

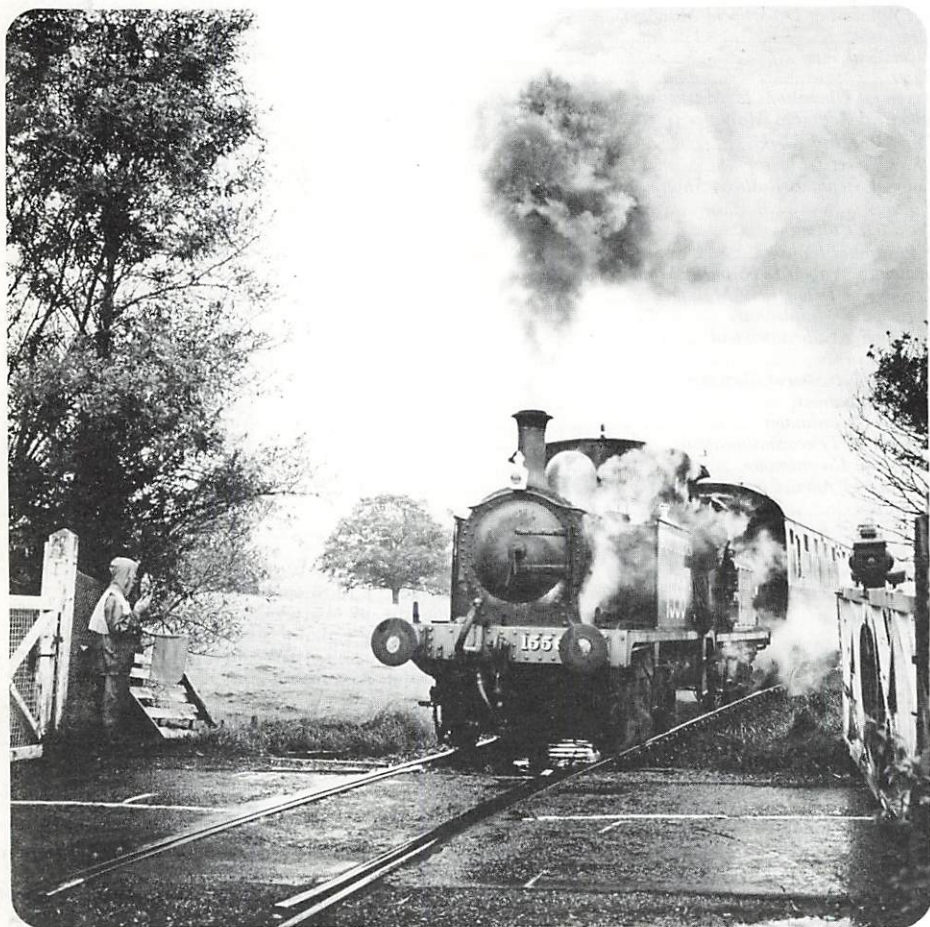


The Tenterden Terrier



Number 48

Spring 1989



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

The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered charity 262481

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Bodiam Castle

A National Trust Property



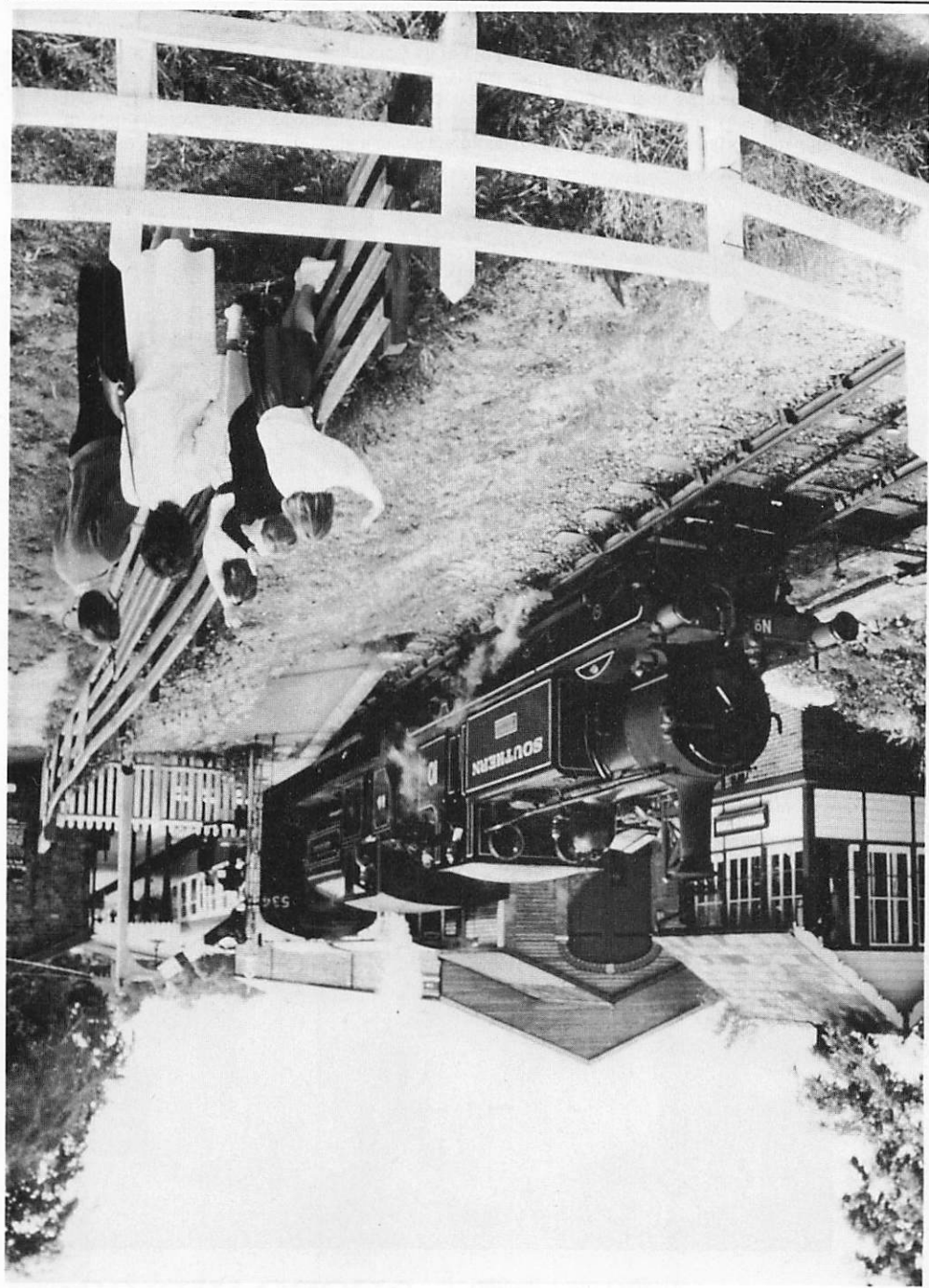
The Castle is open every day from April till October, but weekdays only November to March, between 10.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. or sundown if earlier. Closed over Christmas. Built in 1385 as a defence against the French, ruined in the Civil War, it still has a magical effect on every visitor. Inside one tower an audio-visual display describes life in a castle 600 years ago, and in another, on video, a warrior is being dressed in a magnificent suit of armour. There is a café in the car park. *About 500 yards from the K. & E.S.R. station.*
Telephone Staplecross (058083) 436.

Great Dixter

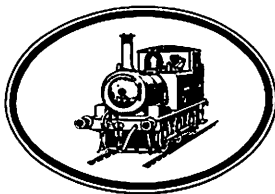


The 500 year old manor hall is open every afternoon (except ordinary Mondays) from 24th March to 15th October, also weekends October 21/22, 28/29 2 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. (last admission 4.30 p.m.). The gardens, well known for the wide variety of plants is open earlier at 11 a.m. on May 27/28/29, Sundays in July & August, also August 28th. Some of the unusual plants have won awards at the Royal Horticultural society shows in London. *11/2 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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FRONT COVER: In pouring rain and high winds, P class 1556 and Terrier "Sulton" cross Cranbrook Road on 9 October 1988
(Mike Essau)

FRONTISPIECE: "We're getting better all the time", the 1989 timetable cover featured Brian Stephenson's photograph of the mid-day train leaving Tenterden Town station on 4 June 1988.

Editorial

Planning our history

The controversy over the style of the Northiam project seems to have crystallised within two camps. There are those, directly involved with its management, budgeting and execution, who prefer to upgrade the line, in the interests of solvency, and in the anticipation that at least 80% of the visitors will not care too much about historical authenticity. No doubt many less active but no less committed members will agree. In the other camp, there are the purists, some of whom re-started the railway in the first place, devised the constitution and feel that the past should play a greater part in planning the future. This is the dilemma that the Board faces, given that the whole scheme now spans two generations and includes members with different memories, interests and loyalties. Perhaps a detailed statement from the directors on the Railway's future identity would help to clear the air. After all, everybody who donates time and money to a charity, expects to know what it is all leading up to.

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Lineside News

Compiled by Neil Rose

Steam locomotives rouse the emotions perhaps more than any other machinery. People who hold them in affection have their own favourite machines and locations to see them in action. The K&ESR provides excellent opportunities to enjoy the sight and sound of locomotives working hard for their living.

Locomotives are undoubtedly the main attraction for visitors; they like watching the engines in action and travelling behind them. The Railway's publicity emphasises the word "steam" for good reason. Yet how many people stop to think about the work needed to prepare these machines for their entertainment? Visitors can see the locomotive crew and often stop to chat with them. But are they aware the fireman and cleaner will have been raising steam and cleaning the engine for three hours before a wheel is ever turned, or that the dirty job of disposal at the end of the day must be completed before they can go home? Or stopped to consider the driver who ensures that every moving part is thoroughly lubricated and working properly? Or spared a thought for the unseen staff at Rolvenden who recol, service and maintain, washout and repair in order to keep the locomotives in service.

Visitors may admire gleaming paintwork, lining out and lettering of a newly restored locomotive but this only represents the tip of the restoration iceberg. Less glamorous is removing rust with a needlegun from a boiler, replacing stays in the claustrophobic confines of a firebox, degreasing frames or the continual welding and machining needed to patch, repair and rebuild.

The Railway's steam locomotives may be the star attractions but, as the 1989 season starts, spare a thought for their crews and the dedicated band of staff in the background at Rolvenden who make sure the locomotives' wheels keep turning week by week.

People

With much sadness we record the death of Paul Sutton on 16 November after a long and painful illness which he bore with great fortitude. His involvement with the K&ESR went back to the earliest preservation days. He was a Director of the Tenterden Railway Company until 1980. Instrumental in bringing the two ex-WD Shobern Austerities to the Railway in 1971, he owned No. 23 "Holman F Stephens/WD191.

In the 1970s he drove locomotives and was a knowledgeable engineer. He was a regular contributor to *The Tenterden Terrier*, becoming firstly Assistant Editor and subsequently Joint

Editor until illness forced his retirement two years ago. His *Lineside News* and photographs became the journalistic record of progress up and down the Railway. Although in recent years his illness prevented Paul playing an active rôle his interest and concern for the Railway never diminished—he is sadly missed. To Val, his wife, and to Nicola and Ian go the heartfelt sympathies of all who numbered Paul as a colleague and friend on the Railway.

Our sympathies are also extended to the family of Derek Everett who died on 23 December. Between spells in and out of hospital Derek was regularly found working on diesel locomotives or along the trackside.

From sad news we turn to joyful news. It is not often that an Assistant Editor of a railway journal can announce the marriage of his Editor, particularly if the Editor has displayed all the characteristics of bachelorhood for as long as anyone can remember! That fortune now falls to me. Over last summer the "Colonel's" appearances around Tenterden station became fewer and he seemed more distracted than usual. The whisper was that he was to be seen regularly in the company of a widow who lived nearby. Soon romance appeared in the air but would it last? Last it did and on Saturday 22 October, a beautiful autumn day, Alys Jones and Philip Shaw were married at Smallhythe's picturesque tudor church. The occasion was enjoyed by many friends from the Railway (most never having expected to see Philip wed!) including, poignantly, Paul Sutton who made a heroic effort to attend. The reception was held at Spots Farm nearby and the honeymoon was spent in the West Country. To Alys and Philip we extend our congratulations.

Finally, there must be something in the air within the Operating Department or at least the following news of births proves that staff do get home from the Railway sometimes! Congratulations go to Ian and Catherine Legg on the birth of baby Robert and to Terry and Lynn Baxter on the birth of baby Jennifer.

Boardroom

Consolidate and cut back on capital expenditure was the message for the annual round of budget negotiations. But in spite of this, the list of essential projects in 1989 is as



Chief Ticket Inspector Alan Feltham presented a book token to 13 year old Kent Evenden, who was deemed to be the most promising youngster in the ticket inspector's team in 1988.

(Jim Berryman)

impressive as it is expensive. It is also indicative of the inescapable fact that the infrastructure and rolling stock of the Railway are ageing. Sanctioned 1989 projects include an overhaul of RU 'Diana' at £5,600, and repairs to Maunsell CK coach No. 56 costing £3,200. The Permanent Way Dept has been authorised to spend around £16,000 on ballast for the existing operating section and a further £7,000 to replace sleepers and point timbers. And so the list goes on

Commercialism may be a dirty word to some, but filling trains and increasing the customer 'spend' from shop sales, etc, is the only way to generate sufficient hard cash to keep up with ever-increasing maintenance costs. Are we winning? The answer is yes, but as the rows of vintage and slowly rotting coaches remind us, it is an uphill battle. Keeping a balance between outright commercialism and the light railway image of a Terrier and two coaches is no easy task.

Communicating what is being done, and why, to the membership is equally difficult. In an effort to improve the lines of communication and to establish a two-way flow, a volunteer liaison officer, Cathy Roberts, has been appointed. Cathy will occasionally attend Board meetings and arrange regular volunteer meetings, at which points of concern can be aired with Board members. Such a meeting took place on 21 January, and among topics discussed were budgets, station colour schemes, progress with the Extension, and problems over the manning of Cranbrook Road crossing (any volunteers?).

"Smokebox", the news-sheet for volunteers, has been resurrected under the editorship of Duncan Buchanan. A copy of the most recent edition is on each noticeboard—it makes interesting and occasionally provocative reading!

Will these changes improve communication? At this stage it is impossible to tell, but it's a good start and perhaps by the end of 1989, with a bit of give and take, the Board members, volunteers and members will all be working to a common goal.

Steam Locomotives

No. 3 (32670/Bodiam): A new internal firebox needs to be constructed to specifications approved by the Railway's insurance engineers. The design document is expected soon and any

further repairs arising will be dealt with at the time of overhaul.

No. 8: This is not a mistype nor has former K&ESR Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST "Hesperus" been salvaged for use in the 1990s! The number, unused on the Railway since 1941, has been allocated to ex-LBSCR Terrier No. 78 "Knowle" which arrived at Rolvenden in private ownership during 1988. "Knowle" is no stranger to the K&ESR having been hired from the Southern Railway to work the line in the 1940s and remained the regular branch locomotive in BR days. The history of "Knowle" is featured elsewhere in this issue.

It was stripped down to component parts on arrival, being already partially overhauled. Work has started on the frames, extensive repair work being needed on the trailing ends. Horn checks need refitting and the cab floor replacing. One piece of good news is that the cylinder casting is in good condition.

No. 10 (Sutton): Serviceable but due to be thoroughly inspected by the boiler inspector prior to Easter. It needs some cosmetic repainting.

No. 11 (1556): The P-class is in a very similar state to the Terrier. It needs some attention to its paintwork and is due for a boiler inspection before the start of the operating season.

No. 12 (Marcia): Dick Beckett, the locomotive's owner, has blanked off the boiler ready for its removal. It is to go to Hedges at Chatham Dockyard when the Norwegian's boiler is returned.

No. 14 (Charwelton): Out of service, as reported previously. The firebox needs major surgery in the vicinity of the firehole door. A large piece of internal plating on the inner firebox needs replacing, damage having been caused over many years by fire irons being used without a proper protector plate fitted. The old patch plate has been removed and quotations for remedial work are awaited from boiler repair specialists. Whilst "Charwelton" is out of service the rear buffer beam will be straightened out.

No. 19: After further delays, the boiler is due back from Hedges in early February upon completion of a few minor jobs to satisfy the inspectors. The locomotive will take shape again once the boiler is reunited with the frames.



No. 40 B.T.H. Bo +Bo locomotive plus ballast train at Wittersham Road Station, 15 January 1989.
(Neil Rose)

Some welding work has been done on the new tender tank and Adrian Landi has fabricated a new ashpan under contract to the Norgewian Locomotive Trust.

At the Trust's annual meeting in January Tim Stanger retired as a Trustee. The current Trustees are David Stratton (Chairman), Bob Blackley and Tony Pearson, their Rolvenden skills invaluable now that restoration is in the engineering phase, rather than fund raising. Nonetheless funds are nearly exhausted and Tim Stanger, who remains Treasurer, still has an outstretched hand for donations.

No. 21 (Wainwright): Has been stripped down to its bar frames, with the wheels sent away to Slade Green for turning. At the time of writing, work is progressing well but will take a lower priority once No. 24 is ready for reassembly.

No. 22 (30065/Maunsel): Passed its annual boiler examination and is currently stored ready for the new season.

No. 23 (191/Holman F Stephens): Whilst currently serviceable, it is due for a boiler inspection in March upon which will depend its availability in 1989.

No. 24 (William H Austen): Boiler repairs have

been completed successfully and currently awaits final hydraulic test for insurance purposes. Once the go-ahead is given, the boiler will be reunited with the frames and motion on which overhaul work is finished. Reassembly and repainting will continue into the spring before the locomotive is returned to traffic. When completed, it is probable that one from Nos. 22, 23 or 25 will be taken out of traffic early to start on a major ten year overhaul.

No. 25 (Northiam): In store, having passed its yearly boiler examination prior to working many of the Santa Special services. Some remedial boiler work was carried out for the inspection with further work necessary before too long.

No. 26 (Linda): With its first season in traffic successfully ended, there are a few minor matters needing attention over the winter period. Also due for boiler inspection.

No. 27 (Rolvenden) For the record, this locomotive remains on static display at Tenterden where scores of children (and many adults too!) climb up the steps into the cab and imagine themselves as engine drivers. "Rolvenden" appears to be standing up well to this punishment!

Diesel Locomotives

No. 40: In traffic and in regular use. It is understood that painting is to be completed once the Class 14 availability is more assured.

No. 41: "Yorkie" was withdrawn from service following complete mechanical failure of the donkey air starting engine. A replacement engine has been obtained and fitted; the air compressor and air braking system were thoroughly overhauled. Regular servicing has included work on the main generator, traction motor and ejectors with oil and filters replaced; engine governor repairs have been effected.

No. 43 (Titan): In traffic and running well. New gearbox air piston seals have been fitted to fourth gear. This distinctive yellow machine is regularly seen at work at Wittersham Road.

No. 45: Nominally stored because of its

deteriorating mechanical condition, this 04 class Drewry 0-6-0DM turns its wheels from time to time if no other locomotive is available.

No. 47: Not much to report this time on ex-BR class 03 0-6-0DM No. 2024. A few small jobs have been completed and it is hoped that the next issue of *The Tenterden Terrier* will report commissioning trials.

No. 49: A string of problems, undoubtedly arising from its long period of idleness with the NCB, have caused headaches for both operators and the Diesel Department. When it has been in traffic and running well, it has proved very powerful and ideal for the Railway's needs. Work carried out has included the replacement of a cylinder head, turbocharger and some air valves. The Voith transmission has failed with the automatic speed change operating incorrectly.

Steam Locomotive Mileages

No	Name/Other No.	1988	1987	Total since 1974 or entry into traffic
3	32670	—	—	4425
10	Sutton	1280	3	8464
11	31556/1556	1371	964	2671
14	Charwelton	1194	1874	4100
22	30065/Maunsell	640	419	11147
23	WD191/HF Stephens	1728	1555	16722
24	William H Austen	—	1823	14078
25	Northiam	2773	1198	11137
26	Linda	1720	—	1720
Total Steam Miles		10706	7836	

Diesel Locomotive Mileages / Hours

No	Type/Name	1988		1987
		Miles	Hours	Miles
40	BTH Bo+Bo	284	141	n/a
41	Ruston 0-4-ODE	508	276	78
43	Drewry 0-4-ODM	487	208	40
45	Drewry 0-6-ODM	5	10	56
49	BR Cl.14 0-6-ODH	202	56	—

Diesel locomotive mileages and hours run must be regarded as approximations only. By the nature of their work they may spend all day on shunting duties, being started as required and only running a few miles.

Steam cranes were in steam during 1988 as follows:

133	Taylor & Hubbard 10 ton DS451	162 Hours
145	Grafton 10 ton DS1770	25 Hours
151	Ransomes & Rapier 36 ton DS81	83 Hours

Rolvenden Dépôt

Staff have been busy helping to complete the platform in time for Easter. A priority has been the erection of steelwork for the shed extension jutting onto the platform; this was put up in mid-January allowing the back wall to be built. Once this work is completed the void area to the platform facing wall will be infilled. This work has taken precedence over all other jobs around the dépôt.

The water column close to the crossing gates is scheduled for installation this winter. Plans are well advanced to re-sleeper the area of No.2 road alongside the locomotive ash pit and to concrete the whole area which becomes very churned up in wet weather. For the same reason the shed frontage adjacent to the toilet block will be concreted when time permits.

Mike Harman and Mike Grimwood have wired up the diesel workshop and the new oil store. Also thanks are due to Dave Green and Colin Edwards for work laying the platform facing blocks.

Carriage and Wagon

No. 54 Maunsell BSO. Work is progressing steadily. One side has been painted in its first coat of olive green with the window frames in natural timber varnish. The coach swapped places with No. 56 in October, being positioned on No. 2 road which allows full access around the vehicle. The now accessible second side is being reclad with galvanised steel sheeting and having windows refitted. Inside mouldings and fittings are being re-installed. The seats have been sent to a contractor for retrimming, two-thirds of them have been completed and now await fitting.

No. 56 SR Maunsell CK. The Community Programme project which had been working on this coach for the previous year ended on 31 August. For a variety of reasons, outside the Railway's control, it was unfortunately impossible to continue the project under the new Employment Training scheme which replaced CP. However, two of the staff and a third person from another scheme have continued working on the coach and will do so until their twelve month contracts with CP expire. Three second class and two first class compartments have been fully varnished and are now completed, bar seating. The remaining two first class compartments are held up awaiting the rebuilding of the roof and associated framing repairs about them.

No. 52 Pullman "Barbara". The Pullman was run into the workshop on 5 November for a repaint and fitting of new kitchen equipment. It has been repainted in full Pullman livery with a white roof. The lettering and lining out were applied by David Dine who attained a high standard of finish despite long hours and working in very cold weather. The damaged gangway was repaired which involved having new brackets cast at Rye Foundry. These brackets locate the top gangway plungers which were found to be bent and had to be removed and straightened.

The kitchen area was refitted by Keemlaw Ltd, a catering equipment contractor, whose work took the best part of a week. New equipment includes ovens, grills, water heaters and sinks. "Barbara" was shunted out on 8 December and was back in traffic the following day. Some minor work is still outstanding and will be undertaken over the winter period.

No. 53 Maunsell BTO. This Pullman set vehicle entered the workshop in January for overhaul and repainting.

Nos. 139-140 Twin Bolsters. These wagons arrived at Tenterden in late September from Wittersham Road on their first trip over the line since arrival in November 1983; perhaps not surprisingly, both suffered hot axle boxes. They entered the workshop during October and were lifted to inspect all axle bearings, five being found defective and needing attention. Repairs were carried out to the bolster pivots and all floor boards replaced. Two sections of timber underframing were found to be rotten and needed replacement. Both wagons have been painted GWR dark grey and appropriately lettered. They were released from the workshop on 5 December. During the repairs the original GWR numbers were discovered stamped in the underframe, being 32337/8 respectively for K&ESR Nos. 139/140. If anyone has any information about these wagons please contact the C&W Department who so far have drawn a blank on their history.

No. 155 Five Plank Open wagon (S5916). Entered the workshop on 8 December with damaged body boards and flooring. It was released to traffic one month later, on 8 January, after repairs. The running gear was overhauled, the first time since arrival in January 1988. It was repainted in SR dark brown and given original number 5916.



P.W. department staff laying in new pointwork at Wittersham Road with the aid of the Grafton steam crane, No. 145, on 15 January 1989.
(Neil Rose)

No. 146 ex Crane match wagon. This vehicle was originally a BR built 30 ton bogie bolster 'C' which was converted to a match wagon at Ashford works in the 1960s to run with the 10 ton Grafton steam crane DS1770 (now No. 145). Its use in this rôle has been limited and it was felt to be of more use as a flat wagon to carry track panels for relaying on the Northiam extension. Thus it entered the workshop on 8 December for a full overhaul and conversion.

All the bodywork, jib rest, chain lockers etc were removed, the underframe cleaned and painted with black bitumastic, and a completely new timber floor installed. The running gear was overhauled for the first time since the vehicle arrived on the Railway in February 1984. It has been painted black and left the workshop on 8 January, soon being worked back to Wittersham Road ready for its new task.

Outside the C&W workshop work has continued. A concrete oil store shed has been completed, utilising an authentic cast iron window frame and steel doors recovered from a similar building. A start has been made on building a covered storage area for heavy running gear spares, with a further section of ground requiring concreting before the area can be extended further.

Building

Owing to other work, the steps and balcony of Rolvenden signal box were not due for

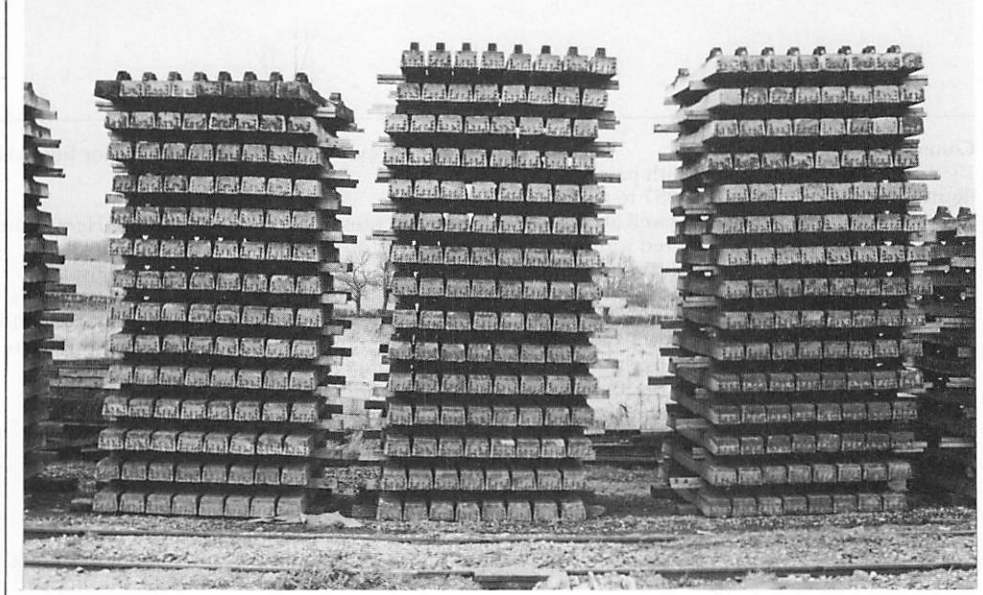
completion until February. All that now remains is to finish the painting.

An appeal in the last *Terrier* for help with painting or general building work was underwhelming, to say the least. Not one person contacted Dave Stubbs. With the extension to Northiam now a reality the Building Department faces an ever increasing workload. If members are not prepared to become involved, then contractors will have to do jobs well within the capabilities of anyone prepared to tackle DIY tasks. Please do come forward and so help to save the Railway money.

Over the winter period various minor jobs have been undertaken, including rendering of the new C&W oil store, cleaning of all gutters and rain water pipes at Tenterden, and rebuilding of the bunks in the S&T Dept mess coach to comply with fire regulations. In the early spring it is planned to re-roof Tenterden station building, followed in April by a start on construction work at Northiam.

Catering

Turnover has continued on its upward trend with results some 20% up on the previous year. The importance of a presentable buffet, with sensible food lines and attentive, courteous staff cannot be overstressed. Over the year about a dozen new volunteers have come forward to help in the buffet, their assistance being greatly welcomed.



Sleepers stacked at Wittersham Road, ready for use on the Northiam section on 15 January 1989.
(Neil Rose)

On the Santa Special and Hogmanay trains over 12,500 mince pies were eaten, being given to both parents and children. Manager Ken Lee can personally vouch for the 90 dozen litre bottles of punch that were emptied or sold; he claims to have put most of the empties single-handed into bottle banks around Tenterden!

Clearance & Forestry

Much thought has gone into lineside management on the Northiam Extension. To give passengers the best possible view of this part of the Upper Rother Levels the aim is to remove the corridor of overgrowth to open the view and, by careful management, conserve and create a bird and wildlife habitat. Undergrowth will be removed from trackside and ditches throughout. The section can be divided into three parts.

From Hexden to Rother Bridge the few trees over the first part will be saved and shaped where possible. On the northern side of the second part the clumps of hawthorn and blackthorn will be shaped into individual standing trees, while on the southern side for two hundred yards before Rother Bridge and line of willows will be lopped to tidy them up.

From Rother Bridge to the cattle crossing at Gate Court Farm the standing specimen trees will be lopped and tidied—they comprise oak, ash and sycamore. On both sides of this half-mile section it is planned to establish a

traditionally layered hawthorn hedge, nowadays a rare feature in the south-east. Advice for this project has been supplied by the South of England Hedge Laying Society.

Thanks are due to the Society's secretary, John Blake and to George Street who have visited the Railway and given practical advice. Two members of the Department, Robin Dyce and Peter Thoroughgood attended a one-day training session given by the Society. Constructing such a hedge is a long term project, the actual laying not taking place for at least ten years. Thus the turn of the century should see both the Railways' centenary and a commemorative traditional hedge! In the meantime the hawthorn trees have to be regularly trimmed to maintain upright growth.

The final section, from the crossing to Northiam station has the best selection of standing trees, many of which are close to the line. With careful thinning and lopping it is hoped that most can be saved.

It remains to record that the 1988 work target was completed just ahead of schedule. There were several new faces during the year and it is pleasing to record that some have become regular attenders at working parties. Work continues along the Extension during 1989; the year got off to a fine start with 22 people attending the first work party of the year on 8 January.

Commercial Operations

1988 ended up, as predicted, with passenger figures up by some 12% over 1987 to a fresh record of 73,000. This total was well above budgeted growth but not achieved without an ever-increasing workload and strain on every department. While there remains significant scope for further increases within our present pattern of train services, growth will be limited by our capacity to cope with more visitors, especially when our volunteer workforce is not growing as fast as our business requires. Our average train loadings vary greatly through the season and we will be hard pushed to carry very many more at peak times when trains are running close to capacity.

However, the Rolvenden Signalling Scheme will provide the means to run a more frequent service as required and will really begin to reap the benefits of the substantial financial investment and the hard work put in over the duration of the project by the S&T Dept. It would be a shame if a disagreement over painting schemes should mar the introduction of another milestone in the Railway's successful development.

The Santa Specials continued their track record of growth and profitability. Numbers topped 11,800 and it is a credit to all volunteers who played their part that the exercise ran so smoothly—not only the visible members of the team, but the 'behind the scenes' efforts by Donald Wilson in present buying and organising the mammoth task of wrapping every gift, the roster clerks, and those responsible for ticket bookings should all be congratulated. It is amusing to read back numbers of the *Terrier* and to refresh one's memory of the Editor's prediction of a few years ago that our capacity must surely be reached at 7,500 and suggestions of a two train service were wide of the mark. In fact the two train service worked superbly and will be the standard for 1989. Whilst more staff are needed, it is less hard work with rests between trains and therefore more pleasurable for all concerned. The introduction of colourful Pixie costumes proved popular with staff and customers, although we had some odd looking pixies at times—more like gremlins on occasion and the Marketing Director was likened to a garden gnome! Other refinements for the 1989

Santa season, planning of which began in January, will include seat reservations, First Class seating at a higher fare and the possibility of an

exciting sponsorship deal from a major financial institution.

Surely a preservation record was the Herculean effort by the C&W Dept in overhauling and repainting Pullman Car 'Barbara' in just five weeks with most of the work done at weekends. With its new stainless steel kitchen installed and freshly painted, a series of successful Christmas Dinner trains were run for the first time and ended up the year with the by now traditional Hogmanay Pullman. Some work remains outstanding in the kitchen, particularly to the ventilation, but otherwise the new facilities worked well.

The pristine condition of 'Barbara' made the rest of the train look less smart and the Dining Car, Maunsell BSO No. 53 is to be outshopped in SR olive green. This coach, together with 'Barbara', will form the Pullman train in the early part of the year with seating limited to just 36 seats. Restaurant Car 'Diana' will undergo major repairs to the bodywork and a complete kitchen rebuild; it is due back in service in July when the Pullman will revert to its full complement of 68 diners. Then we will have a train in first class order, as befitting such a prestigious service.

There is a need to recruit and train more ticket inspectors whose duties are vital. They provide the main contact with visitors, greeting them at the station entrance, protecting revenue by checking tickets and talking enthusiastically about our enterprise. If you like meeting people and are of a smart disposition, please volunteer your services to Alan Feltham, the Chief Ticket Inspector, by writing to him at Tenterden Town station.

The new-look 1989 timetable leaflet has been well received and has come in for praise from many quarters. The English Tourist Board pronounced it an excellent publication, probably the finest produced by a private railway, at a recent meeting of the Association of Independent Railways: the meeting's Chairman, a well-known publisher and leading light in a West Country railway, was heard to say that he wished his own people could produce such a good and clear timetable. Mention must be made of Brian Stephenson's superb photographs and he deserves credit for his substantial contribution to the pleasing end result.

Easter looms with frightening imminence and

the Kent Messenger Newspaper Group have agreed to sponsor another Family Fun Weekend over the four days. 'Guest of Honour' on Good Friday and Easter Saturday will be Paddington Bear and, as in previous years, there will be other attractions and sideshows to entertain visitors.

It is always interesting to learn how others see us and the news that we were Runner Up in the *Railway World* "Independent Railway of the Year Award" was a fine endorsement that our commercial policies are not only right but are being noticed and applauded by the outside world. Perhaps some people are too close to the Railway to appreciate the total transformation that has taken place in every department over the past five years. Of course there remains much room for improvement in certain quarters and everyone should read Ian Allan's reasons for awarding his top prize to the wonderful Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, for they are the goals we should be aiming for. In the meantime each of us can claim a share in the Award, for every volunteer has contributed to the Railway's present success and status. Now we must strive to be THE Railway of the Year before too long. Incidentally, there was no league table this year.

Membership

Last year membership increased by over 5%, double the rate for 1987, with more than 300 new members joining. Unfortunately, nearly 200 names were deleted owing to non-renewal but, nevertheless, a net gain of 133 members was achieved giving an overall total of 2710; this figure is made up of 1890 Full, Associate and Honorary members and 820 Family members.

30 new members joined during the first week of January 1989, a flying start for the New Year, compared with 14 for the whole of December. The poor showing for that month was due to the late arrival of the 1989 application forms and brochures; with excellent Santa Special passenger figures, this was indeed a lost opportunity. Many of the deleted names were of fairly recent origin but included 32 members of over eight years' standing. During November a further reminder was sent to each of these "long service" members. Sadly, only five re-joined.

The subscription increase for 1989 was the first since 1985. Despite the increase, 1989 renewals received up to 31 December were nearly 11% up on the same time a year earlier. This is very encouraging and augurs well for the future.

One third of subscriptions are paid by banker's order. If you do not pay in this way, you are invited to do so, setting it up now for 1990 onwards. The appropriate forms are available from the Membership Secretaries (see inside front cover). Better still, sign a banker's order linked to a Deed of Covenant; by this means the Railway, a charity, can benefit from the tax you will have paid on the part of your income earned to pay the subscription—at no cost whatsoever to you! Over 300 members currently pay in this way—many, many more are needed.

Operating

The operating season finished very much as it had started—hectic. Record passenger numbers on the Santa Specials were achieved by running a two train service for the first time in December. Fortunately the arrangements ran very smoothly, a credit to all staff involved. During the closed season operating commitments centre on engineers' trains although it is hoped to achieve some driver training on both the Class 14 and Ford diesels. This year a vacuum fitted diesel locomotive will be needed every weekend operating day for various duties, as well as for the extension tracklaying work.

Following the appeal in the last *Terrier* for volunteers on the operating side of the Railway, we welcome David Quinnell as a Trainee Guard. Unfortunately, he was the only person to respond. As has been stated many times before, more staff are needed to run trains through to Northiam. Services there commence in just one year's time. A robust training scheme has been prepared to give trainees a thorough, interesting learning package, so please come forward and give it a try—being a guard, or a signaller, or a member of the footplate crew is not as daunting as may first appear and can be fun as well as personally rewarding. So why not add a further dimension to your life? Neil Sime is waiting to hear from all keen members who want to help keep the wheels turning; telephone him on Maidstone (0622) 65556 any evening.

Following his appointment as S&T Dept manager, Ian Legg has relinquished his post as Traffic Co-ordinator, a demanding job which he admirably filled for two years. Applications for the position have been sought and an appointment should be made before Easter. Duncan Buchanan and Graham Richards are congratulated on their appointments as Controllers.



Pixie costumes were a new and popular innovation for the Santa Special trains during 1988.

(Kentish Express)

Permanent Way & Civil Engineering

The headshunt has been completed at Tenterden and is already full of rolling stock. At Rolvenden the pointwork on the loop points outside the signal box will be completed by March.

Work has started at Wittersham Road to lay in new pointwork from the running line to give access to the remodelled permanent way yard; the ground has been prepared and minestone laid to form the trackbed of the new headshunt which parallels the running line behind the up advanced starting signal. The pointwork beside the bottom end of the platform, which currently leads to the yard, will be removed as it is in very poor condition. The unseasonably mild and dry weather in January provided an excellent start to closed season activity and enabled tasks to proceed unhindered.

75lb rail panels have been removed from the extension in the vicinity of Hexden Bridge ready for re-use in the new yard area. This siding space will be needed when relaying work towards Northiam gets under way in the spring.

All readers are again reminded of the PW Dept's "GET TO NORTHIAM FORTNIGHT" in May. The objective is to complete track relaying over a working fortnight commencing Saturday 6 May. It is essential to have as many people as possible to assist with this vital job. If you can help for all or part of the fortnight, even for a day, please contact Charlie Masterton on Tenterden (05806) 3645. He is co-ordinating the planning of the exercise and needs to know availability. Food will be provided. Why not have some healthy exercise which will not only do you

good but also aid the Railway? Once the track is down it will show that we really mean to run trains to Northiam next year.

Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

During 1988 the average takings per customer has continued to rise; it is confidently anticipated that increases in both turnover and profits will exceed 20% over 1987. The profit to the Railway from the shop will have doubled over two years.

Income exceeded £1,000 on four days during December, no mean achievement. It is evident that the sale of railway videos is becoming increasingly important and this will be encouraged, but not to the detriment of books. Also important is the need to keep stocking new lines, particularly to appeal to repeat visitors. To this end the London souvenir show was attended in November where new ideas were found and new contacts made. At long last it is hoped that a new Railway Guide will be available on sale at Easter.

There will be no radical changes to the shop's layout this year although some minor alterations are planned. There were some new faces helping behind the tills in 1988 and more volunteers are always very welcome.

Signals & Telegraph

Thanks are expressed to Paul Vidler who resigned as S&T Dept manager in the late autumn. He guided the Department through the completion of the signalling installation at Wittersham Road and has overseen the bulk of the work at Rolvenden. He remains an active member of the S&T team and is presently busy



Cathy Roberts is the newly appointed Volunteer liaison officer to improve communications between the Board, Managers and volunteers. (Jim Berryman)

working on the locking frame in Rolvenden signal box. Ian Legg has taken over the reins as manager.

At Rolvenden several signals have been connected up and work proceeds steadily towards completion. The new operating system, devised by Peter Lawrence, will come into use when the box opens. This will be covered in the third article about signalling at Rolvenden to appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*.

The telephone system has given reliable service over the past year. As the extension work progresses, so Chris Lowry and his assistants will be restoring the pole route to Northiam. When this is completed, the new Northiam telephone exchange will be commissioned.

Lastly an appeal! Nick Wellington, ever mindful of signalmen's needs, has equipped Rolvenden signal box with (almost) every comfort. He has provided running water, a coal stove, cooking facilities and sanitation. But what remains lacking is an easy chair! If anyone has an old arm chair (not too big) which they are wishing to dispose of, please let the Department know.

News from Area Groups

Ashford (Kent). 1988 proved a successful year for the Group, with numbers attending the monthly meetings steadily increasing; over 50 people came to each of the autumn meetings.

The Group continued to support the Railway financially. It donated £200 towards the exhibition trailer, purchased a PMV vehicle to

provide the underframes for one of the 4-wheel coaches acquired in 1986, and raised a total of £1400 towards the vehicles' restoration, the money being deposited with the Company. The annual model railway exhibition in Ashford on Saturday 11 March should add to this total.

The PMV originated from Ashford in 1936 when it was numbered S1228; in March 1950 it was converted into an Engineer's Mess & Tool Van and numbered departmentally as DS800. It is particularly suitable as it has a wooden floor and became available when, after a recent overhaul, it was vandalised with part of the wooden body burnt. It is hoped to move it from Hither Green to the K&ESR early in 1989.

The Group's meeting programme is shown in *The Rooter* and everyone is welcome at the BR Social Club, Beaver Road, Ashford at 7.30 pm on the third Wednesday in the month.

Croydon & Sutton. No news for this issue but if anyone would like information about the Group's activities contact Allan Sinclair on (01) 777 8025.

Maidstone. Like Ashford, 1988 was a good year for the Maidstone. Highlights included Tom Grimwood's profitable exhibition at the County Show, sales of waste paper raising £1414, increased attendance at monthly meetings and Steve Thurdow's day trip to the Great Central Railway, Loughborough, which was a sell out and much enjoyed by participants.

The Group's activities resulted in a year end profit of £2536 from which were made donations of £500 for a tool storage container at

Rolvenden and £429 towards the sales trailer and fittings. The balance has been carried forward towards the Northiam project.

The sales trailer has made a significant impact. It is presentable—it would be beneficial to have the Railway's logo painted on the outside—and the income it helped to raise at the County Show amounted to £850 which has paid back the Group's contribution towards its purchase.

An entertaining evening was had thanks to Cliff and Dorothy Wicks who hosted an end-year committee meeting in their home, to which members' "better halves" were also invited. John and Nancy Liddell showed an entertaining selection of films during the course of the evening.

Open meetings take place on the last Wednesday of each month at the Kimberley Clark Social Club, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, starting at 7.30 pm: Details from Paul Gray on Maidstone (0622) 677587.

Sussex. No closed season for this Group! The last quarter of 1988 started with a highly successful show at Pevensey, which attracted several interesting layouts and displays. The numbers attending were up on two years previously and it provided some useful promotion for the Railway. The final two successful exhibition outings, both to Eastbourne, took place on the same December weekend.

December is the month of reckoning. Auspiciously, the Group's AGM was held on the 13th when a sound financial year was reported. Reserves had increased despite having contributed towards the exhibition trailer and

the purchase of a Victorian postbox for use at Northiam.

Northiam working parties have continued albeit at a lesser rate but as the Company's development work progresses so the Group's commitment to ancillary tasks will increase. Restoration of the ex-Robertsbridge footbridge has been delayed whilst trying to find a suitable place for the work; Northiam station site itself now looks the likely location.

Meetings at Westham continue to be well supported and a full programme has been prepared for this year; details can be found at Tenterden or in the *Rootex*. Alternatively, contact Tim Lawrence on Hailsham (0323) 845108.

Thameside. As usual Thameside members spent most of last year assisting in various ways on the Railway and are now all "gearing up" for extension work when it gets into full swing.

During the autumn Bob Gilbert resigned from the Group's Committee prior to his move to Shropshire. His hard work in connection with Thameside activities over the years are much appreciated and it is understood that he will return to the Railway several times each year to carry out operating duties. Shortly after moving Bob was taken seriously ill with a burst appendix; it is to be hoped that by the time these notes are read he is back in full health again.

Andy Webb put together an excellent programme of speakers for 1988 Group meetings and he assures that 1989 is looking just as promising—details of all the Group's activities can be obtained from Sue Jarvis on Dartford (0322) 54201.



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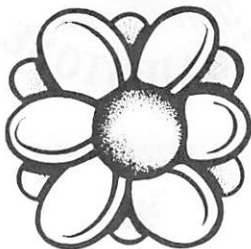
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An analysis of passengers carried in 1988

	1987				1988			
	OP Days	Trains	Passengers	Av Train	OP Days	Trains	Passengers	Av Train
March/April	7	40	5209	130	15	92	9073	99
May	15	78	6597	85	12	67	5722	85
June	16	84	5926	71	23	123	8078	66
July	21	104	9503	91	26	139	9975	72
August	31	163	14487	89	31	161	14796	92
September	14	61	4232	69	14	62	4250	69
October	11	41	1798	44	11	48	2281	48
November	6	18	975	54	4	15	831	55
December	11	44	10575	240	13	60	12283	205
Basic Services	132	633	59302	94	149	767	67289	88
Wealden Pullman/Charters			3418				3486	
Privileges & Passes:-			2818				2754	
Totals			65538				73529	
Bookings from								
Tenterden			56980				66060	
Rolvenden			777				—	
Wittersham			297				464	
On Trains			1248				765	
			59302				67289	

With an extra 16 operating days and an additional 134 trains we have not managed to maintain last year's vastly improved average train loading – 88 this year as against 94 last year.

However, we have increased our passenger business by 12.8% (well above budget), nearly 8,000 more travellers. The majority of the increase was in full return trip passengers which was good news, particularly for the treasurer!

The two-train Santa Special service came to pass this year. We ran 54 Santa Specials, an increase of 16, and carried 11,783 passengers, 13.3% up on last year but the train loadings decreased from 274 to 218 which made life a little easier for Santa and his pixies.

Platform ticket sales were down by 1,100 but more people chose to ride than just look around. The increase to 20p did not put people off and most visitors were happy to pay.

Rolvenden being closed did not make any appreciable difference to numbers mainly

because a booking clerk was often in attendance to talk to visitors and direct them to Tenterden.

Wittersham Road figures were nearly 200 up on last year while on train sales were almost 500 down. It is curious that, year after year, so few passengers join the trains at our terminus station.

First class travel was very popular and over 3,000 passengers chose to pay the £1 supplement. Many said this was the first time they had ever travelled 1st class so we must ensure they have really had something extra.

Pullman trains and charters were down on last year as train numbers were reduced due to staffing difficulties.

All in all another very successful year and one we can be pleased with, but we must continue to attract travellers to our railway and the good work the Marketing Manager has achieved must be built upon.

John Emmott

Northiam, Here we Come

Anyone looking at Northiam this winter could be forgiven for wondering when reconstruction would start. Yet, amidst the seeming chaos, there is an underlying plan which in due course will recreate a country station of the 1930's. And this is shown in the accompanying plan.

Those who were fortunate enough to attend the Volunteers Meeting on the 21st January 1989 had the technical problems explained to them by Gary Barker, our resident Colonial engineer! For the uninitiated, Gary is a qualified civil engineer with the Australian Army on a two year secondment to the UK who was 'volunteered' to help with the extension by David Stratton. But let Gary tell the story in his own words:

It sounded a simple enough request by, chairman, David Stratton, "You're a civil engineer aren't you, how about giving some advice to the team working on the extension?" My reply was affirmative and shortly after I met up with members Graham Pattison, David Hazeldine and Lawrence Brydon to discuss the layout proposed for Northiam. A bit of extra surveying was required. Yes I could borrow the equipment from work, it would only take a few

days If only I knew what I know now! Anyway all designs are complete and the original estimate for the extension has been reworked with a saving identified here and there. During this time I have heard many comments, I have read articles by members on how things should be re-created or done. Some have been factual, others fictional and occasionally emotional.

My dilemma, was to blend the differing requirements of the many with the regulations of today, based on a railway built to minimum standards 90 years ago so it can carry tomorrow's loads and yet still meet the budget. Somewhere there was a compromise solution on everything, except safety; this is how it was found.

* * *

There are two key external documents that control this railway; the Light Railway Transfer from British Railways and the Department of Transport's Railway Construction and Operation Requirements Booklet. Both documents stipulate procedures that must be followed. These include the powers of the two county



Northiam station site prior to work commencing on the extension programme, 5 September 1987.
(Brian Stephenson)

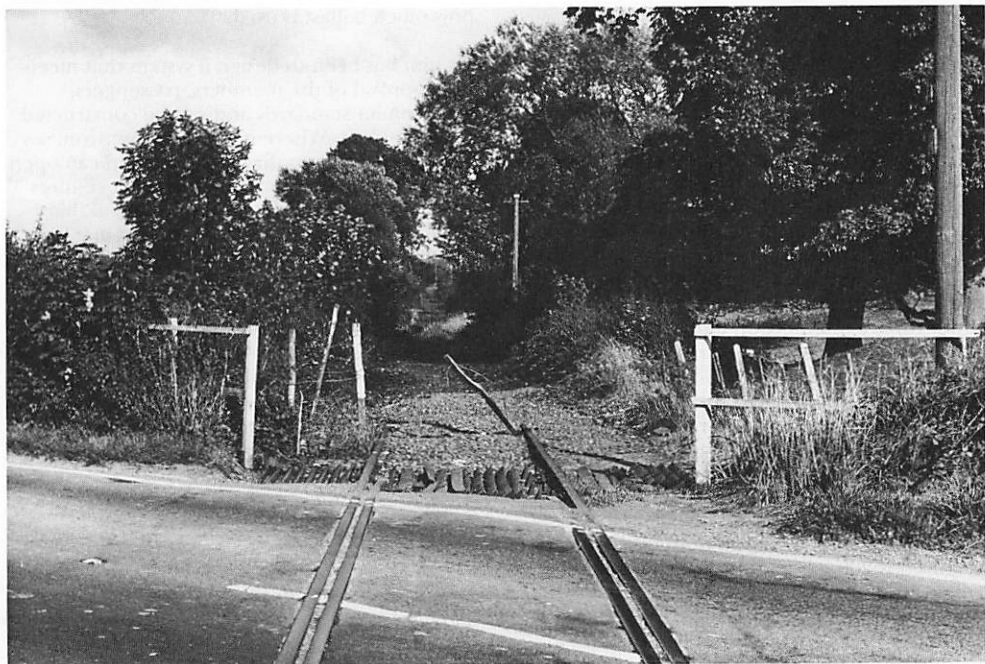
councils involved, approvals of the Secretary of State for Transport, and seemingly simple matters, but frustrating, when chasing centimetres—The Structural Railway Gauge Dimension Diagram. These documents were my starting point. It is important to understand that there is no such thing as a precedent; hence Northiam platform will be constructed differently to Tenterden, being a completely new structure. Furthermore, the requirements of East Sussex County Council may be different from those of Kent. Fortunately, the documents are not dogmatic as there is some flexibility; they are worthwhile reading.

The aim at Northiam is to preserve the past as far possible whilst meeting modern day needs. The curved platform concept has been maintained and provision has been made for an 80 space car park, given the complete lack of parking on the A28. The layout is not ideal, but of all the options considered by the board it is the best compromise in terms of satisfying both the feelings of the members and passenger needs. Provision has been made for connections to bay platforms on the up and down side

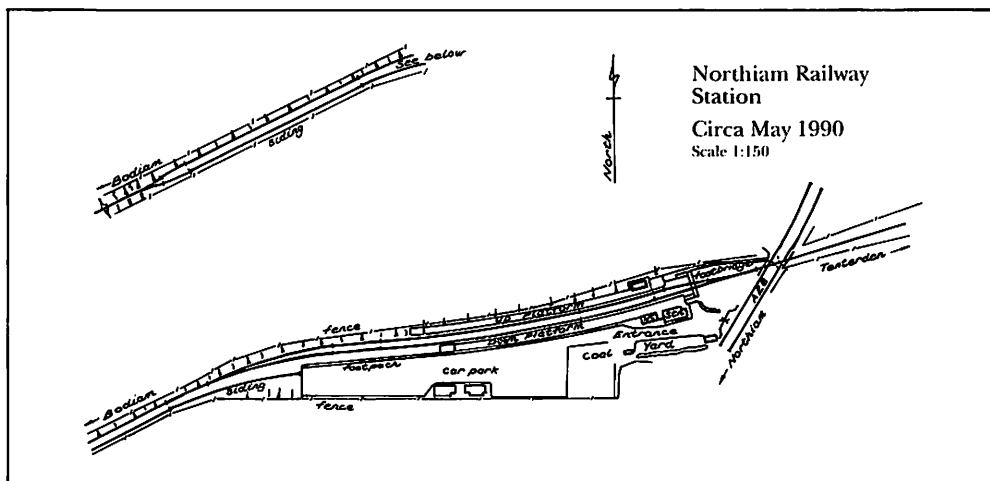
including a link to the long siding.

The siding has been designed for an engineer's possession when the Bodiam extension work commences, hence the initial connection away from Northiam. The height of the track has been determined by the level crossing and floor of the existing station building. This has required summit and sag vertical curves to get over the crossing and into the station on a level grade. Simply put, the station building could not have been put in a worse location; you may have gathered that there is a cost to preserving the past!

The final step has been to examine the right of way. Except for one curve, the line is straight from the bottom of Wittersham Bank to Northiam and for most of the way crosses a flood plain on an embankment. Good drainage is critical and David Hazeldine and his team have already completed extensive works. Apart from drainage I was concerned on track alignment, failure areas and foundation strengths. Although there are no original survey marks, pegging was relatively simple and



The lifted section of the track at Northiam, looking towards Wittersham Road, 5 September 1987.
(Brian Stephenson)



completed in two days.

David Hazeldine had already identified some failure areas which occurred in BR days. Track at Cyster's Curve is in poor condition and drainage and strengthening works are in hand. The rest of the embankment has also been examined and work is required in places.

The foundation bearing pressure, coupled with axle load, train speed, rail section, sleeper type and spacing are the main determinants for ballast depth. Depth is also controlled by the formation width because, if lack of care is not exercised, ballast will go over the side into drains. Adoption of a railway industry standard of 300 millimetres ballast depth for a secondary line, based on tonnages very much higher than the K&ESR, would have cost around £100,000. Clearly, this area was worthy of some research. In order to save money foundation bearing pressure was determined by results from an *in situ* soil test known as the California Bearing Ratio. The results showed the embankment to be composed of silty sands with fair bearing pressures (in imperial terms 1.5 tons per square foot); overall, not a good engineering result. The ballast depth was then derived using a recently published method involving the determinants previously mentioned. The depth required is 200 millimetres, which is suitable for concrete sleepers and mechanical tamping, whilst being reasonably economical. Where formation areas are known to be poor, a membrane to prevent the embankment material mixing with the ballast after rain (pumping), will be installed. In good areas the formation

will be gently reshaped so that water falls away from the track centre line toward the drains. The aim is to take maximum advantage of existing ballast. However, because of the original materials used in the embankment, periodic maintenance, both on the track and drains, will always be required on the K&ESR, regardless of how much ballast is used.

My aim has been to design a system that meets the approval of the members, passengers, government standards and can be constructed within budget. Where necessary, compromises have been made so that the extension can open as planned. Even though modern procedures and techniques can be used it is critical that regular maintenance occurs—the original light construction will always be a limiting factor.

* * *

Behind the scenes the Commercial and Operating Departments has prepared a draft timetable for 1990 which have been circulated to all Departments. The challenge of Northiam is not just reconstruction, it is the ongoing operation of a seven-mile railway.

Anyone who has had a close look at the station building or cottages will realise that they are in desperate need of repainting.

By mid summer the site should be sufficiently advanced to make it worthwhile starting on this major task, and, as the saying goes, many hands make light work—so if you feel that you would like to help, give Project Manager, Graham Pattison, a ring NOW on Tunbridge Wells 38026.

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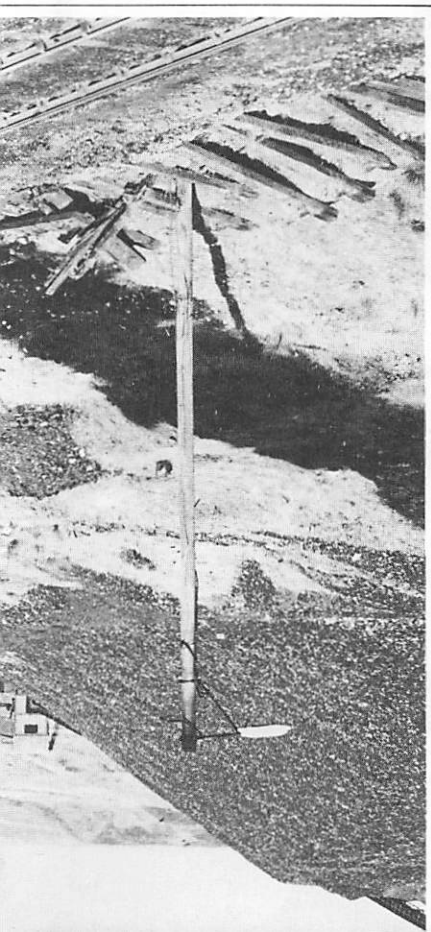
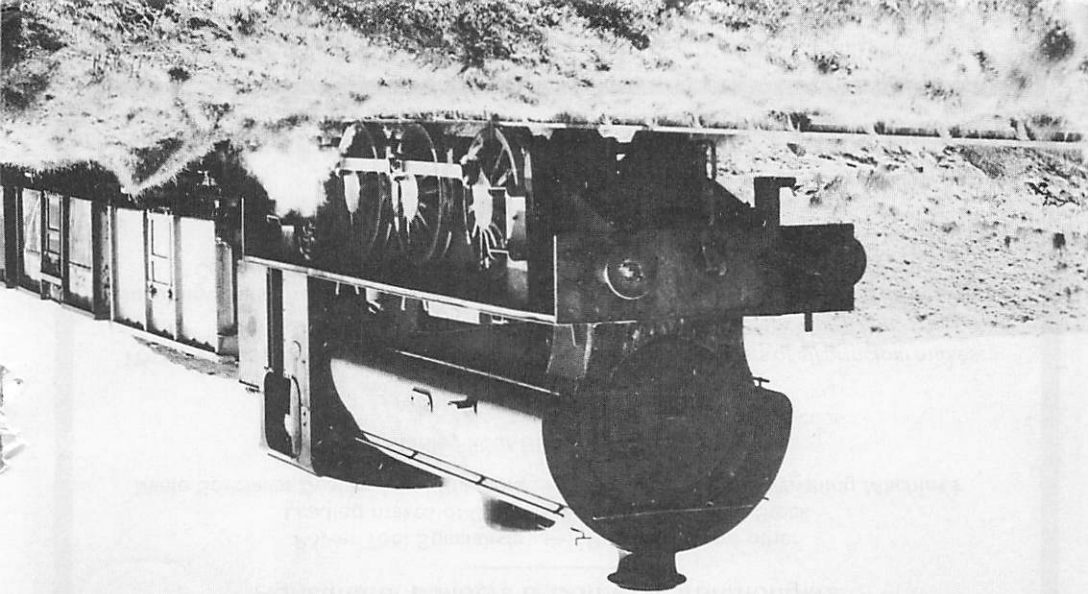
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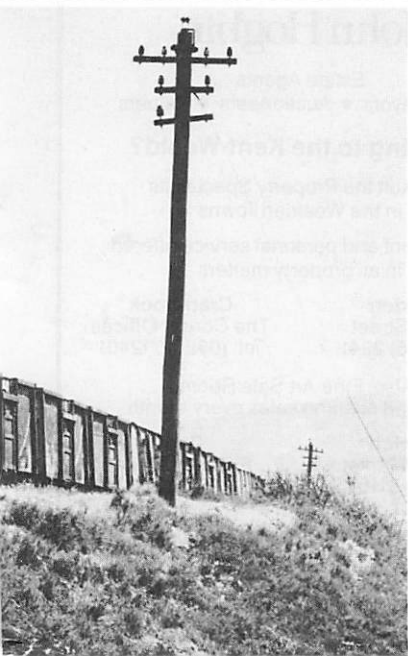
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Linda



Hunslet 0-6-0 locomotive 'Linda' officially entered service on the Kent & East Sussex Railway on 23rd August 1988, eleven years after she arrived at Tenterden and following major restoration work. Linda had previously seen service with the National Coal Board at Maesteg Colliery in South Wales, where she was photographed by Tom Heavyside on 23rd May 1973.

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Sheila Kaye-Smith and the K&ESR

Gordon Webb describes the railway as seen in the writings of the well known Sussex novelist.



Sheila Kaye-Smith

(Phil Streeter)

Just three miles south of Northiam Station lived Sheila Kaye-Smith, the literary hit of the nineteen twenties. Author of thirty two novels, short stories and countless other books and articles, her career as a writer spanned the years from 1908 until 1956. It all came to an end when she fell to her death down the twisting spiral staircase of her home, leaving the draft of another novel on her desk.

Most of her fictional output was concerned with country life around the Kent/Sussex border, just the area in fact traversed by the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Only eight of her thirty two novels omit any mention of a railway, and of these at least two deal with a period before the railways came.

It may be true that most women's interest in railways is limited to the anxiety of changing trains, or wondering whether they are on the right train at all—unless, of course, they are married to a railway enthusiast—and sometimes not even then! Occasionally, however, there appears that extreme rarity, a woman who not only loves railways and, seeing them with a keen and perceptive eye, has the ability to weave their details and working practices into the stuff of her stories.

Such a one was Sheila Kaye-Smith. Take her *Weald of Kent and Sussex* (Robert Hale 1953, reprinted 1966), in which she invites the reader to accompany her about the Weald not, as might be expected, by car, bicycle or on foot, but by those odd little single-track railways crossing the rural areas between the main lines. Unusual in a non-railway book, the fact that it should have been written by a woman must make it unique. She writes:

I can remember being rebuked as a schoolgirl for saying that I enjoyed travelling by train because I could see so much of the country from the window. Some of the finest scenery in Britain is offered to the traveller by rail. Once the wayside station is left behind—and a wayside station has charms that no wayside garage possesses—you are alone in the fields or in the mountains. You have, besides, the pleasures of a changing angle of vision, of gazing down on roofs or into farmyards or up into ... the shadowing ... trees; while the close foreground is often gay with flowers.

Yes, it seems the Sheila Kaye-Smith was from an early age a member of that happy band—a true lover of railways. And not without humour:

... a Kent and East Sussex railway takes a lot of nationalizing, "and I assure you," said the station-master cum porter cum signalman at our nearest station, "they get no co-operation from us."

Writing from pre-war experience, she goes on:

Now the line is threatened with extinction ... its closing would be a loss for it is the only means we have of exploring one of the loveliest and one of the most perfectly rural valleys in England ... at one time the economically minded could travel by it from Dover to Hastings for fivepence less than the cost of the direct route via Rye and Ashford, the only drawback being that the trip took four hours instead of one and a half.

There follows a description of a day out that she sometimes enjoyed as a girl, when she and her family would take the train from Hastings to Rye, walk to Scot's Float Sluice (then called Star Lock) and cruise up the navigable River Rother to Newenden. Catching the train from Northiam Station to Robertsbridge, and thence back to Hastings, rounded off the day out. Sheila Kaye-Smith was born in 1887 so that these trips would have been in Rother Valley Railway days.

Next she takes the reader on an imaginary journey from Robertsbridge to Headcorn by rail,

I do not propose that we should make our excursion down the valley behind this film star (which) Will Hay borrowed for his film 'Oh, Mr. Porter', nor will we commit ourselves to the Bumper ... made up of two motor-buses fixed back to back and living most shatteringly up to its name. The two friends of my youth Juno and Rotvenden, are scrap by now, so a small saddle tank engine with the initials KESR still ghostly beneath the palimpsest of British Railways, shall convey our single coach with a tail of four or five wagons out of Robertsbridge.*

She must have meant a 'Terrier' side tank engine. There follow fourteen pages of description covering the area traversed by the line, which, allowing for small changes, might even now serve as a guide to the traveller, at least from Bodiam to Tenterden, and her comment on the working timetable is summed up:

No train ever goes through Tenterden, and as the delay there amounts to an hour or more ... the stations further up the line can be reached more expeditiously by almost any other means of transport.

It was not so long ago that the normal mode of travel by most people was by train. Given Sheila Kaye-Smith's love of railways, and the Kent and East Sussex in particular, it was inevitable that her fictional characters should travel by train. Five novels and a short story mention journeys on the Rother Valley or the Kent and East Sussex, while two more novels include descriptions of journeys on the latter, but using fictitious names for stations and places.

Spell Land (published in 1910) contains a curious inconsistency. Having placed her character in Battle, Sheila Kaye-Smith writes:

He had been to Robertsbridge, and along the light railway to Benenden ... and mastering the vagaries of the light railway timetable arrived at Battle a couple of hours earlier than he expected.

Now, in some of her other novels the author is apt to play tricks with place-names, and I conclude that in this instance she did not literally mean a station called Benenden, but that knowing the line so well, she must have

meant 'a station for Benenden.' Still, errors do crop up, and in *The Challenge to Sirius* (1917) appears the following:

In the year 1885 Maggie opened a greengrocer's shop in Rye, and two years later a dairy in Hastings. The Rother Valley Railway ... provided hitherto undreamed-of means of transport ...

In 1887? Perhaps the actual history of the line was not Sheila Kaye-Smith's strongpoint! In *Green Apple Harvest* (1920) one of the characters travels from Headcorn to Bodiam in:

The little train—a string of ancient South-Eastern coaches hooked to a toy engine—heaved itself out of the station ...

Apart from the fact that she must have meant the coaches were the Great Eastern ones, I must admit that this particular piece does sound a bit like something out of Tank Engine Thomas! In *The Village Doctor* (1929) the new doctor's arrival in Northiam at the station is placed:

one mile from the village and up hill all the way.

Although they live in the Bodiam/Sandhurst area the characters in *Shepherds in Sackcloth* (1930) travel to Brighton via Hawkhurst, Tonbridge and Lewes, an unnecessarily roundabout way, one would have thought. Surely a shorter way than using the Hawkhurst Branch and the Cuckoo Line would have been from Bodiam Station (nearer than Hawkhurst Station) and via Robertsbridge, Hastings and the coast line west to Brighton.

Later in the book a character says:

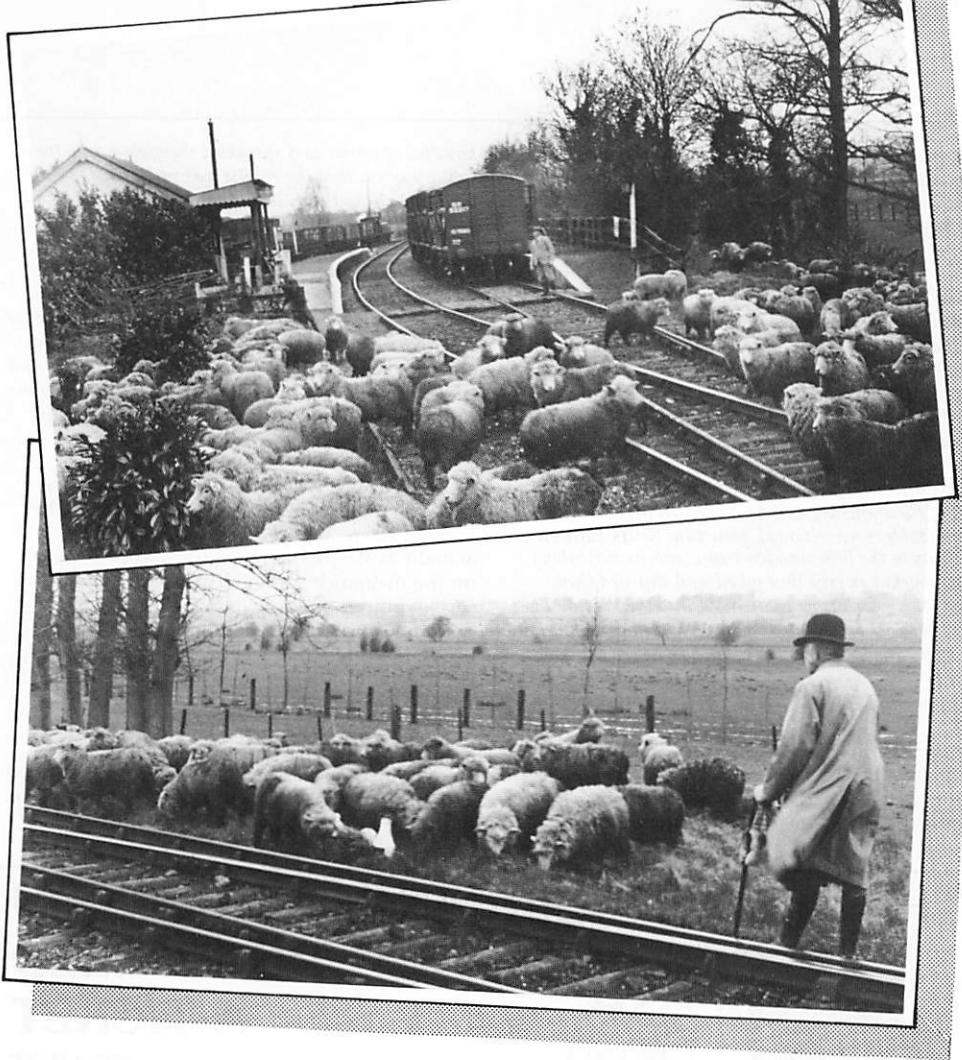
I take the Rother Valley train from Northiam on Thursday.

Note that he does not actually say 'the Rother Valley Railway'. Perhaps there were older inhabitants along the valley in 1930, who, remembering the building of the railway, still clung to the original title.

'Nineveh,' the short story in a collection published in 1938, includes just a single paragraph, but a nostalgic one:

Leaving the main line at Robertsbridge, they embarked on the rural innocencies of the Rother Valley Railway. A little single line ran them through endless hop-gardens, past farms with crumpled red roofs and

*the Hawthorn Leslie locomotive *Northiam*.



The Kent & East Sussex Railway at Northiam, as Sheila Kaye-Smith would have known it: probably 1920's.
(Col Stephens Railway Museum)

white-capped oast-houses, over a dim spread of marshes, where the distances were blue and the foreground golden, till at last they came to Wittersham Road Station—a lonely little platform on the edge of the marsh.

I cannot date the story exactly, but motor cars were in use for commuting 'to the junction' for a train to London, so I assume that it was in the early thirties, which makes the reference to the 'Rother Valley Railways' wrong.

The last two novels we will look at include the KESR under other names; *Ember Lane* (1940) need not detain us long as the relevant excerpt

has already appeared in *The Kent and East Sussex Railway* by Stephen Garrett, our assistant editor, (Oakwood Press 1972, revised edition 1987). We must note, however, that the 'Sussex Border Railway' uses the same fictitious station names as does the 'Kentish Border Railway' in *The Lardners and the Laurelwoods* (1948). The prelude to this latter novel includes what I consider to be Sheila Kaye-Smith's best description of the line or at least the southern half of it, both in its early days, and (probably) immediately post-war!

Such a railway, thought Martin, should not be allowed to exist in the present stage of our civilization. He had been sitting for an hour on a hard springless

seat, but he had not travelled more than twenty miles; and it was impossible to read because there was no light in the carriage. There had been no light in the old days, he remembered; the railway had no tunnels and it had not been thought necessary to provide lamps to dispel merely natural darkness. But surely things might have moved a bit since then. From what he could see of it, this carriage had been in use unchanged for thirty or forty years. He might even have travelled in it on some earlier occasion ... they might all have crowded in here ... laughing, chattering, pushing, scuffling, taking up the whole compartment with their parcels and hand luggage.

It was a strange thought that in those days the high spot of their journey had been their change from the comfortable, conventional, punctual South Eastern Railway to the little wooden train with its ridiculous hump-backed engine that jolted and shunted them across the marsh from Flattenden into the Weald. The holiday seemed ... really to begin when the guard came swinging along the footboard and in at the carriage door to take their tickets. 'Five and two halves to Rushmonden' ...

Another high spot had been the first glimpse of Idolsfold. It was visible from the train, he remembered, shortly after Potcommon. You could see it high on the ridge above Shirley Moor. At the junction only a

handful of people had sprinkled themselves into the solitary coach that the engine was just about to pull away. There had been three halts since then ...

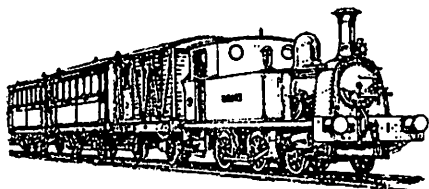
Bess Hovenden, however, had arrived early, for she knew that the train was capable of arriving early too—should there be no goods to shunt at Bibleham, Potcommon, or Drungewick Road. The distant hoot of a train broke into the silence. There it was at last—at the level crossing by Castweasel. A series of clanks and rumbles brought the train into the station. Then came the engine's long sigh, and the banging of carriage doors ...

I have it from a friend who knew Sheila Kaye-Smith that 'Idolsfold', for which Martin in the excerpt above alighted at Rushmonden, is actually at Woodchurch. Shirley Moor is shown on the ordnance survey map. Readers might care to amuse themselves by a little mild detective work to find the real names disguised by the fictional ones, and to determine which engine and rolling stock Martin used.

There is a Sheila Kaye-Smith Society which meets regularly and publishes a journal. Particulars of membership can be obtained from Mrs A.R. Jenkins, 16 Monceaux Road, Herstmonceux, Hailsham, East Sussex.

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Letters to the Editor

A matter of history

Sir—I entirely agree with your correspondent, Mike Esau, that Northiam and Bodiam stations should be preserved as they are and not 'modernised' to accommodate more passengers. I joined the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society because I wanted to support the preservation of a vintage railway and not to support a commercial business.

New Malden, Surrey

J. Hand

Sir—As a non-working member, I have previously been reluctant to criticise aspects of the Railway and the direction it is taking. However, following the A.G.M. and a site visit, I was dismayed by the extent of the development of Northiam station, that I am writing in support of Peter Davis's views as expressed in last summer's issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*.

During the 1930's and 1940's the K&ESR generated interest out of all proportion to its size and importance within the national system. This, at a time, when steam reigned supreme. Thousands of industrial locomotives, often of extreme age, operated over hundreds of industrial, mining and agricultural systems, whilst four and six wheeled carriages rattled along numerous branch lines. Yet, still the Kent & East Sussex offered something unique, with its varied collection of locomotives and rolling stock, its rustic stations and its elementary and unhurried operating methods.

Now, in the late 1980's, with dozens of private railways competing for both passengers and volunteers, it is essential that we offer something special. The Bluebell possesses a most comprehensive collection of locomotives and pre-nationalisation carriages; the Severn Valley Railway represents both the L.M.S. and G.W.R. without equal; the North Yorkshire Moors Railway offers locomotive action unequalled elsewhere; the Mid Hants Railway presents British Railways, 1950's style; while the Isle of Wight Railway recreates the charm of the country branch line. Each railway offers something to tempt both visitor and volunteer. The K&ESR, however, offers the historically inaccurate combination of predominately ex-Main Line mark one carriages, hauled by former industrial locomotives, through 'Theme Park' stations, owing little to main-line or light railway practice. Sadly, we have betrayed the vision of those determined pioneers who have

fought to save the railway, by gradually submerging its once unique identity into the stereotyped uniformity of the purely tourist railway.

We should stop installing complicated signalling and over-developing our stations in an attempt to emulate the Bluebell or the Severn Valley Lines and concentrate on the one thing that no other preserved railway can match; the true rural light railway.
That is, if it is not too late

Burgess Hill, Sussex

George Jones

Sir—I have followed with interest the debate between those who wish to recreate the KESR as it was and those for whom operational and commercial considerations must take priority. Is there any value in considering a compromise whereby a replica KESR wayside station is erected at some point along the line between Wittersham Road and Northiam or between Northiam and Bodiam? It could have a short platform, a small station building based either on the Rother Valley corrugated iron style or the wooden pattern of the Headcorn Extension, and minimal toilet facilities. If space allowed there could be a short grassy siding with representative examples of goods stock.

Normal service trains would not stop at the station but it could be served on advertised special occasions by a shuttle service between the adjacent stations powered by our smaller locomotives and making use of our older carriages. With the points clipped out of use and no passing facilities I cannot see that an operational signalling system would be needed nor would there be any need for locomotive watering facilities.

Effectively the scheme would be a separate operation within the operation of the line and could be funded separately. There are many small preservation sites around the country that open only on a monthly and bank holiday basis and whose operation is aimed more at the enthusiast than the casual visitor. This would be just such an operation enabling us to make use of our historical rolling stock without over-taxing it. Without road access such a site might make an acceptably secure base for some of our larger relics to be displayed. It could well also provide an attractive location for filming contracts.

Such a scheme will not be possible overnight and should not be at the expense, either in cash or labour, of our ultimate goal of reaching Bodiam. However, it would go some way towards meeting our obligations as the curators of the Kent & East Sussex; it would restore some sense of purpose to members who regret the necessary consequences of having to run a viable and safe railway; it would be fun. If a suitable site exists along our track it could be earmarked for such a scheme and suitable materials and equipment can be earmarked for use here as they become available or are displaced elsewhere on the line.

Chingford, Essex

Stephen Garrett

Peter Davis replies:—

It seems that my article in the Summer edition of The Terrier generated a great deal of interest and I am delighted that many members have taken the trouble to let me know how much they agree with it. Mike Esau's letter on the subject, in the Autumn Terrier, is well balanced, supportive and typical of the reaction I have received.

Perhaps it is now time for the Board to issue a statement on the Railway's identity. Is it to be allowed to slide into anonymity, with at best a phoney Southern Railway appearance, or is the preservation of its unique independent character to be encouraged and built upon? Failure to take the latter course will ensure that the K&ESR becomes just another local preserved line, of no specific interest except that it once was a much celebrated independent company. In order to stay in the National ratings its unusual character and history will have to be skilfully highlighted and developed.

May I also comment again on the proposed footbridge at Northiam. I expect that having required a bridge a case was then made for having it. That is, had it not been available, then the more appropriate installation of interlocked wicket gates would have been the negotiated solution. The footbridge will dominate the compact station site, destroying the atmosphere at a stroke. Would it be too much to ask that the suggested alternative is seriously considered?

A Happy Member

Sir—Although the little room was crammed, the large audience were expectant at the start of our winter Volunteer's Meeting. Lighthearted banter was heard everywhere, as it always is when we members meet. But, at one and the same time, there was also an air of determination. Of

people present, who work hard for the cause, but to whom our governing Board of Directors seem to be blind and deaf to requests. However, this was the place, and the time, to ask—Why? This the venue too where the Board actually told us why.

As the meeting got under way, the professionals were wheeled out to sally forth. The money man equipped with half-a-dozen excellent graphs, portrayed our growth. Showed us just where we used and raised the where-with-all, depicting interestingly, that that too was changing year by year as we matured as a Company.

The Publicity man was exuberant, (I thought he was going to cry). His strategy of marketing to the public had 'taken off'. And while our minds reeled with all that, and chests inflated with pride, along came the Civil Engineer man. Wham—back to earth. 'Your trackbed is a bottomless pit for your profits', he said, or words to that effect. One could feel the groans.

But soon, up went our soaring spirits yet again as another reminded us, "We're on our way, we're on our way, stand back, Northiam, here we come—Yippee!

The emotional see-saw went on, and on, as statement question and answer followed each other. But, the more we all heard the more we all grasped of these joys and difficulties of running a Railway. And became the more educated in the process. It also sank in, just how lucky we really were, in having good solid 'professionals' in our organisation, in the right places, giving unstintingly of their time—like all the volunteers.

Mr Editor, to those present that evening it became blatantly obvious,—the future success of our Kent and East Sussex Railway is not in any doubt. 'Cos the workers enthusiasm to carry it forward is there. In large measure.

Farnborough, Kent

Iain Pringle

Getting Tanked Up

Sir—The article in your winter issue about buying side tanks for "Bodiam" reminds me that in May 1940 I was serving on an AA site at Aldington, and next door there was a small stone crushing plant; the water supply for this was a Terrier side-tank. Presumably this must have been one

that was spare after the 1933 rebuilding of "Bodiam" using some bits from "Rolvenden". Does this appear on the sales side of the ledger Mr. Miller is studying?

Llandre, Dyfed R.W. Kidner

The Weston Point Light Railway

Sir-The article in the last edition of "The Tenterden Terrier" reminded me that the Weston Point appears on a Salford Terrace letterhead of the early 1920s.

If it appears strange that reciprocal free passes should be offered by Colonel Stephens on the Weston Point and Snailbeach lines which never had passenger services, the inclusion of the Gower Railway is even more odd as this was never built! Even the inclusion of the North Devon & Cornwall Junction and Ashover concerns stretches credibility as these were still under construction, not being opened until 1925.

If by listing all the undertakings, the Colonel sought to impress the managements of other companies, he certainly succeeded up to a point, as the collection of over 70 free passes issued to him and now displayed in the Town Museum, surely testifies.

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The Third Terrier

Last year ex-LB&SCR No. 78 "Knowle" returned to the K&ESR after a thirty year absence. Having worked on the line throughout the 1940s and much of the 1950s, it is a case of coming home to Rolvenden to join former running companion No.3 "Bodiam" (32670). After several years in store and having undergone some restoration, it arrived as a kit of Terrier parts. Repair and rebuilding work has started and it is not an idle dream to think there will be three of William Stroudley's delightful little engines working along the Rother valley in the 1990s.

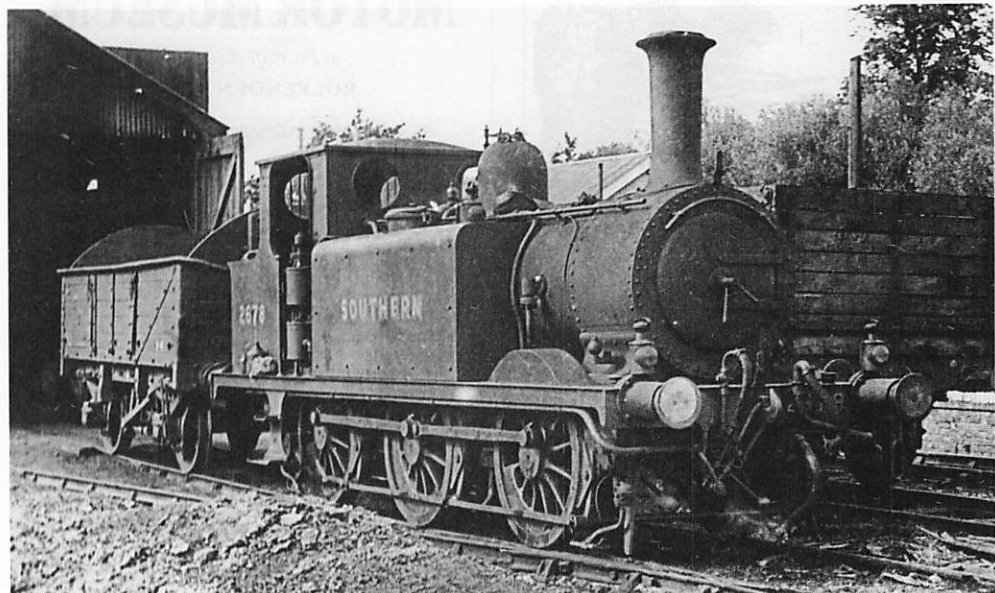
This article chronicles what is known about the history of our latest arrival; technical information about Terriers is readily available elsewhere so will not be detailed here.

"Knowle", now in its 109th year, has had a long and eventful history. Twice it has been close to the cutter's torch but has survived. It came out from Brighton Works in July 1880, a part of the last batch of fifty 0-6-0 tank locomotives within the LB&SCR's A (later A1) class. Detail differences from earlier batches included the fitting of Westinghouse air brakes from new and iron instead of wooden brake blocks. When new it performed on London suburban lines but by

the mid-1890s had migrated to Portsmouth, working the Hayling Island and East Southsea branches.

In 1907 it was renumbered 678 in the LB&SCR's duplicate list and, in the same year, converted to push-pull motor train working. November 1911 saw a Marsh design boiler fitted, the total mileage run at this time being 763,993. Now classified as A1X class, No. 678 was allocated to Horsham in 1912, moving to Littlehampton four years later. It subsequently returned to the London area where duties included the Crystal Palace motor trains; by the end of 1922 it was back in the country at Horsham.

In the ownership of the Southern Railway it is believed to have been stored out of use at Preston Park from 1926 until 1929 when it shipped across the Solent in May of that year to become Isle of Wight W4 (W14 in 1932) "Bembridge". Prior to departure for the Island it was overhauled, fitted with an extended bunker and its push-pull gear removed. Its Island duties came to an end in May 1936 when it returned to the Mainland, only to be condemned at Eastleigh seven months later. Fate intervened, for before scrapping started a reprieve was granted and, after overhaul, it returned to



"2678" on hire to the K.&E.S.R. at Rolvenden, in Southern Railway livery.

(Col Stephens Railway Museum)



"32678" in B.R. days at Northiam, 20 August 1952.

(Lens of Sutton)

traffic in May 1937 as No. 2678, going to Fratton for duty on the Hayling Island services. A year later it was tried as shed pilot at Guildford but was found unsuitable.

1940 saw No. 2678 hired to the K&ESR to alleviate a chronic motive power shortage. Some sources suggest that it was loaned by the SR in 1941 but the K&ESR mileage register indicates that it arrived at Rolvenden the previous year. No. 2678 remained on loan to the K&ESR until nationalisation in 1948 and was retained by BR for service on the branch for another ten years, thus becoming the longest serving non-K&ESR purchased locomotive to work the line.

Drama occurred on 29 March 1949 when, as a result of track subsidence, No. 2678 was derailed near Wittersham becoming well buried in the light soil, thereby creating recovery problems. By end-1949 the locomotive was turned out in lined BR black, renumbered to 32678, and allocated to Ashford although still sub-shedded at Rolvenden.

The final passenger train on the K&ESR ran on Saturday 2 January 1954, leaving Robertsbridge at 5.50 pm in the care of 32678 and sister Terrier 32655, one at each end. Afterwards they ran from Rolvenden to Hastings, where 32678 remained for a further four years, shedded at St Leonards, for the daily Tenterden freight duties. During this period it worked also the seasonal hop-pickers' trains.

Displaced by diesels in 1958, 32678 returned to Fratton for the Hayling Island branch again, this branch being the final Terrier stronghold. In September 1959 it received its final general repairs and repainting at Eastleigh.

By 1963, when Terrier days in BR service were drawing to a close, 32678 was employed on West Quay line at Newhaven. These lines were due to close in mid-summer when the swing bridge over the River Ouse ceased to be used by rail-borne traffic. The final trip over the bridge took place on 10 August when all wagons were cleared from the West Quay lines and, now redundant, 32678 left Newhaven for Brighton eight days later. There it saw out its last BR duties as coal stage pilot before its final trip to Eastleigh where it was withdrawn from service on 5 October 1963.

32678's total mileage was recorded as 1,411,436 upon withdrawal, of which 949,056 miles had been run in 43 years of LB&SCR ownership and 462,380 miles in SR/BR days.

Reprieve came again the following spring when 32678 was sold to Butlins and put on display at Minehead holiday camp. Subsequently it moved to the nearby West Somerset Railway from where it was acquired by Resco (Railways) Ltd who moved it to their premises in North Kent. Now in private ownership, No. 78 "Knowle" has returned to its old haunts on the Kent and East Sussex borders and is stripped down at Rolvenden, where restoration is proceeding.

In preparing this brief history I have dipped into several publications, most notably the late D.L. Bradley's invaluable record "Locomotives of the LB&SCR part 1" (RCTS), as well as C.J. Binnie's "The Brighton Terriers", Klaus Marx's "Famous Fenchurch" and Stephen Garrett's "The Kent & East Sussex Railway"; their researches have made my task much easier.

Neil Rose

"Thirteen"

Some childhood memories of the Kent & East Sussex Railway by Thomas Standen

My railway the Kent & East Sussex line, once meandered through the Wealden landscape from Robertsbridge in Sussex, to Headcorn in Kent. The decision in 1954 to close the line marked the end of an era. It was a sad but inevitable closure for a lovable stretch of railroad, its livelihood unable to compete with ever-increasing road transport.

Alas, only a ghost train rumbles along my nostalgic stretch, from Tenterden to Headcorn, the old-time junction for London and beyond. Yet there are still delights in store for the ardent Rambler who cares to trace the old cinder track, long since reclaimed by the curators of the countryside, namely the farmer and Mother Nature herself.

I had the good fortune to live near Biddenden station, where a boy's wildest dream came true—that of helping to run a real live railway! Recently I returned to my old village where I could obey the magnetism of the past. I stood by the old level-crossing, oblivious of speeding cars and their smelly exhausts. Instead, I took in the sweet smell of steam as I peered round the pair of massive oaks still dominating the scene. Surely, this was no ghost train, and did I really see cotton-wool puffs of smoke belching from the tall brass-banded chimney of a busy-bodied saddle-tank; hauling a single carriage, followed by sundry goods wagons? And who was the apparition by my side? I felt a desire to shake the hand of my old friend Alf *. But it would have been an empty sleeve I grasped, its cuff neatly folded, reposing in a pocket. Alf, you see, had lost an appendage in the Great War; yet, there he stood, as of old, deftly rolling a cigarette with his remaining digits, as I dutifully went about my flag-waving; red to halt those using the highway, and green to wave 'Dinky' Dodds and his train onwards. My fantasy of yesteryear had the vanity of a young egotist pleading for Colonel Holman Fred Stephens to glance down at him from a carriage window, to admire the efficiency of probably his youngest part-time unpaid employee. 'The Colonel' you see—a retired military engineer – was the brains behind the Kent & East Sussex Railway; just one of his shoestring-budgeted and somewhat spartan railways scattered over England and Wales at the turn of the century. But I suspect none was more famous than the K.&E.S.R., its

secondhand motive power and rolling-stock trademarks of a zealous railway builder.

Colonel Stephens dispensed with a host of constructional costs which his main-line counterparts had to meet. Nor did he concern himself overmuch with the gradients of the rolling countryside between Headcorn and Robertsbridge. Earthworks were an expensive item on a meagre balance sheet, so the enterprising Colonel drove his track up and over, or, where possible, around any incline that confronted him. But the ascent from Rolvenden to Tenterden proved a sterner test for his astute brain—the incline is one of the steepest on any standard-gauge railway in the country. Happily, it still asks for a thumping head of steam! And, whilst in the locality, a visit to the Tenterden HQ of the Kent & East Sussex line is more than worth while, the ultimate delight being a ride of sheer unadulterated pleasure if one's visit is on a 'steam up' day.

I return to another era of railway history – that of nearly six decades ago; to occurrences – humorous or otherwise – on the Colonel's line, and, for me, a joy to relate.

When in 1897 Colonel Stephens's drawing-board pencil drew its line from 'A' to 'B' across the Kent and Sussex Weald, it isolated many a village it purported to serve. However, there were compensations if one chose to use the running schedule as a clock – and many did – despite shunting delays with which the 'Terrier' might be involved. For instance the eleven-thirty 'down' from Tenterden – give or take ten minutes – would be the 'tater or cabbage putter on'. The five o'clock 'up' from Headcorn was known as 'Polly', (put the kettle on!) – in winter it was also known as the 'Crumpet Express!' But as mentioned earlier, time-keeping could be erratic to say the least, and it depended on the amount of shunting undertaken at any given station *en route*.

Consider how it would be if you were a first-time passenger on my old railway. You arrive at Biddenden station totally unaware that there will be a delay, and that you will have time for a leisurely stroll, perhaps to discover the whereabouts of the village church. But, surprise, surprise, you are two miles from that beautifying



Biddenden station, 1920's

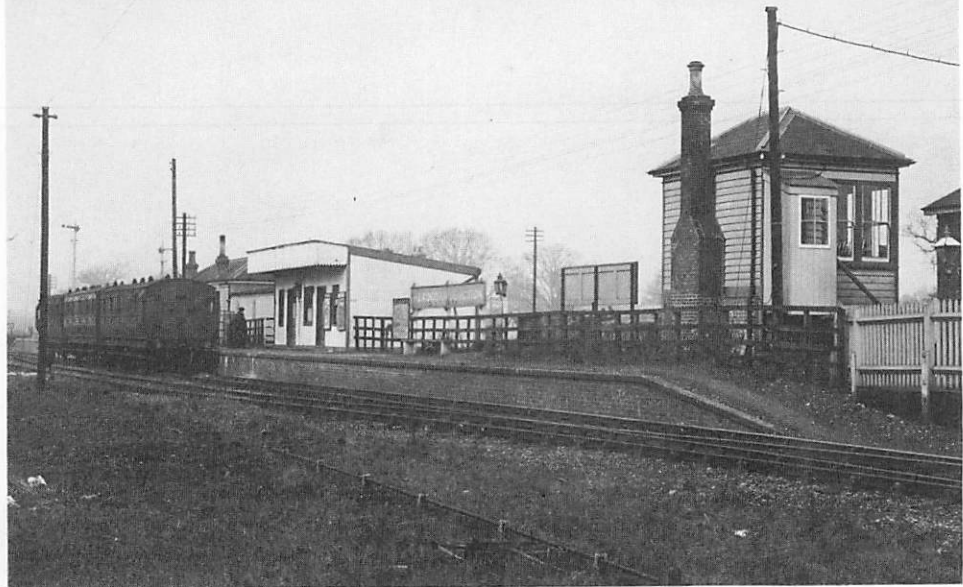
(Col Stephens Railway Museum)

edifice! Let me now assume you remain seated – a wise precaution elsewhere on the railway map. To your utter dismay you hear the engine chug away, leaving you somewhat bemused, to say the least. Leaning out of your carriage window you espy stationmaster Alf. Perhaps he would allay your fears of missing your London connection at Headcorn? But Alf says he has a spot of shunting to do. "And don't worry", says Alf, continuing with, "Headcorn's a pretty enough place for a walk if you 'as to wait for the next train".

I took the opportunity – whilst convalescing from an attack of mumps – to visit Alf in his sidings. He was waiting for a loose-shunted empty fruit wagon coming towards him, a process that asked for a complete understanding between engine driver and Alf. Assessing the impetus given by the 'Terrier' was a vital operation, too heavy a shove made Alf's braking

duty a hazardous undertaking, if we recall his single appendage. But despite that, and a portly stature, Alf possessed a resolute athletic ability. Rarely did Dinky Dodds, the engine driver, misjudge his onward thrust, but on this occasion either his hand slipped off the throttle, or – as Alf succinctly put it later – "Dinky was gawpin' about over t'wards Will's Mother" – whatever that meant! However, the wagon sped towards and eventually past Alf, his valiant attempt at braking foiled by the lever's rusty pivot. I watched Alf still giving chase, his empty sleeve unfurling in the process – a disaster pennant I thought – for buffered at the siding's extent, was a coal truck. I caught up with Alf, his crimson cheeks ballooning between bursts of spluttered invective as we awaited a violent metallic impact. After a near derailment, the silence was broken by another stream of choice expletives, as a coalman's Al Jolson-like features appeared out of the truck, his tirade ending with "No wonder you'm a bachelor Alf, you couldn't stop a runaway pram, and that's fer sure!"

*Alfred Bourne – Station Agent at Biddenden



Headcorn station, K.&E.S.R., 1920's.

(Col Stephens Railway Museum)

And now to Biddenden's two sets of unusual twins. The first renowned pair are of course the 'Biddenden Maids' – Eliza and Mary Chulkhurst, born in the year 1100, joined at the hips and shoulders; what a panic must have ensued in midwifery circles in those far-off days! Not so with 'Janus' and 'Rolvenden', their births induced by none other than Henry Ford. Once more the Colonel's ingenuity was to the fore, when he adapted this duo of 'T' type Ford buses for rail travel. 'Janus' and 'Rolvenden' they may have been christened, but I knew them as 'Push Me' and 'Pull Me', or, in more affectionate terms, 'The Primrose Specials'. Why this flowery nomenclature? I will explain.

Climbing 'Frittenden Bank' necessitated bottom gear, when the pair slowed to a snail's pace, enabling agile passengers to dismount, to gather bunches of lemon-hued blooms, and embark again before Sam,* the driver, changed gear atop the rise. On one occasion Sam halted the rail-buses along the line, with one engine temporarily out of action and the other boiling over like a tin-kettle. Sam had forgotten to put aboard a newly-acquired replacement fan-belt, and now one was wanted. So poor old Sam had to scamper across the fields to the nearest garage to get a further belt. I often wonder what tales were unfolded in urban parlours, for during longer delays on this sleepy line it was

not unknown for passengers to collect armfuls of bluebells!

One other story comes to mind about the K.&E.S.R. In the early days, a set of experimental road crossing gates was installed. One day a motorist arrived at the crossing to find both gates swinging idly, one half way across the road, the other across the line. The driver impatiently leant on his klaxon. A sleepy-eyed crossing keeper soon emerged, it being demanded of him, "Why are the gates only half open?" Came the droll reply; "Well zir – t' tell y' the truth, I'm 'alf expecting a train!"

It was the school's half-term break. A shimmering heat rose from Alf's platform and sleepered track. My old friend was in a tetchy mood. "Are you not feeling well?" I ventured. "I'm alright", replied Alf. "I've lost a train, that's what I'm worryin' about". To vent his feelings, Alf used his ledger to clout an irritant fly. I can still visualise that messy corpse! It was an occasion when a boy should be seen and not heard, as the proverb puts it. But in an effort to appease my old friend I volunteered to put my ear to a rail, hoping to feel vibrations denoting an oncoming train. This futile exercise gave me a self-inflicted injury – a singed ear from the sun-baked rail! Alf extended his watch; "Half an hour late already", he muttered, still annoyed at his train's tardy schedule. "Can't be settin' up rabbit snares this time of year" he remarked, his eyes scanning the horizon for tell-tale smoke. Then we heard a distant whistle. With flags at

*Sammy Austen – Driver and Fitter (not to be confused with W.H. Austen, General Manager)

the ready we made our way to the level-crossing. Soon the 'Terrier' rumbled past, Alf's cynical asides lost in a blow-off of surplus steam.

Back at the station Dinky Dodds had closed his valve, allowing an audible conversation as Alf demanded a reply to his opening thrust; "What's all this about then? Where 'ave you bin ...?" Dinky halted Alf's interrogation with "Can't 'elp the line bucklin' can I?" "Me and Harry 'ave been doin' a straight'nin' job, cartin' buckets of water from a pond to cool the rail down like". And they had done just that!

Alf's patience was to be tested once more as he endeavoured to get his train under way. A bespectacled floppy-hatted dowager's face confronted Alf's at the carriage window. "Is there a toilet?" she discreetly enquired. Alf rounded off an eventual afternoon with; "Ma'am, there ain't no toilet, and what's more there ain't time - you'll 'ave to bottle up till you gits to Headcorn!" As the 'Terrier' moved off I sympathised with that poor soul! In no way would her condition be relieved as her carriage hurtled down 'Frittenden Bank' at a maximum

speed of twenty m.p.h.!

The hilarity of the previous hour or so had alleviated my painful glands, allowing me to undertake Alf's last orders, which were to put the up signal to green, close the sidings and bring in the nearside platform. During my jubilant, sleeper-hopping strides, the lever-pulling sequence escaped my memory. Luckily I was absent from the station the next morning, for the Terrier collided with the lengthman's trolley parked on the loop, my mis-directed train toppling a couple of paint tins, their spilt black and white contents resulting in a pair of sleepers taking on the appearances of recumbent penguins!

With that adventure in mind I am certain Colonel Stephens would have commiserated with one of his ardent young fans. In return, and despite the humour expressed in the preceding text, I gladly report that the nostalgic link between Kent and Sussex served its patrons well. And long may the revitalised Tenterden to Bodiam length be a memorial to its imaginative founder.

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The Colonel's Pipedreams

No. 1 – From Brill to Oxford

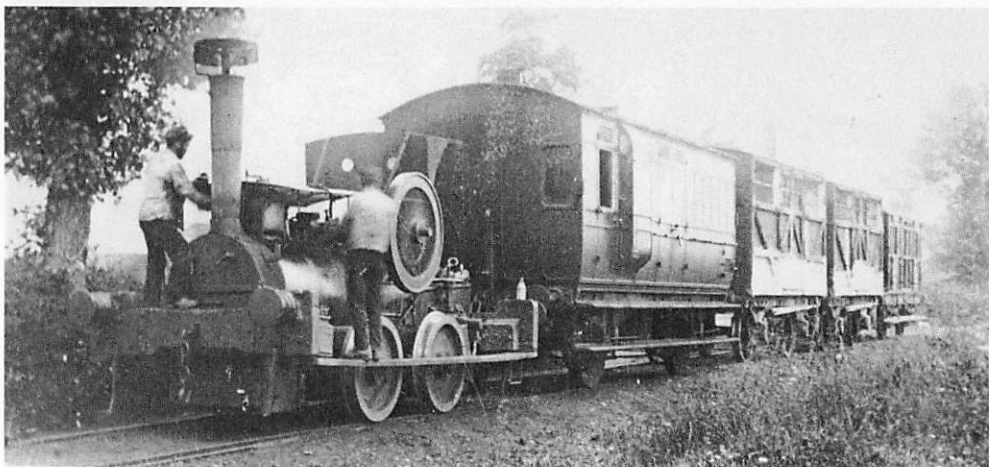
This is the first of a series of articles covering developments contemplated by Colonel Stephens which, for one reason or another, failed to materialise.

It is well known that H.F. Stephens completed his engineering training studying under J.J. Hanbury at the Neasden Works of the Metropolitan Railway from 1888 to 1890. In the following years he did not lose touch with the Metropolitan and assisted with alterations at Baker Street and construction of the Kings Cross subway while working on the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway. Stephens must therefore have been well aware of the Metropolitan's acquisition of the Aylesbury & Buckingham Railway in 1891 in advance of their own line reaching Aylesbury in 1892.

Midway along the Aylesbury & Buckingham at Quainton Road was a further independent line. This was the Wotton Tramway, primarily an estate railway serving the property of the Duke of Buckingham but carrying public traffic as well from its terminus in the Oxfordshire village of Brill to Quainton Road. The line had opened in full in 1872 and offered a passenger service although this was only likely to appeal to the infirm or heavily burdened as the line's chain-driven Aveling & Porter locomotives took over an hour to complete the 6 mile journey! A horse-drawn tramcar was used on Thursday while the locomotives were being washed out and managed slightly better time than the locomotives.

In 1883 an Act was passed to rebuild the Tramway as a double track mainline and extend it to Oxford. This scheme failed to attract sufficient capital to proceed but in 1888 a new scheme for an Oxford & Aylesbury Tramroad was approved along the same route. This went to the other extreme, envisaging a maximum speed of 12 m.p.h., and proved little more popular to investors than its predecessor but sufficient interest was aroused for an extension of time in 1892 and enough money had been raised by 1894 to purchase the Wotton Tramway but not its freehold. Work began on reconstructing the Tramway in the hopes that funds for the extension to Oxford might yet materialise.

Not only was there no great rush of capital to build the Oxford line but the reconstructed Wotton Tramway operated at a loss. Rescue came with an agreement between the Tramroad Company and the Metropolitan for the latter to work the Tramway until such time as Parliament would allow the Metropolitan to purchase the Company. It was against this background that Stephens approached the Metropolitan in 1901 with the suggestion that the Oxford extension be built as a light railway. There is no record of Stephens submitting any actual plans for this proposal and he may well have intended to make use of the existing Tramroad plans adapted as necessary to the higher 25 m.p.h., speed limit normally granted to light railways.



Aveling & Porter No.1 receiving attention on the Wotton Tramway. (Stephen Garrett Collection)

The Metropolitan did little more than note Stephens' suggestion. The Great Central had made its junction with the Metropolitan at Quainton Road in 1898 and had begun its services to Marylebone in 1899. The Metropolitan's line was consequently operating at full capacity already and fitting an Oxford service into its schedules would have been difficult. Operationally, a London to Oxford service running partly to mainline standards and partly to those of a light railway cannot have been an appealing project whilst there would have been little attraction in operating the Oxford to Quainton Road line as a purely local service.

The Metropolitan never actually completed its purchase of the Tramroad Company but continued to lease the line until its closure in 1935. The Oxford & Aylesbury Tramroad Company was finally wound up in 1940. Two locomotives associated with the line may be seen in the London Transport Museum: one of the original Aveling & Porter chain-driven locomotives and Metropolitan 4-4-0T No. 23. The Quainton Road terminus of the Tramway now forms part of the Buckingham Railway Centre.

Morous

The "Colonel" helps Children in Need

The "Colonel" played a prominent, though passive, role on Saturday 29 October 1988 in helping Chislehurst Round Table raise £600 for the BBC Children In Need Appeal.

The Colonel, of course, took the form of the K&ESR's 48 ton Austerity 0-6-0ST No 23 'Holman F Stephens' (WD 191) which was hauled on a rope through Tenterden Town Station by members (and friends) of Chislehurst Round Table No 1111. I am sure that the real Colonel would have approved of this method of saving fuel and perhaps loco crews will need to

study their traffic notices with more care in future just in case this cost-saving idea is adopted by the Board.

The event took place because, as Chairman of Chislehurst Round Table and also a volunteer driver on the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, I was interested in fostering a charity fund raising event involving a steam railway. Clearly Welshpool would be too far away for the purpose so I wrote to Mark Toynbee to see if the K&ESR could provide the necessary facilities.



"The Pull" at Tenterden Town Station, 29 October 1988.

(Patricia White)



Peter and Katie White collecting for the B.B.C. "Children in Need" Appeal, 29 October 1988.

(Patricia White)

Mark (who was wearing his Marketing Manager's hat at the time) was very enthusiastic about the idea and we agreed that Chislehurst Round Table should pull a loco through Tenterden Town Station. Charity funds were to be raised by the members of Chislehurst Round Table obtaining sponsorship, for the distance pulled, from their friends and business contacts.

Chislehurst Tablers decided that the event should be linked to the BBC Children In Need appeal and so it was arranged for Saturday 29 October 1988 which was shortly before the appeal was due to be featured on nationwide TV. It was to take place at 1pm i.e. during the service loco's layover at Tenterden between the morning and afternoon services.

The day dawned bright and sunny, though with a chill wind, and was ideal for the event. The pullers set off, by car, from the Chislehurst area for the 30 mile journey to Tenterden, equipped with a tug of war rope, for pulling the train, borrowed from a local fire brigade.

A shock awaited us, however, at Tenterden. The loco department had rostered the 48 ton "Colonel" instead of the 28 ton 'Sutton' promised by Mark. Given that some of the pullers were still stuck in a traffic jam at Pembury (or so they told us later) there was concern that the extra 20 tons would be the straw to break the Tablers' backs.

However, quick thinking by Mark (this time physically wearing his Station Master's hat but metaphorically still also wearing his Marketing

Manager's hat) saved the day. As The Colonel is chimney first towards Headcorn, after donning HVVs we posed for the photographer from *'The Kent & Sussex Courier'* pulling in that direction. Once the photo opportunity was over, driver Jack ran No 23 beyond the water tower and we attached the rope to the rear of the loco and, in front of a small crowd of onlookers, pulled it 150 yards toward Robertsbridge. This was done because it is less uphill in the latter direction and so made the pulling easier.

The pull was successfully accomplished in less than 10 minutes and the missing Tablers arrived just as we stopped at the level crossing gates. After thanking Mark (he may have been wearing his Director's hat by this time) and the loco crew, we retired to 'The Fat Ox' for some well deserved refreshment.

The £600 raised was presented to the BBC at the TV Centre in London, on 18 November during the Children In Need programme, although we were not able to hand over the cheque on the air. However the event proved very popular with the local press in both the Tenterden and Chislehurst/Bromley areas with pictures and text prominently featured in a number of papers.

On behalf of Chislehurst Round Table I would like to take this opportunity to thank the K&ESR for providing the essential facilities for this stunt. We enjoyed our visits to Tenterden and are pleased that between us, we had some fun whilst raising money to benefit underprivileged children.

Tom White



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From the Railway Archives



With interest centred on extending services to Northiam, I thought I would look through the Company archives and see if I could find some incidental photographic material about the station which might be of interest to readers.

I came upon the details of Arthur Osborn who was probably the first station agent appointed at Northiam in 1900. Mr Osborn was born at Hastings on 1st October 1884 and died at Bexhill on 9th September 1957. He is pictured in his Rother Valley Railway uniform, probably in 1902. Both the top coat and the corduroy underjacket are adorned with the Company initials in individual brass letters which are rather unevenly sewn on to the material. A larger version of the letters are used for the cap.

The group photograph shows Arthur, on the right, with his sister Rosina, second from left, and the others are members of the Jones family with whom he lodged at, it is thought, Wykeham Cottage, Northiam. Rosina, known to the family as Rose, later married into the Shoemsmith family of Hastings, well known as producers of postcards. Arthur later married a Northiam girl, Ann, daughter of Thomas Sargent who was a farmworker.

It is not known for sure when Arthur left his

position as station agent but by 1913 he had taken a post as gardener at Blacklands, a large house at Crowhurst where he lived in a cottage on the estate. He served in the First World War and later continued to visit the Tenterden and Northiam areas with his motor cycle and sidecar. He later moved to Bexhill where he was able to satisfy his life-long passion for horses by working a horse drawn milk float, and where he later lived in retirement.

Arthur Osborn was distantly related to Henry Osbourne of Salehurst, who was the only member of the Company's staff to be killed on active service in either of the World Wars.

A memorial in Salehurst Parish Church reads:

In Memory of Private Henry Osbourne,
No 113, 7th Batt. R. Sx. Regt. of this Parish,
who fell at the Battle of Loos in Flanders,
Sept. 25th 1915, aged 39 years.

This Memorial Tablet was erected as a mark of respect by the Directors and Staff of the K.&E.S.R. upon which undertaking he was employed in the Engineers Dept.

According to W.H. Austen junior, for some years afterwards an annual memorial service was held

at the church on the anniversary of Henry's death, though it is not known when this custom ceased.

The difference in spelling of the names can be explained in that in the 19th century, when records were handwritten, it was quite common for mistakes in spelling to be perpetuated and sometimes not only did different branches of the same family have differing spellings of a common name, but one individual might change the spelling of his name during his lifetime!

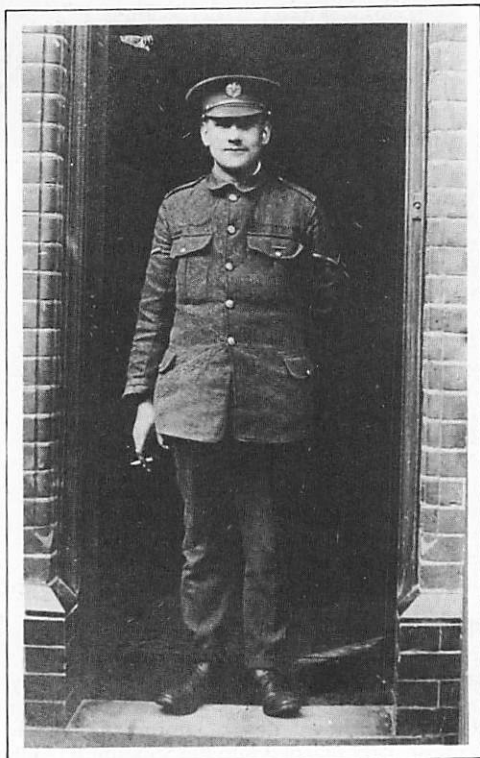
Albert Osborne carried yet another version of the name and he also hailed from a Salehurst family, though it is not known whether he was related to either of the other subjects of this article.

Albert resided at Coronation Villas, Northbridge Street, Robertsbridge, and is pictured here in about 1916 when he was a lance-corporal and batman to Colonel Stephens. When Albert left the Army he remained in the Colonel's employ and later assisted in the drawing office of the Company's offices at Salford Terrace, Tonbridge.

I am indebted to Miss Janet Osborn for photographs and to her and Peter Carey for information.

I would be pleased to hear from readers who may be able to throw further light on the involvement with the Railway of those named in this article.

John Miller, Archivist





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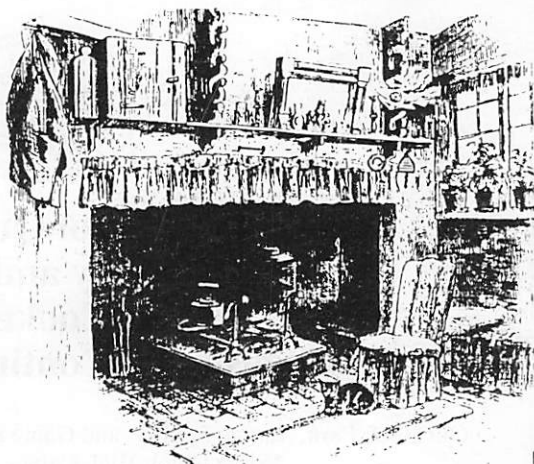
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