

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 46

Summer 1988



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.*

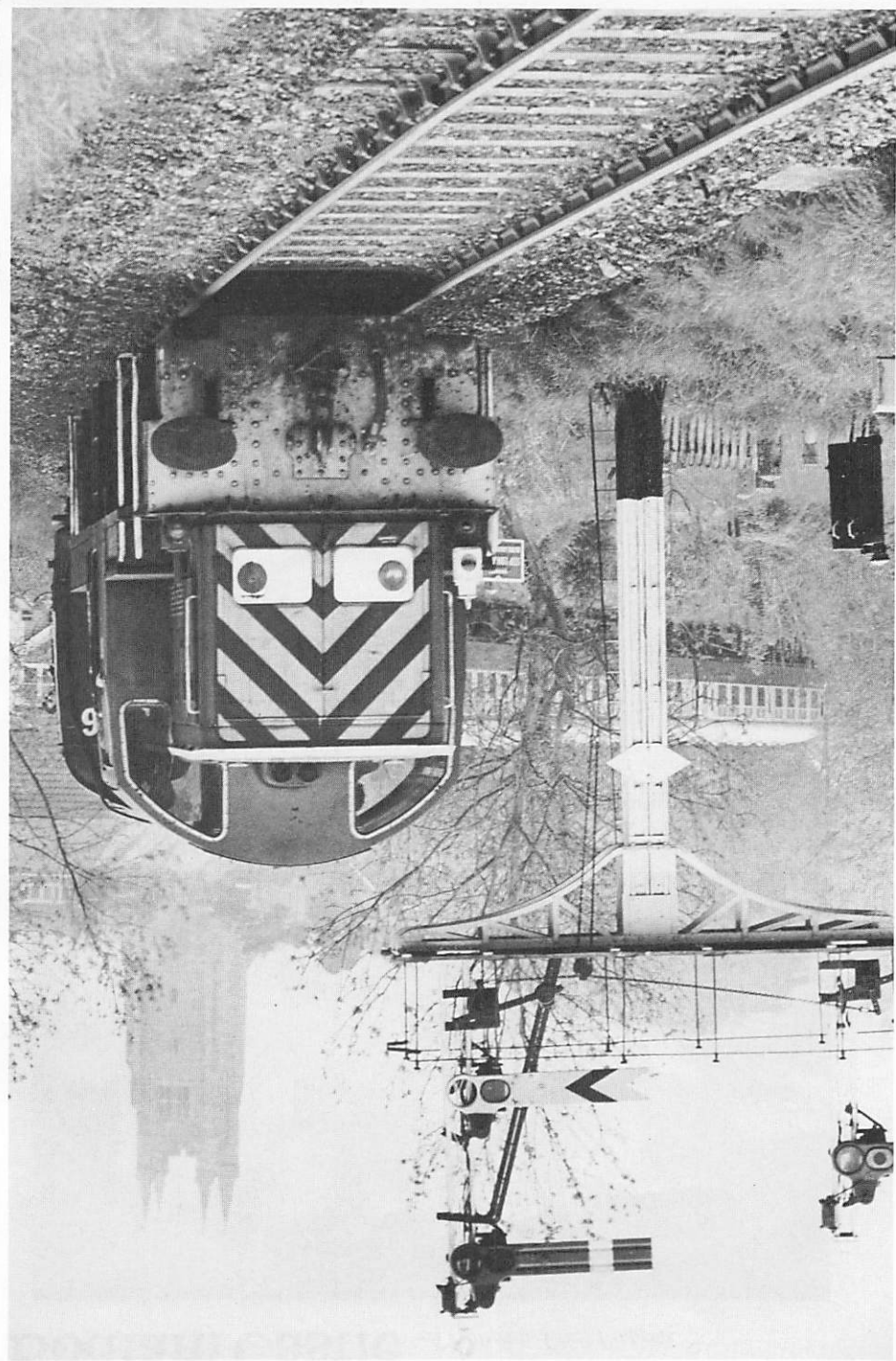
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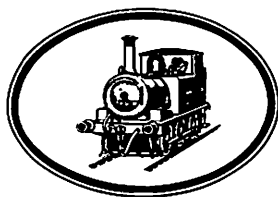


This 500 year old manor hall is open every afternoon (except ordinary Mondays) from 1 April to 16 October, also weekends October 22/23 29/30 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. (last admission 5 p.m.). The gardens, well known for the wide variety of plants is open earlier at 11 a.m. on May 28/29, Sundays in July & August, also August 29th. 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 (07974) 3160.



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Number 46

Summer 1988

Contents

- 2 Frontispiece
- 3 Editorial
- 4-15 Lineside News
- 18-19 Pole Route
- 20-21 People in Profile-12
- 24-25 Southern Steam
- 26-28 A matter of History
- 31-35 Coaches allocated to the Kent & East Sussex from 1948 to 1954
- 36-37 "We liked the trains"
- 38-39 Backward Byway
- 41-43 Evening Visitor
- 46-48 Signalling at Rolvenden since 1948

FRONT COVER Terrier no 10 Sutton and P Class 1556, both in Southern Railway liveries, haul the 2.00pm train from Tenterden Town to Wittersham Road on 7th May 1988
(Brian Stephenson)

FRONTISPIECE Class 14, ex-British Railways 9525, heads out of Tenterden with a test train of six vehicles on 11th May 1988
(Jim Berryman)

Editorial

Where have all the members gone?

Neil Rose's introduction to *Lineside News* highlights the necessity of members to come forward and help to run the Railway. Whilst some departments experience few problems in this respect, others are lamentably short and the picture is one of concern, with a small, but perceptible drop in overall support – the vital Pullman services being notable in this respect. Now that we have a full time administrator at Tenterden station, there should be no problem in making contact with the working membership – Jack Wood would welcome a phone call or personal visit. After all, nothing is lost by making an initial approach – even if it does not lead to commitment at this stage. With a permanent staff of only two, the Kent & East Sussex cannot expect to survive, let alone expand, without a greater degree of enthusiasm than we are experiencing at present.

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Lineside News

Compiled by Neil Rose

Ten years ago this summer Wittersham Road station opened. Yet it seems no time at all since it was an adventure to take a train westwards down the valley from Rolvenden. Rails disappeared in a swathe of brambles and meadow grasses, while a precarious Newmill Bridge acted as an effective barrier to further progress. It is no bad thing to reflect on achievements over the last decade and The Tenterden Terrier over the years makes interesting reading. Much of the work has been behind the scenes, upgrading track and drainage, bringing locomotives and rolling stock into the operating fleet and improving working conditions.

We have developed visitor facilities. Tenterden Town station today bears only a passing resemblance to that which Holman F Stephens knew, with shop, buffet, study centre, toilet block, even a children's playground. These developments may offend the sensibilities of railway purists, but we are an important centre in the South East England tourist industry. A major part of our revenue comes from visitors who see the Railway as an entertainment which competes with other attractions for their attention. It is a market that is fickle and demanding. We have to respond accordingly if we are to have a secure future.

It is important to remember that one commodity is essential for the success of the Railway, the enthusiasm and dedication of the working members. Unless those who operate the trains, maintain stock and provide services for visitors derive satisfaction from what they are doing, the Railway becomes unviable. People will cease to volunteer if they are taken for granted or if their hobby becomes a burden rather than a pleasure. The Railway is as much about the hopes and aspirations of the members, as providing a public service. The balance is not always an easy one to maintain especially as demands on resources steadily increase.

Fortunately, the vast majority of volunteers would admit to getting immense pleasure from the Railway. As the following notes indicate, there are plenty of areas where new blood will be welcomed. If you are interested in helping in any capacity do telephone Jack Wood at the station office on Tenterden (05806) 5155.

Boardroom

The wet weather in early 1988 created havoc with Rolvenden's rebuilding. That the work was finished in time is a credit to all concerned and particular thanks must go to those who came

down in the days leading up to Easter, often working until ten or eleven o'clock at night relaying the track. Understandably, the appalling conditions caused the programme to go over budget, as materials – and in some cases volunteers (!) – disappeared into the quagmire. Some readjustment to the remaining 1988 Permanent Way Department's work programme and budget has been necessary to compensate for the overspending.

By the end of April it was evident that an over-ambitious Wealden Pullman schedule was straining staff resources to the limit. To ease the staffing problems and allow an early start on the Winter 88/89 overhaul of the Pullman set, a decision has been taken to conclude the Pullman season at end-October. Pullman services are a very important source of revenue to the Railway, and to make up for the anticipated lower income and retain a balanced budget this year, some adjustments have been made to planned expenditure in other Departments. Help is always needed with Pullman services.



(Jim Berryman)

People - Jack Wood

Jack Wood joined the company on 14th March 1988 as Tenterden site manager. A former

bank manager from Bearstead who took early retirement, Jack responded to our advertisement and was chosen from a dozen applicants for the job. His duties include liaising with film and T.V. companies, organising school parties and overall responsibility for the shop. Jack is at the station full time from Mondays to Fridays and would like to make contact with new volunteer helpers for whom he will endeavour to find interesting jobs in all departments. If you do not already contribute to the practical side of running the Railway and would like to do so, why not call in to see him or telephone – you will be certain of a warm welcome

Steam Locomotives

No. 3 (32670): Barlow Boilers, of Warrington, have indicated that they can repair the inner firebox of this locomotive. An engineer has visited Rolvenden and a detailed quotation for the job is awaited. Subject to approval and sufficient funds being available, there is some hope that repairs may commence soon.

No. 10: The Terrier re-entered traffic on Sunday 10 April, and seems to be running well after its cylinder repairs. It looks resplendent in Southern livery in a style similar to that carried when on the Isle of Wight between 1930/7 where it ran as W9 "Fishbourne". It carries a SR style brass plate on the rear of the coal bunker.

No. 11 (1556): Fully serviceable and running well. The recently fitted brick arch has dramatically reduced coal consumption and tendency to throw out sparks.

No. 14: In service and running well; now reassessed as a Class 1b locomotive and is permitted to work the Pullman set up Tenterden Bank unaided. Some minor firebox work was undertaken over the winter; the existing ashpan was inadequate, causing ash blockages which had rotted the foundation ring rivet heads. Adrian Landi constructed a new ashpan, fitted before Easter. Draughting arrangements were also improved. Bob Timmins partially repainted and varnished the locomotive which has looked extremely smart in service use.

No. 19: Work on the tender is progressing well. Lawrence Donaldson's team have rebuilt both front and rear drag boxes, while the frames have undergone a thorough examination much

corrosion being found and dealt with. Tony Pearson has been busy descaling and repainting the frames and wheels. The axleboxes are also being examined, receiving remedial work as required. New brake blocks have been cast and the rigging completely overhauled. Brian Remnant has continued work on the tank, including welding on the original valance.

The locomotive's boiler remains at Hedges' workshop at Chatham Dockyard and is on target to return to Rolvenden by end-summer. Bob Blackley has spent much time at Chatham acting as liaison between the Railway and the contractors where the project is being overseen by boiler inspector, Bill Vincent.

The Norwegian Locomotive Trust still seeks money so that pipework can be replaced and a proper job made of reassembly and repainting. A comprehensive booklet about the project has been produced by Derrick Bilsby aimed at Norwegian companies with UK connections, with the objective of raising support from that source. Trust members raised funds by manning a Pullman train in May, profits going towards the locomotive. However, wider support from amongst the Railway's membership is welcomed – details about £100 shares can be obtained from Tenterden and, of course, donations are always accepted.

No. 22 (30065): During its winter examination, the right-hand valve liners were found to be scored so "Maunsell" is out of service whilst they are remachined. A new piston valve head is being made and fitted. It is hoped that the previous dreadful coal consumption will be reduced as a result of this work. The sidetanks have been repainted and Bob Timmins also painted 'British Railways' on them as the original transfers were in poor condition.

No. 23 (191): Fully serviceable but due to be repainted soon. Meanwhile the 'temporary' camouflage livery still gives this locomotive a most distinctive appearance.

No. 24: Its ten year overhaul started very quickly; the boiler was removed from the frames on 16 March and will go to Warrington for specialist repair work. The smokebox and ashpan have been removed and sent away as patterns for replacements. Work has started on cleaning down the cylinder casting with the frames etc needing degreasing prior to a full repaint.

No. 25: In service.

No. 26: Its overhaul is completed and by the time these Notes are read the locomotive should be in regular traffic; its entry into service took place on Sunday 22 May and an official naming ceremony is planned for June. "Linda" was steamed for the first time on the KESR on Easter Monday when a few minor defects were found; remedial work has included the replacement of a split internal boiler supply pipe, refacing the regulator valve, overhaul of the whistle valve and the repacking and tightening of sundry leaking joints.

Bob Timmins has been responsible for the locomotive's painting. It is finished in BR Western Region Brunswick Green with a black and orange line. The 14B shedplate of Kentish Town carried on the smokebox door is in recognition of owner Bob Forsythe's early railway career. Many people have given much time and effort to restore this locomotive to a very fine standard and they are to be congratulated on a job well done.

Diesel Locomotives

No. 40: The BTH Bo+Bo has been employed on station pilot duties at Tenterden.

Nos. 41 & 43: The two O-4-O diesel shunters have continued to run well and have seen intensive service on PW Dept workings. Ruston No. 41 clocked up well over 1600 operating hours during its first year on the Railway whilst Drewry No. 43 covered some 284 miles during the closed season.

No. 42: The Hunslet O-6-O awaits the refitting of its new wheelset when shed space can be made available for this work and other repairs to be completed.

Former No. 43, Fowler O-4-ODH has left the KESR for its new home on the Slough & Windsor Railway.

No. 45: The larger Drewry, BR Class 04 O-6-ODM, has remained in use although confined to Rolvenden where it has acted as yard pilot.

No. 46: Work on this BR Class 03 shunter has been progressing well with the overhaul of the connecting rods and painting of the frames completed.

No. 49: Most of the Diesel Department's limited resources have been concentrated on the BR Class 14 Diesel-Hydraulic (D9525/NCB 507). It has been fitted with vacuum exhausters and associated pipework, as well as undergoing a thorough mechanical inspection. A large number of minor defects have been put right and the airtanks have undergone testing and examination for insurance purposes. On Wednesday 12 May it successfully hauled two test trains, the first comprising seven bogie passenger carriages and the second 23 wagons, a mammoth size by KESR standards. Both tests were successfully accomplished and it headed its first trail passenger train the following Sunday; unfortunately gremlins attacked the mechanics en route which necessitated rescue, the locomotive being returned to Rolvenden for repairs within the cooling system. Hopefully, No. 49 will have taken its place in the Railway's diesel fleet by early summer.

Rolvenden Depôt

The area surrounding the outside pit was reconcreted shortly before Easter and a new fence erected, the work resulting from the drainage scheme. Easter saw the demolition of the former Running Foreman's Office. The office has made way for a new 40ft ship's container intended as a workshop for the Diesel Department. Oiltank arrangements have been altered and bulk deliveries now eliminate the tedious and backbreaking work of handpumping from 45 gallon drums, much to everyone's relief. The old fuel tank has been replaced by a new one near the signalbox and a pump will be installed to assist refuelling. Michael Harman is replacing and rewiring all the outside lights and several more have been erected to aid work after dark. Finally, new rail fencing has been put in beside the shed roadway.

Carriage and Wagon

During the closed season all eight BR Mk.1 coaches underwent their annual heavy maintenance, as well as repairs and modifications. Both ends of each vehicle were lifted, the bogie pivots and suspension checked and greased, as well as a thorough testing of the vacuum brakes. Much time was spent repairing toilets, several of which had been locked out of use for several months due to leaking roof tanks. Between the coaches there are 14 toilets to be maintained in good order.



The recently-arrived Drewry diesel-mechanical locomotive 'Titan' at Rolsvenden on 7th May 1988
(Brian Stephenson)

Mk.1 TO No. 64 had its seating stripped out in January and sent away for retrimming in orange/black pattern moquette. The seats were refitted just before Easter. All Mk.1 coaches now have new pattern seating or good quality BR material.

Mk.1 CKs Nos. 86 & 87 have had their 1st class compartments upgraded by fitting new green pattern curtains, mirrors engraved KESR, as well as traditional pictures. Carpets are being installed as they become available. Early style BR first class and no smoking window transfers have replaced modern examples. No. 87 had to be unloaded before work on the interior could commence, having arrived last year full up with spare seating and fittings.

Over Easter, the Wealden Pullman set received attention. Pullman No. 52 Barbara had its roof painted white, with minor paint attention to the bodysides. One vacuum brake cylinder, which had been giving problems, was repaired by robbing No. 51 Theodora of equipment. The cylinders are of a non-standard type and probably will have to be renewed in the future.

Mk.1 RU No. 69 Diana's body paintwork on one side was in poor condition with crazing and flaking; after preparation, this side was repainted in Pullman colours, lettered and lined out by David Dine. Body sheeting around the windows is showing signs of corrosion and

as a consequence heavy repairs will be needed within 12 months.

Maunsell BSO No. 53 saw minor repairs to the roof which has also been painted white as well as patch painting on one bodyside. The vacuum brake main train pipe was found to be badly corroded and leaking in several places where it rested on support brackets and so was renewed completely. A new steam heat main pipe section and branch below the lavatory end needed the bogie to be run out. Finally, PMV No. 74 (1808) had roof canvas repairs and repainting, as well as patch repainting on one bodyside.

The following vehicles have received attention in the workshop.

No. 80 PMV (1248 ex DS161). Entered the workshop for overhaul in February having been in store since arrival in 1984. All the glazing had been smashed and was replaced by steel sheets, while one door was replaced. New roof canvas was fitted. Now painted in SR olive green with white roof and SR lettering; in use as C&W Dept stores van.

No. 129 LSWR 10t goods van (2780) also entered the workshop in February to replace the roof canvas which had blown off. The van was repainted LSWR brown, with appropriate lettering. Unfortunately a large quantity of water had soaked through the unprotected roof

whilst it stood out near Hexden Bridge; seat backs stored inside were damaged beyond repair and were burnt.

No. 79 PMV (1145 ex DS70217). This vehicle, used as the PW Dept mess and tool van, entered the workshop in early May for overhaul. A new roof canvas was fitted and repairs carried out to the bodywork, buffers and vacuum brake. Also repainted in SR olive green and lettering, but with a grey roof.

No. 56 SR Maunsell C.K. Community Programme Scheme staff have continued their work on this coach. All timber affected by dry rot has been removed, including two compartment partitions, a large section of roof boards over one compartment and all the corridor partition top rail. The vehicle was sprayed throughout with dry rot killer during February and new timbers are being refitted. Many of the roof curved timber packings have been replaced and a start has been made fitting new ceiling panels. Most of the window framing has been renewed and all the glazing rebbed. Virtually all the varnish stripping has been completed, and rebuilding of the compartments is starting. Forthcoming work includes repairs to the body framing ready for the fitting of new body sheeting.

Within the workshop a caged wall has been erected to fence off the woodworking machinery area. All the machines have been wired in and additional (much needed) power points fitted through the centre of the shed. The storage area and materials are gradually being sorted into some semblance of order as time permits.

No C&W Dept news would be complete without a report on stock arrivals—

No. 156 12t 5 plank dropside open wagon. B741291. Builder and date not yet known. Wheelbase 12ft and vacuum braked. Latterly used as packing wagon with Eastleigh breakdown crane and fitted with through air brake pipes. Painted yellow. BR code "PIPE".

Nos. 157/158 Both 13t steel sided dropside open wagons. Wheelbase 10ft. BR code "MEDFIT". No. 157—B460168, built Ashford 1952 to lot 2351. Vacuum fitted; brakework and suspension LMS style and pattern. Latterly used as a weight wagon to test weighbridges. No. 158 builder and date not yet known. B460575. Latterly internal user wagon

numbered 083606 used at Woking pre-Assembly Depôt to carry track materials. Both arrived Wittersham Road on 12 March.

No. 159 SECR 25t Goods brake van. High roof with long body of a type known as "Dancehalls". Number not yet known. Acquired from Resco Rlys who had stripped off all bodyside and end boarding ready for rebuilding. Two buffers and some braking equipment missing. Intended to rebuild eventually as original. Arrived Rolvenden on 23 March.

Community Programme Scheme

As well as working on the Maunsell coach for the C&W Dept, there is an associated C.P.S. outside team. Winter work concentrated on erecting a timber three-rail fence around the Tenterden car parking field and associated areas. New timber gates were fitted at the field's entrance and a single pedestrian gate fitted in the fence line. Two cast iron lamp posts have been installed at the entrance and these will be wired in shortly, while a third post will be positioned outside the C&W yard forecourt. Also, a fence has been installed alongside the Tenterden headshunt to close a large gap created by constant trespassing. Broken down and missing fencing in the area has been renewed.

Work is now centred on erecting fencing alongside No. 3 carriage siding and providing storage areas for C&W Dept materials. Once this is completed, work will begin on surfacing the C&W forecourt yard with granite sets, 60 tons of which having been delivered already.

Booking Office

Having finished 1987 on a high note, the 1988 season appears to be continuing where last year's left off: during April 9655 passengers were carried.

Rolvenden platform may not be available at all during 1988 but thanks are expressed to those booking clerks who continue to man the station, operate the gates, and generally perform a useful PR job. Another valuable job is performed by all manning the Information Kiosk on busy days. As promised, real tickets for intermediate destinations have been printed; when Rolvenden is again open for business, passengers will receive a proper ticket and not just an excuse for one!

Arthur Penny has now retired from the

booking clerks' roster. At almost 80 years of age he has served the Railway in a number of capacities since the earliest days of preservation. He made the long journey by public transport regularly from his Eastbourne home. We hope that Arthur will continue to visit us and we welcome Douglas Edwards, our latest recruit.

All Booking clerks are thanked for their hard work last year. The face behind the window is the first volunteer usually encountered by the public; a pleasant manner and welcoming smile works wonders for the Railway's image. If anyone else is interested in joining the team, and it's high time a few ladies came along, please contact John Emmott at Tenterden.

Building

Because of the permanent way work and consequent lack of space at Rolvenden, it was decided to assemble and prime the timber

sections of the new signal box outside the C&W shed at Tenterden and to transport the structure to its destination once the trackwork had been reconnected.

The sections were loaded onto wagons on Good Friday and taken to Rolvenden that evening. 6. am on Easter Saturday saw Brian Deer and David Stubbs from the Building Dept, with Charlie Masterson as steam crane driver, erecting the framework on the brickwork base. The job was completed by 8. am, leaving the line clear in plenty of time for the day's services. Thanks are due to those concerned for their efforts at a very early hour.

Over the following weeks the roof timbers and cladding were erected, with the roof slating due to be carried out by a contractor. The signal box is an impressive addition to the Railway at Rolvenden: considering that most of the work



Newly restored Austerity locomotive 'Linda' outside Rolvenden shed on 7th May 1988, prior to returning to service
(Brian Stephenson)

has been carried out by volunteers, it is an achievement to be proud of by all concerned.

During the closed season loose and broken coping stones at Tenterden station were replaced or rebbed. Tarmac has been put down on one damaged part of the platform and to the area at the Headcorn end which previously had not been properly surfaced.

Catering

The Easter crowds also helped to provide the buffet with record takings, an encouraging start to the season. This year's policy is to continue to provide easily prepared food – sandwiches, cakes and simple hot snacks such as soup, which past experience has shown amply meets the requirements of the majority of visitors. Behind the scenes the dishwasher has proved an unqualified success and hopefully will encourage more people to volunteer their help, safe in the knowledge they will not have to spend most of the day with their hands in hot washing up water.

Clearance

Earlier this year Department members worked between Wittersham Road and Hexden Bridge; this area will be sprayed manually in July to stop regrowth. Tenterden headshunt has seen some clearance work, as well as the removal of storm damaged trees, in readiness for tracklaying work. Three large, potentially dangerous, willow trees have been removed in the vicinity of Newmill Bridge. In addition several family groups have been working on the upper section of Tenterden Bank, above Cranbrook Road crossing, while across the border into East Sussex the Hastings Conservation Volunteers have been making steady progress, to a very high standard, between the Rother Bridge and Northiam station.

The annual weed spraying exercise, undertaken by contractors, was due to take place on 26 May. Through the summer and autumn the Department will be working on the Kent end of the Extension, between Hexden and the Rother Bridges.

Department Manager, Allan Tebboth, would assure anyone that 'High Summer on the Marsh is Lovely': why not find out for yourself – for details of clearance parties contact Allan on Tenterden 3011.

Extension News

At the time of writing the Railway is still awaiting the outcome of two applications for financial help towards the cost of rebuilding the line. Unfortunately, one of the conditions attached to grant aid is that work cannot begin until a decision has been given and so the planned start in April/May was deferred. Hopefully, we shall be able to make up lost time and retain the target date of reopening to Northiam in Spring 1990.

In the meantime, sales of Bonds are continuing, with over £131,000 raised by end-April – leaving just £44,000 to go! The last lap is always the hardest, but if we are going to reopen on time with an attractive station rather than a half-finished building site, and a fully ballasted track, then the remaining Bonds must be sold. Copies of the Prospectus are still available from Tenterden station office.

Marketing

The 1988 season got off to a flying start with another very successful Easter Family Fun Weekend, sponsored by the Kent Messenger Newspaper Group. Nearly 7000 passengers travelled over the four days, with Good Friday setting a record for the number of passengers carried in one day – 1963 on 10 trains. No less than 16 relief trains were provided over the holiday weekend in an effort to carry all waiting passengers. It really was the rush hour all day every day and it was quite a relief when the weekend was over! The shop and buffet benefited from the influx of visitors by turning in excellent figures.

Everyday running during the week following Easter was deemed worthwhile and will be repeated. Since Easter, traffic has remained largely on target for an 8% increase over 1987 but a better than expected May Day holiday weekend has further boosted figures. April's traffic was 66% up on 1987 but as we ran on 15 days instead of six a direct comparison cannot be made.

The overall product offered to the public is greatly improved. The days of threadbare, dusty seats in carriages are behind us. Different coach liveries add interest and variety in motive power further enhances a visit. The Railway now employs on a part-time basis a cleaner who ensures that the shop, buffet, exhibition room and toilets are thoroughly cleaned each week, an important step forward. She also cleans the

Wealden pullman set.

A controversial display plinth for a pump trolley, featuring a length of ballasted track with flower beds at either end, has been built to enclose the outside seating area adjoining the buffet. It provides a visual focal point, especially now that it has been planted up with trees and shrubs; it provides another item of interest to visitors.

The Study Centre building, a wooden structure put up last year, has been transformed into an Exhibition Hall and Video Theatre. The Exhibition Hall features a photographic display illustrating certain highlights from the Railway's history and, although unfinished, is already proving popular. The Hall doubles as a classroom for our schools' business.

Our advertising catchment areas have been enlarged to include the South London suburbs and Croydon area. Hitherto the marketing strategy has been to raise our profile within a 30 mile radius. This has been largely achieved and so attention is being turned further afield. With a tight budget it is better to concentrate the limited resources rather than dissipate it too thinly over a wide area. A larger 1988 budget has allowed the area to be enlarged without reducing the impact of our advertising in the local neighbourhood.

Membership

1987 was a demanding year on the membership front. Administration procedures had worked well for nearly a decade but, for a variety of reasons, it was felt that the time had come for a change. This involved much additional work for the Membership Secretary and with the wholehearted co-operation of the two Membership Renewal Secretaries, the changeover went remarkably smoothly. The end result is that the Railway now has a modern, flexible, fully computerised membership and mailing record.

In 1987 there was a net increase in membership (in all categories) of 56, compared with 70 in 1986. Membership totalled 2577, made up of 1822 Full, Associate and Honorary, plus 755 Family. So far this year (to mid-May) 157 new members have been welcomed compared with 127 over the same period last year.

With the July 1987 mailing members in selected local areas were sent a membership application

form, the idea being for each to recruit at least one new member. Out of the 700 forms despatched, just 3 (yes, three!) new members resulted. Clearly, this was most unsatisfactory. Northiam may well be reached in 1990, yet will the services be adequately staffed if new (working) members are not forthcoming for training now? It is up to all of us to "sell" the Railway to our friends.

Operating

After the relative tranquility of running works trains during the closed season, the Railway burst back into life at Easter when 43 trains were run over the four days. Operating staff responded to the phenomenal demand, providing a regular and efficient service. The visit of members of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies to Tenterden for their Spring meeting necessitated additional trains, including the first double-headed by Terrier No. 10 Sutton (in SR green) and P-Class 1556 (in lined SR black): with past LBSCR and SECR rivalries forgotten, these two old ladies made a fine sight hauling the special ARPS lunchtime Pullman up Tenterden Bank, a sight and sound not lost on the many enthusiasts around the station that day.

Major P Olver, from the Department of Transport's Railway Inspectorate, made a two-day visit to the Railway in March, examining the new track layout at Rolvenden and the newly acquired ballast regulator. He gave valuable advice on other operating aspects, including extension plans, alterations to Wittersham Road's yard layout, Cranbrook Road crossing and a new block signalling system designed to give much greater flexibility than any of the present systems available. The proposed system has been pioneered by Peter Lawrence of the S&T Dept, with preliminary design work by Roger Rowe. A test rig was demonstrated to Major Olver and development now proceeds to a trialling stage with the objective of introducing the system next year. We are greatly indebted to Major Olver for the time he spent on the KESR and look forward to future visits.

The Operating Committee has commenced work on a major revision to the Railway's Rule Book, planned for introduction next year.

Congratulations to Tony Golding, Carol Mitchell and Graham Richards on passing out as guards; to Rex Stirling Baker, Simon Cox



Rolvenden signal box nearing completion, 7th May 1988

(Brian Stephenson)

and Richard DeCoverley on becoming diesel secondmen and to Cathy Roberts on her appointment as a controller. The increased number of trains means more work for our hard-pressed roster clerks in finding personnel for all the duties. Vacancies exist in ALL operating grades and Operating Manager, Neil Sime, would like to hear from anyone interested in keeping the trains running. Training schemes have been developed to enable trainees in all grades to reach the required standards with the minimum of delay.

Permanent Way and Civil Engineering

Almost heroic efforts were needed by PW Department members to complete the Rolvenden track works to enable trains to run over Easter. As reported in the last *Tenterden Terrier*, incessant rains at the beginning of the year made the site almost unworkable and it became a race against time to complete the task; as it was the track through Rolvenden was only passed fit for passenger services late on Maundy Thursday. If there was a "best length" prize, then the few hundred yards from Rolvenden crossing gates would certainly win it, being virtually of main line standard and far removed from the light railway shortcomings of yesteryear. Whilst the through line is complete,

the loop has yet to be joined up. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to rebuild Rolvenden platform until September when operating days can be avoided.

The entire track has been properly tamped this Spring, and the Railway's own Matisa Ballast Regulator has left the line looking neat and tidy. 700 tons of ballast have been laid this year, mostly at Rolvenden. In addition 100 tons of ash has been put down in the vicinity of Tenterden home signal, raising the track upwards of 12 inches in places.

The new siding on the Tenterden side of Rolvenden level crossing has been completed and is in use. Forthcoming work, apart from general track maintenance, includes the laying in of rails in June to extend Tenterden headshunt to the legal boundary. This will give another 4-5 coach lengths of shunting space.

At Wittersham Road some 5000 concrete sleepers have been sorted and stacked ready for use. A new headshunt, associated with the revised yard layout, has been dug out and awaits filling with minewaste and ash prior to track laying; this work is currently in abeyance following the cost over-run at Rolvenden.

Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

The first four months of 1988 have seen sales in the shop more than double last year's figures for the corresponding period. The record Easter crowds spent more than £5000 in the shop over the four days. Jack Wood, our new Tenterden Site Manager, received his baptism by fire (or tourist) on Good Friday when he and Tim Stanger took £1550 at the rate of £300 an hour! This sum beat the previous best day's trading of £1200, achieved in December 1987, as did takings on Easter Sunday and Monday.

The shop has benefited from greater visitor numbers in April, but we would like to think that we are better prepared this year. The shop is open seven days a week, with local retired members making a valuable mid-week contribution, which will become even more important as the season progresses. However, there is a severe shortage of volunteer help at the weekends, when the majority of our visitors spend. It would be a great pity if the progress made in our retail business slowed down because of lack of volunteer support: at present it provides a profit in excess of £20,000 each year, which is needed to fund the Railway's development. Jack Wood is responsible for the shop roster – so please offer your help if you can, it is a very satisfying job.

Finally, the Board has decided that forthwith only working members will qualify for the present 10% discount on purchases; other members will receive 5%.

Signals & Telegraph

Evidence of Rolvenden's signalling is clearly visible. Over Easter two signal posts were erected. The first, the down inner home, is a SR half bracket post comprising a rail built main section and a lattice doll. It is located at the Wittersham Road end of the new platform and will control entry into the loop. The second, the down advanced starter, is an SR type straight double rail post located near the Sewage Works siding. The up loop starter was put up in early May and is a straight lattice post mounted on a steel plate bolted to the new concrete pad surrounding the loco pit. Further concrete troughing has been installed in the station area, intended to protect signalling and telephone cables.

At Tenterden a metal battery compartment has been positioned behind the signal box, replacing the temporary wooden shed which

had housed the signalling batteries for the past year.

The Department's programme of telegraph pole replacement has seen life expired poles at Cranbrook Road and Northiam being renewed. Work has continued with the rigging of additional overhead wires at Rolvenden, needed for the signalling scheme.

News from Area Groups

Ashford. The Model Railway Exhibition in March was again successful with over 1000 people through the doors and a net profit of £380. Of this, £200 has been given towards the purchase of the new outside event caravan. Ashford Group members will assist at its first outing to the Sellinge Steam Rally at Whitsun.

A visit to the Waterloo & City Railway ("The Drain" to commuters), to see it before major changes are made to this unique underground line, was much enjoyed and we are joining with Maidstone Group in a visit to the Great Central Railway. A further visit to the Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway is planned for 16th June. Group meetings continue on the third Wednesday in the month at the BR Social Club, Beaver Road, Ashford at 7.30 pm; all visitors are very welcome – details from Eric Graves, telephone Ashford 23687.

Croydon & Sutton. A hardcore of working volunteers continue to form a sound basis for meetings held on the last Tuesday of most months at the BR Staff Association Club, near East Croydon station. New members are more than welcome and although membership of the Railway is desirable, it is not a prerequisite to attend. If you live in South London or North Surrey do come along.

In March there was a members' slide evening which provided an opportunity for several people to try their hand at public speaking with a selection of worldwide railways viewed and discussed. In April, Allan Sinclair gave his slide presentation, recently updated and entitled "The Kent & East Sussex Railway 1896 – 1990". Allan has given this presentation to a wide variety of audiences across South-East England and he is always on the lookout for more to spread the message about the Railway.

In early 1988 the Croydon Tourist Information Centre wrote to Marketing Manager, Mark Toynbee, inviting participation in a major

tourist promotion entitled "Transports of Delight", held at the Town Hall on Saturday 23 April. Mark contacted the Group who were delighted to undertake the commitment. Many societies, groups and businesses attended but the K&ESR was the only standard gauge railway to provide a display. Video tapes, slide projector screens and uniformed staff all contributed to a professional looking display attracting many interested people: nearly 1,000 timetable leaflets were taken away by potential visitors to Tenterden. Thanks are due to members Claire Studd, Shaun Uphill and John Pritchard for giving time up to assist. Also on the promotional theme, the Information Centre at West Croydon Bus Station was supplied with timetable leaflets to coincide with a special excursion being run to the K&ESR by the Wandle District of London Buses on Sunday 26 June. If successful it is hoped that the sight of a red double-deck bus will become a regular feature in the car park at Tenterden.

Further information about the Group's activities, including the slide presentation, can be obtained from Allan Sinclair on (01) 777 8025.

Maidstone. The Group's contribution towards the Extension will be the funding of the public shelter on the proposed 'up' platform at Northiam. This will be financed mainly from the sale of waste paper: all members can assist by leaving their newspapers and computer paper in the trailer at Tenterden – neatly bundled please!

The Group will be represented at the Kent County Show and Maidstone Carnival, both annual events taking place in July. A miniature railway, pump trolley and the newly purchased publicity caravan will attend the Kent Show; the Carnival entry will take on a topical local subject. In May the Group organised a trip to the Great Central Railway.

The long awaited return quiz match against the Severn Valley Railway will be on the evening of Wednesday 12 October at the London Transport Museum, above Camden Town Underground station – all are welcome. Group meetings take place on the last Wednesday of each month, recommencing in September after the summer break, at the Kimberley Clark Social Club, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone. For details on all events contact Paul Gray on Maidstone 677587.

Sussex. 1988 has started well, with preparatory work at Northiam under way. The track was relayed to enable rolling stock to be moved out of the station area. Fence posts have been removed into storage and the former Robertsbridge footbridge moved to Rolvenden so that work can start on cleaning and painting. Two members have started restoring seats for Northiam at their homes.

The Group attended the Modelworld Exhibition at Brighton and Collerton Fayre in Eastbourne, with good results including plenty of publicity material distributed. Recent meetings have been well attended. In February John Cruse showed slides of the transport scene in the Hailsham area; railway shots included a trip from Hailsham to Polegate on a Class 33; all brought back memories for an appreciative audience. Other speakers have included Klaus Marx of Bluebell Railway fame and Ian Dean from the Amberley Chalk Pits Museum.

Any help with the footbridge and other jobs at Northiam will be much welcomed; please contact Tim Lawrence on Hailsham (0323) 845108.

Thameside. Group members continued to assist the engineering departments with their work programmes throughout the winter months. With the season now well under way, members are taking an active part in the running of trains. The majority are operating staff, whilst some work on the Wealden Pullman or with other commercial activities.

With the Group's current membership all working members, meetings tend to be a forum for exchanges of news from the Railway as well as providing greatly enjoyable social events. Another fine programme of speakers has been put together for 1988 and details can be obtained from Sue Jarvis on Dartford (0322) 54201.

Once again Bodiam station will be open on the Sunday and Monday of August Bank Holiday weekend with the usual book/souvenirs stall, light refreshments etc. Intended to remind visitors to the Castle of the Railway's proximity, please call in if you are in the area.

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K&E.S.R. cab side number plates ideal for house numbers can be cast in brass (£15) or

aluminium (£12). Other items include K&E.S.R. locomotive nameplates, smoke box number plates 32670, 30065, 31556 and various shedcode plates. Please contact Simon Long or Charlie Masterson on Cranbrook 241448 for details. All profits to Locomotive Department Projects.

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Newly restored track formation at Rolvenden, awaiting re-instatement of the platform, 7th May 1988
(Brian Stephenson)

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Pole Route

The sight of telegraph poles marching across the landscape and the sound of the wind singing in the wires are railway features that have largely disappeared during the 1980s. Nowadays telecommunications cables are usually placed in trackside troughing whilst at the extremities of the railway system radio signalling is becoming increasingly widespread. Many independent railways have abandoned their pole route, either placing cables at track level or use British Telecom lines.

The KESR retains this traditional railway feature although this may not be readily apparent to visitors at Tenterden where, for convenience, the large number of cables needed are placed in troughing for the first few hundred yards from the station. The overhead route commences just below the home signals and continues on the down side of the track all the way to Bodiam.

There are 240 telegraph poles, at approximately 80 yard intervals, ranging in height from 18 to 28 feet; the tallest two straddle the road at Wittersham Road. Some date from 1952 when BR renewed the overhead route. Each year several life-expired poles are replaced; formerly secondhand timbers were obtained but today new pine poles are purchased, costing some £45 apiece. Rotting is most likely to occur in the 5ft length of each pole below ground. Poles are rarely re-used with their rotten ends sawn off as they become too short, although they are occasionally moved intact from one position to another. Modern pressure creosoting gives replacement poles a longer life expectancy than their predecessors.

The overhead lines comprise plain galvanised wire (72lb/mile weight) and have a total length exceeding 80 miles. Copper was once widely used but proved an irresistible temptation to thieves. For safety the wires are sheaved with insulated covers where they pass beneath overhead power cables. The lines are carried between insulators ("pots"), made of china (white) or composition material (black), which are bolted on crossarms or the pole-top.

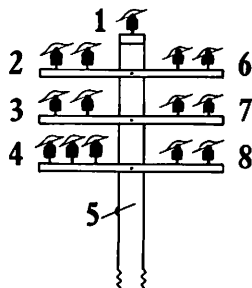
Where possible, a single wire is stretched between a run of poles, merely being bound to each insulator it passes. However, wires can break through rusting, damage by trees or even steam cranes! Remedial work includes splicing in new lengths of wire, retensioning between adjoining poles, and ensuring that all joints make strong, lasting electrical connections.

The number of wires depends on the circuits needed. These may include telephones, block and release instruments, and signal repeaters. Generally the wires are paired for each circuit but between Northiam and Bodiam there is only one for the telephone line, an earth return being sufficient. The maximum number of overhead wires carried is 14, on three cross arms, on poles near Wittersham Road; a further cable carries the wires for the station's local circuits. The accompanying diagram shows this layout which differs at other locations on the Railway. It should be noted that three telephone circuits are carried from the exchange at Rolvenden, two for use at Wittersham Road and one continuing to Northiam. The charging circuit is for the batteries located in Wittersham Road signalbox, a low current being carried through the block telephone lines from Rolvenden when the box is closed. Finally, the topmost single line is spare, maintained for use whenever needed.

The KESR is fortunate in having an overhead telecommunications route kept in excellent order. This is undoubtedly thanks to the efforts of S & T Dept member Chris Lowry who for over 20 years has looked after it virtually singlehanded. For safety he is accompanied when working along the line, but his workplace is the top of a pole, repairing, tensioning, keeping the lines in good order. It is he, with occasional help from S & T colleagues, who digs holes by hand or mechanical auger and then positions the replacement poles. He is out in all weathers most weekends throughout the year; over last winter he was fully occupied repairing the damage wrought by October's gale. It is very easy to take the pole route for granted yet Chris Lowry's dedicated work is vital to the efficient running of the Railway.

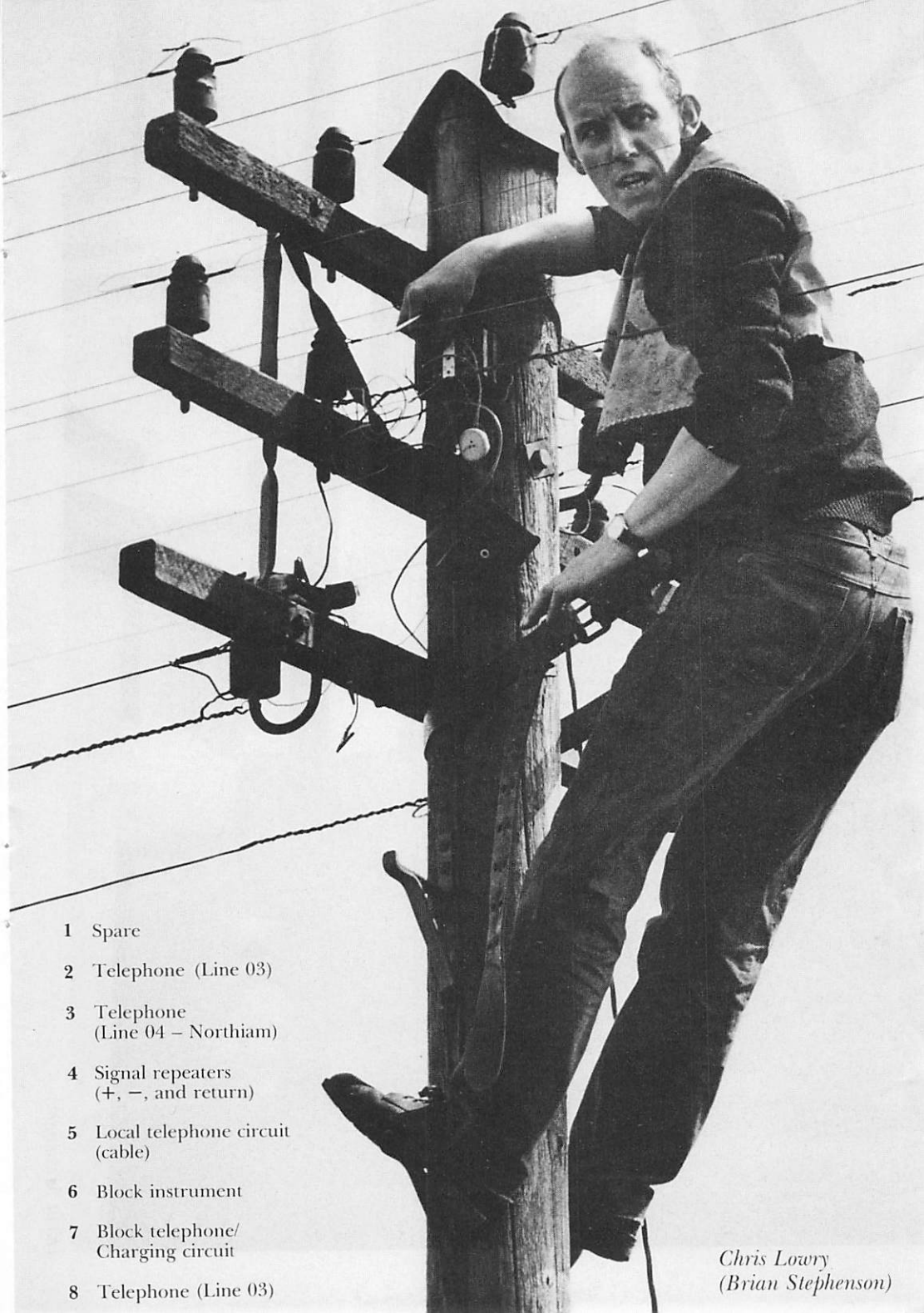
Neil Rose

Pole No.100 – Wittersham Road (Layout of circuits)



Boundary fence

Track



- 1 Spare
- 2 Telephone (Line 03)
- 3 Telephone
(Line 04 – Northiam)
- 4 Signal repeaters
(+, -, and return)
- 5 Local telephone circuit
(cable)
- 6 Block instrument
- 7 Block telephone/
Charging circuit
- 8 Telephone (Line 03)

*Chris Lowry
(Brian Stephenson)*



(Kent Messenger)



People in Profile

12: Derek Dunlavey

Derek Dunlavey was one of the first members of the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society having joined in 1961, its inaugural year, as member number 1004, the series for juniors starting at 1001. At the time, he and his friend Dick Beckett were engineering apprentices at British Railways Ashford Works and both travelled regularly to the Bluebell Railway to help at weekends. Calling in at Tenterden one day, they helped to lay a siding for two of the Society's first locomotives, "Dom" and "Gervase", which were arriving shortly. From then on, their allegiance changed and for more than 25 years now, Derek has been a regular volunteer on the K & E.S.R. His responsibilities have included permanent way, operating and currently, Director in charge of Rolvenden Locomotive works.

Born at South Shields, he moved to Bexhill with his family in 1956. He is now Project Engineer

(Traffic Plant) with British Rail based at Doncaster. A bachelor, he comes to Tenterden every other weekend and still finds time to devote to his other hobbies of canals, gardening, hill walking and industrial archeology.

Unquestionably a regular working member for longer than anyone else, he was asked what is the greatest task facing the Railway today. He replied, without hesitation, "to keep our amateur status and the volunteer atmosphere in the wake of commercial pressures" – a difficult balance to strike between the objects of a charitable organisation and the necessity to remain commercially viable. The photograph on the left was taken in 1972; Brian Stephenson's portrait taken on 7th May 1988 shows that he has changed remarkably little.

P.D.S.

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Southern Steam



by Brian Stephenson

Newly restored Terrier locomotive 'Sutton' heads 'P' class no 1556, both in Southern Railway livery.



A Matter of History

Peter Davis, a former Chairman of The Tenterden Railway Company Ltd, expresses some personal views on the Northiam project and his hopes for the future

In 1947, the late Cuthbert Hamilton Ellis wrote in his book *The Trains We Loved* — "Southern and Eastern England had several light railways built under the Act of 1896. Still there survives the delicious Kent & East Sussex. It began in 1900 as the Rother Valley and was to have grown into something more ambitious, linking Pevensey with the Medway at Maidstone, with branches to Rye, Cranbrook and Aplemore but it never got beyond Headcorn in the North and Robertsbridge in the south. The trees brush its one coach mixed train and there are lizards in the grassy yard at Rolvenden"

Although nationalisation was shortly to follow the line lost none of its distinctive character, continuing more or less undisturbed until the mid fifties, when after closure of the Headcorn extension, wholesale demolition took place. Notable survivals were, of course, Bodiam, Northiam and Tenterden stations and these were more or less intact when the present company took over. Perhaps the reasons for preserving the line should be examined. It was not only delicious to the likes of Hamilton Ellis, it was also attractive to the general public, even to the extent of it being the subject matter of a famous poem in *Punch* for the summer edition of 1946. The Kent & East Sussex was different, it was easy going, it was rustic, its rolling stock was quaint and very old. Above all, it possessed that uncluttered simplicity which was the hallmark of its builder, Holman F. Stephens. It was a haven of individuality in days of increasing standardisation and suppression of character elsewhere in the national railway system.

It was for these reasons that support was rallied for the line's preservation and reinstatement. The promoters envisaged a revived Colonel Stephens railway serving both the community and tourists. Of course, subsequent less than happy circumstances dictated that the line should be further truncated and would rely solely on tourist traffic for its revenue. It should be remembered that the fight to reopen the line lasted 13 years, during which time hundreds of members remained loyal to the project, even though for six of these years not a wheel turned. The frustration of years of painfully slow

negotiation and obstructive bureaucracy were borne by a handful of directors and members. Both volunteer workers and directors were driven by the vision of a revived K & E.S.R., a living memorial to the light railway age and to Holman F. Stephens in particular.

Looking back, can it be said that the vision has been realised? I am afraid not. From the earliest days it was understood that longer trains, extended platforms, heavier engines and even signalling would be necessary for viable operation and generation of funds sufficient to rebuild the line. Indeed, all this has taken place, but unfortunately without proper regard for the character and correct practices for a Colonel Stephens railway. Apart from characteristic fencing at Tenterden and an awning at Rolvenden, scant attempt has been made to re-create the K & E.S.R. In fact, the tendency has been to impose South Eastern & Chatham Railway, Southern Railway and even British Railways character on new developments and reinstated facilities. This is understandable, as equipment from these concerns is most readily available in our part of the Country. Also, in the formative years, expedience was paramount, aesthetics being given low priority.

Now, it seems we are in a much better position to give more thought to the authentic recreation of a Colonel Stephens Railway. Bodiam and Northiam are the only remaining examples of his many wayside and passing stations. Without questions, they should be carefully restored, perhaps to immediate post war condition. Allowances for present day traffic requirements must be sympathetic and in the Stephens idiom.

The planned 'development' at Northiam is totally unacceptable. There is no case for re-aligning the permanent way, a footbridge, a South Eastern Railway signalbox, water columns or additional buildings. If the present layout creates operating difficulties, then so be it. That is how it was and that is how we should be happy to leave it. Vintage car owners do not instal hydraulic brakes, screenwashers, indicator lights and other refinements for their own convenience and comfort. No, they savour the hardships of motoring as it was. Surely the



Northiam and Bodiam stations as they were in the 1920's and 1930's. Note oil lamps on wooden posts, bar fences and not a footbridge in sight (B.K. Copel Colonel Stephens Railway Museum)



whole point of preserving a railway, especially with unpaid labour, is also of re-living a bygone experience.

If Northiam was a Great Western Railway or Southern Railway station there would be no doubt in anyone's mind as to how it should be restored, witness the splendid period

restorations of the Severn Valley and Bluebell Railway stations. Perhaps the correct Stephens features are difficult to define, photographic evidence being the only reliable source of information. However, having studied the Stephens railways for many years and being old enough to have visited some of them, I offer the following guidance as a check list:-

Correct

*Fencing
signals
signal boxes*

*(if at all)
crossing and yard gates.
platforms
All buildings*

*Platform and yard lamps.
Trespass signs etc*

Post and rail, painted or creosoted. Privet hedges
Lower quadrant, wooden or rail posts
Low built ground frame type in timber and corrugated iron
Horizontally barred type
Brick faced, brick copings, tar and grit surface
Timber frame, corrugated iron cladding. Brick to plinth level only. Plain barge boards and finials or any form of construction permitting final appearance as above.
Wooden posts, acetylene or oil lanterns
K & E.S.R. cast iron type

Incorrect

*fencing
Signals
Signal box
Crossing and yard gates
Platforms
All buildings*

*Platform and yard lamps
Trespass signs etc*

Iron railings, wooden picket type
Upper quadrant, S.R. or B.R. type. Colour lights
High level S.R. or S.E.C.R. types. Ornate brick construction
Cross braced S.R. type
Concrete faces and copings. Tarmac surface
Brick elevations, slate roofs, arch top windows, ornate barge boards and finials
Ornate cast iron types. High intensity modern types
S.R. or B.R. signs

Naturally, there are exceptions to the above. Tenterden station uniquely being a brick structure, but compliance with these guidelines would ensure an authentic re-creation of the remaining unspoiled part of our railway.

As far as Northiam is concerned, I am sure from personal experience that relaxation of Department of Transport requirements can be negotiated in the cause of historical accuracy. For instance, why cannot passengers cross the line by a footway protected by wicket gates adjacent to the level crossing and linked into the same locking system, approach being by a fenced footpath from the platform ends – a typical Stephens feature. Do we really need water at every station? Cannot the signal box be as unobtrusive as possible and in the correct style. Why not instal lavatory facilities in one of the bungalows, suitably reconstructed for the purpose. The other could be used as a tearoom, perhaps furnished to represent a railwayman's cottage.

Some years ago, I acquired for the Railway three G.E.R. lower quadrant signals from the Ipswich Dock branch, together with two G.E.R. swivelling ground disks from Westerfield Junction. There is the basis for a representative

vintage signalling installation – if they can be found! To a great extent, the character of a railway is dominated by its permanent way and formation, sharp curves and switchback contours epitomising light railway practice. To alter the permanent way at Northiam would destroy a fine example of Stephens' curiously inconvenient layouts. The sharp turnouts and curve through the platforms are dominant features and must be retained intact. Suggestions that they may cause buffer locking and other problems can surely be discounted, as bogie stock, including Maunsell main line carriages, has always been used on the line. These days, reconstruction and reopening of private railways is fairly unremarkable. It does not even require imagination and ingenuity provided the necessary finance is forthcoming. Some terribly dull railways have emerged in the last few years and a remodelled, developed tourist packaged Northiam is likely to be another.

The clever thing to do would be to re-create a period scene along the lines suggested, providing the public with a unique and authentic experience. We are both a preservation company and a charity, we must ask ourselves what we are trying to achieve.

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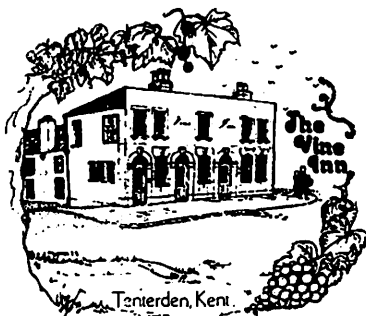


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Coaches allocated to the Kent and East Sussex from 1948 to 1954

Correspondence in *The Tenterden Terrier* Nos 37 and 38 on the subject of the coaching stock used on the Kent & East Sussex line from 1948 until closure of the passenger service has prompted me to set down all that can be gleaned from official sources.

The only respectable coaches inherited by BR from the old Company in 1948 were the two ex-London & South Western corridor brake thirds, KESR Nos 1 and 6, formerly Southern Railway Nos 3093 and 3121. No 3093 had been built in December, 1904; its first LSW number was 56 and after 1912 it became 1323. It was given its SR number in July, 1926. The building date of No 3121 was April, 1904, and its original number was 558, later 1725; its SR number was painted on in July, 1926. Body length of both vehicles was 56 ft, weight 26 tons, and both were formed in SR set 421 with a composite as middle coach. This set was disbanded in 1943 and the two brakes were sold to the KESR in December of that year. After carrying KESR numbers for four years they reverted to their old SR numbers (with "S" prefix) in 1948 and continued to be allocated exclusively to the KESR until their withdrawal in April, 1951.

In 1948 two more ex-LSW corridor brake thirds were transferred to the KESR: Nos 3170 and 3171 from 3-set 415. These were to a different design from the earlier two; both had been built in 1921 (originally numbered 1307 and 1317 respectively) and both were 57 ft over body, which was panelled in galvanised steel instead of wood, although still with wooden mouldings; they weighed 28 tons each. SR numbers were painted on in March, 1927. In photographs of KESR trains they can be distinguished by their LSW flat, square "tin" duckets; the earlier coaches at some stage had received standard SR-style duckets. No 3170 was withdrawn in December, 1949, but No 3171 lasted until October, 1950.

A further two ex-LSW 1921-built corridor brake thirds were transferred to the line in about June, 1951: Nos 3165 (LSW 1290 until February, 1927) and 3175 (LSW 1337 until August, 1927). They were from the same batch as Nos 3170/1; No 3165 had been for a short time in 3-set 403, but No 3175 was "loose". These two remained on the KESR until closure in January, 1954, and saw further service elsewhere, being withdrawn in December, 1957.

All six of these brake thirds are recorded as having been branded "To work between Headcorn and Robertsbridge via Tenterden only."

Next we come to the unique coach No 2650. This began life in June, 1909, as LSW corridor brake composite No 948, renumbered 3608 after 1912 and SR 6499 in May, 1924. Body length was 56 ft and the coach weighed 28 tons. It had two first class compartments flanked by two third class compartments each side and at one end there was a lavatory. In June, 1945, the vehicle was rebuilt into a non-gangwayed corridor brake third, the lavatory being stripped and a bench seat for five passengers being placed at that end. The coach was marked "Midhurst Branch Only", but was allocated to the KESR line from about 1953 until closure, upon which it was sent back to the Midhurst line, being with-drawn in July, 1956.

Finally, ex-South Eastern & Chatham Railway third brake No 3291 was allocated from April, 1951, until closure. Built at Ashford as No 860 in October, 1906, and renumbered 3291 in April, 1926, this coach had five compartments, a body length of 50 ft 1 in and weighed 26 tons. It had previously run in 3-set 522. After closure of the KESR passenger services it continued in use elsewhere until June, 1955.

Thus it may be seen that eight coaches were more-or-less permanently allocated to what BR called the "K. & E.S. Branch" but there were never more than four in use at any one time. In fact, four was the minimum requirement, for in the carriage working notice three vehicles were diagrammed each day; although with a little juggling and empty working the services could have been operated by just two.

The carriage workings for winter 1949/50 and winter 1951/2 are set out on the following pages. They are shown exactly as in the original BR notices except that to save space the "Saturdays Excepted" and "Saturdays Only" tables have been amalgamated. They should be read thus: first column, departure times; second column, destination; third column, formation of train; fourth column, working number (this is *not* official but is put in to aid the reader tracing the "all-round" movements of individual coaches); final columns, previous service showing departure time, station of

Carriage Workings

26 Sep 1949 and until further notice

HEADCORN (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 8.50...	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	2	a.m. 7 53	Rolvenden	a.m. 8 30SX
			3	7 53	Rolvenden R.P.	8 30SO
10 53...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	3	9 53	Rolvenden	10 30 SX
			2	7 53	Rolvenden F.P.	8 30 SO
p.m. 12 30...	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	1SX 2SO	11 30	Tenterden	noon 12 00
		1 Third Brake S.O.	1	9 53	Tenterden	10 30SO
4 46...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	2	3 20	Rolvenden	4 27 SX
6 55 SO	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	2	3 15	Rolvenden	4 22 SO
7 15 SX				5 40	Tenterden	6 18
NORTHIAM (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 11 42 SX	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	2	a.m. 11 20	Robertsbridge	a.m. 11 38
p.m. 12 F10 SO	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	3	11 20	Robertsbridge	11 38
ROBERTSBRIDGE (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 8 15...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	1	a.m. 6 55	Tenterden	a.m. 7 40
11 20...	Northiam	1 Third Brake	2SX 3SO	8 50	Headcorn	10 31
p.m. 5 50...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	1	p.m. 4 15	Tenterden	p.m. 5 10SO
			3	4 35	Tenterden	5 30SX
ROLVENDEN (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 6 40...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	1	a.m. —	Berth	a.m. —
7 53...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	2	—	Berth	—
		1 Third Brake S.O.	3			
9 53...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	3	—	Berth	— SX
			1	9 05	Tenterden	9 10 SO
Berth SX	—	1 Third Brake	1	p.m. 12 30	Headcorn	p.m. 1 13 SX
Berth SO	—	1 Third Brake	3	12 F10	Northiam	1 F35 SO
1 40 SO	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	1	12 30	Headcorn R.P.	1 15 SO
3 15 SO	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	2	12 30	Headcorn F.P.	1 15 SO
3 20 SX	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	2	a.m. 11 45	Northiam	12 55 SX
				p.m. 6 40		
Berth SO	—	1 Third Brake	1	6 45	Tenterden	6 45 SO
Berth SX	—	1 Third Brake	3	6 45	Tenterden	6 50 SX
Berth SO	—	1 Third Brake	2	6 55	Headcorn	7 32 SO
Berth SX	—	1 Third Brake	2	7 15	Headcorn	7 52 SX
TENTERDEN (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 6 55...	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	1	a.m. 6 40	Rolvenden	a.m. 6 45
9 05 SO	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	1	8 15	Robertsbridge	8 55 SO
11 30...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	1	8 15	Robertsbridge	8 55 SX
			2	10 53	Headcorn	11 23 SO
4 15 SO	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	1	p.m. 1 40	Rolvenden	p.m. 1 45 SO
4 35 SX	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	3	10 53	Headcorn	a.m. 11 23 SX
5 40...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	2	p.m. 4 46	Headcorn	p.m. 5 24
6 40 SO	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	1SX 1SO	5 50	Robertsbridge	6 30
6 45 SX						

HEADCORN (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 8 50...	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	2	a.m. 7 53	Rolvenden	a.m. 8 30
10 55...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	3	9 53	Rolvenden	10 30
p.m. 12 30...	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	1SX 3SO	11 32	Tenterden	p.m. 12 02
4 46...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	2SX 3SO	p.m. 3 15	Rolvenden	4 22
6 55SO	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	3	5 40	Tenterden	6 18SO
7 15SX	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	2	5 40	Tenterden	6 18SX
NORTHIAM (WEEKDAYS)						
p.m. 1 10...	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	2	p.m. 12 20	Robertsbridge	p.m. 12 43
ROBERTSBRIDGE (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 8 15...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	1	a.m. 6 55	Tenterden	a.m. 7 40
p.m. 12 20...	Northiam	1 Third Brake	2	8 50	Headcorn	10 31
5 50...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	1	p.m. 4 15	Tenterden	p.m. 5 10SO
			3	4 35	Tenterden	5 30SX
ROLVENDEN (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 6 40...	Tenterden	1 Third Brake	1	a.m. —	Berth	a.m. —
7 53...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	2	—	Berth	—
9 53...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	3	—	Berth	—
p.m. Berth SX	—	1 Third Brake	1	p.m. 12 30	Headcorn	p.m. 1 15SX
Berth SO	—	1 Third Brake	2	1 10	Northiam	1 23SO
3 15	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	2	1 10	Northiam	1 23SX
Berth	—	1 Third Brake	3	12 30	Headcorn	1 15SO
Berth SO	—	1 Third Brake	1SX 1SO	6 45	Tenterden	6 150
Berth SX	—	1 Third Brake	3	6 55	Headcorn	7 32SO
		1 Third Brake	2	7 15	Headcorn	7 52SX
TENTERDEN (WEEKDAYS)						
a.m. 6 55...	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	1	a.m. 6 40	Rolvenden	a.m. 6 45
11 32...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	1	8 15	Robertsbridge	8 55SX
			3	10 55	Headcorn	11 25SO
p.m. 4 15SO	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	1	8 15	Robertsbridge	8 55SO
4 35SX	Robertsbridge	1 Third Brake	3	10 55	Headcorn	11 25SX
5 40...	Headcorn	1 Third Brake	2SX 3SO	p.m. 4 46	Headcorn	p.m. 5 24
6 45...	Rolvenden	1 Third Brake	1SX 1SO	5 50	Robertsbridge	6 30

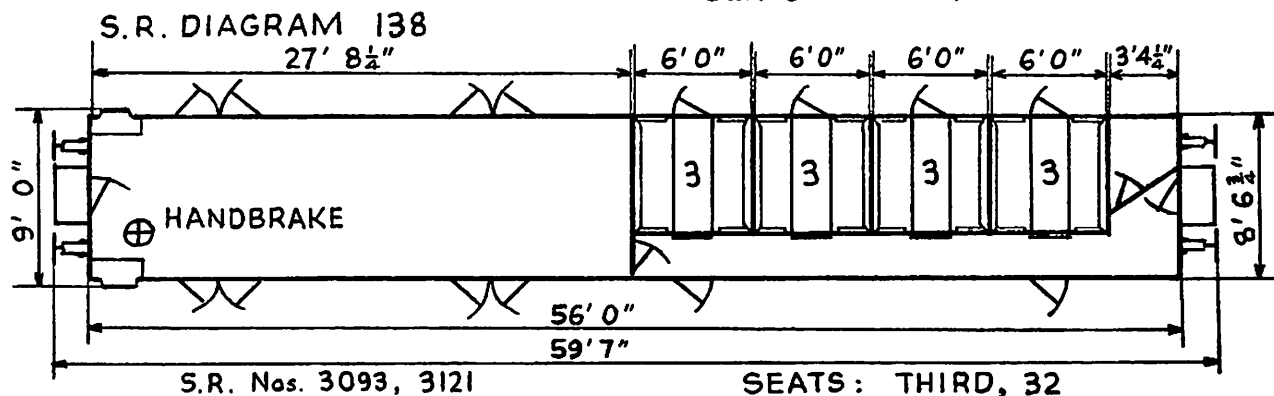
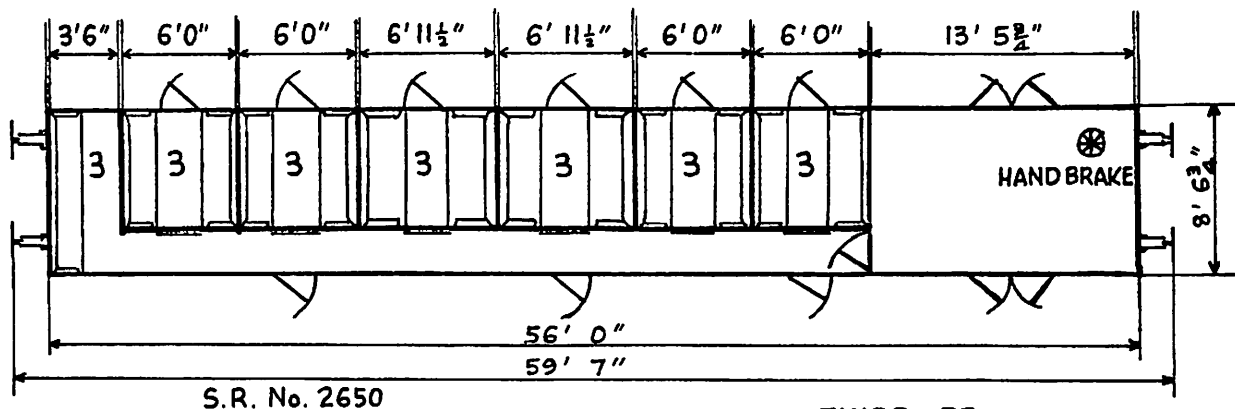
origin and booked arrival time.

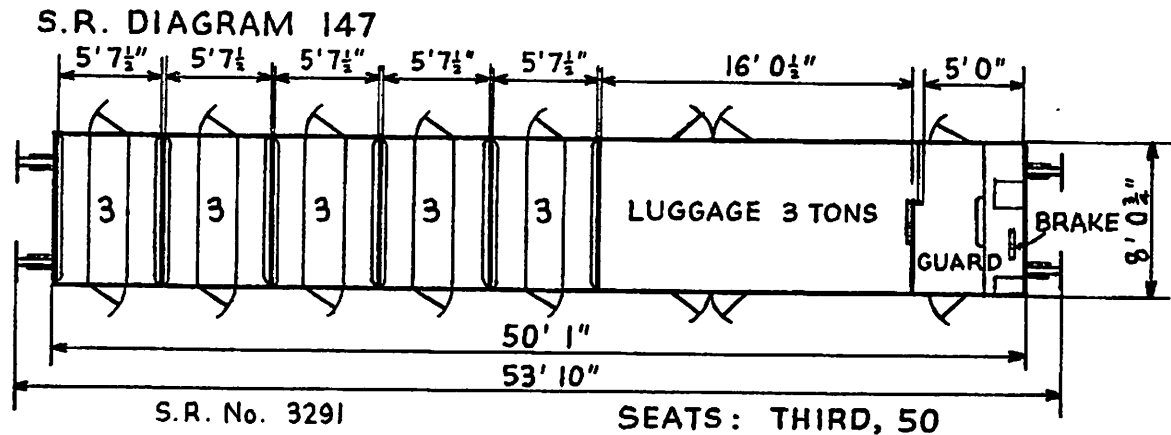
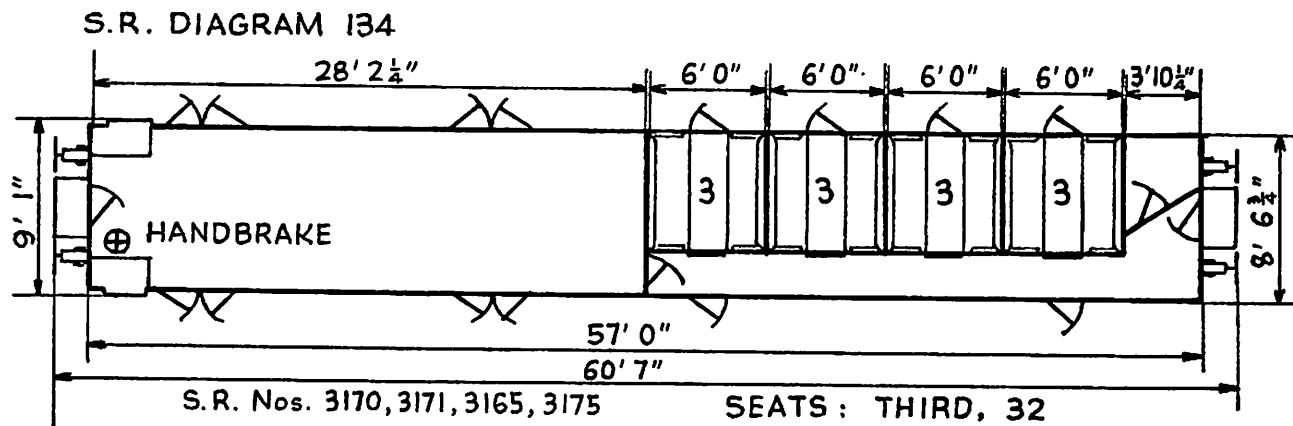
Particular points of interest in the 1949 table are that the 7.53 am Rolvenden to Headcorn and 12.30 pm return service were strengthened on Saturdays to two third brakes, presumably to cope with the vast hordes of shoppers, etc, but by 1951 it was no longer thought necessary to do this. Note also the curious Robertsbridge to Northiam train, which in 1949 continued empty to Rolvenden on Mondays to Fridays but

as a goods train on Saturdays. One feels that only former SR operating officers could have devised such a complex set of carriage workings for so simple a timetable! It is not impossible that the KESR staff simply ignored the official workings and ran the line as they had always done, for it is hard to imagine formal carriage working notices being laid down in Company days.

David Gould

S.R. DIAGRAM 102 (ex DIAGRAM 409)





"We Liked the Trains"

So wrote Matthew and Tom Dimmock from Surrey in the Visitor's Book when they travelled on the Kent & East Sussex Railway in May 1987. Croydon & Sutton Area Group Secretary, Allan Sinclair, analyses the entries in the Book over its first six months.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A Visitor's Book was acquired for the Railway by the Croydon & Sutton Area Group ready for the 1987 season, and it was placed in the Buffet on a special table adjacent to the counter. The Area Group felt that the Book would fulfil two rôles, in that it would put the Kent & East Sussex in line with other attractions in providing a facility that the public appear to enjoy and expect, and it might allow the Area Group to monitor its publicity activities and assess what improvements could be made in that direction. The Book has a Loose-leaf format with a red cover, in order that pages can be extracted as and when required by the Area Group and also in order to remove dog-eared or damaged pages, thus presenting a respectable appearance at all times.

The first entry is dated 17th April, and the last date analysed is 4th October. Between these two dates 1660 people have recorded an entry, which in terms of the 51,716 service train passengers over the whole year represents a poll of about 3.2%.

Visitors are invited to complete five columns, giving the date of their visit, name, address, comments and how did you find out about us?

Some people chose not to complete the last two columns although the vast majority completed all five. So what do our visitors think about us? Space does not permit every entry to be included here but the following represent a fair selection.

On Good Friday, the Thomas family from Ilford commented, "Better than last year" whilst the Banhams from Hastings wrote, "Too many kids". Mr. Bowden from the Isle of Man last visited the Railway as a child with his parents and his comment was, "Good". On the following Sunday a party from Gravesend commented on the lack of a Beer Tent whilst on the same day a visitor from Whitstable had different priorities and wrote, "Not enough butter on the Hot Cross Buns"! Graham and Helen from Tunbridge Wells thought the railway, "Very impressive". A K&ESR member from Cumbria

criticised the catering, writing, "double staffing and two check out points needed in the buffet to cope with the holiday crowds". I wonder if he offered to help out?

In May, the Young and the Wells families from Folkestone thought the railway was "Excellent, but cold". Becky from Tonbridge also thought it was cold "but nice". Also in May we were visited by Stephen from London who felt we "Could do better" but failed to elaborate how, whilst Suzie from Gravesend, a previous visitor, wrote, "It captured the atmosphere of the old days". Previous visitors form a large proportion of our passengers and the Hewitts from Ingatestone, commented, "Last here in 1974. Great improvement".

Later in May, Mr. Taylor from Ockenden, wrote, "Great – except for the crossing gates", clearly not appreciating one of the characteristic features of a Light Railway. However, two days later, Nigel and Lorraine from Derbyshire were impressed, writing, "Came to the Jazz Festival. Here is great". Also in May, Mr. Dormer from Romford wrote, "Good service. Excellent for family visits", and Jill and Keith from Crawley were equally impressed, "Superb days filming. Very friendly atmosphere."

It is always a pleasure to welcome visitors from other preserved railways and in the Autumn two Station Masters from the Severn Valley found time to pay us a visit. One wrote, "The Wealden Pullman was excellent", whilst the other reported, "Superb. A credit to you all. Well presented".

In case it appears that your writer is biased and has only selected the favourable comments it should be mentioned that out of all the entries only two were unfavourable. One particular visitor's remarks were unprintable and a family from Strood were, "Not impressed" having been recommended by "some stupid friends". Oh, well I suppose you cannot please everyone!

So where did all these visitors hail from? This analysis produced some predictable results but also some surprises; it revealed a high level of local support and a surprising number of overseas visitors – Kent: 759 East & West Sussex: 143 Essex: 93 Surrey: 82 Midlands: 46 NW England (inc IOM): 39 West Country: 31 NE England: 23 Hants: 21 other areas varied from East Anglia's 35 while Cambridgeshire could manage just 3. London produced a

surprisingly disappointing figure of only 148. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland supplied 18 visitors between them.

Of the overseas visitors, by far the largest number came from Holland with 32; USA: 10 Spain, Canada & Australia: 5 each. Belgium: 4 France, W Germany, Hong Kong & New Zealand: 3 each and Yugoslavia, S America, Switzerland & Israel: 1 each.

It is suprising that the number of visitors from, for example, the USA should be greater than some of our Home Counties, eg Buckinghamshire: 7 and Berkshire: 9.

Equally interesting was learning how our visitors came to find out about the Kent & East Sussex; in other words, what is the most effective form of advertising available to us. This does not necessarily mean something that we have to pay for, as witness the large number of visitors who came to the Railway as the result of a recommendation from friends or family as compared to the lesser number who read of us in a newspaper. Just look at the figures:-

Family/Friends: 143 Newspapers: 72 Previous visitor: 62 KESR Leaflet: 60 Passer-by/Chance encounter: 57 Tourist guide: 45 Maps: 38

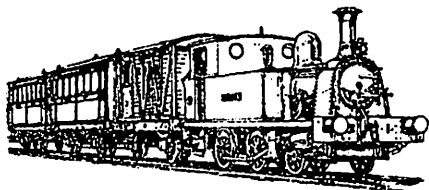
Railway press/books: 33 Television: 7 Coach trip: 7 BR Timetable: 5 Other source eg prior knowledge: 44

The local Police recommended us to 2 visitors, the same number who came to us as a result of broadcasts on Radio Kent!

This completes the analysis of visitors to the Kent & East Sussex during a six month period, what lessons, if any, can be learned from it? It looks as if we have the right formula to attract visitors and also to ensure that they visit us again, sometimes year after year. Many are looking forward to the extension to Northiam, some to us reaching Bodiam, which is very encouraging. There are some slight criticisms but the overall reaction is very good, particularly in respect of staff who are often described as 'friendly'. Indeed, where other railways choose to associate themselves with a plant or herb, the Kent & East Sussex Railway could well be described as 'The Friendly Line'.

In so far as advertising is concerned, newspaper publicity and the K&ESR time-table play a major role but what is apparent is that we should take great care of our daily passengers and visitors as these are the most effective form of advertising that we have!

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Paydens Ltd. 60 High St. Tenterden, Kent. Tel. 2730
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Backward Byway or Leader in the Field?

A new assessment of the Kent & East Sussex Railway by founder member Robin Doust

For such a shortline, the Kent & East Sussex Railway has attracted more than its fair share of attention from writers – a clear indication of the fascination which the enterprise has held for so many people over the years. Almost without exception, however, chroniclers of the line's history have portrayed the railway as a quaint and old-fashioned byway notable more for its shortcomings than for its efficiency or modernity.

In many ways, however, this is an entirely false impression, and although it is probably too late to change public opinion now (and perhaps even unwise to try to do so), it may yet be worth reminding the current generation of railway fans that the old Kent & East Sussex Railway was, in many ways, an important pioneer of innovations which later became widely accepted on the lines of its larger neighbours.

This is particularly true of the various lightweight railbuses which the old company put into operations. To modern eyes, it is true, the four wheeled Pickering steam railcar and the later Shefflex and Ford railcars of the 1930's appear primitive in the extreme – but to railway operators at the time, they were among the very latest new inventions on the railway scene, and credit rather than derision is surely due to the late Colonel Stephens for his imagination and ability in being one of the first to employ the new railbus technology especially in view of the very limited resources at his disposal. Whilst it is true that the Pickering railcar was, indeed, shortlived and can only be considered a failure, the Shefflex and Ford railbuses operated successfully in service for many years. Despite uncomplimentary remarks about their lack of comfort from generations of passengers, they enabled a passenger service to be maintained much more cheaply than would have been the case with a conventional train, and it is quite possible that the Railway would not have survived at all if the railbuses had not been introduced. It is a sobering thought that the little Kent & East Sussex Railway was thus a pioneer in the use of a modern form of rail transport which has since spread throughout the world. Interestingly enough, the wheel has now turned full circle, and the latest generation of Sprinters on British Rail, with their Leyland bus technology, are truly a direct lineal descendant of Colonel Stephens' original

inspiration. In this instance alone, therefore, we should look at the old Railway with rather more respect for its achievements.

In other ways, too, it was a forward looking Company, even after the death of the good Colonel in the 1930's. History records the fact that after 1932 the Railway was actually placed in receivership – effectively bankrupt – but unlike many other small enterprises in a similar situation, it did not lie down and die, being blessed with an energetic and resourceful management and staff. In the late 1930's, like railways all over the country, the Kent & East Sussex was facing major competition from road transport. Some railways would have quietly expired as first their passenger traffic and then their goods was lost to the roads, but down in the Rother Valley they were made of sterner stuff. Colonel Stephens having reprieved the passenger traffic by means of the railcars, his successor, W.H. Austen Senior, resolved to do battle with the road lobby for the freight traffic. Accordingly, a lorry was purchased, which was based on Biddenden station, and offered door to door delivery and pickup of railborn "smalls" traffic. As the Company had no money to buy the vehicle, it was actually paid for by W.H. Austen personally in a convincing act of faith in the future of the Line. Happily, the new service proved extremely successful, and eventually generated enough cash to repay Mr. Austen his original outlay, and to justify the purchase of a second lorry based on Tenterden. This, too, proved popular and economically viable, and had nationalisation not put a stop to this most promising development, it seems likely that the whole Railway could once again have become profitable. Once again the Kent & East Sussex comes out of it with flags flying – not as a moribund and dying enterprise, but one using modern methods and technology to pull itself up by its own bootstraps.

Even in small things, ingenuity was demonstrated. How many members have noticed the concrete lamp standards on the platform at Tenterden? Nasty things, I hear you say – why not tear them down and replace them with suitably vintage cast iron versions? But did you know that those concrete posts were actually made by the old railway company's staff at the Rolvenden Works? Just before nationalisation several stations were equipped



The K.E.S.R. 1936 Bedford Lorry at Rolvenden (Colonel Stephens Railway Museum)

with electric lighting (at a time when many main line stations were still gas lit), and the Company's staff taught themselves the new techniques of reinforced concrete so as to cast their own lamp standards. When the original Preservation Society first moved into the Rolvenden site, a brand new lamp post was found lying in the grass on the site of the old workshops, having been cast there but never used. I wonder how many other small enterprises the size of the Kent & East Sussex would have been able to successfully undertake such work more than forty years ago?

In the heavier field of civil engineering, even greater progress was being made prior to 1948, despite the financial limitations of the Company. The notorious weakness of the many bridges on the Railway is known to all, as is the 10 ton axle restriction which precluded the use of locomotives heavier than a "Terrier" for the whole of the line's independent existence on the Robertsbridge to Rolvenden section. However, a major rebuilding plan was already well under way by the time of nationalisation, and the line from Headcorn to Tenterden had already been upgraded to take much heavier motive power by the time the Company lost its independence and further work was stopped. What a pity the reconstruction programme started at

Headcorn, as it would have saved an enormous amount of expenditure by the Tenterden Railway Company in more recent years. One bridge reconstructed at this time still survives, although unfortunately not on the operational section of the Line, but the massive girderwork of the bridge still standing between Junction Road and Salehurst is a testament to the old Company's determination to do things properly.

Altogether the old Kent & East Sussex Railway Company was a forward looking and progressive enterprise, served by competent managers and faithful staff. I would like to think that Colonel Stephens would approve of some of the similarly progressive things done by the current management to take account of new methods of raising revenue by rail, such as the Wine and Dine trains and the Steam and Country Fairs – but there is always room for improvement, and perhaps the current Directors' attention could be drawn to Jonathan Dalton's letter in the Winter '87 "Terrier". I'm sure Colonel Stephens' ghost would be even happier to see trains on his railway running into Robertsbridge again, and similar projects on preserved railways elsewhere in the country have generated enormous support, as witness the Severn Valley and Ffestiniog Railways.

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Evening Visitor

I remember looking forward to a quiet evening ahead as I drove over to Tenterden. It seemed odd travelling to the Railway in the gathering dusk for a signalling duty but the clocks had been turned back the week before. It was an ordinary enough autumnal evening, still and damp with the prospect of mist later. A waxing moon appeared dimly through the overcast. On arrival, the Wealden Pullman coaches rested illuminated by the platform lamps, awaiting the return of Charwelton and 1556 from recoaling at Rolvenden.

Later, as the minutes ticked away until departure, knots of people stood about on the platform; chefs and waiters, engine crews and passengers mingled in animated conversation, escaping steam adding to the atmosphere. Soon after 7.45 pm, with the signals glowing green, the train departed; as the tail lamp disappeared out of sight I was left on the by now deserted station.

For several hours my only company would be the station's shadows and the periodic striking of the hours from St Mildred's church. I closed the cabin door on the outside world and settled into its cozy interior. With a mug of tea on the table and my pipe well stoked, I sank back into the ancient but comfortable armchair. The lever handles and the brasses of the repeater instruments glistened in the soft light. An oil lamp on the block shelf stood lit ready for use, its pleasant heady smell pervading the air. I settled back to enjoy my book.

"Tap! tap!" A noise at the door. Startled, I looked up and saw a man standing outside on the balcony. Strange, for I normally hear someone coming up the steps – I realised I must have dozed off.

"May I come in?" he asked in a soft Kentish burr. "Why, yes, of course", I replied.

Visitors turn up at any time and they can help to while away the evening hours until the train returns. At first sight I saw nothing particularly odd about the person at the entrance. Enthusiasts wear all sorts of odd garb and this one was no exception. He wore a long, rather threadbare overcoat, seemingly damp, buttoned up to the collar, and a large flat cap. On his feet were well worn, muddy boots. He appeared to be wearing dark green leggings. His facial features were thin and gaunt, his stubble evidencing the need of a shave. Of middling height, he had his coat wrapped

tightly about him. I guessed him to be in his early twenties but it was hard to be certain. I beckoned him to the now vacated armchair into which he sank back: I perched myself onto the stool beside the desk. He looked around.

"The signal box wasn't here when I first travelled by train from this station"
"But it's been built here for at least fifteen years" I replied, somewhat surprised.

"And I remember a second platform" he added. "That's not been here since British Railways days". I began to feel rather nervous of my visitor.

"When last I travelled on the line the engines were painted blue. I've seen many changes over the years whenever I have returned here" he went on. "Such a peaceful little line. Yet it was the death of me".

I was not sure that I heard him properly.

"How long ago did you last travel on the railway?" I asked.

"March 1918 it would have been. Flooded everywhere".

"When did you say?" I asked, my voice barely a whisper.

"It was the last winter of the War" he replied.

I sat motionless on my seat, disbelieving, wondering who the man might be before me. He began to tell his story. For an hour, maybe longer, I sat spellbound as he spoke quietly and unemotionally.

He said that he had been a private in the Kentish Yeomanry and had been out on the Western Front for nearly three years. Already he had been wounded twice, but each time upon recovery he had been sent back to the trenches. Vividly he described that last winter at Ypres; the desolation, the continual rain and mud, the shattered bodies and above all, the noise and stench of battle.

One night he had found himself alone in No-Man's Land, separated from his comrades whilst on patrol. All about him were sounds of death – artillery, the evil stutter of machine-guns, the crack of rifle fire, the screams of tortured men. Star shells above added their light to the chaos. His shell hole was slowly filling with water and soon he would be forced to seek refuge elsewhere. He had pressed himself close to the wet earth, cold, afraid.

A shape stirred a few yards away, detaching itself from a fold in the ground. It resolved into



De-railment at Padgham Curve, between Northiam and Bodiam in 1918. The train was hauled by 0-6-0 locomotive No 8 'Hesperus' (Colonel Stephens Railway Museum)

a man, grotesquely wounded. He watched mutely. The shape dragged itself towards him, faltered and rolled over the lip of the hole, tumbling past him into the oozing mud and water. A hand stretched out, crazed eyes besought help. He could not move, paralysed by his own fear. He turned his face into the mud, unable to watch this new agony, closing his eyes and mind to what was happening about him.

Later, much later, he became aware of the silence. He opened his eyes. Water lapped at his waist. The apparition had gone and he found himself alone. A yellow tinged mist obscured the horizon; tendrils of the gas stretched out towards him in the thin dawn light of the winter's morning.

Somehow he survived that day and he was invalided home for convalescence. The gas had entered his lungs yet, for a third time, the army doctor had pronounced him fit to resume active service again. Sent home for a final few days' leave he had taken flight and he found himself now a deserter, a fugitive in his own country, without friends.

He had lived rough on the fringes of the Marsh for several weeks. He knew he could not return

to the Front. The military police would be looking for him and no doubt the local constabulary also sought him for questioning about a spate of petty thefts and poaching in the district. The meagre proceeds of his endeavours just kept him alive. His increasing breathlessness made it difficult to pedal, even on the Levels. That would please the local residents, he thought wryly; not owning his own cycle, he borrowed transport as required.

It had rained continuously for days, or so it seemed to him. At least it had stopped sleeting and he had done well with his snares in the night; the five brace of pheasants would fetch a good price in Hastings. He rested up against a gate, his breath steaming in the chill air. He looked over the valley to the line of trees that marked the railway's route from Tenterden; he had travelled on it often in childhood days. He decided to abandon the cycle he had left in the hedgerow some way back. At this hour there would be no staff present and travellers were unlikely at the wayside station, the village it served being three miles away over the Marsh. He would travel in comfort. First by the little local train to Robertsbridge, then by the South Eastern & Chatham on to Hastings. He was adept at free travel for it was easy to dodge the railways' officials if one knew how.

Not taking any chances, however, he waited out of sight. Across the Marsh an engine's whistle signified the approach of the early morning train, the stiff breeze whipping smoke over the watery meadows. The saddletank engine clanked to a halt at the platform, a parcels van and two six-wheeled carriages in tow. He bided his moment. With the right away from the guard, the train started from the station. As it passed over the level crossing he moved swiftly, jumping for the low running board of the last carriage. He hung on, out of sight, his lungs heaving with exertion. The train breasted the short bank and gathered speed. He glanced inside the compartment above and saw it empty. He clambered in, thankful to have shelter.

As the train slowed for Northiam station he again took no chances but slipped out of the door on the side away from the platform, making sure he was not observed. A knot of people awaited the train and, to his dismay, some early passengers entered his former sanctuary. He would have to climb forward to find an empty compartment during the journey westwards towards Robertsbridge.

The train steamed across the sodden countryside. Rain was falling again and he gripped tighter the wind chilled him. Water seemed to be everywhere, even lapping over the rails. It was as if the train formed the only living feature in a drab grey wilderness.

Suddenly, his world turned upside down. He saw the engine in front of him lurch, then plunge over on its side in a cloud of spray and steam. The van reared up and his carriage shook violently and vered over, crashing off the rails. He was off balance, his hands numb. He scrambled for a hold but with deadened reactions he was unable to recover his grip. He

fell backwards, slipping down the hidden embankment. The icy water shocked his senses. He had no air in his gas scarred lungs and he felt himself sucked into the mud. Alone. He saw a skeletal hand reach out to him – then nothing.

He stopped speaking. I had not interrupted his story and now I knew not what to say, nor what to believe. The familiar surroundings of the cabin's interior were reassuring yet I still saw him there, by now standing at the window looking into the night outside. Suddenly I heard a train whistle on the Bank: I realised the Pullman must be at Cranbrook Road already. Mechanically, I made for the door.

"I must open the gates" I mumbled.

I did not notice him as I returned, intent to pull off the signals for the rapidly approaching train. Two engines, cinders rising in red fountains above them, pounded past as I took the staff. At the brightly lit carriage windows faces peered out; I heard the sounds of laughter and merriment. I slowly climbed the steps and re-entered the cabin. I was alone.

Had I been dreaming?

There was water and mud on the newly polished floor.

Neil Rose

Written on Hallowe'en night whilst on duty in Tenterden Town signal box. KESR engine No 8 Hesperus was derailed with its train when floods washed out the track between Northiam and Bodiam in the Spring of 1918. The locomotive was recovered a week after the accident, rapidly repaired and returned to service. There have been no recorded passenger fatalities in the history of the KESR.



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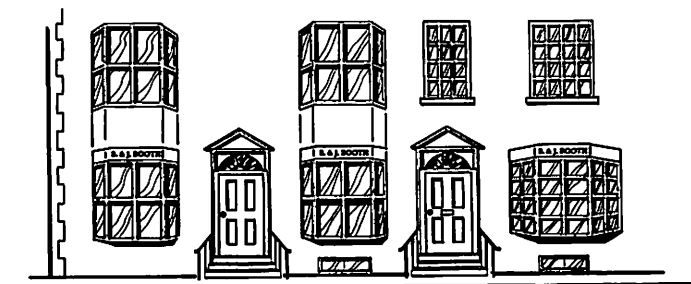
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Signalling at Rolvenden since 1948

No information has so far come to light on signalling at Rolvenden prior to British Railways take-over of the line in 1948. When B.R. came to inspect their new acquisition they made some notes on the signalling then in existence. This report assumes that not much had changed since the line was extended from Rolvenden to Tenterden Town on 16 March 1903.

At nationalisation there were two ground frames controlling the loop and siding points, and two home signals. All the points were fitted with economical facing point locks. These enable the point lock (required for all points in running lines for facing direction moves) to be operated by the same lever as the blades. One is preserved in use at Wittersham Road. One ground frame (marked 'A' on the 1948 and 1957 diagrams) was located near the site of the water tower. This had three levers, one operating the Tenterden end loop points, the other two working the home signals. The up home signal was situated on the Tenterden side of the level crossing, the down home signal was situated by the culvert at the other end of the yard. (IN B.R. days Up was towards Robertsbridge.) The other ground frame (marked 'B' on these diagrams) was situated close to the other end of the loop. This had two levers, one controlling the loop points and the other the old goods siding points – Now the loco yard.

A curiosity at Rolvenden was the double signal fixed to the side of the water tower, originally located on the top of a small post. This worked in conjunction with the Tenterden end loop points and indicated if the road was set for the loop or main line. At the time of BR's official visit in 1948 the block signalling on the line was in a bad way. The Tyers No. 7 Tablet instruments from Rolvenden to Northiam were out of use with a Tablet kept out to work the intermediate siding at Wittersham Road. A Tablet for this section is preserved in the National Railway Museum at York. The section from Northiam to Bodiam was similarly out of order. The section up the bank to Tenterden Town was still in use, using a Webb and Thompson Staff instrument.

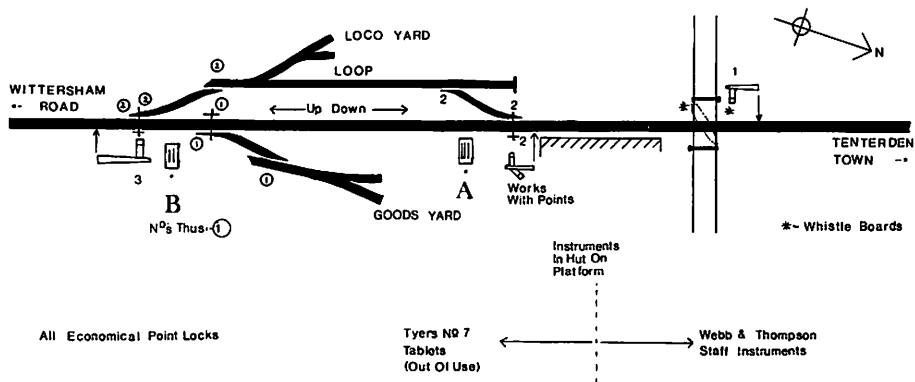
A proposal existed in 1948 to simplify the signalling on the line by removing some of the signals, including the point indicator on the water tower. Also in the proposals was the replacement of the out of use Staff and Tablet

instruments between Rolvenden and Robertsbridge with long and short section staff working. A diagram dated 27 November 1957 (reproduced) details the signalling alterations associated with the line's reduced status following withdrawal of passenger services three years earlier. As far as Rolvenden is concerned, the loop was retained but the loco shed and yard were removed. New ground frames were installed, A, a two lever frame, replaced the old B to control the Wittersham end of the loop and the remaining sidings. The new B controlled the Tenterden end of the loop and was situated close to the site of the old A. This was a single lever frame, all the points retained their economical point locks and the frames were released by the One Engine In Steam Staff. (Tenterden Town to Robertsbridge A section). This is of course how the line remained through closure and into preservation.

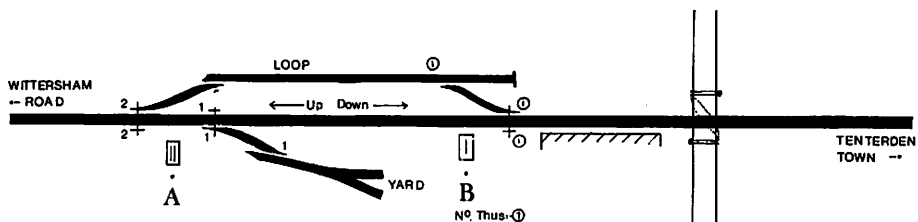
When the present mess room at Rolvenden was built as a machine shop the ground frame was in the way, a 'new' 2 lever frame ex Junction Road was installed on 2 August 1974 with the first length of channel rodding used on the line. This was itself dismantled on 19 November 1977 as the loop was not required for run-rounds, only for storage, services now running to Wittersham Road. The other frame lasted until January 1985 when trackwork alterations were carried out as the first stage in the present signalling scheme. The actual frame was re-used to control the resited loop points only, using a conventional facing point lock. This frame will be removed when the box is commissioned. The ground frame release was changed from the simple Annetts key release originally used, to a Key Token release. This was done in November 1982 when Wittersham Road was opened to enable the frame to be worked when Wittersham Road was open or closed by using either a Key Token or the Long Section O.E.S. Staff which has a Key Token pattern key on it.

A new ground frame has been installed in recent years to control the Sewage Works siding, this being situated on the Wittersham side of the station about ¼ mile away from the platform. It is used mainly for the berthing of locomotives awaiting restoration. This ground frame is only released by the Long Section Staff using an Annetts key lock. When the signal box is opened at Rolvenden this will be released electrically by the signalman.

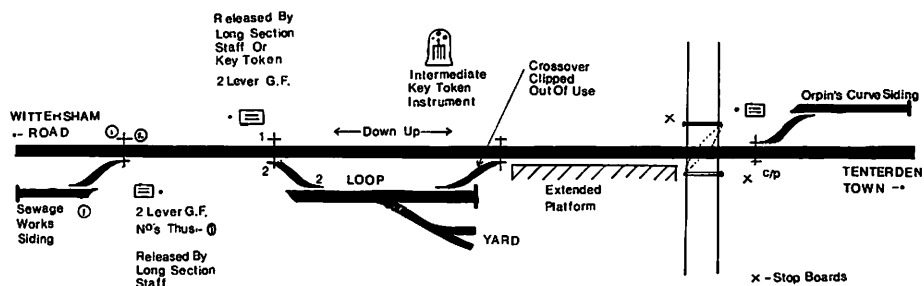
Rolvenden C 1948



Rolvenden C 1957



Rolvenden 1988



The two frames put in by B.R. are of Railway Signal Co. design as used all over the Southern. The Sewage Works siding frame is an Evans O'Donnel frame which originally was in use at Junction Road and is probably an original Rother Valley Railway purchase.

Ian Legg

(To be continued)

The author would like to hear from any reader with additional information on the original signalling of the Railway prior to its acquisition by the Tenterden Railway Company Ltd. Please write to him c/o Tenterden Station.

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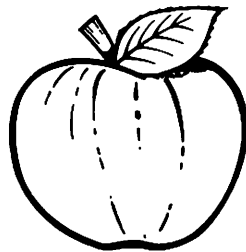
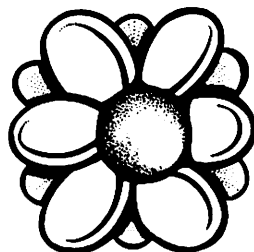
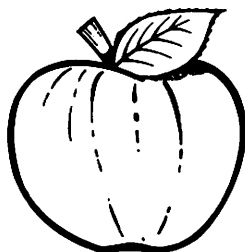
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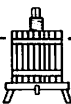
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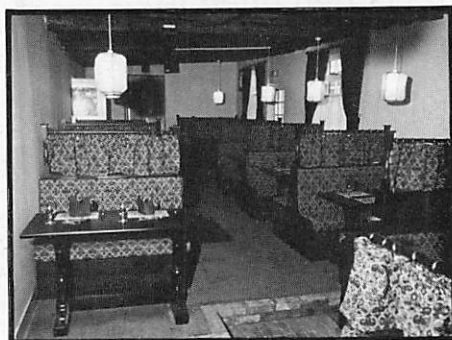
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