurst Ltd, who intends redeveloping the site shortly, gave them to us when the K. & E.S.R. board agreed to their coming to Tenterden. The demolition of the structure and removal of the relics was scheduled for February/March. What is so exciting is the state of preservation of these coaches as they have been completely enclosed in weatherboard, properly roofed over and raised off the ground on brick piers. They retain their doors, windows and original paintwork. One, numbered 2947, has been identified as a four-compartment, second class built at Ashford Works in July 1901 and the other is a brake third. Two other coaches used to form the bungalow have been cut about, but will provide many useful spare parts. More details will be given in the next issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*.

A visit to the North Woolwich Great Eastern Society Museum is being arranged in conjunction with the Maidstone Group on Wednesday 25th June, and a mid-week outing to the Dockland Light Railway is also being organised. The programme of monthly meetings is given in *The Rooter* and all are welcome to British Rail Social Club, Beaver Road, Ashford, on the third Wednesday in each month at 7.30 p.m.

**Croydon and Sutton.** The New Year got off to a fine start with slide shows being requested by various organisations, the first one taking place on 21st January when an Addiscombe Literary Group were the interested audience. If anyone knows of a potential audience for the slide talk, entitled 'The Kent & East Sussex Railway -

Past, Present & Future', then please inform Allan Sinclair who will forward them a pro forma letter outlining the details. The amount of interest shown in these talks is enormous and remember, every member of an audience is a potential visitor to Tenterden.

The first meeting of the year on 28th January was held, as usual, at 'The Ship', in Croydon and a well attended audience played host to Graham Smith who gave his evocatively titled talk - 'The Dying Embers of Southern Steam'. It is always pleasant to see and welcome new members to the meetings and it is particularly refreshing to welcome those from other Area Groups who visit us.

One of the primary tasks at the start of the year was to re-organise and intensify the annual publicity campaign. There is no doubt that the Group's activities in this respect, over the past two years have contributed greatly to the increased passenger figures, but much more needs to be done if we are to tap even deeper into the enormous potential in the Greater London Area. Contacts are being established with R.A.I.L. - Railway Associations In London, to see if membership of this 'Clearing House' of London Area Groups from many of the country's preserved lines and similar organisations can be of mutual benefit.

John Huntley's Archive Film shows have recommenced at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon, and the Group's 'Brick Wall' Display has attracted many customers to the modest bookstall stocked with goods from Col. Stephens Railway Shop.

Whilst these events cater, mainly, for the enthusiast there is invariably someone who requests a talk or further information as a result of the display. Unfortunately, it has not yet been possible to take the Group's adopted project into the Carriage & Wagon Shed. This is, of course, the GER 6 wheel coach on which

work still progresses steadily due to the efforts of a few dedicated members, in particular Clive Grewcock and Bob Clifford. It is hoped that in the future, it may be possible to work under cover when perhaps more people will assist with the restoration work.

The group is planning a photographic competition which it is anticipated will take place in July and will be open to all members. There will be three categories: black & white print, colour print and colour transparency. Details of this and future meetings can be obtained from Allan Sinclair on 01-777-8025.

**Maidstone.** 1985 was once again a very successful year for fund raising. Over £1,900 was raised, of which £1,689 was contributed by waste paper sales. A massive 58 tons was sold but it was a little disappointing to see, every month, a decline in the price paid to us for this commodity; hopefully 1986 will see an upturn. A grand total of £10,661 has now been raised by the area group since its founding in 1976. Of last year's receipts, a further £138 has been given to the bus station project, making a total so far of £1,000; to the B. T. H. Ford No. 40 restoration £141 and £94 to servicing the paper trailer, helping it to pass its annual M.O.T. test.

Not many people seem to realise that unloading the wastepaper usually takes place bi-monthly

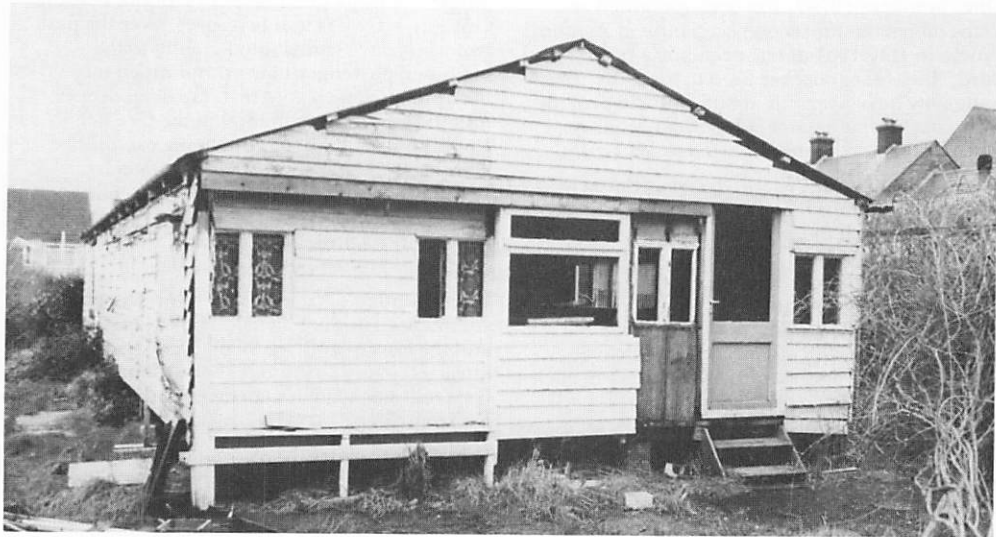
on a Saturday morning, taking on average, seven people about 2½ hours to move, all by hand! Any more volunteers?

As mentioned in the last edition of *The Tenterden Terrier*, there have been some changes in the Group's committee: Jolyon Vickers and Paul Gray were recently welcomed by the new Chairman, Colin Edwards. Paul has taken over responsibility for the group's publicity and his telephone number for any snippets of news is Maidstone 677587.

On 23rd/24th November the Maidstone members attended the Chatham Dockyard steam enthusiasts' weekend. £56 was taken on the sales stand on these two very cold and damp days. A request to the Maidstone office of the Woolwich Building Society has resulted in an offer to publicise the railway in their windows at Maidstone and ten other branches within the area.

A warm welcome awaits members and non-members at the Kimberly-Clark Social Club, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, on the last Wednesday of each month at 7.30 p.m.

**Sussex.** The Group had a busy run up to the end of last year with attendances at Model Railway exhibitions in Eastbourne and Brighton and also a Collectors Fair in the former. These all helped to increase the turnover for the Group and at the A.G.M. in



*The Ashford Area Group's 4w S.E.C.R. coaches in disguise. A guard's duck can just be discerned on the left hand corner, 14th January, 1986*

[Paul Sutton]



December the funds were showing a healthy balance of £900 for use at Northiam.

Work at Northiam has progressed with a cattle grid being fitted on the level crossing on the A.28 and two more to be built on the accommodation crossing towards the Rother Bridge. The station building roof has been repainted and new guttering fitted to the coalyard side. Work is also in hand to make a new door for this side as the existing one is more metal plates than wood! Johnnie Baker and friends have acquired the up platform shelter from Stonegate station on the Tunbridge Wells - Hastings line. This structure, built by the S.E.R. in 1851, is now at Northiam awaiting erection on the second platform side. The team have also been assisting the Thameside Group in recovering track from Paddock Wood.

A full programme of meetings at Westham is underway. The A.G.M. was followed by an excellent talk from Nigel Menzies on his steam trip to East Germany and Poland.

Encouragingly numbers of people attending are gradually increasing and the highest number to date listened to Robin White's talk on the West Somerset Railway in January. Westham Village Hall is the place to be on the second Tuesday each month at 7.30 p.m.

**Thameside.** On Saturday 16th November 1985 a few group members together with some of the S & T Department helped with the removal of the waiting shelter from Stonegate station on the Hastings Line.

On Tuesday 3rd December 1985 20 members went on a visit to London's Post Office Railway, meeting at six o'clock outside the main post office; the tour took about 3 hours. All those who took part enjoyed themselves and thanks must go to Andrew Webb for organising it.

The beginning of 1986 saw a busy time for the Thameside group with most of its members involved in various projects on the railway, some helped with the removal of No. 3's boiler for repair and many were involved with the track removal at Paddock Wood.

On 8th April another railway quiz will be held with the Weald Area Group at the Crown public house in Tonbridge High Street.

There are plans to open Bodiam Station on the late May Bank Holiday for the sale of refreshments, books, bric-a-brac, souvenirs and pump trolley rides, etc.

**Weald.** No notes were received from this group.

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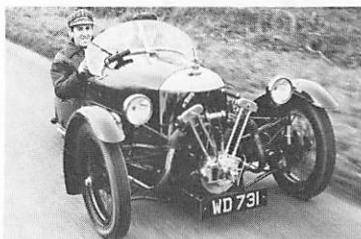
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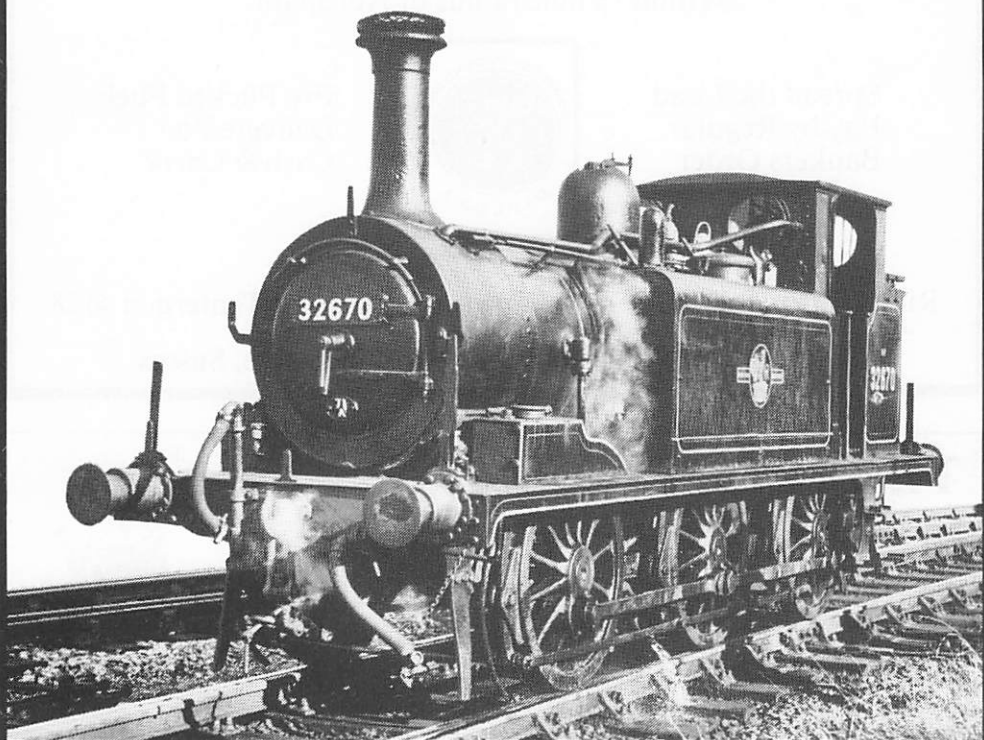
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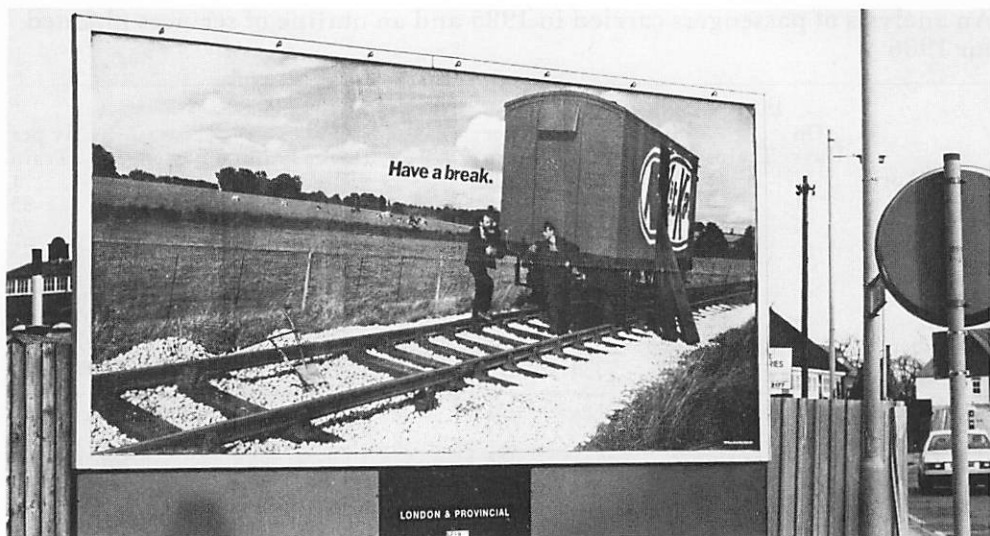
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*Last October the Railway was the setting for a new poster advertising campaign for a well-known brand of chocolate biscuit. Ex L.M.S. 12T ventilated van was repainted in a suitable scarlet and white livery and filming took place at Orpins Crossing, with chocolate sleepers in the track!*

*[Brian Stephenson/Mark Toynbee]*





# Tickets Please!

An analysis of passengers carried in 1985 and an outline of services planned for 1986

1984					1985				
	Op Days	Trains	Passengers	Av per Train		Op Days	Trains	Passengers	Av per Train
March/April	11	43	4639	108		10	45	3189	71
May	11	50	3631	73		10	55	4684	85
June	17	68	5904	87		19	72	5644	78
July	19	82	5533	67		19	87	6519	75
August	31	132	9492	72		31	156	12313	79
September	10	35	3139	89		9	33	2668	81
October	9	28	1320	47		10	32	1652	52
November	5	15	620	41		5	16	505	32
Dec/Jan	12	41	7336	179		14	46	8058	175
	125	494	41614	84		127	542	45232	83
Wealden Pullman		39	2534	65			40	2705	67
Charters/Specials		5	237	47			7	267	38
		538	44385	82			589	48204	82
Privileges & Passes			2783					2441	
Total		538	47168	88			589	50645	86
Bookings from:-									
Tenterden			38541					42366	
Rolvenden			936					1123	
Wittersham			396					292	
On Trains			1741					1451	
			41614					45232	

1985 ended on an optimistic note, with a record number of passengers carried and reflecting a 7% increase on 1984. Average loadings were not significantly changed and it was clearly a wise decision to increase the number of trains, particularly in the peak operating month of August and for the highly profitable Santa Special season. The undoubted success story of the year has been the introduction of the family ticket on which over 10,000 passengers travelled. To some extent this mitigated the effect of a 26% increase in basic fare levels, which was implemented at the beginning of the year. Rover tickets (included above) fell sharply from 124 to a negligible 50, whilst there was a modest increase in the number of dogs carried, from 337 to 354. Platform tickets fell from 2449 to 1778, probably due to the lack of inspectors at the platform entrance.

A number of discount voucher schemes were advertised in local newspapers and tourist publications, but the response was small and

only 942 vouchers were presented, with a total of 1965 passengers. The exercise did, however, enable us to identify areas of support and also resulted in a considerable amount of editorial coverage in the publications themselves.

Santa Specials, which are included in the December passenger totals, amounted to 7553 compared with 6897 in 1984. These are hugely popular, probably because they represent excellent value for money, given the quality of the presents and nearly always ran to full capacity.

Rolvenden and Wittersham Road stations are not always manned, but even taken with the 'on trains' bookings, numbers remain surprisingly small. The sale of 292 tickets, for example, is equivalent to just 2 tickets per operating day or 1 for every 2 trains.

The Wealden Pullman continued to work to capacity during the year, the increase in average covers being due to the fact that two extra seats



*Santa with three locos! Two Terriers and the U.S.A. climb Tenterden Bank in fine style with return 2.00 p.m. train from Tenterden on 23rd December 1985*  
[Mike Esau]

were made available in each train by re-siting the serving table. A similar number of scheduled trains will run in 1986, supplemented by charters and specials as required.

The general timetable for 1986 shows that the number of trains will be increased by 68, of which 28 will be accounted for by additional mid week running in June, July and September. Calendar variations will also help in

terms of the number of weekends in the operating season and improved Saturday services in May and June, coupled with more intensive services in connection with special events, account for most of the remainder.

We shall look forward to a successful 1986.

John Emmott

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# Dangerous Practices on the Kent & East Sussex

The Public Records Office at Kew holds many documents relating, directly or indirectly, to the Kent & East Sussex Railway. Most of these have fairly prosaic titles like 'St Michaels Halt' or 'Cheap fares for Seamen' but file MT6.2254/1 rejoices in the intriguing title 'Dangerous Practices on the K. & E.S.R.'. The practice concerned was that of collecting fares and checking tickets by the conductor or guard who had to move along the train and from carriage to carriage on the outside. The file opens with a letter from Guy Ewing & Co. of Tunbridge Wells to Major Pringle of the Board of Trade Inspectorate, dated 5 February 1903.

Dear Sir,

re Rother Valley Railway Robertsbridge to Tenterden

*We heard yesterday when travelling on the line that you were down the day before to inspect the extension from the present station to one nearer the town. In passing from Robertsbridge up the line you can hardly have failed to notice what we regard as a most dangerous practice which would not be permitted on any other line under any circumstances. Not only is it unnerving to passengers to see a man walking along the footboard from carriage to carriage but we regard it as a highly dangerous practice and venture to think the Company should not be permitted to call upon their servant, the guard, to do so. Why cannot tickets be issued at the stations as on other lines or in the alternative have corridor carriages so that the man can walk along without risking his life on the footboard, particularly in wintry weather.*

*We beg to remain, Dear Sir  
Yours obediently  
Guy Ewing & Co.*

The file notes that a similar complaint had recently been received concerning the Southwold Railway and asks for a letter to be sent to the Rother Valley Railway requesting an explanation. The reference to the Southwold Railway is curious as this line had balcony carriages and gangways which made it very easy to move from one carriage to another. Stephens' reply on behalf of the Rother Valley is characteristic of his uncompromising approach:

Sir,

*In reply to your letter R1625 of 13th inst. Eight of our nine carriages on this line are constructed internally on the corridor principle. No danger is feared from the guard following the universal continental practice of getting from one carriage to the other as the steps are adapted for this purpose.*

*The practice has been in use for nearly 3 years without accident or complaint and the traffic does not justify the employment of persons capable of issuing tickets at the various stopping places.*

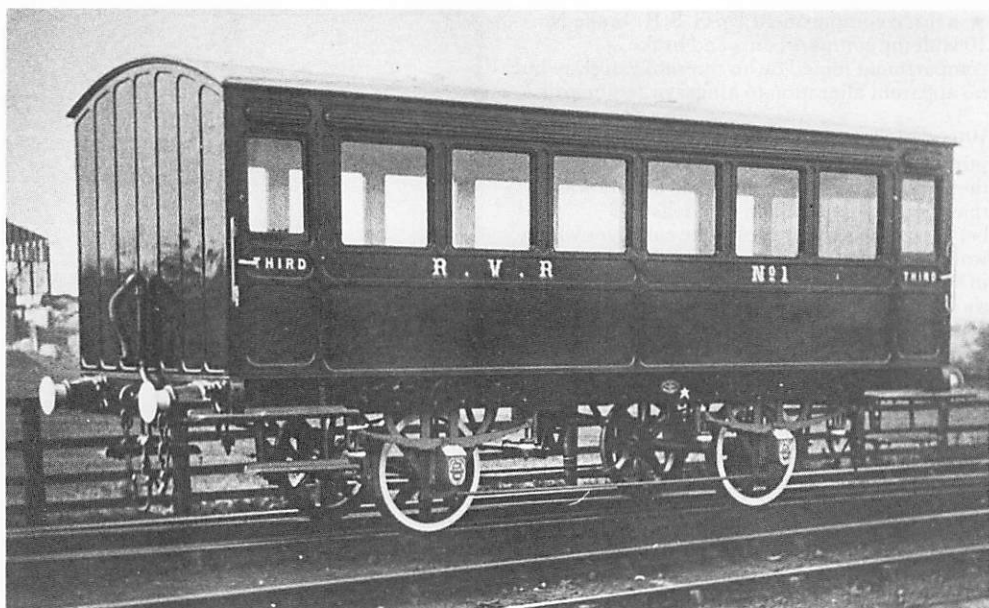
*Your obedient servant  
H.F. Stephens*

In fact, Stephens was not entirely candid in this reply. It is true that six of the line's carriages, the original Hurst Nelson stock, had been built with internal gangways and it is possible that two of the second-hand ones subsequently acquired had been fitted with internal gangways by this date but in 1903 the Company owned eleven coaches rather than nine. As for the 'adapted' steps, it is true that the footboards on the Hurst Nelsons projected some distance beyond the carriage ends but there is little evidence of any such work having been done on the second-hand stock. The Board of Trade certainly seem to have had their doubts about the matter because the file now calls for a sketch of the stock and an interview with Stephens. There are no minutes of this interview but a summary is given of its conclusions:

- ★ footboards to be extended as far as possible without fouling each other
- ★ extra handrails to be provided
- ★ end doors on carriages either to open inwards or to be hinged so that doors open away from end of carriage
- ★ if new stock were to be acquired it should be of the end-corridor type.

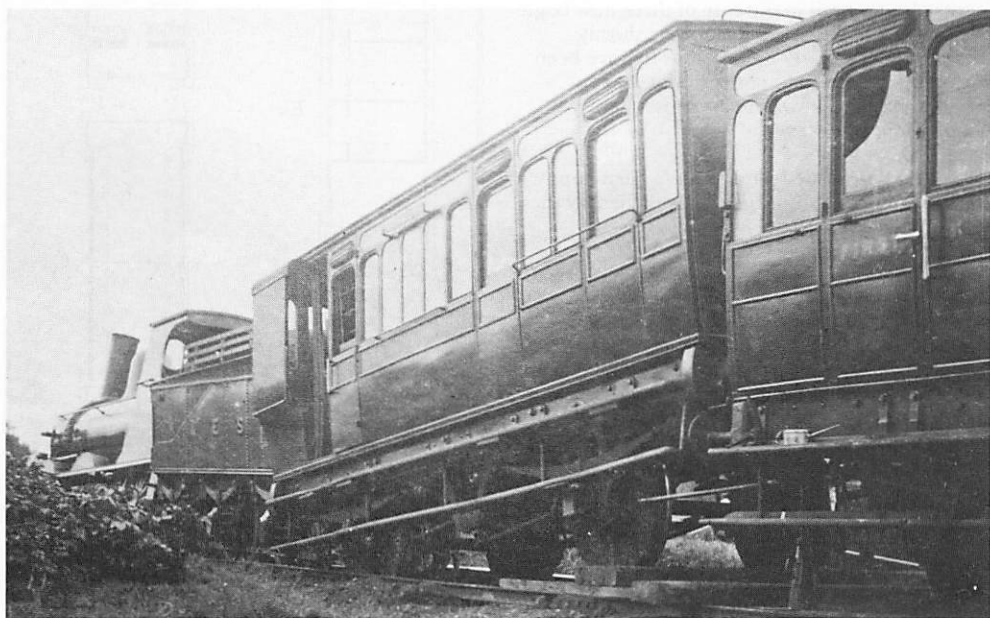
In September 1903 Stephens wrote to say that all the carriages except for No. 11 had now been attended to and that in future tickets would be issued at the stations at Bodiam, Northiam, Tenterden Town and 'partially' at Rolvenden. Stephens may have been over-optimistic because he wrote again in December 1903 confirming that the necessary work was 'in hand' and enclosing a diagram 'of the carriage stock'. This is a curious affair showing a five carriage train. The vehicles can be identified as

- ★ ex-Great Eastern 2-compartment brake No. 9 with no sign of an internal gangway or any other alteration except that one compartment seems to have lost half its seats.
- ★ a Hurst Nelson third-class apparently as built.
- ★ a Hurst Nelson first-class apparently as built.
- ★ a five-compartment carriage with an internal gangway cut through the compartment partitions along one side and seating altered to suit (this is either ex-Cheshire Lines Committee No. 11 or ex-Great Eastern No. 13)



*Hurst Nelson carriage No. 1 – note footboards.*

*[Historical Model Railway Society]*



*Ilfracombe Goods No. 7 Rother, southbound near to the present day home signal at Tenterden. The front coach, No. 9, is after conversion to a passenger brake van, but still retaining additional handrails for the guard.*

*[W.H. Austen Collection]*

★ a three-compartment Ex-G.E.R. brake No. 10 with the compartments and brake compartment joined by an internal gangway but no apparent alteration to hinges or footboards.

What is not clear from the diagram is whether it purported to describe all the passenger stock on the line. What it did show all too clearly was that there might be a gap of at least 3'3" between the footboards of some carriages which would be even greater on the outside of a curve in the line. Even more curious is the fact that shortly after the diagram was drawn up all the Hurst Nelsons were sent away to be converted into three bogie coaches.

This fact and a diagram of the conversions forms the substance of a letter from Stephens to the Board of Trade in June 1904. He adds that 'arrangements have been made to book passengers at all stations except Robertsbridge and Junction Road thus very materially reducing the necessity of the guard moving from car to car' and that 'the guard is not to enter or leave the cars other than those on the corridor system while the train is in motion'. Needless to say, the Board of Trade's requirement that new stock be fitted with end corridors was ignored as it was also ignored in the case of three new bogie carriages obtained from Pickering's shortly afterwards. Similarly there seems to have been no attempt to adapt or convert any of the second-hand stock which was subsequently acquired.

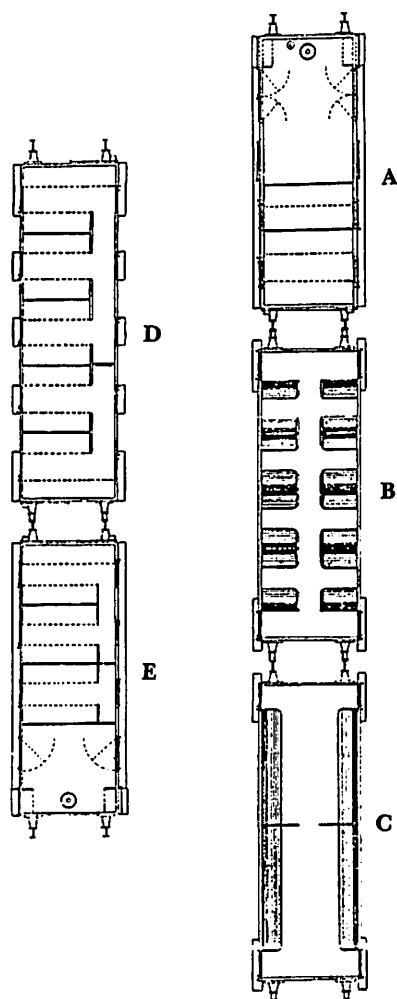
The Board of Trade seems to have been happy to let matters rest until rudely awakened by the following letter, dated 4 March 1911.

*Dear Mr Buxton,*

*I would like to call your attention to what appears to be a peculiarly dangerous practice on the K.E.S.R. Company which has a line extending from Robertsbridge to Headcorn. The Company has no booking office at Robertsbridge and the guard in consequence climbs from carriage to carriage while the train is in motion in order to collect fares and to give tickets. The rolling stock is very old and there appears to be no handrails to assist him in crossing from one compartment to another and the element of danger is, therefore, great especially in winter. I think it is a matter to which the attention of the Board of Trade should be called.*

*Yours very truly*  
*Arthur Sherwell M.P.*

Once again Stephens was requested for his observations on this matter as well as for



*Diagram of the carriage stock sent by Colonel Stephens to the Board of Trade Inspectorate in December 1903. A = Ex-G.E.R. No. 9; B = A Hurst Nelson third-class apparently as built; C = A Hurst Nelson first-class apparently as built; D = Eüher Ex-C.L.C. No. 11 or Ex-G.E.R. No. 13; E = Ex-G.E.R. brake No. 10.*



information as to whether the line had acquired any new stock since 1904. With injured innocence Stephens replied that he had thought the Board to be satisfied with this method of operation and added that, 'There is no difficulty in reaching from one hand rail to the other on the train in question, this was carefully tried prior to the system being put into use and where necessary additional hand rails were fitted. As the Department are no doubt aware the system is quite common on the Continental Railways.' He admitted that additional carriages had been acquired but these were mainly used on the Headcorn Extension.

The Board seem to have taken their cue from Stephens and replied to Sherwell that they were well aware of the practice in question but that it had been in use without incident for eleven years and must, therefore, be safe. They even pointed out that the practice was common on the Continent! Sherwell replied that he was still unhappy with the situation but does not seem to have taken the matter further. About this time the bogie stock seems to have been laid aside and most of the 'adapted' stock disposed of to the East Kent Railway. However, the Board of

Trade seems to have had no further interest in pursuing the matter because when Salehurst Parish Council wrote complaining of the practice of guards 'going from carriage to carriage on the outside' in January 1914 the Board dealt with the matter by acknowledging the Council's letter but taking no further steps as the Council had neither asked for action nor for a reply!

Thus guards continued their athletic practices on the Kent & East Sussex until 1944 when true corridor coaches made a belated appearance on the line. In the event, nobody was ever recorded as being injured by this 'dangerous practice' though whether this was due to luck or exceptionally fit guards we shall never know. With the prospect of our non-corridor 'Birdcage' coaches returning to service what are the prospects for sales of light refreshments from the outside of the train?

Stephen Garrett

*The Author would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Public Records Office and the use of various documents in their custody.*

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# PULLMAN'85

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Photographed by  
Brian Stephenson

The Annual Wealden Pullman staff dinner was held at the White Lion Hotel, Tenterden, on Saturday 7th December and attended by a record number of 49 members and guests. The theme of the evening was 'Fancy Dress' and a number of well known characters turned up suitably attired. The occasion was once again a fitting climax to a most successful year on the Pullman trains and excluding the train crews, a total of 84 people were rostered on one or more occasion during the season, 6 more than in 1984. The staff attendance award was won by Julia Liddell, who was present on no less than 35 occasions, out of a possible total of 45, including charter trains. Runners up were

Duncan Buchanan and Richard Osborn with 30 and 28 turns respectively. Thanks were due to the locomotive crews, guards and signalmen who also worked long hours to ensure smooth running of the trains and it was good to see them well represented at this year's dinner.

With around one-third of all scheduled Pullman trains for 1986 already fully booked, the Team looks forward to another successful year. Improvements to the menus are under consideration and these, together with a more comprehensive wine list, will ensure new standards of excellence for the one service that we never have to advertise. —>



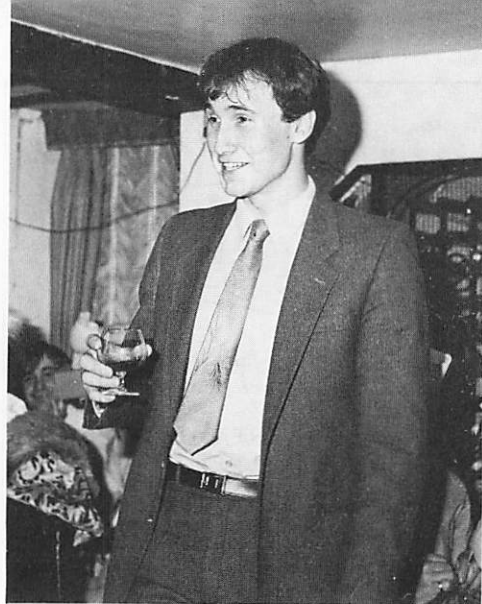
*The Bishop's Party.* ↑

↓ *Henry VIII attending to Maid Marian!*





↓ *Hey! What are you doing?*



↑ *Mugs of the Years '84 and '85.*

↑ *Rostered for the evening.*





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# Weald Artillery

**New light on the rail-mounted guns which were based on the K. & E.S.R. during World War II, by Ted Gee**

An interesting souvenir of the dark days of 1940 came to light recently when a heavy brass nameplate and other family treasures were traced to a solicitors storeroom in Worthing after having been mislaid for a number of years. The photograph shows one of the two 'E.E. Gee' nameplates which were attached to the 86-ton, 9.2 inch Mk 13 railway gun which was based on Rolvenden Station from February 1941 to August 1944. Its companion at Wittersham Road was named 'S.M. Cleeve'. The two guns belonged to No. 4 (Suffolk) Super-Heavy Railway Battery R.A. which was formed at Felixstowe on 1st March 1940. The officers and men were mainly from Territorial Army units in East Anglia, the Midlands and the North, with a leavening of "regulars". At the time there was a great shortage of super-heavy artillery that could be brought into use to stem the German advance in Europe.

On his return from the Far East late in 1939, a Major S.M. Cleeve was given the task of finding and refurbishing an unknown number of World War 1 railguns, which had been hidden away in sundry depots – notably at Chilwell – since 1919. The next priority was to train crews for these weapons. To this end, Cleeve was joined in late March 1940 by my Father, Major E.E. Gee, a senior gunnery instructor, who was recalled from retirement in December 1939 and posted to the School of Artillery at Larkhill, where he first spent a few weeks training personnel for two batteries of the cumbersome 12-inch road howitzers.

Following a brief spell at the Shoeburyness School of Coast Artillery, where some railgun training was in progress, he joined Major Cleeve at Catterick where they formed a special school of Super-Heavy Railway Artillery. In April 1940, No. 4 S/H Battery was under training at Catterick with a view to going to France to reinforce the existing super heavy batteries already there; one battery of two 9.2-inch rail guns and two of 12-inch road howitzers. However, Dunkirk intervened with the total loss of those three batteries and the threat of an East Coast invasion prompted No. 4 Battery to be sent to Lincolnshire, where it operated in the area around Boston and Kirton<sup>1</sup>. It remained there until the Battle of Britain events indicated that the south east corner was a more likely area for the Germans to land.

By July, Major Gee was back at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain and Cleeve, now promoted to Lt. Colonel, became Commandant of the School at Catterick. It was during this period that it was decided to give names to the first pair of super heavies to pass through the School and be deployed in an operational role and it was fitting to name them after the two men primarily responsible for setting up the operation.



On August 28th, the Battery received notice of its impending move and the guns left Kirton on September 3rd, arriving at Ashford late the following day. On September 9th they were moved to their operational positions in Hythe and Folkestone<sup>2</sup> and on September 12th, the Folkestone gun (E.E. Gee) was inspected by no less than the Prime Minister, The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, The Commander-in-Chief Forces, The First Lord of the Admiralty and their retinues!

During the following weeks, there were several enemy bombing attacks on the coastal towns and Dover received considerable attention from the guns at Cap Gris Nez. Battery personnel were frequently involved in assisting the civilian A.R.P. rescue teams and on one or two occasions fired on low flying raiders with their light automatic weapons – Lewis guns.

Only one shell was fired in earnest, being the Folkestone gun on the afternoon of October 18th, when a single cliff top observer was able to see a gaggle of E-Boats cruising in the sunshine at a range of some 24,000 yards. Patches of coastal fog along the cliffs prevented cross bearings from being obtained from the other O.P.'s, but the 385 lb shell landed beyond the E-Boats causing them to scatter towards the French coast – not knowing that the gun had de-railed itself and presented no further threat. Luckily, the gun crew on the upper platform were only shaken up and "E.E. Gee" was back in action the following day. Meanwhile, the



event had been heard and seen by the gunners at Hythe. Beyond this, routine training, exercises on gun-position defences in conjunction with other units, frequent inspections by visiting "Top Brass", etc, were the order of the day, in what was the beginning of a long period of inactivity.

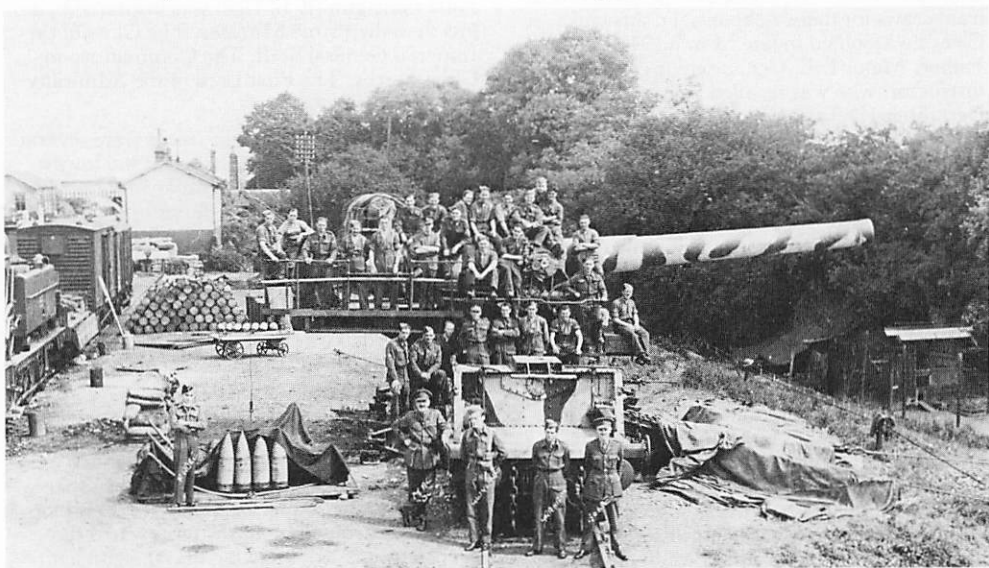
In February 1941 it was found desirable to move the Battery to the Kent & East Sussex Railway, where life followed much the same pattern, with various changes in personnel taking place from time to time. If conditions were particularly suitable for an enemy attack, the guns would be put on standby for anything up to a week. At other times, the guns would move to different locations and fire a few rounds out to sea. The gunners were also sent off on small arms courses with their rifles and Lewis guns to improve their ability to defend their somewhat exposed gun sites.

In June 1941, "S.M. Cleeve" became de-railed during a practice shoot at Wittersham Road - to the discomfiture of the crew who had earlier passed a few caustic remarks about the Folkestone de-railment. Two days later it fired two more rounds without incident and official photographs taken at that time were published in the Spring 1983 issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*. At various times, the battery carried out

practice shoots from Golden Wood<sup>3</sup> and later on, several batteries of 2nd and 3rd Regiments took it in turns to spend 10 days at a time there in a "state of constant readiness" to defend the Dungeness petrol pumping installations from possible cross-Channel commando raids<sup>4</sup>. On these occasions, the Battery's forward observation officer was housed on the lighthouse, courtesy of Trinity House.

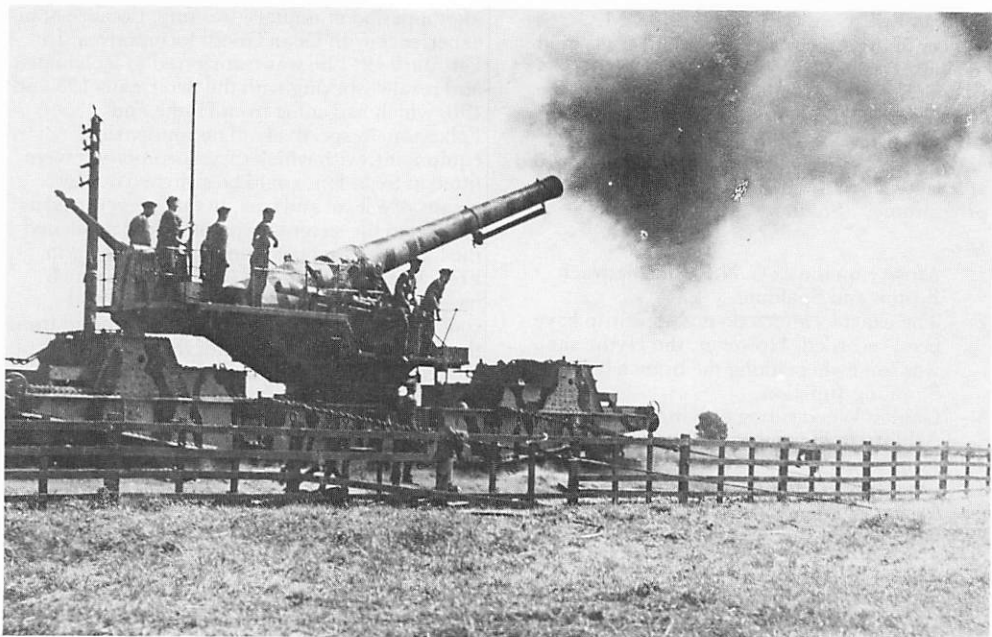
In March 1944 all of the railguns of the 3rd S/H Regiment were handed over to the 2nd Regiment and No. 4 Battery, with others, went elsewhere to re-train on road guns for overseas service, being transferred in September after final training on American 8" road guns at Larkhill. The railgun batteries were due to follow later that year, but the condition of the railways in Belgium and Holland became so bad that the move was cancelled in December and the units were disbanded shortly after.

Just what happened to the K. & E.S.R. guns after March 1944 has not been established; all of the 9.2 and 12-inch railguns were broken up after the War, but the four nameplates were rescued and last seen together at Worthing in 1959. Only the one of E.E. Gee in the photograph is known to have survived, the other three were probably sold for scrap in the Worthing area around 1960/61.

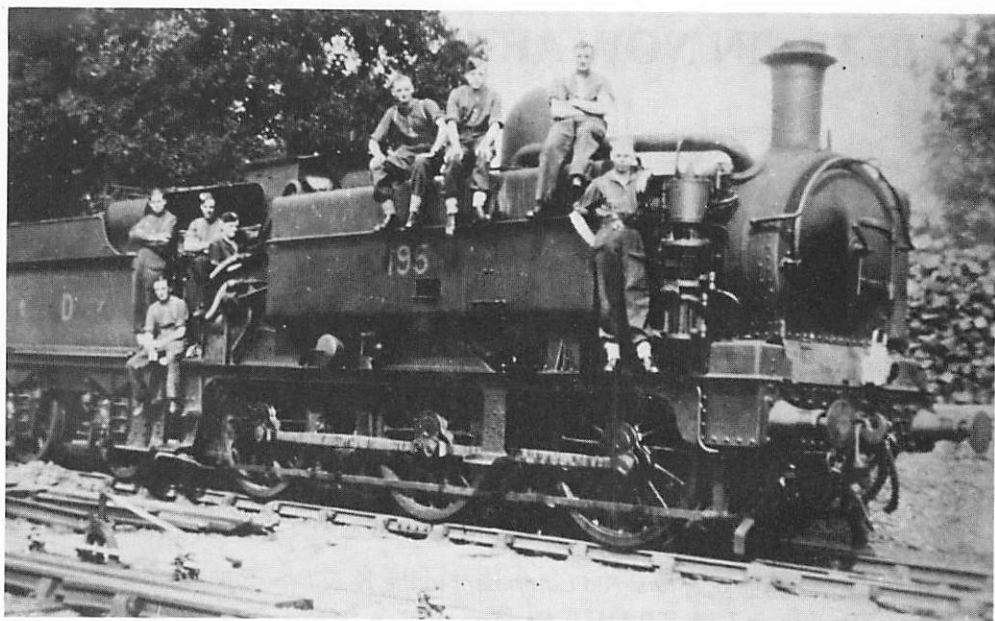


*H.M.G. "E.E. Gee" with officers and men of the 4th Super Heavy Battery R.A. at Kirton, Lincs, Summer 1940. The locomotive on the extreme left is probably ex G. W.R. Dean Goods No. 195 which went with the gun to Folkestone.*  
[Ted Gee Collection]





*H.M.G. "S.M. Cleeve" calibrating at Mablethorpe (Lincs), 4th August 1940. [Ted Gee Collection]*



*Ex G.W.R. Dean Goods No. 2531, then W.D. No. 195, at Hythe 1940. It was retained at Longmoor after the war in a derelict state for re-railing practice until 1959. [C. Turner]*

Colonel E.E. Gee, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., Officer of the American Legion of Merit, died in 1959.

Lt Colonel S.M. Cleeve, the original Commanding Officer of the 18-inch "Bochebuster" in 1917/18, is 93 years of age and lives at Wimbledon Common. He appeared at least twice in the B.B.C. television programme, "Soldiers", during 1985.

#### Notes.

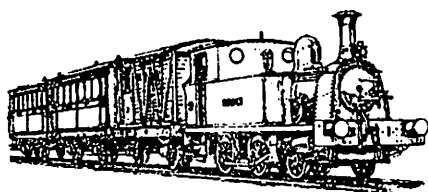
1. *Kirton* - on the ex G.N.R. line between Boston and Spalding.
2. The exact locations do not appear to have been recorded. However, the Hythe site was somewhere along the branch line from Sandling Junction.
3. Golden Wood siding at Kingsnorth on the Ashford to Hastings line; the site is still visible today.
4. Operation "Pluto" = Pipeline Under The Ocean. Some huts and foundations of this complex are still visible.

Postscript: Charlie Turner, an ex-G.W.R. man, now living in retirement near Oxford, was a fireman with the 195 Transportation Company, Royal Engineers, and recalls being sent from Longmoor to Hythe in August 1940,

after a period of military training, because of his experience with Dean Goods locomotives. In February 1941 he was transferred to Rolvenden and recalls working with the two Deans 195 and 196, which had come from Hythe and Folkestone respectively. The condensing equipment, with which these locomotives were fitted at Swindon, could be switched out by means of a level and was, in fact, never used as it affected the steaming qualities and deadened the fire. He, amongst others, was billeted in French ferry vans in Rolvenden yard, which had been fitted out with double bunks and cookhouses. The guns were moved around from time to time, sometimes with the ferry vans attached, and on one occasion were sent to Grately, near Salisbury, for calibration, travelling via Headcorn, double headed. The Deans were taken once a month to Ashford for servicing and the Railway's facilities were not used, anyway officially. They never travelled over the Robertsbridge section. So far, no photographs of these two locomotives in use on the line have come to light. Charlie Turner left Rolvenden for Ashford in April 1941.

Does anyone know when the third Dean, No. 197, which was reputedly on the line, actually arrived? - EDS.

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# People in Profile

## 5: John Miller

John Miller became acquainted with the K. & E.S.R. one day in 1973; driving through Rolvenden, he called into the Railway site, thinking it was a scrap yard. Member, Rodney Packham, who was working there at the time, explained about the preservation plans and suggested that he might like to assist by painting some of the coaching stock, then in store at Northiam. It was here that he came across some members of the clearance department, notably Mark Yonge and Boris Perkins, who were tackling the grass grown tracks with a "giant rail-mounted lawnmower". He then decided to join the Clearance Department on a regular basis, becoming its Departmental Manager two years later. He became a Director of the Company in 1979 and its Chairman in 1983.

John Miller's involvement has included marketing and publicity, the Wealden Pullman, building projects and special events. He retired

as Chairman and from the Board in 1985 and since then has been devoting much of his time to organising the Colonel Stephens Museum and archive collection, which has expanded enormously in recent years. A Deputy Chief Nursing Officer with the Medway Health Authority, he lives in Tenterden High Street, within a few hundred yards of the Railway and always has open house to members who may pass by. In Brian Stephenson's portraiture, he is seen receiving a presentation at the A.G.M. on 19th October from his successor as Chairman, David Stratton, on behalf of the members of the Tenterden Railway Company for outstanding services to the Railway.

He was also noticed recently in the bar at the White Lion Hotel, thinly disguised, in the presence of a 'well known Bunny Girl of Tenterden' - truly a man of many parts!

P.D.S.





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# Welcome to the Gin Palaces!

**Tom Burnham concludes the history of the three Longmoor blue saloons which have recently found a new home on the Kent & East Sussex Railway**

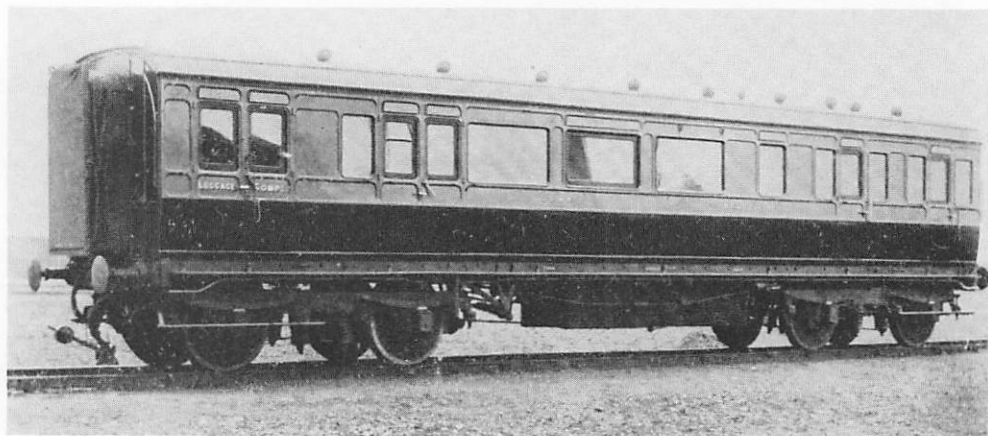
The third of the three Transport Trust saloons is of London & South Western Railway origin and is the youngest of the three, dating from November 1910. It was built at Eastleigh works as invalid saloon No. 11 and was one of a pair with No. 12. Two similar vehicles, without the gangway connections which were a feature of Nos. 11 and 12, had been built in 1907 as Nos. 9 and 10. No. 11 weighed 23t and was 46'6" long over body, 8'3¼" wide and 11'8½" high; the width and height were slightly less than the L. & S.W.R. standard in order to facilitate through running over other railways. Almost half the length was occupied by a saloon, which normally contained a couch, three or four lounge chairs and two folding tables, while a bed could be installed if necessary. The saloon was provided with double doors so that stretchers or wheelchairs could be loaded easily. At one end of the saloon was a luggage compartment and at the other was a short side corridor leading to the lavatory, a first-class compartment seating 4 and a second-class compartment seating 5. The interior was finished in a luxurious style; the saloon and first class compartment were carpeted and panelled in satinwood with oak banding, while the second class, lavatory and corridor had mahogany panelling. The underframe was of oak and the 8' wheelbase bogies had Mansell wheels. Both vacuum and Westinghouse brakes, electric lighting and steam heating were fitted. Unlike the S.E. & C.R. saloon, No. 11

never had continuous lower running boards. The original livery was dark brown and salmon pink, with lettering along the waist panels.

No. 11 was renumbered as 4105 in 1912 and after 1923 became Southern Railway 7803. It was withdrawn in February 1938 and sold to the Longmoor Military Railway. Its companion vehicle, No. 12, was renumbered 4106, became S.R. No. 7804 and was withdrawn in 1939, becoming 1579s in the service stock series.

On arrival at Longmoor, our saloon was numbered 119, eventually losing its end gangway connections. Like the S.E. & C.R. saloon, it spent much of the war at the back of the carriage shed but afterwards was turned out spick and span as Army No. 3007 in blue livery.

The Longmoor Military Railway had its origin in a line built by the Royal Engineers between 1905 and 1910 from the Bordon branch terminus of the L. & S.W.R. to Longmoor Camp. An extension to Liss, on the S.R. Portsmouth Direct main line, was built from 1924 to 1933, although a junction was not made until 1942. In the same year, the Hollywater Loop, giving a complete circuit for training purposes, was completed. The total route length was about 12 miles and at its greatest extent, during the Second World War, track mileage reached about 70. After the war, the Army's need to train railwaymen declined and it was eventually decided to close the L.M.R. The last



*Invalid Saloon in London & South Western days.*

[R. C. Riley Collection]

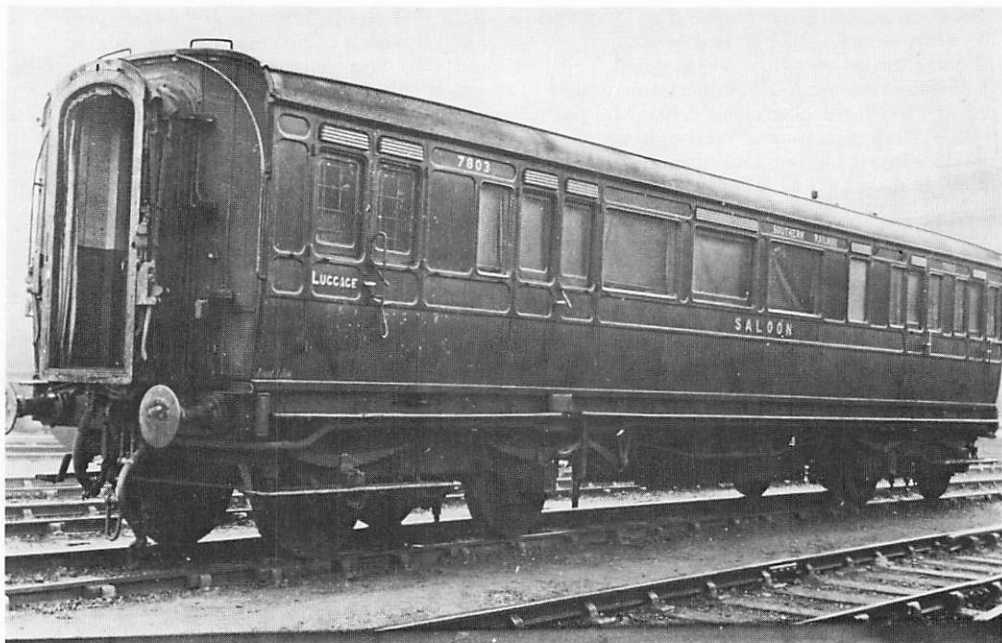
of a very popular series of public open days was held on 5 July 1969 and on this occasion the three Blue Saloons made several runs from Longmoor Downs to Oakhanger and back, mainly hauled by "Austerity" No. 196, Errol Lonsdale (which later spent some time on the K. & E.S.R.), although they also ran behind 0-8-0 diesel No. 890, General Lord Robertson. At the closure ceremony on 31 October 1969, the official Last Train to enter Longmoor Downs, carrying the Colonel Commandant, was formed of 2-10-0 No. 600, Gordon, and the three Blue Saloons.

Meanwhile, moves were in hand to retain at least a part of the L.M.R. as a working steam railway museum. The Ministry of Defence (Army) presented the three Blue Saloons (as an outright gift) and the 2-10-0, Gordon, on indefinite loan, to the Transport Trust at a ceremony at Longmoor on 28 May 1970, with a view to their being kept at Liss as part of the stock of the proposed Southern Steam Centre. This hope was not to be realised, however, and it was necessary to find a new home for the vehicles. The Transport Trust decided on the Severn Valley Railway, and the move was completed on 20 September 1971.

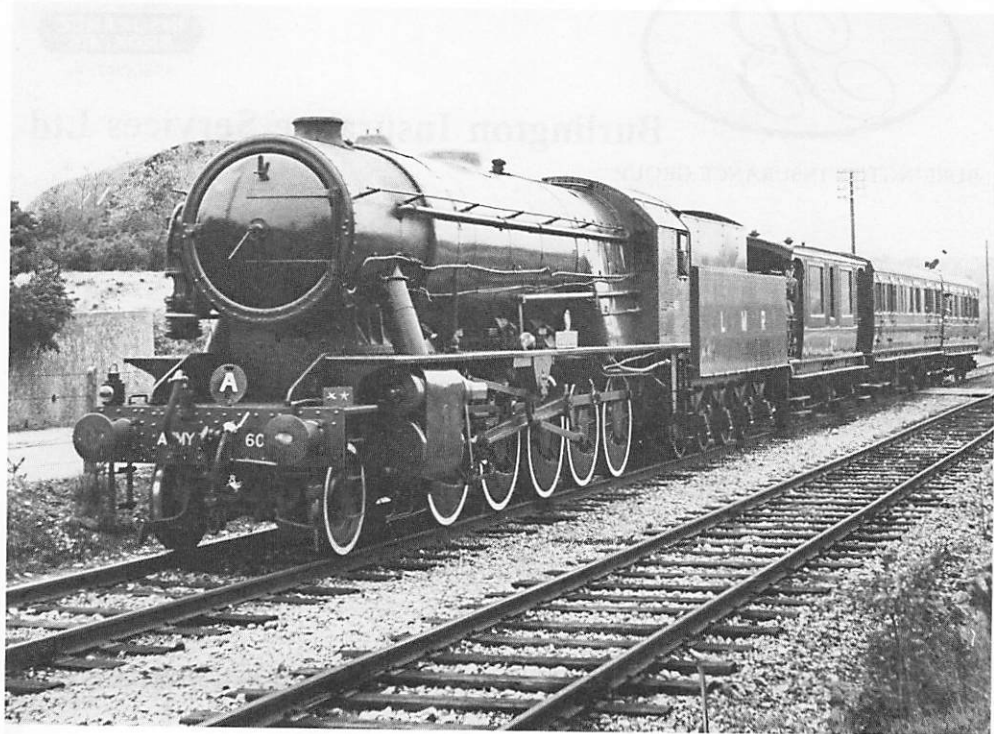
Although it was at one time intended to restore the saloons to their original liveries, this did not take a high priority. They never entered passenger service on the S.V.R., but did see occasional use for filming contracts, one example being in 1979 when the two bogie saloons were painted chocolate and cream and hauled by 2-6-2T No. 4566 in an attempt to represent a Great Western Railway train of the Edwardian era for an episode of the BBC Television "God's Wonderful Railway" series.

In 1984, the owners of the vehicles, the Transport Trust, invited offers for them. The K. & E.S.R. bids on behalf of the Locomotive Trust and two private owners was successful and the three saloons arrived on the line in July 1985. Restoration work on the L. & N.W.R. example has started and the Locomotive Trust has launched an appeal for funds to return its ex-S.E. & C.R. saloon to its Edwardian splendour, so that party travel will once again be able to take place in proper turn-of-the-century surroundings.

Thanks are due to Messrs. M.S. King, R.C. Riley and G.R. Weddell for information on the L. & S.W.R. saloon. Readers may be interested



*In Southern Railway livery as No. 7803. Note gangway, long since removed. [R.C. Riley Collection]*



*W.D. 2-10-0 No. 600 "Gordon" leaving Longmoor with the last official train carrying the Colonel Commandant, 31st October 1969*  
*[Brian Stephenson]*

to know that a 4 mm scale drawing of this vehicle by Mr. Weddell appeared in the *Model Railway Constructor* for October 1971 and that a 7 mm scale version may be had from the South Western Circle.

\* \* \* \*

Following the publication of part 1 of this article, member Vince Morris of Derby kindly offered to analyse a paint sample taken from a balcony of the L. & N.W.R. inspection saloon. His findings were as follows:- There is evidence of no less than 12 paint layers and, in order, these are black, red, green, blue, silver, dark blue, blue, red, light blue, dark blue, white, maroon. The black layer, closest to the wood, is the most interesting; it is continuous, but of very uneven thickness. It is also very porous in that the red layer (undoubtedly a primer) has been absorbed into it. Remarkably, when cut into, there is still some resinous inclusion. Instrumental analysis suggests that the layer is mainly carbon, with some sulphur and a little aluminium and calcium; it is not typical of a

conventional surface coating or stopping compound. The most probable explanation is that it is the residue after a previous coating has been burnt off. The charred paint (into which some of the wood resin had seeped before it cooled down) was not rubbed down well before the primer was applied, hence the uneven thickness and porous nature. An alternative answer may be that it is a local recipe for a levelling compound, for which every workman would have his own mixture, based on tar. The analysis does not suggest this immediately, but age could have caused some alteration.

Mr. Morris's analysis suggests that the coach was almost certainly stripped of its L. & N.W.R. 'blackberry black' and if the 'red' is a primer, also of its L.M.S. maroon. Most of the other coats can probably be attributable to Longmoor paintings after the War, but the green coat does not seem to fit in with this pattern. Could it have been painted in green during its brief period on the Melbourne Military Railway? – Eds



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# Letters to the Editors

## Fifteen Years of Company Membership

Sirs – I read with interest John Head's article in the Winter 1985 issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*. Although a Kent member, I nevertheless feel that the geographical analysis does an injustice to Sussex as Hastings and its environs appear to be part of Kent! Surely Sussex ought to be credited with 13% and the Kent figure amended to 56%?

Folkestone, Kent

George White

*Mr. White is, of course, correct – apologies for this unfortunate error. – EDS.*

## From Sheffield to Kent & Sussex

Sirs – Your Sheffield railcar article refers to the moving of the headlight from the radiator to the roof, which must have been very late in its life (unless altered again) as it was at the radiator in the summer of 1936. These cars were delivered with two headlights at each end; however the nearside one seems never to have contained a reflector. Both were still in place by the radiator at each end in 1935; in summer 1936 (Headcorn end) there was no headlight, only the nearside shell of one.

One other point; when delivered the cars carried the numeral 3 in a large shaded style the same as on SECR carriage doors; is it not possible that this merely denoted 3rd. class?

Great Hinton, Wilts

R.W. Kidner

Sirs – I refer to the average speed of the Sheffield railmotors.

The article in *The Railway Magazine* of April 1935 reproduces the timetable of the summer of 1934. The motors were allowed 30 minutes for the 8 miles Chichester to Selsey and mixed trains 40 or 45 minutes. Mention is made of the service shown in *Bradshaw* for February 1935, after the line had closed. Many years ago I was warned that *Bradshaw* was a very dangerous guide for assessing the date of a service.

The service in question was completely useless with just one morning train each way, taking an hour from Selsey to Chichester and 45 minutes in the reverse direction. The service was described as being operated by "motor cars" – 3rd class only.

It would be interesting to know for how long, if at all, this service operated as the line closed quite suddenly with the staff only being given a week's notice. It would have been necessary to operate a separate freight train as this lasted

until a week after the end of the passenger service.

Bristol

J.F. Burrell

## Steam to Victory

Sirs – Upon reading of the "Steam to Victory" show I deeply regretted I was unable to visit the railway at that time. How nostalgic it all seemed. Like the lady from Suffolk who was reminded of her youth by the American Army vehicles, I felt the same when I saw your pictures. I was in the Army myself during the war, hence the sight of the ATS girls outside Tenterden station brought back memories. Best of all was Winston inspecting the loco crew, this scene was most realistic. I could, judging by the crew's smiles, imagine the real Mr. Churchill cracking a joke with them. Monty standing at his side looking on seriously, and in the background the Colonel wearing an imperturbable expression. Although I would not wish back those days, my memories were certainly aroused. I am so glad that during such a wet summer you were fortunate to pick on two fine days. Finally, I did see the "Austerity" in its camouflage livery in the siding at Rolvenden. I paid the railway a visit on the 15th September, strangely enough the anniversary of the day in 1939 when I made acquaintance with the King's Royal Rifle Corps at Winchester Barracks. I hope your next year's theme will be equally successful and perhaps I will have the pleasure of seeing it.

Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent

Henry Surridge

## Taking Stock

Sirs – Perhaps I could add further comment to Peter Clark's letter and his reference to the two photographs in *On Southern Metals* (plates 20 and 21).

With a magnifying glass one can identify the ex-L.S.W.R. corridor brake in plate 20 as S3175, standing just South of Rolvenden station in June 1951, perhaps awaiting a Headcorn turn, and not, I think, running to the station as the caption suggests. On this date, the coach faced brake end to Headcorn, but photographs taken during 1953 show it to be facing brake end to Robertsbridge, indicating that occasionally coaches were turned end to end – off the K.E.S.R., of course!

Plate 21 is interesting – taken on the same date as the photograph above, it shows what is undoubtedly ex-S.E.C.R. "birdcage" brake S3291 in the siding, hard up against the carriage



shed, identified by the first vertical panel beyond the fifth compartment being steel-sheeted over. This can be confirmed by reference to *Rails To Tenterden* (picture 103), which depicts S3291 not long ex-works in the Autumn of 1953, with the earlier-style prominent roof air vents apparently replaced by ones of a more squat pattern.

Followers of K.E.S.R. coaching stock history will recall that the original L.S.W.R. corridors 1 and 6 (as S3093 and S3121) were withdrawn on 7th April 1951 and the carriage registers show that "birdcage" S3291 was transferred to the K.E.S.R. from Set 522 with effect from this date, so it is reasonable to assume that the second "birdcage" brake behind "Terrier" 32670 in the photograph was, with S3291, the pair that replaced the two L.S.W.R. corridors some two months previously. Unfortunately, I cannot at the moment identify the second "birdcage" coach, but a Pamlin Masterprint photograph dated July 1952, shows the same carriage arriving at Rolvenden in a mixed train behind a "Terrier" (believed to be 32659). Thus, it probably ran for at least a year on the line and can be identified by the whole of the guards/luggage area of the bodyside being sheet steel panelled over. This carriage may have left the line in about July/August 1952 as the composite/lavatory "Birdcage" brake S6638 starts to appear in photographs from then on and ran until at least the Spring of 1953; it can also be identified in a mixed train at Biddenden on page 69 of *Rails To Tenterden*.

By the Summer of 1953, S6638 had presumably been transferred away to become part of Set 917, as in August, ex-L.S.W.R. corridor composite S2650 was on the scene. This is almost certainly the coach that appears behind 01 31065 in photograph 97 in *Branch Line To Tenterden*, on page 116 of *The Country Railway*, and as the title page photograph in *Branch Line Album-Southern*; also the coach referred to by Stephen Garrett as marked 'Midhurst Branch'.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the line's complement of coaches remained at four in regular use from about 1948 up to 2nd January 1954. When ex-L.S.W.R. corridors S3170 and S3171 were withdrawn on 31st December 1949 and in October 1950, respectively, I am tempted to think that similar vehicles S3165 and S3175 arrived around these dates. Can anyone confirm my theory or better still, put a date to their arrival and the order in which they replaced S3170 and S3171? With reference to the supposed ex-L.S.W.R. coach of 1947, as

apparently no photographs have emerged, did it really exist at the time – or was it a myth that has been perpetuated through the years?

Winterbourne Whitechurch, Blandford, Dorset  
A.G. Coombes

Sirs – Stephen Garrett's interesting article in the Spring 1985 issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*, refers briefly to the working of a through carriage from London to Tenterden via Robertsbridge in the late 1920s. I am wondering if any of your readers can throw further light on this practise, which services were involved and over what period? Were any photographs taken, I wonder, of the Southern coach on the branch?

Tenterden, Kent

Kenneth Grahame

### No need to dial 999?

Sirs – With reference to the article in the Summer 1985 issue of *The Tenterden Terrier* under my name, I should like to point out some inaccuracies which have crept into the text. This was due to the fact that I was unable to approve the final content prior to publication. The garage in Bridewell Lane is leased to me at present, at a rent, and will have to be purchased when the premises are vacated in 1987; in the meantime, it is used to stable the engines owned by myself and Ian Langley. I should make the point that the Kent Fire Brigade is always contacted whenever there is a fire, however small. Although the engines attend rallies and charity functions from time to time, this is purely on a personal basis and not as official representatives of the K. & E.S.R. We do not have any plans to purchase a Land Rover at the present time and there are one or two inaccuracies in the technical data in the table on page 39, although I do not feel that it is worthwhile to refer to these in detail. Finally, I should point out that the caption to the photograph on page 37 does not depict the correct uniform for the persons mentioned and that on page 38 includes an engine (RUM 966) which was visiting Tenterden for the day and is not owned by individuals associated with the Railway.

Kennington, Kent

Ted Webber

*Ian Langley would like to point out that of the four appliances listed under his name, only the Land Rover, 16 BMR, is available for fire fighting purposes on the Railway. He also wishes not to be referred to as a 'Sub Officer', which was the title attributed to him in the text. –*

# The Line that Refused to Die

Klaus Marx recalls the Branch Line Society railtour of 12 April 1958

The years immediately following the cessation of passenger services and total closure of the northern section are well documented. Even the Headcorn section saw further train movements in the early part of 1954 with, for instance, the clearance of wagons on 15th January and movement of the Ashford crane on 10/11th April to Robertsbridge via Tenterden due to inadequate clearance limits on the Tonbridge to Hastings line. "Terriers", of course, continued to work the daily goods train up to Tenterden Town and at the end of the summer hop-pickers specials ran up to Bodiam, occasionally Northiam, and there was the longstanding through evening train to London Bridge.

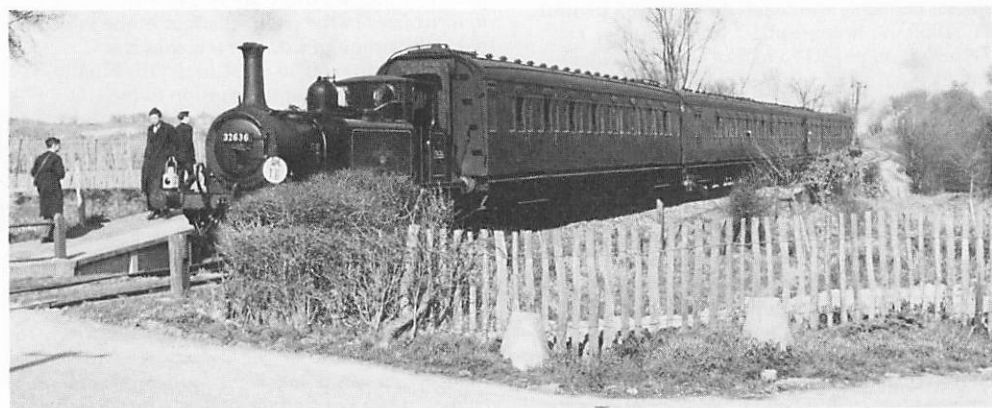
What exactly lured me to participate in the Branch Line Society's railtour of 12th April, 1958, is not exactly clear at this distance of time, but the line was one which had tremendous drawing power where railway enthusiasts were concerned, a fact well proven today beyond question. Before me I still have the cutting from the *Kentish Express* of 18th April, 1958, which has such mind-blowing headlines as 'Enthusiasts re-open Weald's steel lane' and 'Speed took Second Place on Sentimental Rail Trip', and began: 'Not since the day over four years ago, when it was finally closed to passenger traffic, has there been so much excitement as on Saturday. . . The Line had come to life again.'

The special was chartered from BR from Robertsbridge to Tenterden and back and consisted of four Maunsell Hastings line coaches scheduled to carry 120 people. Motive power was provided by two of the St.

Leonard's based "Terriers", one at each end of the train. At the special request of the Society one of them was to be 32636, formerly Fenchurch of 1872, then the oldest working locomotive on the national system, manned by Driver P. Hawkins and Fireman F. Jenner who had worked up the rake of empty main line stock single-handed from Hastings to Robertsbridge. The engine was in very smart condition and a credit to the depleted shed staff at St. Leonard's. Taking the leading end at Robertsbridge on the outward journey in a rather less spotless state, having been taken off the morning Tenterden goods, was 32678 which had hosted me back in 1953. This time it was crewed by Driver F. Hazell and Fireman R. Blair who normally operated the daily goods with experience going back several years before the closure. In charge was Mr. A.G. Pay, a head office inspector from Waterloo with Mr. A.B. Allcorn, Robertsbridge's genial stationmaster, and Guard D.A. Vidler.

Most people had travelled down on a party rate return ticket from Charing Cross to Robertsbridge at single fare and a half costing 12s 6d (62½ p), and found the special waiting in the KESR bay platform, 32678 and the guard's compartment of the first coach standing beyond the platform edge. The weather was fine with just a few white clouds around to improve the photographic skyline.

Stops were made at every station allowing photography at either end. I have shots of 32636 at Salehurst Halt and Junction Road Halt where apparently a new concrete platform was



*A1X Class No. 32636 at Junction Road Halt with the B.L.S. Special.*

*[Tenterden Railway Co.]*



*32678, the other loco on the special train, taking water amongst the remains of Rolvenden, 12th April 1958.*  
[Tenterden Railway Co.]

installed after the line was closed to passenger services! At Bodiam I chose a snap of the forecourt, seem to have missed out at Northiam, but there was a six-minute pause at Wittersham Road where one was able to take in the whole train, the middle section screened by the rapidly expanding hedgerow behind the platform. There were several wagons in the siding. Progress was slow since level crossings had to be opened and closed by the firemen.

So on to Rolvenden where little remained to indicate that it was formerly the nerve centre of the line as the locomotive shed and most of the sidings had been demolished. There the "Terriers" in turn took on water in preparation for the 1 in 36 up to Tenterden, and this stretch proved the most dramatic moment of the trip. The cavalcade charged furiously up the gradient, but passing Cranbrook Road crossing the special was already down to a crawl and a couple of hundred yards short of the terminus the "Terriers" came to a wheezing stop, attempted a final assault without avail and thereupon determined to stand tight on the bank and raise steam for the next ten or so minutes.

They may have managed to 'arrive triumphantly', as the press records, at the crowded platform of Tenterden station, but it was a close run thing as the procession eased over the cattle grids protecting the level crossing in Station Road.

The majority of enthusiasts walked up to the end of the track half a mile north of the station, a point marked by a stack of three horizontal sleepers astride the final rail length. The goods yard was still in business. After a stop of nearly half an hour 'at Tenterden station where BR

have at last been applying a paintbrush to good effect' it was time to begin the return journey, almost leaving behind one enthusiast who appeared from the direction of St. Michael's Tunnel.

This time 32636 was in the lead, having taken over the special rectangular headboard proclaiming 'Branch Line Society Railtour'. Another water stop at Rolvenden followed, blocking the level crossing for some time and trying car drivers' patience to the extreme. Here Mr. Ian Hurst, the organiser and a rare character to boot, auctioned a set of photographs of the line in its vintage years which, with a collection on the train, produced the somewhat miserly sum of just over £3 for the Railway Orphanage. Centre of debate amongst the erudite was a mysterious rail trolley by the trackside thought to incorporate the wheels of the former KESR Ford railcar.

On board was Mr. W.G. Rann, clerk in charge at Tenterden, who left the train at his 'home' station of Northiam from where the special ran 'fast' to Robertsbridge which it reached at its scheduled time of 5.8 p.m., taking an overall time of 68 minutes compared with the outward trip of 81. From there the enthusiasts caught 'a modern diesel train (the Hastings six car DEMU) to London en route for their homes as far away as Liverpool, Sheffield and Bristol, while the "Terriers" double headed the empty stock back to Hastings.

It had been a good day, excellent value for money, and many probably thought, as one of the picture captions suggested, that this would possibly be the last passenger train along the line. In closing let me quote the paper's

footnote: 'There are still some who refuse to believe the line has had it. The growth of Tenterden and an improved main line service soon to start at Robertsbridge would, they say, justify a modern diesel railcar service between the two places.' While many present must have seen the occasion as revisiting the graveside of a lost friend, we must be grateful there were those who refused to believe the line had "had it". There is no doubt this episode set in motion those preservation stirrings that were to bear

fruit in the decade that followed.

\* \* \* \*

Postscript: My visits of 1953 recalled in issues 32 and 33 of *The Tenterden Terrier* turned out to be false funerals, given that I found myself travelling behind steam more than 4 years later. However, the pass and tickets reproduced here and used in this and previous journeys may possibly be of interest to readers.

K.M.

For issue to OTHER THAN Railway Executive Staff.

**R.E.** 25

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28<sup>th</sup> DEC. 1953.

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to ride upon the engine

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Between ROBERTSBRIDGE | ROLVENDEN  
and ROLVENDEN | HEADCORN.

Date 30<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 1953.  
Issued for the British Transport Commission  
by [Signature]

This pass must be exhibited when required, and is issued subject to the conditions printed on the other side.

0422

BRITISH RAILWAYS (S)  
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Rolvenden to  
Via [Signature]  
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NOT TRANSFERABLE.

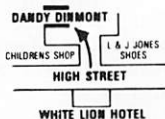
0422

0112

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Branch Line Society Tour  
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P.M. 14432 PARTY

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TENTERDEN T'N & Back  
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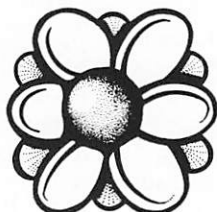
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# Book Reviews

**STEAMING THROUGH EAST SUSSEX** by Peter Hay, published by Middleton Press. 120 captioned photographs and introductory text. Price £6.95; hard covers.

The latest in the Middleton Press's series of albums maintains the high standards of previous titles. The contents are divided into five sections and within each, the lines themselves are dealt with in station order. The captions are well detailed and informative, but the overall location map is awkwardly positioned to the horizontal and lacks sufficient detail. The Kent & East Sussex is covered as an offshoot of the Hastings line with four "Terrier and train" views from the fifties and the Rye & Camber Tram, another Colonel Stephens line, by two well-known photographs of the line's Bagnall locomotives "Camber" and "Victoria". The book contains several rarities and oddities, including two nice shots - Newhaven Quay, complete with Grande Vitesse van of 1906/1908 and perhaps strangest of all, the private gasometer at Heathfield station in 1957 - a source of natural gas discovered in 1896, which was used to light the station and some village street lamps. Is it still working today?

P.D.S.

**SOUTHERN RAILWAY HALTS - SURVEY AND GAZETTEER** by R.W. Kidner, published by The Oakwood Press. 64 pages black & white photographs, maps and timetables. Price £3.90.

Roger Kidner had announced his retirement from the Oakwood Press shortly before we reviewed Locomotion Paper No. 147. This latest offering is No. 156! However, the Oakwood Press is now under new management, which leaves R.W.K. free to go on writing.

The Author's investigations into Halts in the old Southern Railway area is extensive and the reviewer was intrigued to learn of some that had existed in Kent that were unknown to him. What was a halt? the reader is asked: "was" as nowadays those that are left are known as stations. They were first built as "platforms", the term Halt coming into use during the early 1900s when the boom in building them started as a means of offering a better service with steam railcars to meet the rising competition from motor buses.

A fascinating little book, especially recommended to students of the Southern scene. Just where was Ebbsfleet & Cliffsend Halt?

P.C.S.

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# Rails to Tenterden

## Paul Sutton recounts some details of the latest permanent way materials recovery exercise

As the railway progresses and extends, the demand for more track components intensifies and by their very nature, re-usable rail, points and chairs tend to command high scrap prices. As our part of South East England is not industrialised, the number of redundant private sidings that could offer us useful material are few and far between. Thus, it was fortunate that a quantity of track, points and buffer stops was discovered last year by a member of the Permanent Way department, lying out of use in Paddock Wood at the site of an old grain silo. As a result of patient negotiation with the new owner of the property, we were offered some 390 yards of 91 ¼ lb bullhead track, three type C 95 lb. turnouts (points) and two sets of railbuilt buffer stops at an extremely low price.

Readers may wonder why we should want 91 ¼ lb rail – a S.E.C.R. product, long forgotten on the main lines. The main objects of our desires at the sites were, of course, the turnouts, followed by the buffer stops and lastly the track, which came as part of the whole deal. However, as we still have one small section of 91 ¼ lb rail on the operating section and a further one between Northiam and Bodiam, the removed material will be useful for spot replacement during routine maintenance.

T.R.C. Director George Wright arranged

working parties to dismantle the track and fittings and these took place during January and February. The operation was well organised with all material being carried on flat trolleys (while the last siding was still in position) and dumped in separate skips. The rails were towed along the track bed by a J.C.B., in readiness for loading on to David Brailsford's artic. All sleepers were left in position as it had been established at an early stage that they would be unfit for re-use. Indeed, not much could be seen of them, as the majority had become fairly well covered in grass and weeds. A certain amount of tree felling had to take place before lifting operations could commence.

All in all, this was a well planned, efficient operation with maximum co-operation being given to, and received by, the owner of the property, resulting in our acquiring many valued fittings at a very reasonable price.

Paddock Wood, for those unfamiliar with the area, lies on the South Eastern main line to Dover, some 4½ miles to the east of Tonbridge. The station opened on 31st August 1842, being known then as Maidstone Road. When the branch to Maidstone was opened on 24th September 1844 the name was changed to Paddock Wood. The junction assumed further status when the line to Hawkhurst finally



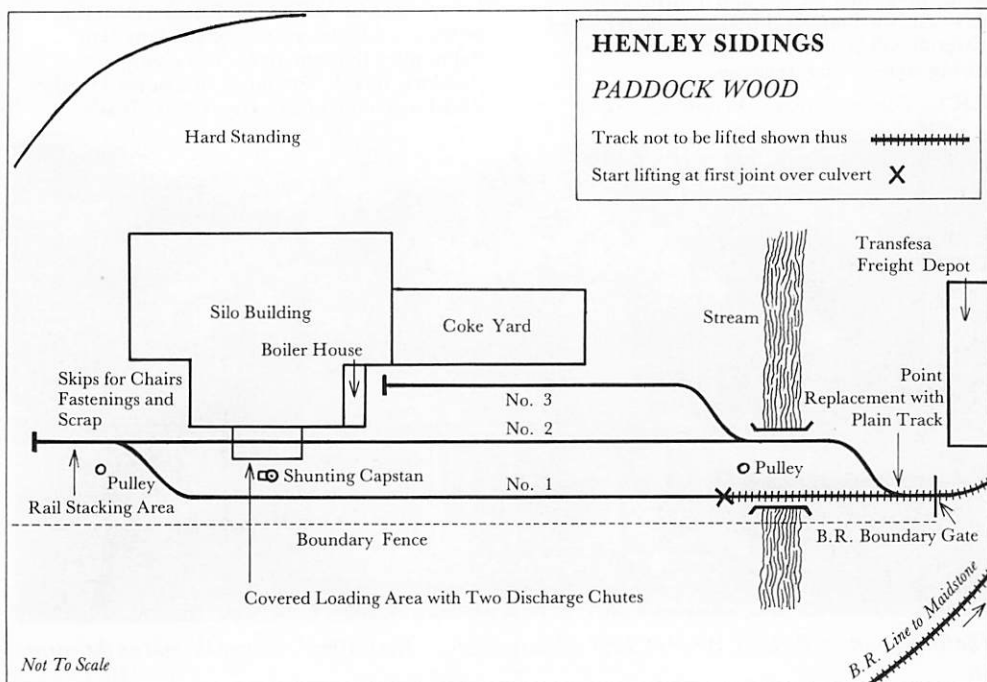
*The lifting party at Paddock Wood on 12th January 1986. "The Gaffer", George Wright on the extreme left.*

*[Paul Sutton]*



Work in progress alongside the loading bay, 12th January 1986

[Paul Sutton]



opened as far as Goudhurst on 1st October 1892. The extension to Cranbrook and Hawkhurst was not passed as fit for traffic until 4th September the following year. As well as the public goods yard there were sidings for Rowntrees, Mack & Edwards (fruit and vegetable importers) the Hops Marketing Board and the grain silo. When the main line and the Maidstone West route were electrified in 1961 the Hawkhurst branch was closed on 12th June, the same day as the K. & E.S.R. Most of the private sidings became disused and were taken up. In the 1970s a decision was taken to close the B.R. Hither Green Continental Freight Depot and site a new privately owned one at Paddock Wood, next to the Maidstone line. This has resulted in a big increase in the foreign rolling stock, both in the depot and in reception sidings nearby.

Until recently the first three-quarters of a mile of the Hawkhurst branch, which ran parallel to the main line, was intact, but then a gap appeared at the Cranbrook end and late last year the connecting point at Paddock Wood was removed. However, the double faced S.E.R. clock on the Up platform ticks on.

Finally a reminiscence from John Baker, who was a member of the recovery gang. . . . One of his first jobs on the then Southern Railway in

1946, as a Passed Cleaner, was the Paddock Wood shunt, normally a C Class duty from Tonbridge shed. Several times their 8-hour shift would turn into a 16-hour one as Tonbridge had no spare crews to send as relief – many men still being in the forces perhaps?

One day, during shunting, the front end of the 'C' became dry and a bit noisy. One of the tricks of the trade at that time was to put a large gob of wagon axlebox grease down the blast pipe during a pause in operations. While the loco was stationary this would melt and lubricate the parts that the proper cylinder oil had not reached (like that lager!) However, on this occasion things didn't go according to plan; the break over, John and his driver climbed back on to the footplate and moved off, whereupon the unmelted lump of grease shot out of the chimney and landed on the head of the Senior Shunter. To a seventeen-year-old this seemed incredibly funny, but his driver warned him that the dignity and co-operation of shunters had to be maintained.

\* \* \* \*

*The author would like to thank George Wright for help given in preparation of this article and Mr. Jack Henley of Henley Transport Ltd. for his help, generosity and co-operation throughout.*



*The Shunting Capstan, made by Stothart & Pitt Ltd. Engineers of Bath in 1943, on site at Paddock Wood, 12th January, 1986*  
[Paul Sutton]

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