

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 49

Summer 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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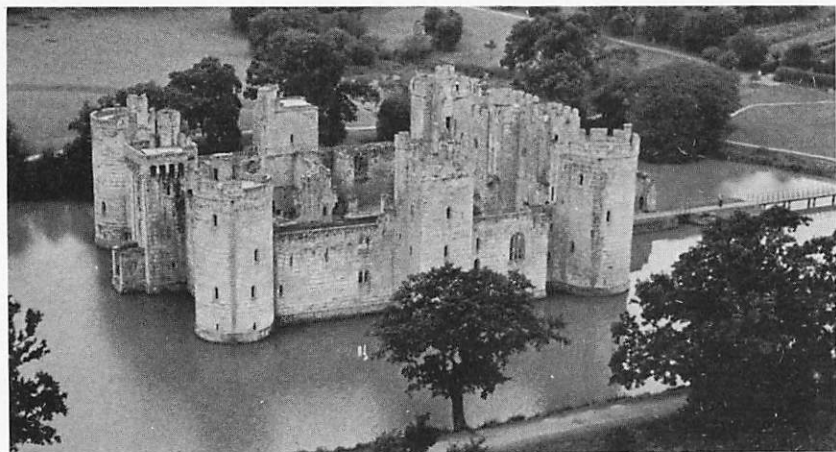
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Bodiam Castle

A National Trust Property



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

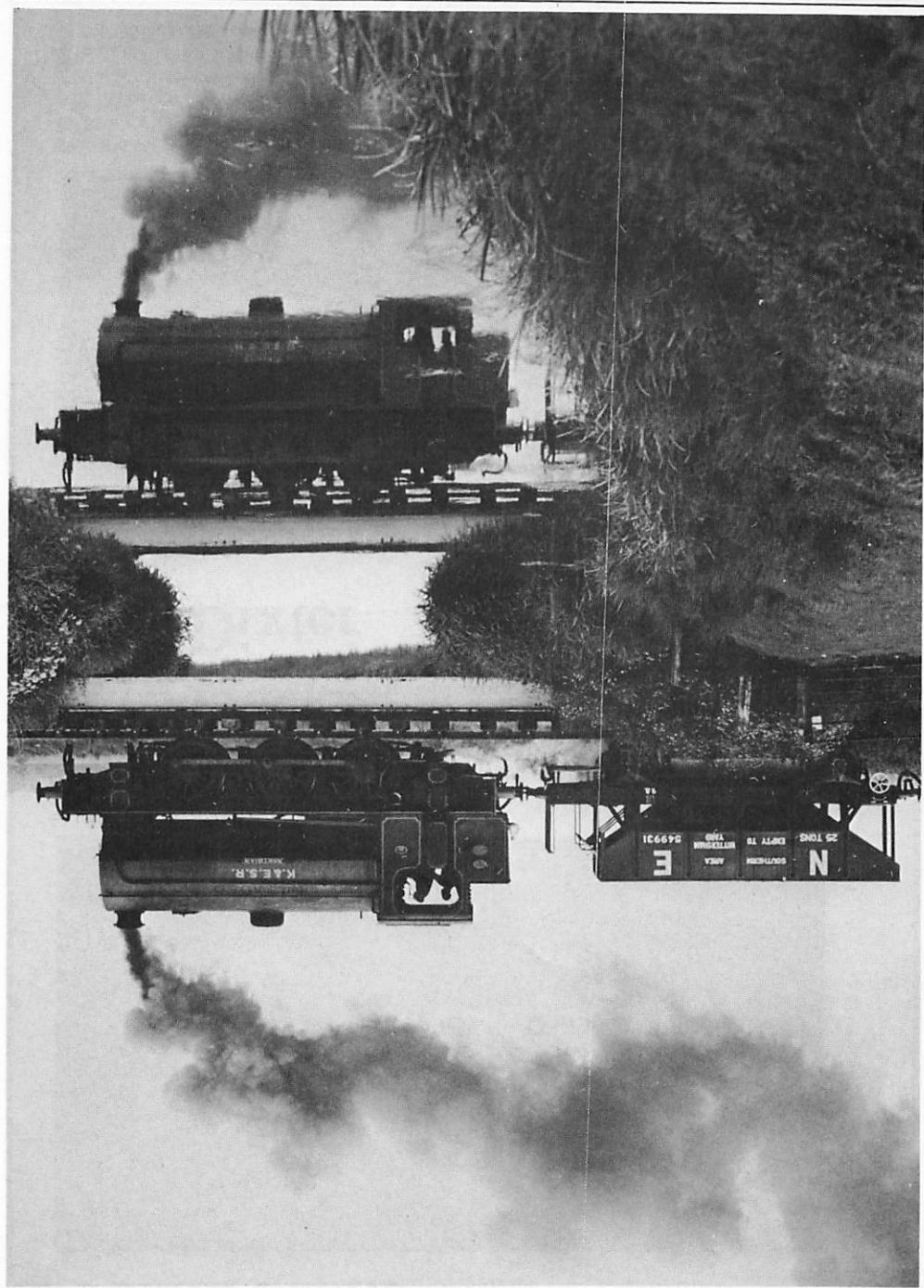
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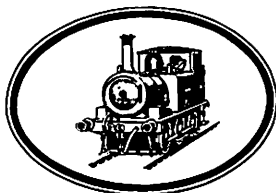


The 500 year old manor hall is open every afternoon (except ordinary Mondays) from 24th March to 15th October, also weekends October 21/22, 28/29 2 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. (last admission 4.30 p.m.). The gardens, well known for the wide variety of plants is open earlier at 11 a.m. on May 27/28/29, Sundays 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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Editorial

Sleeping Beauty

The breakthrough to Northiam came on Friday 19 May 1989, when "1556" crossed the road and entered Northiam Station; a milestone in the Railway's history. Virtually all of the work was achieved by the Railway's own enthusiastic amateur members under the watchful guidance of Professional Engineer, Gary Barker, to whom we are greatly indebted. Of course, much remains to be done, but the target date opening the line in April 1990 cannot now be in question. As to Bodiam, presently silent, overgrown, but not forgotten. Is this the little branch line yet to be awakened?

FRONT COVER: *"FROM ROLVENDEN BOX" The signal box view at Rolvenden, with No. 10 "Sutton" and "P" 1556 leaving with a Tenterden Town to Hexden Bridge train on 25 March 1989.*
(Brian Stephenson)

FRONTISPIECE *"Reflections". No. 25 "Northiam" crosses Hexden Bridge with an empty ballast train returning from Northiam to Wittersham Road on 3 June 1989.*
(Brian Stephenson)

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We made it to Northiam! During the evening of Friday 19 May the last track panel was lowered into position and joined onto the level crossing rails at Northiam station, thus completing the relaying project. One and one-half miles of panels had been constructed at Wittersham Road and laid in position from Hexden Bridge. In crossing the River Rother it had become the Kent & East Sussex Railway again. Hot sunshine, between 25-53 people on site each day, long hours and hard work, the camaraderie, and finally attainment of the objective, are abiding memories. It was a quite remarkable fortnight, unparalleled in the Railway's history, both confounding the pessimists who thought we would never return to East Sussex again and proving that the volunteer members of the K&ESR are without equal when it comes to tracklaying. News and pictures appear elsewhere in this issue.

A new Rule Book was introduced at the beginning of the season, containing regulations and general instructions for the safe operation of the Railway. The regulations primarily cover the duties of staff, discipline and the safe working of trains while the instructions cover a wide diversity of topics for which guidance is required on occasion.

This is the Railway's third Rule Book since re-opening; in addition to extensive revision, it is much easier for quick reference. It contains some 160 loose-leaf A5 sheets in a stout ring binder, and is produced on a word processor to facilitate updating. The Operating Committee and Robin White are commended on compiling a thoroughly professional publication.

Safety is of paramount concern given today's stringent health and safety requirements. There is an obligation placed on everyone to take care; to quote the Rule Book – "Safety must be the first consideration of all staff. They must do everything possible to ensure the safety of trains, the public, other staff and themselves". The Rule Book provides staff with precise and clear instructions covering virtually every eventuality. Whether it is an emergency situation or an everyday operating occurrence, adherence to the Rules is vital to minimise possible confusion and to maximise safety.

Our passengers take it for granted that the Railway operates safely. Their confidence must be met and it beholds all staff to know and rigorously apply the requirements of the Rule Book at all times – "Working to Rule" must be the norm on the K&ESR.

Steam Locomotives

News from Rolvenden on the Railway's

locomotive fleet is as follows-

No. 3 (32670/Bodiam): Still awaits a quotation from boiler contractors to construct a new inner firebox, the design of which has been approved.

No. 8 (Knowle): Little progress to report as Bob Forsythe and Paul Hatcher have been concentrating on No. 14 Charwelton.

No. 10 (Sutton): Left for Tyseley on 24 April to spend four months or so at the Birmingham Railway Centre. This is to meet our side of the exchange arrangements following the visit of GWR 0-6-0PT 7752 to the K&ESR during 1986.

No. 11 (1556): Serviceable, but in the absence of No. 10, unable to haul alone the heavier trains required by the Operating Department. Called into service for the second week of the Extension fortnight. For five days it was worked intensively and gave a first rate performance, its light weight proving idea on unballasted track. Coaling, watering and servicing took place at Wittersham Road and it was in use for some 15 hours daily.

No. 12 (Marcia): Owner Dick Beckett has made a new smokebox and running plates. The locomotive is back on the rails again, having been stored off the road.

No. 14 (Charwelton): The boiler has been despatched to the Midland Railway Centre, Butterley for specialist firebox repairs. The top of the cylinder block has been cleared of concrete, etc. The right hand casting is very thin and two holes have been located in the blast pipe branch; specialist repairs will be needed. The general mechanical condition has been examined.

No. 19: Work on the tender tank progressing slowly. The boiler has still not returned to Rolvenden following repairs.

No. 21 (Wainwright): Now back on its wheels and boiler repair contract being drawn up. Progress temporarily halted due to lack of funds.

No. 22 (30065/Maunsell): In regular service but the poor state of the water tanks is a continuing cause for concern.



U.S.A. 30065 rounds Willow Curve with a Hexden Bridge to Tenterden Town train on 25 March 1989.
(Brian Stephenson)

No. 23 (191/Holman F Stephens): In service and running well.

No. 24 (William H Austen): All boiler repairs successfully completed and steam test carried out satisfactorily. The boiler has been put back in the frames and new smokebox rivetted in place. A new bunker has to be fabricated as have some sections of the cab running plate. Once the boiler is clad and lagged the tank and partial cab sides will be replaced.

No. 25 (Northiam): In service for rest of year.

No. 26 (Linda): Minor problems experienced with palm stays. Otherwise successfully passed boiler examination and in service.

Diesel Locomotives

No. 40: The BTH Bo+Bo was kept as standby diesel because a small number of outstanding jobs needed attention. During the Extension fortnight it was regularly used until the middle of the second week when an excursion off newly laid rails fortunately caused no damage; an earlier defect due to low battery voltage was quickly rectified.

No. 41: The Ruston 150hp 0-4-0DE had been

out of service for some months because of difficulties in obtaining spare parts. Its overhaul was completed ready for the Extension work and during the first week shared railhead duties with No. 40. Having run well it became a total failure with a burnt out engine valve seat; this has now been repaired.

No. 43 (Titan): The yellow Drewry 150hp 0-4-0DM has been very active in recent months and trouble free. It received a full service in preparation for the Northiam project when a number of defects were attended to, including replacement of a door window and a sander pipe.

No. 45: Withdrawn from service in mid-May. It will be retained as a source of parts, possibly being eventually overhauled.

No. 47: No progress to report.

No. 49: The ex-BR class 14 is in traffic and has seen regular use. In addition to work around Wittersham Yard it was used as second locomotive on the Wealden Pullman on Saturday 13 May when run-round facilities were not available. Defects attended to have included an overhaul of the engine starter motor and

replacement of the engine cooling water drain valves. The transmission has also given further problems; after seeking advice from Voith, a special grade of oil has been added.

Rolvenden Dépôt

The water column, which came from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, has been installed opposite the Tenterden end of the platform, close to the level crossing. It looks in keeping – how much it is used remains to be seen.

The station platform is progressing steadily. All the coping stones, bar a few which are awaiting delivery, have been laid; the platform area has been filled, compacted and levelled off ready for top surfacing.

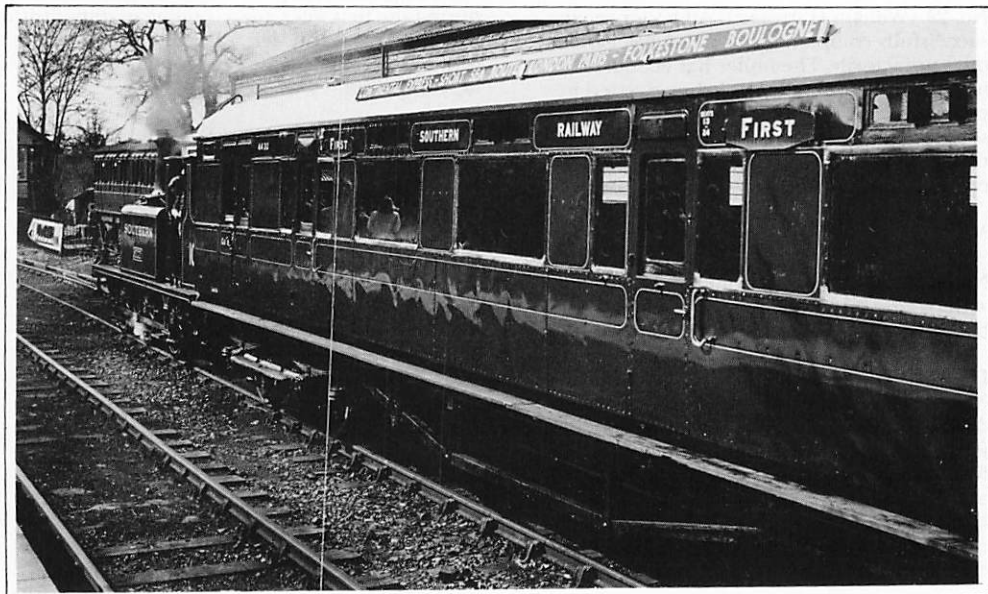
New gates have been installed at the platform ends and at the crossing in the middle of the yard. The area around the outside pit on No. 2 road was concreted before Easter, an operation involving 25 cubic metres of concrete and a gang of about 20 people to shovel it; hitherto this has been very muddy in wet weather. Lights have been put into the outside pit to aid locomotive preparation and dispersal after dark. Automatic air operated oilers are being installed; when completed, work will start on the shed extension.

Carriage and Wagon

No. 54 Maunsell BSO. All the bodyside sheeting has been refitted and undercoated, while the window frames have been put in and glazed. A small area of roof framing over the guard's van is being repaired ready for a new canvas to be fitted. All seating has been returned from the trimming contractor, to be installed when the floor has been repaired and recovered.

No. 56 SR Maunsell CK. Awaits our carpenters to repair body corner pillars and roof to enable the completion of both lavatories and two first class compartments. A start has been made on the third class compartments by fitting moquette to side panels ready for the seating.

No. 53 Maunsell NBO ("Nondescript Brake Open" – Pullman set brake). Entered workshop on 8 January for overhaul and repaint. The south side of the coach was in a shabby condition, the paintwork crazed and flaking. All paint was stripped on this side to bare metal which revealed two decayed panels needing renewal. The bodyside bottom timber rail was found split and decayed in places, being repaired with new sections of hardwood timber. Several bodyside brackets were renewed. The window frames and droplights were stripped of paint – several layers of K&ESR cream and/BR



Newly outshopped Maunsell brake 4432 at Tenterden on 25 March 1989. (Brian Stephenson)

green – before cleaning and varnishing in natural wood. A number of window bottom frame members were also renewed.

The coach has been repainted in full SR olive green livery, ends and underframe in black, and grey roof. Full Southern lettering and lining has been applied; it now carries its original number of 4432 and set number 452 on the brake end. David Dine made a superb job of the signwriting and lining, the task taking him all of eight days.

Light attention was given to the running gear which included welding of worn brake linkages and modifications to the lighting charging system. The vehicle was released from the workshop on 24 March.

No. 74 SR PMV 1808 (Pullman set). Out of service since last summer following a shunting mishap which resulted in the gangway being severely damaged and one end pulled outwards. The badly bent body end stanchions were heated and jacked back into position and the body end boarding repaired. It entered the workshop on 27 March when the gangway was refitted, after the faceplate, suspension brackets and hangers had been heated and straightened. The original canvas hood, although badly damaged, was temporarily refitted, to be replaced as soon as a new one has been manufactured. A large gas refrigerator was installed which required a steel cabinet to be fitted to the underframe to carry propane bottles. Modifications were carried out to the electric lighting system, power being supplied from the batteries of No. 52 Barbara. The van was painted in SR olive green and left the workshop on Saturday 1 April, after only five days and just in time for the first 1989 Pullman.

No. 52 Barbara. Entered workshop on 24 March for completion of minor work left over from last November. A full set of arrow transfers were applied to all the bodyside vertical mouldings, thereby completing the Pullman livery; these transfers had not been available at the time of repainting. New strip lights were fitted in the kitchen, with sundry repairs and modifications made to the lighting system. The work was carried out by Dave Scott who has looked after electrical work this year for the C&W Department. The gangway, which was damaged in the same shunting incident with PMV 1808, was reheated and reset to its correct position, although a slight twist still exists in the faceplate, fortunately not affecting the coupling. It was

moved out of the workshop on 27 March.

No. 69 Mk. 1 RU Diana. A heavy overhaul was started on 1 April, the first since arrival ten years ago. The bodyside sheeting was badly corroded beneath all sidelights (windows); several of the saloon's double glazed units were defective which produced a fish tank effect for passengers! All the glazing has been removed, with corroded sheeting cut out and the bodywork prepared for new sections to be welded in.

Internally, all work has been concentrated in the kitchen, pantry and side corridor. Removal of the aluminium floor plates, which were life expired, revealed most of the timber floor panels beneath to be rotted due to the ingress of water over the years; 90% of the floor has been completely removed and will have to be rebuilt with new material. Several of the body and floor steel frames were found badly corroded and have been replaced with new welded sections. All of the kitchen and pantry equipment, including cupboards, shelving and bodyside panels have been taken out ready for refitting with new units by a contractor. The coach is booked to resume Wealden Pullman services on 1 July, so the work schedule is very tight.

No. 121 LNWR 4-wheel Flatrol. This wagon was derailed during shunting at Rolvenden on 20 December resulting in one axlebox being smashed beyond repair and another box fractured. As there were no spares available, a pair of new axleboxes were fabricated by an Ashford firm at a cost of £800. This indicates the expense involved to keep old wagons in service; the Flatrol wagon in particular is very heavily used by the PW Department. It was repaired on site at Rolvenden on 11 March. While out of service the badly worn bearings were removed for rebuilding and remetalting; the work was carried out by Bob Forsythe and Paul Hatcher.

The three ballast hoppers (one TROUT and two DOGFISH in BR parlance) – Nos 123, 144 and 154 – have received attention to the running gear and doors in preparation for the heavy ballasting programme on the Extension. The recently purchased Dogfish (DB993620) had a seized centre door which took a couple of days to free and make workable: several areas of the hopper body need new sections welded in at a later date, together with a repaint.

Nos. 139-140 Twin Bolsters. In response to a

request in the last *Tenterden Terrier*, Mr H Singleton, a member from Hastings, has supplied us with the following information obtained from the GWR wagon register held at the National Railway Museum, York. Nos 32337/8 were built in July 1891 at Swindon to lot 220 and are of timber construction. They were condemned at Swindon on 13/3/1918, being recorded as fitted to carry boats for the Government the previous year. Thus, after 26 years of GWR service they spent the following 65 years in naval use, presumably all at Chatham Dockyard, until purchased by the K&ESR in 1983.

A new item of rolling stock to report is privately owned Great Eastern Railway 48ft bogie saloon coach No.5 which arrived from Carnforth on 10 May. This vehicle dates from 1898 and was originally built for the use of the Princess of Wales. It ended service on BR in the 1970s as a civil engineer's observation saloon with large windows fitted in the body ends. Although complete, it needs roof repairs and a complete revarnishing of the bodywork. The layout comprises a saloon at each end with a pantry/guard's compartment and lavatory between.

By the time these notes are read, four vehicles that have been purchased are expected to have arrived on the Railway. These are LSWR design and SR built "Ironclad" coach S730, SECR PMV 2012, SR PMV 1228 (to be used as an underframe for one of the LCDR coach bodies rescued by Ashford Area Group) and SR 21 ton Lowmac wagon, S61048 of 1923.

Permanent Way & Civil Engineering

By early Spring the pointwork at Rolvenden was finished, thus completing the loop, whilst at Wittersham Road a new crossover and headshunt were installed. The existing pointwork at the bottom end of Wittersham Road platform was left in situ, its retention proving invaluable during the Extension fortnight.

It is the preparations for and the actual "Get to Northiam" fortnight itself that overshadow all other news. That the target of track laid to Northiam was achieved on schedule, despite several setbacks, is testimony to the many members who responded magnificently to the occasion. Each day an average of 35 volunteers worked on the project, several giving up their holidays to the Railway for the whole fortnight.

The hours were extremely long – Wittersham Yard was a hive of industry by 7.30 am – lasting well into the evening; there was even a night shift until midnight, making up panels ready for the following morning.

Numerous people were involved in the planning and execution of the exercise but four, who had day-to-day responsibility, merit special mention. Firstly, Department Manager, Paul Wilson who, to cap everything and having worked himself into the ground, had to sit a professional examination on the final day of tracklaying; Civil Engineer, Gary Barker from Down-under, for whom our "long straight" may seem tame after the vast expanses of his native country, whose practical expertise was invaluable; Civil Engineer and Extension Project Manager, Dave Hazeldine who, in no uncertain terms, made sure that volunteers kept up their efforts whilst working safely and efficiently – "slave-driver" might be an apt description, not least of himself; and Director and Extension Co-ordinator, Graham Pattison for whom this operation was just one aspect of bringing passenger services to Northiam by early 1990.

Gloriously sunny weather was the hallmark of the fortnight, with just one overnight shower; remarkably for an English May, the recurring complaint was that it was too hot!

Preparatory work included attention to culverts and drainage, followed by a visit by soldiers of 24 Field Squadron, Royal Engineers, who graded the trackbed throughout, thus providing a suitable formation on which to lay out track panels to be followed later by ballasting and tamping.

In concept the exercise was simple, to lay one and a half miles of track panels between Hexden Bridge and Northiam level crossing. Shortly after 8pm on Friday, 19 May, the 172nd track panel to be laid was joined to the level crossing and, an hour later in the gathering dusk, a steam locomotive (No. 11 SECR 'P' 1556) was once again within Northiam station, standing on temporary track.

The 45ft track panels were constructed within Wittersham Yard. For each, 18 concrete sleepers were craned into approximate position using a special jig, to be barred into exact alignment; each chair was cleaned and metal keys laid out. Pairs of rails were selected, brushed and lifted, by crane, into the chairs. After alignment to



Tenterden's new site Manager, Mike Barnes-Murfin, who joined the Company on a full time basis in March 1989. (Jim Berryman)

ensure the rail ends were square, the keys were hammered home. Finally, the assembled panel was loaded onto a flat wagon ready to go to the railhead.

Two or three panels at a time were delivered to the railhead gang. In turn each panel would be lifted by crawler crane which moved slowly backwards, lowering the panel into position for fishplating to the one immediately before it. Once unloaded the empty wagons were returned to Wittersham and the next load of panels sent out. The railhead gang was made up of five or six people; everyone else worked at the Wittersham base where the object was to ensure panels were made, loaded and ready for despatch to the railhead without delay.

As well as people building panels, others were employed as train crew, signalman and shunter, crane drivers, rail measurers and sorters, sleeper stackers, fishplate and bolt cleaners and greasers. Perhaps the most indispensable people present were Sue Jarvis in the first week and Claire Stuchbury, ably helped by Kay Dixon, for the second who prepared meals for all in the PW Department's PMV; their catering skills were much appreciated and over the fortnight they must have made scores of gallons of orange squash, coffee and tea to quench parched throats.

Panel laying began on the first Wednesday, the initial four days having been spent sorting the yard area and in general preparatory work. On the first laying day a trial 9 panels were put down, increasing to 27 the following day, coinciding with a media visit to the railhead. Both rail mounted 10-ton cranes were used during the first week for panel assembly and loading but, unfortunately, the yellow Grafton (No. 145) developed serious drive shaft/bearing problems and took no further part in the proceedings after the Friday. No tracklaying took place over the middle weekend, the crawler crane driver being allowed some time off!

Meanwhile the decision was taken to hire a road crane to assist the 10 ton Taylor & Hubbard steam crane at Wittersham Yard. This proved an extremely sound move. The road crane proved quite remarkable with its 110 ton capacity and 100ft+ jib towering above everything. It stayed on site for four days, making light of hitherto impossible lifts, before going to another job. This left the red steam crane soldiering on alone; it was built for track assembly work and

more than earned its keep, and respect, over the fortnight. The Railway's 36 ton crane, kept in steam in the background, was not suited to this type of work.

Another problem was that Ruston 0-4-0 DE locomotive (No. 41) suffered an engine failure and could no longer share panel train duties with the BTH diesel; its place during the second week was taken by the P class steam locomotive.

Panel laying recommenced on the second Monday, although progress was hindered by the need to build two 60ft sections of track in situ under power lines. By tea time the River Rother was crossed and the rails reached into East Sussex. Tuesday was a red-letter day with no less than 33 panels being laid, the panel assemblers working flat out so as not to hold up progress. Hitherto the alignment had been dead straight but on Wednesday the bend before Northiam (Cyster's curve) was negotiated. This reduced progress, to be halted in the late afternoon by the BTH diesel's partial derailment on the curve's unballasted track. By a quirk of coincidence this happened on the spot where 32678 Knowle (now No.8) similarly came to grief forty years earlier. It wasn't until Thursday morning that the steam locomotive brought all the remaining panels to the railhead, with class 14 No. 49 acting as Wittersham pilot and Drewry No.43 working a sleeper wagon up and down the siding behind the platform.

With the level crossing now within reach, 24 panels were put down on the Friday. For onlookers the sight of the crawler crane blocking the main A28 as it lowered the final panel into place was reward enough. The goal of Northiam and the Rother Valley Hotel just up the road had been reached!

For the statistically minded 172 panels were constructed and laid over eight days, an average of over 21 daily; the maximum number put down in one day was 33. Including two 60ft sections made on site, a total length of 1 mile 860 yards of track was constructed, involving some 3100 concrete sleepers and 348 lengths of rail. Over 6000 tons of ballast now have to be laid along the section, itself a major task which, hopefully, should be completed by end-June.

Operating

A two train service ran over Easter but owing to the uncompleted Rolvenden signalling, as well as the needs of the PW Department, they



*Happy days
(above) Company Chairman, David Stratton, receiving the Ian Allan sponsored Independent railway of the year award from Lord Montagu of Beaulieu (right), and Ian Allan (centre).
(below) Margaret Howard, who joined the Company in March on a part-time basis, as Catering Supervisor.
(Brian Morrison; Jim Berryman)*



crossed at Wittersham Road. With the Wittersham – Hexden Bridge section out of use for passenger services this year, the first of each two train "flight" simply propelled over the Northiam end points and pulled down the through road to await the arrival of the second train from Tenterden into the platform.

Apart from the normal train services, the Department has been very busy running engineering trains in connection with the Extension project including the two week "bash" when three locomotives were required each day. All operating staff are congratulated on a magnificent effort involving very long hours to see the job completed.

Special mention must be made of Gerald Beck who, as well as signalman at Wittersham Road throughout the fortnight, was also the site co-ordinator, "radio communication centre" (to relay messages from the low lying yard over Wittersham bank to the railhead gang) and, vitally, to act as link for the ladies preparing the meals!

Having laid the track, it is time to plan the 1990 timetable of services to run over it. Graeme Richards, the newly appointed Traffic Co-ordinator, has this well in hand. Manager Neil Sime reports that the request for more operational staff in the last issue met with at least half a dozen offers and those concerned are very welcome.

Signals & Telegraph

By mid-July Rolvenden signal box should be commissioned, the project having taken the major part of the Department's efforts for the past six years. Thanks are extended to everyone who has helped build the box and its fittings. A full description of the signalling at Rolvenden will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*.

Paul Vidler and Peter Lamont have spent some time at Wittersham Road making locking alterations for the new Engineer's siding ground frame. Chris Lowry and his various helpers have also worked at Wittersham, at the request of the PW Department, moving telephone and signalling circuits from the overhead pole route in favour of a ground level multicore cable; this is to give rail mounted cranes room to slew round when making track panels.

With the system at Rolvenden nearing

completion, thoughts turn to the next project. There are several small tasks outstanding, such as ground frames at Rolvenden and Wittersham, wiring at Wittersham and general maintenance. The level crossings along the line are undergoing scrutiny with thought of providing automatic operation at some locations. Consideration is also being given to signalling at Northiam; it is expected to be minimal and, hopefully, lower quadrant.

Building

A start has been made laying granite setts outside the C&W workshop. Whilst backbreaking work, the results are very pleasing. When all the forecourt yard has been covered it will provide a tidy, paved viewing area for visitors opposite the station building. The small wheel turntable has been uncovered again and, following the installation of associated track, will be made workable for the first time.

People

There has been a change of Tenterden Site Manager. Jack Wood departed at the beginning of March, being immediately replaced by Mike Barnes-Murfin who is welcomed and whom, we hope, will enjoy his period looking after the Railway's interests.

Sadly, we record the death in April of Rex Sterling Baker, an "elder statesman" amongst the volunteer workforce and an example to all in the Southfleet track lifting operation. He will be remembered for his great and abiding love of the Railway and its surrounding countryside.

Commercial Operations

The new season got underway with a bang. Our third Kent Messenger Newspaper Group Family Fun Weekend over Easter saw the cash registers ringing like never before. While the total number of passengers, at 5907, was slightly down on 1988, revenue was far in excess of budget because of a less generous concession for KM readers.

Critics of the event complain that it has nothing to do with preservation but is only staged to make lots of money. On the latter point there is no disagreement – it makes absolutely pots and after the three month winter close-down it is a welcome and vital boost to cash flow, reducing the Railway's overdraft dramatically, thereby saving bank interest payments. On the former point the weekend introduces the Railway to a far wider audience than would otherwise be



Easter fun at Tenterden Town Station (1 to r) Graham Hukins, Nicola Hukins, Peter Broyd, Vanessa Toynbee. (Jim Berryman)

reached with longer term spin-offs.

Many highly complimentary letters have been received from satisfied visitors and no complaints. One such was from Frank Needham, Station Master of Manchester Liverpool Road station, part of the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry who wrote, "My wife and I paid our first visit to the Kent & East Sussex Railway on Good Friday. . . . I must congratulate you on the way your railway is run with great attention to detail and authenticity I was particularly pleased to see a good turn out of young people, all smartly dressed and polite yet not self-conscious or afraid of their duty".

While on the subject of youngsters, we have been fortunate in recruiting a band of first class ticket inspectors whose dedication and attitude is a credit to all. Most interestingly, no less than eight attend Tenterden's Homewood School. A photograph of them with their headmaster has received useful press attention in local newspapers and railway enthusiast magazines.

A review of ticket inspectors' duties was prompted by Chief Ticket Inspector, Alan Feltham. The rôle has changed over the years,

the demands of the job having increased as passenger numbers grow. Not so long ago the inspectors had, at most, four coaches to clean each day. Today they are frequently faced with nine vehicles and next year twelve on peak days. The review is still underway but one major change has been implemented already. The duties of manning the platform barrier has been given to a new grade of ticket inspector, known simply as Porters to prevent confusion between them and on-train staff. There are eleven volunteers on the roster already, including Ray Baker who has been away for two seasons, and the system is working well. The job is especially suited to retired people who might find climbing in and out of trains somewhat taxing but who still enjoy meeting visitors.

Our involvement with Ashford Borough Council's tourism initiatives has seen two familiarisation visits to the Railway by journalists and tour operators. The first, on Saturday 15 April, was for a party from the UK while the second, on Monday 8 May, was for a group from France. The Channel Tunnel and Ashford International Rail station means a huge influx of continental tourists and we are putting out feelers to ensure that we do not miss out on this new business in 1993.

The start of Northiam track laying provided an opportunity to invite the press to watch work in progress. A somewhat unusual itinerary was devised for Thursday 11 May. Journalists met at the Rother Valley Hotel, close by Northiam station, for a briefing by Commercial Operations Director, Mark Toynbee, before hiring two mini buses which travelled up the trackbed, over the Rother Bridge and on to the head. The scene with two vehicles awaiting on the trackbed at Northiam station was somewhat reminiscent of Colonel Stephens's venture into railbuses! Upon arrival at the head Civil Engineer, Gary Barker took over. The three quarters of an hour anticipated on the journey soon became two hours because of the media interest. Television South and BBC sent crews. Radios Kent and Sussex, representatives from seven local newspapers and four railway enthusiast publications also attended. The resulting press coverage was excellent; the start work was also reported in the "Daily Telegraph" on 4 May.

Thoughts now firmly focused on Northiam, detailed planning of the 1990 timetable is under way. The first draft has been circulated internally and approved in principle. Discussions have been started with Hastings and District Bus Company with a view to integrating their Hastings to Northiam services with our own and including connecting bus times in the timetable.



Tenterden signal box nearing completion.

(Neil Rose)

Mark Toynbee gave a talk to a well attended meeting in Bodiam Village, organised by Bodiam Parish Council, on 11 May in which he outlined the Railway's achievements and plans for the future. The level of interest and support augurs well for reopening to Bodiam.

Passenger carryings for the first part of the season to end-April show business 9% up over 1988, being a total of 10,531 passengers. A further 1,333 platform tickets were issued. Booking Office revenue for the period, however, was even more telling, being no less than 33% ahead of budget. This allowed the normally sombre Revenue Accountant, Alan Robinson to comment on his monthly computer summary that "Whilst this result may warrant a degree of satisfaction there should nevertheless be no undue frivolity displayed". So accountants have a sense of humour, after all!

Booking Office

The upward trend in April passengers is good news indeed. There were slightly fewer Easter passengers but ordinary weekend services were well patronised. Two booking clerks have been on duty at Tenterden on extra busy days using both ticket racks, thus speeding up the ticket buying process for visitors.

Welcome to two new booking clerks, Tim Wilson and Roy Craske, whose services are much appreciated. Chris Ford, in conjunction with Tim Wilson, set a record on Sunday 30 April in persuading 130 passengers to travel first class – can any booking clerk beat this?

Thanks are expressed to those booking clerks who have manned Rolvenden on almost every running day although the station has been closed to passengers. Public relations efforts and crossing duties are most appreciated. Hopefully, it will not be too long before Rolvenden is reopened to visitors.

Catering

Mrs Margaret Howard, a recent arrival in Tenterden, learnt that near neighbour Ken Lee was looking for a new catering supervisor. Fortunately for the Railway the idea appealed to her and she is now to be found in charge of the buffet; she works on running days, for a maximum of five days a week. It is also pleasing to report at least two new volunteer staff this year working on catering duties. The season started well over Easter and turnover has continued to show a healthy increase on last



Off the rails. Ford back to back buses conveying members of the Press to Northiam for a ceremony at the start of track laying on 11 May 1989
(Jim Berryman)

year. A revised counter layout as well as kitchen alterations have helped to speed throughput of customers.

Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

Revenue generated by the shop so far this year has shown an increase on the equivalent period a year ago – may the trend continue. Railway videos continue to be excellent sellers and the well stocked bookshelves are being depleted with equal vigour. Tried and tested lines are still selling well alongside newly introduced ones.

The Railway's new mugs, bearing a wrap-around logo design are on sale. They have been described by a visiting railway journalist as "the best I've seen in many a while" – he bought two!

The saga continues of the awaited new tills. The donors assure us they are on the way but which way they are coming is not yet clear. The hard work of the small band of dedicated volunteers is appreciated but, as ever, more would be welcome.

Membership

Following the initial encouraging flush of membership renewals, as reported in the last *Lineside News*, activity has fallen off considerably.

Unfortunately (as at mid-April), 270 Full and Associate members had not renewed their 1989 subscription. A further 94 subscriptions were underpaid as a result of banker's orders not having been amended to reflect the current membership rates. Altogether, the non-paid and short-paid members represented nearly 20% of the Full and Associate membership. Ironically, there appeared to be no specific resistance to

the subscription increase although a net loss is always to be expected when rises occur.

Members not fully paid-up are reminded that they are not entitled to any rights or privileges of membership until the arrears are cleared.

New membership is a little more encouraging: 110 members in all categories having joined by mid-April compared with 96 in the comparable period last year. It is saddening to report that the Railway has lost no less than nine members who have died since last autumn.

Stations

The winter close-down saw much activity at Tenterden, with various tasks being performed which cannot be done when trains are running. The Booking Hall was given a complete repaint over five weekends. This was last done for the Queen Mother's 1982 visit and the place was looking somewhat shabby. At the same time attention was given to the front of the building where the ravages of the weather had caused fading and paint peeling. The path leading to the station building from Station Road was widened and resurfaced by contractors before Easter.

Roland Meek has undertaken to repair all the platform seats; with no less than 11 on the station this is quite some task. All damaged or rotten slats are being replaced with hard wood. Roland has also repaired and repainted the platform fencing. Mention should also be made of Stan Collier who has mended two of the four platform barrows which had suffered from over-enthusiastic use – they are not designed to move huge lumps of concrete and metal on behalf of the S&T Department!

ket Inspectors (or nowadays Porters) have g bemoaned the fact that they are expected stand unprotected for long periods at the form barrier. That's fine on a summer's day the wind can howl along the platform. Protection from the worst of the weather is now provided by a smart inspector's hut, made by Building Manager, David Stubbs. It fits under canopy and looks completely in keeping – to uninitiated it could have been there since opening of the Railway.

Rolvenden work continues by members of Locomotive Department who are preparing station for its long overdue re-opening! There has been great progress in recent weeks the edging slabs laid, platform lights installed and painting of the building underway. Board agreed to permit the painting of Rolvenden in SR green and cream livery, a mark from the Company's normal colours of brown and cream.

Contractor was employed in mid-May to erect platform fencing. This too is non-standard.

Wherever possible the original four bar style is used or, alternatively, wooden paling. Most of the fencing at Rolvenden is closeboarded in order to screen the period atmosphere of the platform area from the various portacabins, containers and sundry buildings which make up the works. Purists might see this as a further corruption of the Colonel Stephens heritage but visually the scene is greatly enhanced with the detritus of the works screened from passing view.

Wittersham Road station has been dwarfed by piles of concrete sleepers and ballast mountains in connection with Northiam relaying. Despite this, Station Agent, Gerald Beck remains remarkably cheerful awaiting the return of the rural tranquility normally associated with his station.

As a matter of interest it is pleasing to see that the new owners of High Halden station, on the abandoned Tenterden to Headcorn section and now a market garden, is being beautifully restored and renovated to a standard which



dismantling the former passenger shelter on the "Up" platform at Headcorn Station, for possible use on the K&ESR, 18 March 1989
(John Liddell)

would do credit to the Railway. After years of dereliction a Colonel Stephens station is being given a new lease of life as a shop – or are the owners planning a preserved railway of their own?

The Wealden Pullman

Richard Osborn has returned as Wealden Pullman Manager from the beginning of May. Mark Toynbee had added this task to his many other duties for the previous year. Fewer trains in 1989 have eased the staffing situation but it remains tight and any willing volunteers for chef, waiter, barman, or washing-up should contact Vanessa Toynbee at Tenterden station without delay – catering experience not needed.

Changes to the menu, which offers a selection of seven wines, including non-alcoholic, instead of only two as in previous years, has proved easy to provide, raised quality and met with complimentary remarks from customers.

The Pullman set looks extremely smart with SR BSO dining car No. 53 newly outshopped in olive green setting new standards in coach restoration. The camera of Brian Stephenson caught "Sutton" hauling the newly restored vehicle out of the C&W Workshop on Easter Sunday and his picture will be on the front cover of the July issue of *Railway World*. Mark Toynbee, in conjunction with C&W Manager, Paul Ramsden, commissioned kitchen contractors Keemlaw Ltd of Larkfield to produce plans for a new kitchen in "Diana"; this will be installed during June.

Cleaning of the Pullman train is now

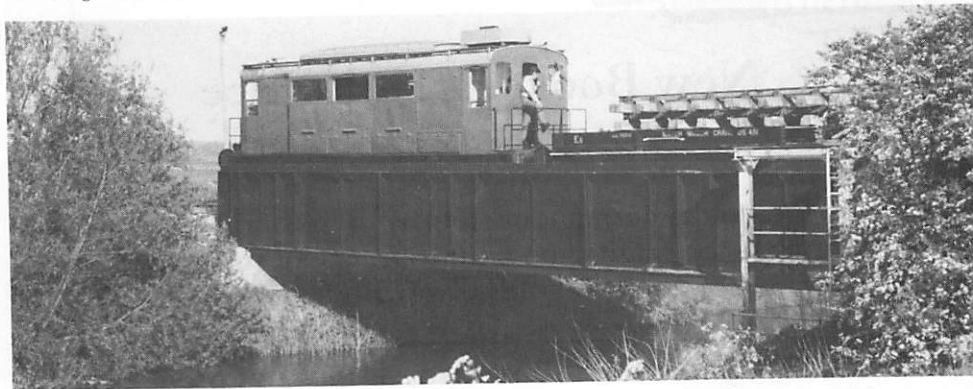
undertaken weekly by "Scrubbers", a Tenterden based company who have also the contract for the season to clean the toilet block and exhibition room at Tenterden station.

News from Area Groups

Ashford Group's thirteenth Model Railway Exhibition on Saturday 11 March proved to be another success. Over 1300 people came through the doors and the stalwart band of ticket inspectors were kept busy all day selling and punching tickets. Even better was the record profit of £730, which has increased the Group's fund for the restoration of their LCDR 4-wheeled carriages to £2,200.

Maidstone Group has received a generous donation from long-serving member Jack Fox in the shape of his "Never Stop" model railway which he exhibited at many publicity events on behalf of the Railway. The tank engine and Pullman coach push-pull continuously up and down the track and is a great favourite with children; they are invited to guess the number of trips over the day for a small prize, the answer being determined by an automatic counter.

Members will find full details of Groups' forthcoming activities and meetings in *The Rooter*. Other readers who would like further information are invited to contact one of the Group Officers, as follows—
Ashford Eric Graves – Ashford (0233) 623687
Croydon & Sutton Allan Sinclair – (01) 777 8025
Maidstone Paul Gray – Maidstone (0622) 677587
Sussex Tim Lawrence – Hailsham (0323) 845108
Thameside Sue Jarvis – Dartford (0322) 54201



B.T.H. diesel No.40 crosses the Rother Bridge with a freight train during May 1989.

(John Lidd)



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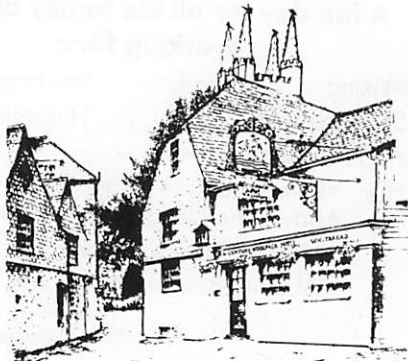
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Letters to the Editor

A matter of History

Sir—As a child I lived close to Northiam Station; my mother and I regularly used the service, via Robertsbridge to London. It therefore has pleasant memories for me. Thus I have a particular interest in the 1990 re-opening.

The current impassioned correspondence whether to restore or update, amuses me, because the two are not incompatible, and both are vital. After all, Tenterden Station has retained its original structure refurbished. Adjacent are amenities demanded by today's visitors as mandatory. True, it would have been preferable if these had been in buildings styled more in sympathy with the Station itself, but anything is better than nothing at all. However, without these facilities vital secondary revenue would be much lower.

Now that there is no Hastings—Tenterden bus service via Northiam, the train could provide the link between the village and Tenterden for residents. There is nothing at the Railway end of the village to attract visitors as such.

Thus the K&ESR **MUST** provide adequate facilities for waiting passengers.

Surely there are members who are architects/surveyors/builders, capable of designing a sympathetic compatible building adjacent to Northiam station for toilets and catering. Why not solicit their free voluntary professional services, through the *Terrier*?

The nearby Rother Valley Inn has quite a lot of Railway memorabilia in it, provides meals and has a large area for children. Prior to the train service commencing, it is worth a visit to establish a good tie up with the Railway.

Eventually when Bodiam (with its masses of Castle visitors) is reached, the National Trust and Planning Authority will **demand** compatibility with the Castle and immediate environs as a condition of granting permission for full operational service there. Northiam gives the opportunity to experiment first.

London, SE13

Peter Philpotts

Sir — I have read with interest Peter Davis's article 'A Matter of History' and the correspondence it has provoked!

The impression given thus far is that the majority of members would like to see minimal development at Northiam in an attempt to recreate the railway as it was in the 1920's and 30's. Uniquely, it appears, in support of the present policy is our Chairman; notably, as yet, the only working member amongst correspondents on this subject.

This view contradicts that in evidence among the volunteers, most of whom realise the railway was heavily in debt for most of the 20's and 30's. Development is essential to meet the ever increasing demands of the Railway Inspectorate and the expectations of the general public; not to mention the small matter of paying the bills!

Had the policies advocated for Northiam in the Spring issue been pursued at Tenterden we would still be inviting our visitors to park in a congested approach road, serving them tea and snacks in a carriage with seating for no more than a dozen, directing them to public conveniences 300 yards away up Station Road and providing no entertainment between train departures. I'd also venture to suggest that we'd be languishing in the lower half of the Ian Allen "league" rather than riding high at number 2!

High Halden, Kent

Graham Hukins

Sir — With regard to Mr Davis's article "a matter of history," it is only natural that someone who has given so much of his time and effort throughout the formative years of this railway to have strong views as to how it should progress. However, there can be no comparison between a pampered vintage car with only a few outings a year and a working, passenger carrying railway, and no matter how much we respect his opinion, views seen only through rose tinted glasses will not help the railway progress in a competitive environment.

Let us examine why the average family visits our railway. To see a diesel engine? No. To see spectacular scenery? No. They could buy a cheap return on British Rail and get hours of both! The answer is, of course, that they are drawn by the nostalgia of STEAM, but at the same time they expect to find decent facilities, decent toilets, tea room and souvenir shops to help them to continue to enjoy their day out. I am not a student of the Stephens era but from what I have read most of it was run on a make do and mend basis, and worn out engines, tatty rolling stock, dilapidated track and stations with

o amenities have no place in today's preserved
ways. A Col. Stephens railway could not hope
o survive in a tourist industry all vying for
customers. Like it or not, we have become a
major tourist attraction in the South East and, if
we are to remain so, we must not only continue
o attract visitors but hold their attention by
giving them things to do, see and spend money
on, not only at Tenterden but at Rolvenden,
Lorham and, ultimately, Bodiam. It is possible
that along with the expansion of Ashford a
theme Park may be built, if it is, we will need to
be in a position to attract some of those people
who come to see it. Ashford is not many miles
away by car and if only a small percentage of
theme Park visitors come it will help to put us
in a strong position for the final push to
Bodiam.

Mr Davis may not agree with these sentiments,
but as he cites other preserved railways, let us
like the two stations of our main rival, the
Bluebell, beautifully restored, certainly, but they
do not have a restaurant, a bar, two souvenir shops,
recently installed footbridge, as well as a
model railway, museum and assorted stalls,
including one for ice cream. The Bluebell is a
successful railway, they know the real money
does not come from train fares alone. Like us
they need to make money just to continue
operations amongst the ever increasing costs of
reservation, but, if we, the KESR, want to have
sitting engines, restore vintage rolling stock,
hold special events and extend our line then we
must earn a lot of money and to that end be
prepared to explore all reasonable possibilities
of doing so and should not be above examining
how other railways operate.

nally, by no means let us forget our heritage
and Mr Garrett's idea certainly merits
consideration but, it is surely time to bury the
Col. Stephens image, if we have so much SECR.,
and BR material as Mr Davis suggests then we
have all the ingredients and a unique
opportunity to construct a branch line of the
early Southern early BR era. The Stephens era is
dead and cannot for practical purposes be
covered so let us look to the future when
trains once again run to Bodiam. For it is then
and only then when our line, our finances and
our future are secured that we can afford the
luxury of experimenting with occasional diesel
Stephens type services. So think on this, a
Stephens railway today equals no railway for
the narrow.

East Sussex

Paul Mercer

Sir – Much emotion has been expressed over the
suggestion that the K&ESR be preserved as it
used to be – a truly rural light railway. I would
be the first to agree, it would be very nice, but
who would pay for it? Certainly not the
passengers, because there would not be any.
Consider, if the K&ESR did not run either Santa
Specials or Wealden Pullman; its trains were
slow, antiquated, unlit with no toilets on board,
then meandered around, shunted wagons off at
every station, with a timetable that took not the
slightest notice of what any passengers may have
actually needed. The staff did not have
uniforms, the locos came from all over the place
and were pretty tatty at that, as was the limited
rolling stock.

The character of a truly light railway was the
very thing that killed it off in, since in the end it
simply could not compete and ceased to have
any useful purpose.

All that 90 percent of our customers want is a
steam train ride – they have probably never
heard of Colonel Stephens.

Tenterden

Chris Wood

Sir – The letter from Mike Esau in the Winter 88
edition and the 'Countdown to 1990' article
following it show clearly the impossibility of
preserving the line 'as it was' in the face of
modern day demands for comfort and safety etc.
However, the point made that were the Colonel
or Wm Austen alive they would certainly have
taken advantage of the tourist trade, and before
that I suggest the availability of cheap second
hand diesels, is very valid.

But to put these matters into perspective, let us
not forget that 'modern steam locos hauling Mk
1 coaches' will appear to the future traveller in
his Paris-London TGV to be no less "quaint" or
"old-fashioned" than did a 'Terrier' with one
birdcage coach to the golden Arrow passenger
flashing through Headcorn in days gone by . . .
in fact . . . the contrast will be greater.

The GW railcar, of course should be restored,
but more in keeping with the K&ESR image
would be a bus body on a rail chassis, such as
was to be seen in Ireland in the 1950s. Surely
not too costly a project for the future . . . bus
preservationists beware!

Horley, Surrey

D. Trevor Rowe

Sir – After paying my annual visit to Tenterden and enjoying reading your most excellent Terrier Magazine, I felt that I must put pen to paper.

Firstly my "annual" and in the past more frequent visits commenced in 1939 when I was 7 years old and were in those days a very great treat indeed because my Uncle, whom we were visiting was Mr George Dobell, who was of course Stationmaster at Tenterden for many years. We continue to visit his widow and I now bring a grandson, also a steam enthusiast, to visit a very different KESR!

I must say how I admire all those who have made the KESR such a success today. It really is a great credit to you all and the crowds on Easter Sunday were fantastic, more passengers in a day than they used to have in a year! The staff are rather smarter than in the old days too, and there are not many situations where you can say that! The magazine is definitely the best produced by any private railway and is a real pleasure. I usually send mine to a steam buff in Queensland.

However the main reason for my sudden venture into a letter is not to pass out compliments, I am sure that you get plenty. It is to put my views on what I sense is a disturbing controversy in the organisation on which I hope as an outsider I may be allowed to comment. There seems to be a proportion of the supporters and enthusiasts who run the railway who feel that it is in danger of losing its "character". That is an elusive quality and as I am Director of Winchester Cathedral Trust trying to raise funds to preserve a Cathedral I know a lot about "tradition and character".

May I say that Col. Stephens would have given his right arm to have seen as many passengers at Tenterden as you had on Saturday. You must exploit your market potential or you will not survive. Of course you must have small steam locomotives, it's a Light Railway, but you must have the facilities and capability to handle crowds and satisfy what they want, and this changes over the years. So your management must firstly make the right commercial decisions. However the KESR is special, it is not a Bluebell or a Severn Valley Railway or a South Eastern & Chatham (no viaduct but plenty of sheep!) and therefore the buildings especially must have a "KESR look" about them and perhaps not everyone can stand under cover on

the platforms, but that is right. The trains are a problem, it is necessary to run 5 or 6 high capacity modern coaches in a train and 90% of the customers are happy with an Austerity or USA tank on the front. But when you have your extra line capacity why not insert in your timetable "HISTORIC TRAINS", just one Terrier or P tank, one or two old coaches and a brake van or even a wagon or two, and run them like the old days, SLOWLY with long waits in sidings! even shunting! and charge a premium price to ride on a genuine KESR train with loco crews in cloth caps not SR shiny tops! Incidentally, in the article on p28 about Sheila Kaye-Smith, she remarks about a small saddle-tank, this surely was No. 4 the old LSWR Beattie saddle tank that was still about in the first few months of nationalisation. When I was a teenager chasing rare steam locos, I amassed a collection of railway tickets and labels, some are rare sorts, they really are collecting dust so I am sending them to the KESR for use either in the Museum or for sale, whichever is appropriate.

Best of luck with the push on to Northiam.

Winchester

Brian Hoadley

Sir – I make only very rare working visits to the KESR so, like previous correspondents, I have felt ill qualified to criticise any aspect of the running of the railway.

However, I have followed the controversy over the future "style" of the railway with great interest and it was the editorial in the Spring 1989 Journal which finally spurred me to put pen to paper. I quote "... at least 80% of the visitors will not care too much about historical authenticity".

Please correct me if I am wrong, but I have always understood that the railway was set up as an *Educational* Charity with the object of operating a working museum and educating the public on rural light rail transport of the turn of the century and of the influence of Colonel Stephens on the subject?

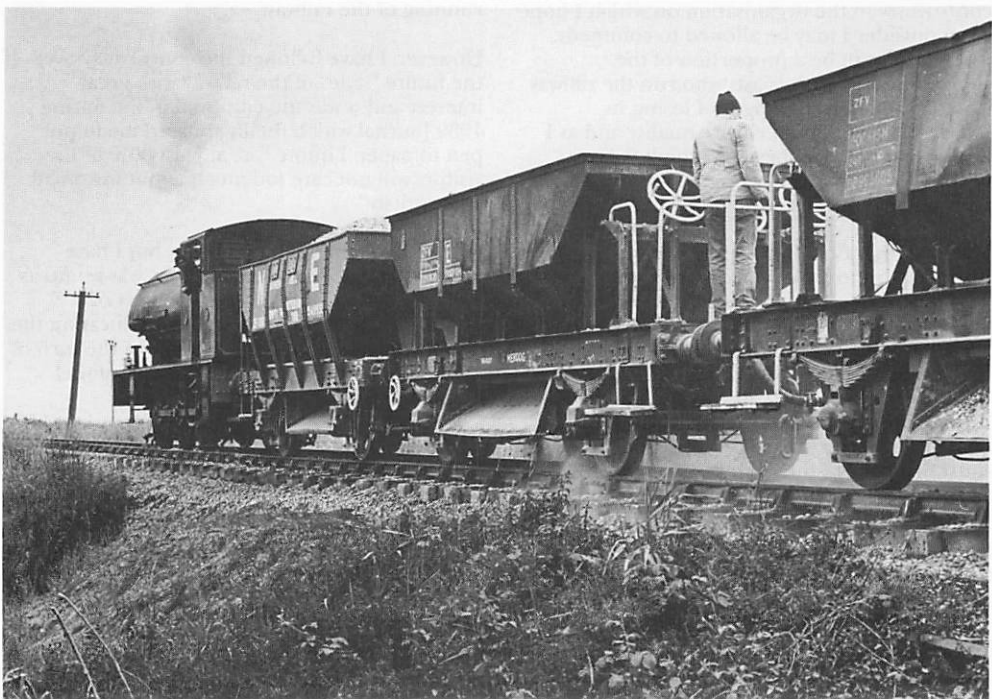
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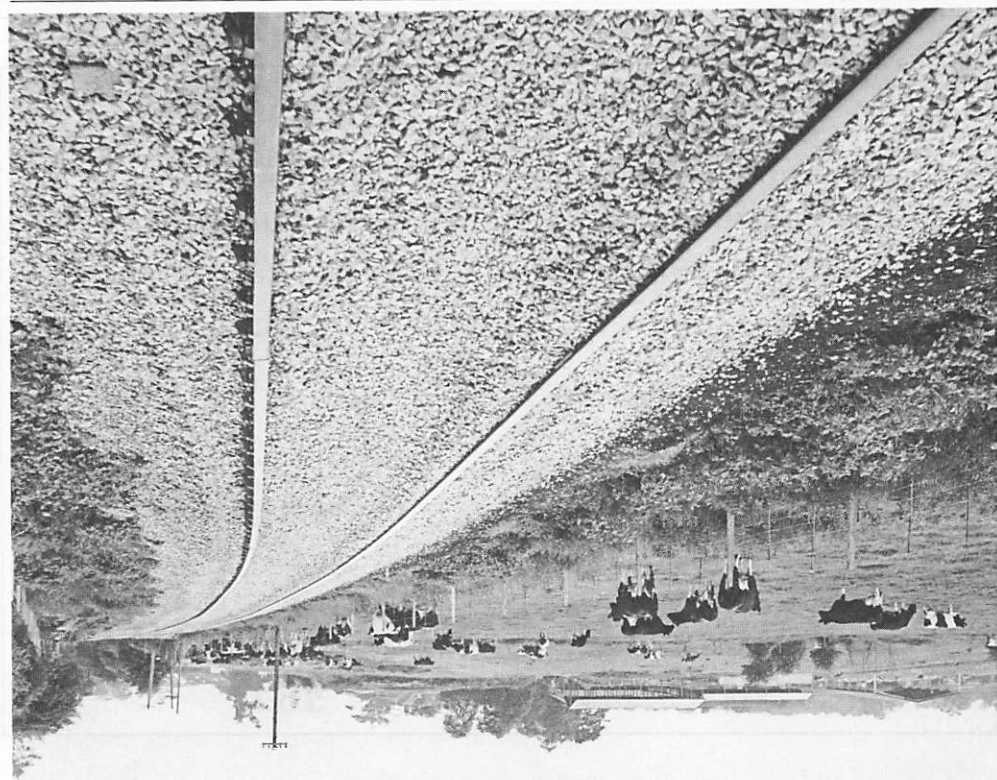
Nigel Shoosmith

(Mr Shoosmith's letter must be the last word on this subject. The Editor thanks members for such a wide dichotomy of views, which may be helpful to the management when formulating their policy for the Bodiam section of the line)

HELLO NORTHIAM!

Ballasting of the track was well advanced when Brian Stephenson visited the line on 3 June 1989. First, the hopper wagons were loaded up at Wittersham Road. Then, the contents were dropped between Northiam and Rother Bridge. Ballasting had been completed on the curve to the east of Northiam. Northiam Station site itself awaited the reinstatement of track and a new platform face.





THE KITCHEN GARDEN



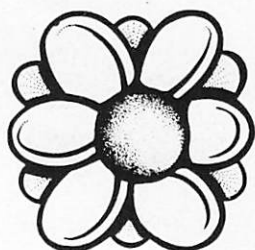
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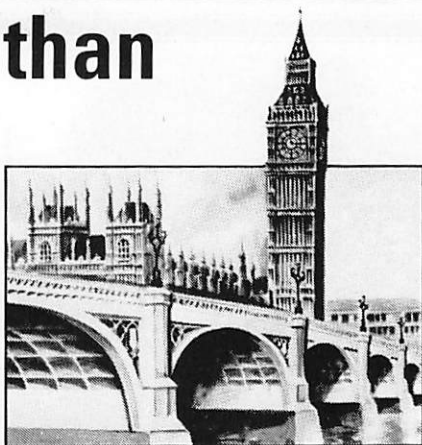
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Clearance and Conservation

Key Mitchell outlines the delicate balance that has to be observed between clearing the undergrowth and protecting the environment.

The Tenterden Railway Company is in the business of preserving railway equipment but it has been suggested in the past that it should also preserve the natural beauties of the countryside. Whilst the clearance group is well aware of the need for conservation, it also has to meet operational requirements and passenger desires, as far as these can be known. With the increasing interest in wildlife and awareness of the need to conserve its habitats, mature vegetation on railway land forms an important landscape and nature conservation resource.

Interest in preserving wildlife goes back over a number of years. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds celebrates its centenary this year, and its original impetus came from Victorian ladies concerned about the destruction of exotic species in order to supply plumage to decorate the hats of the fashionable. Concern over the preservation of areas took rather longer to have an effect, with the first National Parks being designated following an Act of Parliament passed in 1949, although private safeguarding of land by the National Trust began earlier. In both cases the focus was on the large scale, which is understandable since it is easier to observe changes in populations of the larger mammals and birds, and changes affecting wide areas of landscape. But as knowledge of other smaller and less easily seen species has increased, so concern for their protection has grown, and other designations of protected land have followed – national and local nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and direct protection of certain species, most recently increased by the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981. Special areas can be quite small, particularly local nature reserves in towns, but it is not physical size that matters – even a small site can be a complete environment for a ground-living invertebrate, and it can also be important to the people who live around it. For the focus has changed from the rarities, and the unique habitats, to those which were once commonplace, and are now not as common as they were. A parcel of oak woodland is still, thankfully, not a rarity in terms of land coverage in Britain as a whole, but if it is the last piece in one sector of a major city, many people would fight to retain it so that they and their children could walk through the bluebells in spring. They may be unaware that such a combination of

plants is fairly restricted in its occurrence in Europe, and provides a home for a whole complex of organisms, including insects, parasites and fungi, but if it is kept, these things may come to their attention later and will still be available to study and enjoy. As built development increases, so the pressure builds up on land still in its 'natural' state; equally, advances in agriculture, especially since the Second World War, have made many changes possible and profitable in the countryside.

The word preservation has been used so far with deliberate intent, for that was how the movement was seen, trying to maintain landscapes in themselves as wildlife habitats, in a certain state. For some people it was also an attempt to save the countryside as they knew it from their childhood. However, increasing study and knowledge of natural processes leads to the realisation that nature is not static, and follows a succession of development from bare ground through to a climax suited to the prevailing soil and climate (woodland for most of south east England). Even this climax can be in a state of flux, and the most important factor in speeding or retarding change is man. Human activity has always modified environments, to produce a certain crop or view, and it is often the man-modified landscapes that are preferred, such as the hedge-enclosed chequerboard of small fields of the lowland farming system. The cessation of man's interference can also result in unwanted change away from the chosen preserved state as in the end of grazing on downland when it is retained for recreation. Young trees formerly grazed by animals soon shoot up and form a tangle of scrub, on its way to reverting to woodland, and vast teams of volunteers may be needed for 'scrub-bashing'. A far more effective way of dealing with the problem is to reintroduce grazing, but it was not until 1965 that the Nature Conservancy Council actually became the owner of cattle herds and sheep flocks to help conserve the habitats of its own nature reserves. The understanding, at least partially, and working with the mechanisms of natural succession can be defined as conservation.

Conservation has also been defined as the maintenance of a delicate balance between plants, animals and man, and to be successful

requires a detailed knowledge of the organisms concerned. The clearance group does not have members with specific botanical and zoological knowledge, as far as is known, but fortunately practical considerations also tend to lead to actions which will help in conservation.

Firstly, it must be determined what it is that is to be conserved – a definition of the objective. Without a detailed survey, there is no way of telling whether the railway line harbours some great rarity which must at all costs have its habitat maintained in order to survive. But 'common' species can be identified and reasonable guesses made at the other organisms likely to be there. These are not necessarily common in the wider context of the area, where farmland abutting the line has usually been drained, with improved grass for pasture, or arable fields. Both of these are man-made stages, using applied ecology, through physical means of drainage ditches and altered land levels, genetic changes to preferred species to give them an advantage, and application of pesticides and herbicides to kill off unwanted predators or competitors. So the common weeds of agricultural land have now become scarce, and the insects which fed on them.

Even the railway line itself is a man-made habitat, dictated by operational requirements; it required a dry embankment for the line, often using imported material and with ditches on both sides, and vegetation kept short close to the track to avoid the risk of fires starting from stray sparks. Hedges and boundary trees may have been left – there was an 'avenue of trees', made up of poplars and willows between Wittersham Road and Northiam, but the grass along the line grew sufficiently well to allow a hay crop to be taken, used to feed the horses which delivered parcels locally. A return to this type of habitat may be required to fit in with preserved railway image. Alternatively, it can easily be seen how quickly growth reoccurs if the line is not used – some members of the present clearance gang have cleared the line through to Northiam and Bodiam several times – and in many parts of the country it is the scrub, thicket and woodland of disused railway lines which is now the desired habitat, protected as nature reserves. Either habitat may have its benefits in terms of species conserved, which are also mutually exclusive; long grass is likely to harbour many types of invertebrates, while the hedge and bramble environment, resembling the edge of a woodland, is particularly good for

birds, with roosting, nesting and feeding sites.

Secondly, one of the features of a stable ecosystem is diversity in terms of habitats and species, and a varied and interesting view for the passengers is something that the clearance group aims for. Diversity means that if one factor of the environment changes, there are likely to be feedback mechanisms operating to prevent sudden alterations in the whole system, and if the habitats are patchy, a change in one may not affect another area of the same type elsewhere on the line. The lack of manpower on clearance automatically means that the whole line cannot be at the same stage of treatment throughout; there will always be some areas recently cleared of bramble and trees, some growing back and some with years of growth awaiting attention. This is also partially deliberate, in that away from the trackbed, physical rather than chemical means of control are used, and that selective tree cutting is carried out. As far as possible, specimen trees such as oak or ash are left to grow if they are not too close to the track, and willows are pollarded so that trunks remain at 2-4 feet and young shoots sprout from these, to be cut again after 5-10 years growth. Hawthorn and blackthorn are dealt with differently again; some can be left but often branches are so tangled and twisted that it is easier to cut the whole tree down rather than attempt to shape it to form an attractive specimen. The multi-stemmed trunks seem to indicate previous cutting, possibly to form traditionally-laid hedges. If shoots regrow satisfactorily from these stumps it may be possible to re-lay and maintain hedges, with newly grown saplings to fill in the gaps. This should provide a stockproof barrier (the original reason for planting hedges), an attractive outlook, and create or re-create a habitat for wildlife. Where the line is wider, there are some patches of woodland with mature trees which can be left when there is no danger of them falling and taking down telephone wires; the willows have a tendency to fall when older and pollarding is a way of keeping the tops light to prevent this.

In other parts of the line the ditches widen to form pools, where a chorus of frogs can be heard from the Wealden Pullman. The wetland habitat, indicated by reed growth, could be extended if ditches were deepened since much of their length must have silted up over the years, or been bypassed by alternative land drainage systems in the adjacent fields. Dead



Lineside clearance taking place alongside newly laid track, just East of Northiam on 3 June 1989.
(Brian Stephenson)

stumps and branches not cleared away to the bonfire also provide a habitat for insect larvae and thus food for birds able to search the crevices. Even the 'bramble and dog rose' habitat may have value if looked on in these terms, instead of merely as a nuisance to be cut and burned. The blackberries at least are appreciated in autumn, by humans if not by birds and small mammals! This habitat is likely to persist because of the way it reproduces vegetatively and is treated simply by cutting, whereas a systematic eradication programme using brushwood killer might get rid of it for good. So although clearance operates to destroy a habitat, it also allows another one to form for a while, with a more open grassland and herb layer having sufficient space and light to flourish.

Conversely, another attribute of the railway line is its continuity and this is also valuable in terms of wildlife conservation. Since environmental factors change only slowly along the line, mobile organisms can use it as a corridor, to travel between areas outside the line and avoid open fields with perhaps inimical conditions, such as

kestrels. They would also be able to avoid the ravages of the clearance group and its bonfires by moving on to (possibly only temporarily) safer places. The 'green corridor' provided by disused railway lines and canals is a feature of some conservation strategies in areas like the West Midlands conurbation, but it can also be significant in rural areas like Lincolnshire with otherwise featureless prairie landscapes of intensively farmed land.

Finally, the management implications of any conservation strategy must be considered. As previously mentioned, the actions taken to fulfil other requirements have resulted in the creation of habitats for wildlife – conservation as a by-product of railway preservation. This may be the best way to achieve it, especially with limited manpower available (time and money are of less importance, although manpower can be bought in, for example by using Manpower Services Commission projects). The maintenance of a 'traditional' form of land use (albeit only over the last 150 years), a railway line, results in its associated landscape being retained as well. However there is room also for

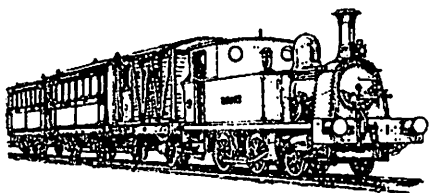
more positive management initiatives, such as hedge laying and tree planting. This may raise the question of introductions, which are frowned upon by some conservationists. But reintroduction of a species known to have been present in the past is less contentious, and saves the time it may take in recolonising from elsewhere, always supposing that there is an available 'reservoir' as a source. The railway line in particular may have been cut off at its ends from reservoirs of similar land, by the closure and alternative use of stretches outside our control. Parts of Sussex are now almost free of Dutch Elm disease, and resistant strains are being developed, so it may be possible to bring that back as a tree, as well as trying to keep any suckers that have regenerated. With flowering plants, it may be tempting to introduce many to increase the attractiveness of the line for passengers, but this would need to be done with care to avoid an artificial, gardened appearance.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 extended the duties of water authorities, changing them from 'having regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty' when considering proposals relating to the discharge of their functions, to a duty to exercise their functions to further the conservation and

enhancement of natural beauty. Other statutory undertakers have not had their responsibilities strengthened in this way but their obligations are set out in other Acts from which they derive their powers. British Rail has been conscious of the need to manage mature vegetation adjoining railway lines for some time, and a survey and management plan for an area in Winchester provided valuable input to a guide to good practice in the management of lineside vegetation. A follow-up to this, the Lineside Vegetation Management Project, will prepare a register of such sites throughout Hampshire which are important in landscape and nature conservation terms, and will implement management techniques on demonstration sites for the six different habitat types identified in the Winchester area. These will be compared with control sites, left undisturbed apart from essential safety work, so that the effectiveness of the management action can be assessed in relation to operational safety, landscape and wildlife objectives set out in the management plan. If conservation is to be a reality for the Tenterden Railway Company, rather than a byproduct, a similar approach may need to be adopted to avoid any conflict of objectives and ensure the best use of scarce resources in managing the line.

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Duncan Buchanan



Many people may be surprised to see the pages of the Terrier graced with a regular column. The Terrier publishes a record of the railway both currently, largely through Lineside News, and historically, through articles submitted often by the same group of well known writers. A few articles appear about the current railway and these are always welcome but they are rare and invariably single subject. It is felt that a column consisting of a number of shorter items is needed that both comments seriously on the railway and comments humorously at the railway. Hopefully this will be achieved.

For those who do not know who I am, a few words are required. I have been a volunteer and member for 6 years and involved in several departments throughout the railway. I also edit the Smokebox. This, for those who have never seen it, is a simple newsletter, published about 10 times a year, containing news and views for the working volunteers. It provides a useful means of letting each department keep in touch with the others. Some groups, a good example of which is the clearance department, are quite distant from the mainstream of news, and especially that news which never sees the full light of day in the Terrier. This column will not be copying the Smokebox but will hopefully give some added colour to the factual news in the Lineside News section. Anybody who has suitable material for this column is invited to write to me at Tenterden Station.

Clippings from the press indicate that the extension has generated much interest. The KESR press machine has swung into action and supplied them with data and photographs. However it appears that someone has his distances muddled up. First comes the *Kent and Sussex Courier* (21 April) which says "... to extend the line by another four miles." *The Daily Telegraph* does little better by suggesting "A three mile extension to Northiam, E. Sussex, is planned ..." *The Kentish Express* (18 May) must be short of the mark when it says "... he's determined that the 1.6 kilometres of line scheduled for laying will be firmly in place by the end of May." It seems that the hyperbole of the press officer is proportional to the time before completion is due. Can we therefore expect the extension to be of zero length by opening day? Need we therefore only declare the opening day and all will happen?

Look at where we are today. Since I joined the railway the dingy old buffet has become a spacious 1930s tea room; the old cramped, but quaint, shop has become a supermarket; the permanent way has seen a vast improvement; the Pullman and Santa Specials continue to exceed capacity and then there is Northiam. Some have argued that the aims of the original preservationists have been squandered in pursuit of profitless prosperity where more passengers travel in order to increase facilities in order to get more passengers to travel. Others argue that in order to survive financially, especially when trying to put right the scale of civil engineering neglect that the line has suffered, requires a certain laissez faire attitude to our past. Indeed it has been suggested that Col. Stephens, if he were alive today, would be only too glad to have a large group of people work long hours, for no pay, on his line. He might also not care too much how the profit was generated or what history is destroyed.

The KESR has become known for a certain business acumen, a tradition surely continued from the old Colonel. Pullmans and Santa Specials are the prime examples of this. The way we are now beginning to tackle engineering problems is also indicative of this attitude.

Many views prevail over where the KESR is trying to go. There is a commercial, or marketing, view pitched with, or sometimes against, a financial view. There can also be

constructive debate with the preservationists. Northiam station site has demonstrated this as evidenced in these pages in recent issues. This debate, if fairly presented, is healthy. The remaining view, and perhaps so familiar that it is often forgotten, is the volunteers view; where we must preserve or recreate only that which can be operated by a largely volunteer run railway. This is not, for one moment, to suggest no paid staff are required but to say that the railway is, primarily, a volunteer organisation. Few, if any, members want an all paid staff approach so we must be careful to build the railway in a way that is volunteer oriented. Sacrifices have been and will be required. Perhaps some, or all, manual level crossing gates will disappear if open crossings, with lights for the road traffic, are introduced (Cranbrook Road being an obvious first choice). Whilst at first sight this may seem extreme, running Pullmans on a genuine light railway is hardly historically accurate either, but with the passage of time begins to seem right. Must we always be slaves to the past or can we not maintain our links to the past and go forward into the future?

One side of KESR operations that few see is ballasting the line. Large quantities of stone are

delivered, normally to Wittersham Road yard, and then moved to the extension using the railway's three hopper wagons. This year loco No. 22, Maunsell, has been employed on this duty. Covered in dust, and looking like it hadn't been cleaned for years, it really looked the part of an industrial shunting loco. Someone with a sense of humour, and an eye for an appropriate remark, wrote in the dust on the side tanks, YEOMAN EXTENT. Foster Yeoman may have similarly named class 59s but a steam loco looks much better.

During the laying of the extension almost one day of work was lost due to the Ford Diesel becoming derailed near Cysters curve. This was commented on by a local who remembered a loco coming off at the same point, during May as well, many years ago. Some, with memories longer than mine, may remember that the loco on this occasion was fired by Jack Hoad, now a KESR driver of many years standing. On both occasions the crew were on their way home near the end of the day. Is this bit of track jinxed or is it just coincidence?



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The Colonel's Pipedreams

No. 2 – The Wantage Tramway

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

In the first article in this series it was related how Colonel Stephens failed to persuade the Metropolitan Railway to build the Oxford & Aylesbury Tramroad as a light railway. This was not his only excursion into the world of tramways. The Hundred of Manhood & Selsey Tramway carried the title as a flag of convenience to conceal its dubious legal authority to run at all. The Weston Clevedon & Portishead had started with genuine ambitions of running through the streets of Weston-Super-Mare, admittedly before Stephens became involved with that line. Even that pioneer of street-side running, the Swansea & Mumbles Railway, would have come under Stephens' control if his plans for the Gower Light Railway had succeeded (*see the Tenterden Terrier No. 28*).

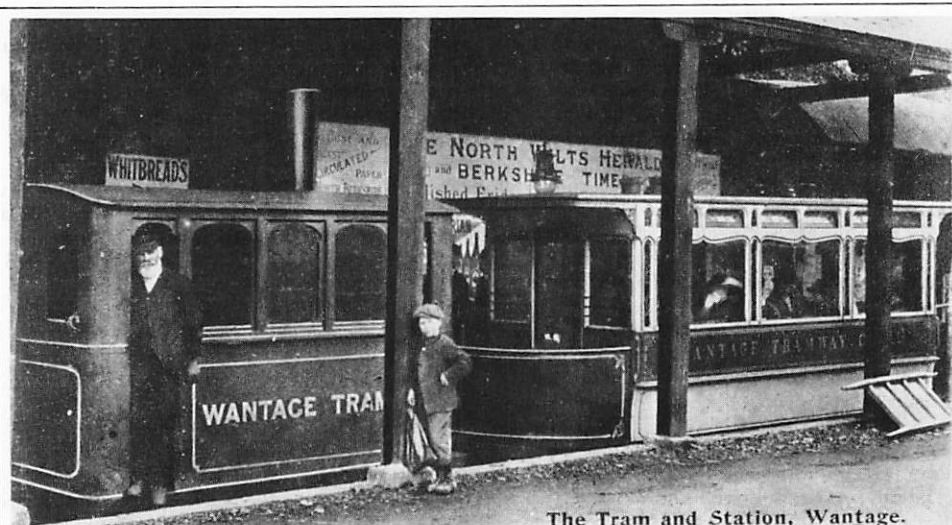
It should therefore come as no surprise to learn that in 1920 Stephens seems to have contemplated adding the Wantage Tramway to the lines under his management. This was a modest concern of respectable vintage. It had opened in October 1875 as a horse-drawn roadside tramway linking Wantage Road Station on the main Great Western line between Didcot and Swindon with the town of Wantage some 2½ miles away. Even before the line had opened its directors had received on loan an experimental self-contained double-deck steam tramcar designed by John Grantham and built jointly by Merryweather & Sons and the Oldbury Carriage Company. The car entered regular service in August 1876 and became the first steam tramcar to operate in Britain. Upon proving itself satisfactory the car was purchased in September. It was joined in November by a more conventional Merryweather steam tram locomotive but this was returned to its makers in 1878, the Tramway having acquired a Hughes tram locomotive in the meantime. The tram locomotives tried to date had not proved capable of handling goods traffic satisfactorily so in 1878 the Tramway obtained a George England 0-4-0WT from the L.N.W.R. who had acquired it on taking over the Sandy & Potton Railway. One further tram locomotive was purchased in 1888 and three 0-4-0ST locomotives arrived in later years though two of these proved unsatisfactory. There was also an extensive trial of Mekarski

compressed air tram locomotives in 1880.

By 1900 the Tramway had settled down to a quiet and profitable existence shuttling goods and passengers between Wantage and the Great Western. A dividend was paid each year until 1915 and between 1903 and 1911 the line returned a comfortable six per cent. Apart from the construction of a short goods branch at Wantage and the development of an extensive delivery service there were no startling changes although two new passenger cars were obtained from Hurst Nelson in 1912 to replace some of the existing horse-type tramcars. One of the new cars had originally been built as an open-topped electric double-deck car for an exhibition in 1900. It had, however, remained on Hurst Nelson's hands and was converted to a single-deck car before delivery to Wantage. The second car had been designed as a light carriage for the Nidd Valley Railway in 1904 but this order had been cancelled. Despite their earlier origins both cars carried makers plates dated 1912.

The comfortable existence of the Tramway came under threat with rising costs during the First World War and the closure of one of the line's main customers in 1917. Increased fares and charges kept the line afloat but in 1919 the line's Manager, Mr W A Noble, made off and in his absence frauds amounting to £1000 were discovered. A meeting of shareholders in January 1920 set up a committee to investigate the affairs of the Company. Their report was completed in February and presented a tale of neglected maintenance and dubious accounting. It was, however, in their opinion not too late for the line's fortunes to be repaired under proper management. A new board of directors was established and it was to these that Colonel Stephens made approaches in June 1920. After a number of enquiries Stephens arranged to meet the directors on August 20th but cancelled the meeting by telegram shortly before it was due to take place.

Whether Stephens' particular style of management from Tonbridge would have proved acceptable to the directors or effective in practice is a matter for speculation. In the event the directors seem to have carried on most of the management of the line themselves until appointing Mr J Bullock, who had earlier served



The Tram and Station, Wantage.

The Steam Tram of Wantage is unique, as having been the first of its kind in England. The Tramway was opened in 1875 with Horse Cars. A short time afterwards Steam was used, succeeded in 1880 by compressed air. Eventually Steam was reverted to and used at present.

Wantage Station, with the Matthews steam tram.

(Lens of Sutton)

as Goods Manager, to take over the management in 1922. In 1925 the passenger service was discontinued and responsibility for this and the parcels and mail traffic was taken over by the Great Western. Freight traffic continued until 1943 when it was suspended following damage to the track by American army vehicles. The Americans made good the damage and the line re-opened in 1944 but both the track and the two surviving locomotives were now worn out. When it was learned that

Wantage Gasworks was likely to close it was decided to close the Tramway too. The last traffic was carried on 21st December 1945 and the line's effects were sold in 1946 including the purchase for preservation by the Great Western Railway of the George England locomotive. This was subsequently refurbished at Swindon and was displayed for many years on Wantage Road platform. It can now be seen in the care of the Great Western Society at Didcot.

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'Bodiam' Observed

One of the difficulties faced in researching the history of individual locomotives is that of tracing their movements. Shed allocations, where available, are useful in plotting their likely duties though locomotives could wander far from their allotted home or could be sub-shedded without the fact appearing on the official allocation lists. Equally the records of the various locomotive works, again where available, are a useful record of repairs and repaints but these necessarily give only a very partial record of a locomotive's career. *The Railway Observer* published by the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society is therefore a very useful means of filling in the gaps in the official records since it consists of the collected observations of members of that society. It is particularly useful where a locomotive is of special interest. The Brighton 'Terriers' appear to have been of special interest to the contributors to the *Railway Observer* and as a result it has been possible to compile the following record of the travels of Kent & East Sussex No. 3 'Bodiam' during its period in the ownership of British Railways as Southern Region No. 32670.

Unfortunately the series of *Railway Observer* to

which I have access starts in 1951 with the result that the first reference to 32670 that I have traced is in February 1951 when a visitor to the Kent & East Sussex in January found 32670 shedded at Rolvenden along with fellow 'Terriers' 2640 and 32644 and '01' 0-6-0 31370 which had recently been in collision with a lorry at Biddenden. 32670 was still on the Kent & East Sussex in May but was then keeping company with 'Terriers' 32659 and 32678 and '01' 31048.

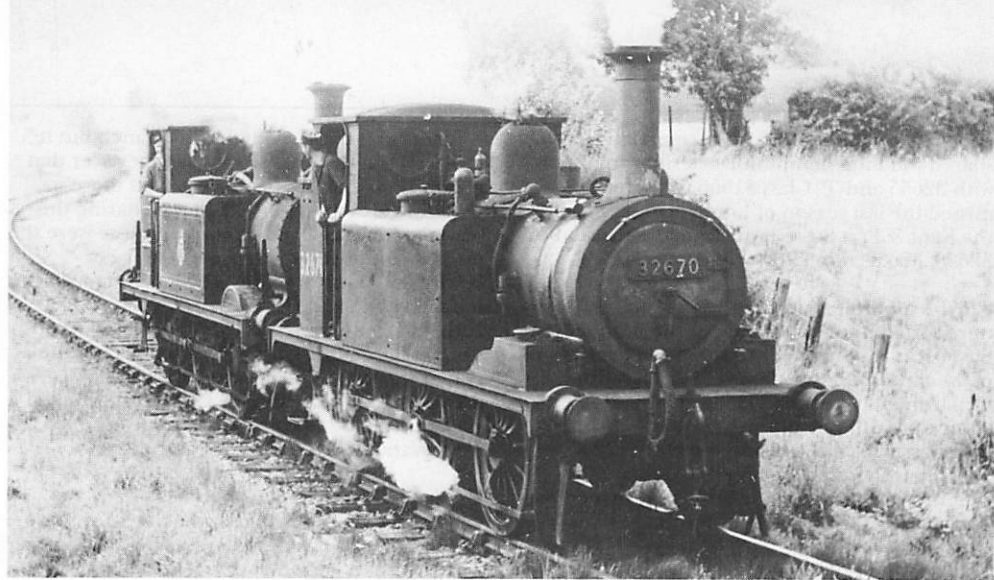
The same quartet were present in March 1952 but 32678 was recorded as spare engine and 32670 was awaiting transfer to Ashford Works for attention.

In October 1952 32670 had returned from Ashford and was working the line with '01' 31065. 32670 had previously faced towards Headcorn but had been returned facing towards Robertsbridge. It was also reported that the previous practice of moving pairs of locomotives along the line with a carriage between them as a spacer to prevent excessive weight on bridges had been abandoned in favour of despatching locomotives at intervals. I believe that the previous practice was subsequently resumed but



"32670" in final style of B.R. livery.

(Stephen Garrett collection)



A rare sight – Terriers in tandem, possibly on the Headcorn section. Can anybody identify the location?
(Stephen Garrett collection)

the *Railway Observer* makes no further reference to this. On 27th November 1952 the embankment near Robertsbridge was badly damaged by flooding with the result that 32670 was cut off at Robertsbridge and had to be shedded at St Leonard's until the line was repaired.

A visitor to Rolvenden in May 1953 noted that 32670 was still carrying its Kent & East Sussex Railway green livery but without any lettering to indicate ownership. The late Donald Bradley actually recorded 32670 as having had its side tanks overpainted black at Ashford as early as September 1949 but presumably the rest of its green livery survived until its full repainting in British Railways lined black at Brighton in March 1954, a matter that went unreported in the *Railway Observer* but has been recorded by Bradley. It was presumably on account of these attentions that 32670 missed the last day of regular passenger service on the Kent & East Sussex on 2nd January 1954 when services were entrusted to 'Terriers' 32655 and 32678 and '01's 31064 and 31065.

The end of passenger services and the closure of the line between Tenterden and Headcorn also saw the closure of Rolvenden Shed. '01' engines from Ashford continued to frequent the line to clear stock and to carry out the demolition of the Headcorn section but 'Terriers' working the freight services and the hop-pickers specials were now based at St Leonard's. In September 1954 32670 was recorded as allocated here in

company with 32655, 32662 and 32678. This appears to have remained 32670's base until April 1956 when it was recorded as having been sent earlier in the year to Ridham Dock near Sittingbourne to substitute for 'P' Class 31078. The exact date of this move was not recorded but by February 32670 had moved on to Dover to rescue B4 0-4-0T 30084 which was being tried out on the Dock line and had failed in heavy snow. 32670 was retained to work the Dock line for an unspecified period but by 19th May had moved to Faversham, presumably for further use at Ridham. By September 32670 had returned to St Leonard's for use on the Kent & East Sussex where it was employed on ballasting duties while 32636 and 32678 handled the hop-picking traffic.

32670 remained on the Kent & East Sussex and handled the 1957 hop-picking traffic with 32678 between 31st August and 22nd September but moved to pastures new in 1958 when it was reported in February as having been seen shunting at Brighton and at Newhaven. In June that year diesels replaced 'Terriers' on the Kent & East Sussex and St Leonard's closed as a shed although remaining a stabling point for the diesel shunter. 32636 was retained at Ashford to deputise for the diesel if need arose and was back on the Kent & East Sussex by the 7th June. 32670 missed all this but moved from Brighton to shunt at Lancing Carriage Works from 9th June. This was a relatively short posting as it had been replaced by 32655 by August and presumably returned to Brighton. Its next

expedition was reported in December as having shared the Littlehampton Dock shunting turns with 32655 and 'P' Class 31556. It therefore missed the last season of hop-picking trains on the Kent & East Sussex which were entrusted to 32636, 32662 and 32678 instead.

32670's movements during 1959 went unreported until it returned to the Kent & East Sussex on 18th October to share the operation of an enthusiasts' special over the line with Departmental 'Terrier' DS680. This visit coincided with one of the periodic indispositions of the resident diesel 11223. 32670 was therefore retained to operate the freight service on the line but had returned to Brighton by the end of the month.

I have found no mention of 32670 in the *Railway Observer* during 1960 but Bradley recorded its last British Railways overhaul as having taken place at Eastleigh during May of that year. It was therefore in good condition to return to the Kent & East Sussex on 11th June 1961 to operate the final British Railways service over the line together with 32662. By now the only major operation remaining for the

'Terriers' was the Hayling Island branch but it was not until the final year of services over that line in 1963 that 32670 was reported there in *Railway Observer*. In July 32670 was sharing this service with 32650 and 32662 and these were the three locomotives to share the last day of services on 4th November. 32670, along with the other surviving 'Terriers' 32636, 32646, 32650 and 32662, was then withdrawn and put into store at Eastleigh. This, of course, was not the end of the story. On 10th April 1964 32670 arrived at Brighton and on 11th April travelled via Hastings to start up a new career in preservation on the Kent & East Sussex.

Caps still remain in 32670's British Railways career and I appreciate that the dates for some of the observations noted in the *Railway Observer* lack precision. However, it is a tribute to the interest that this class of locomotives generated, and 32670 in particular, that such a record can be created at all. Bigger and more powerful locomotives of more numerous classes often went without any sort of detailed individual mention during the whole of their careers.

Stephen Garrett

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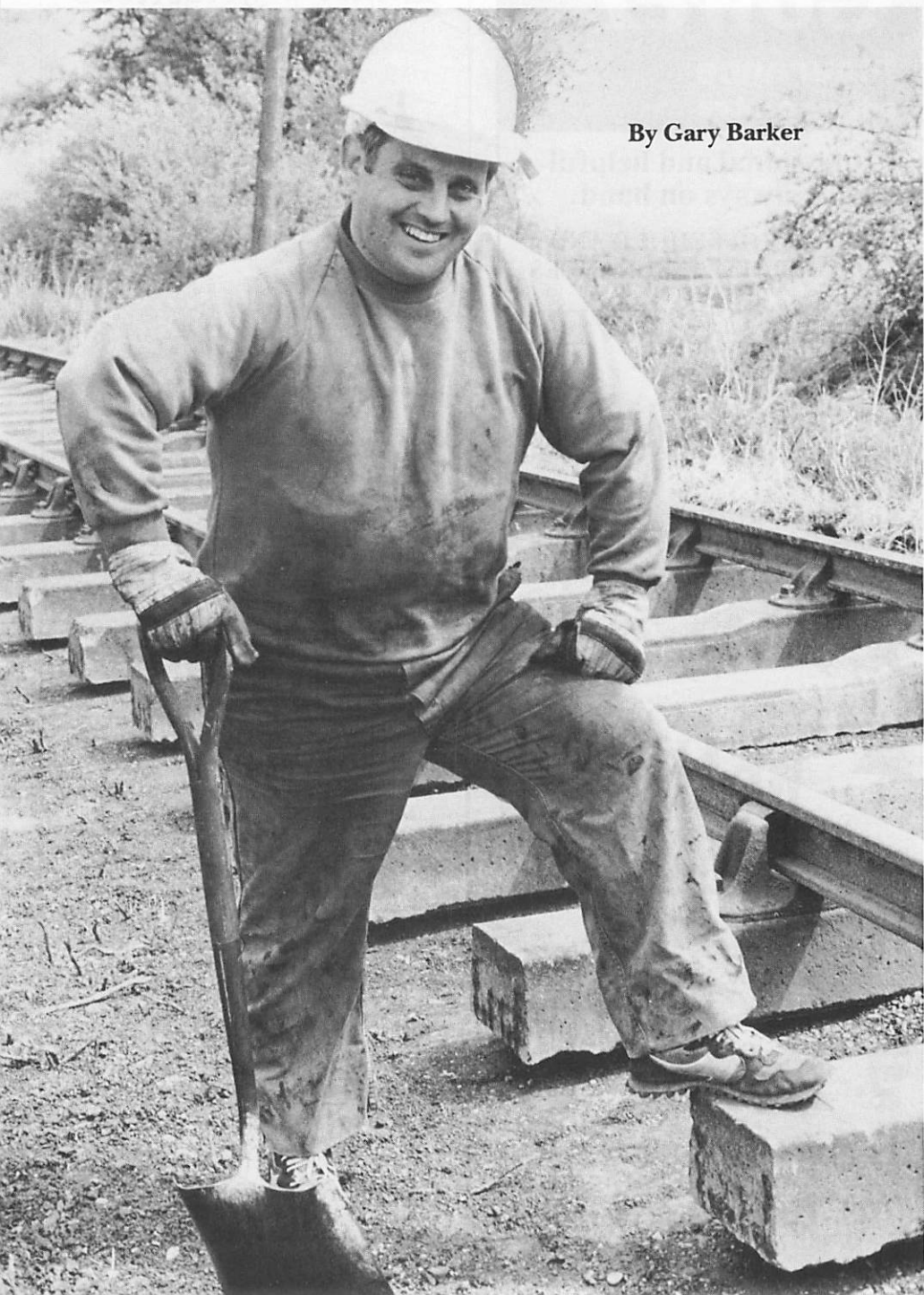
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Northiam, Here We Are!

By Gary Barker



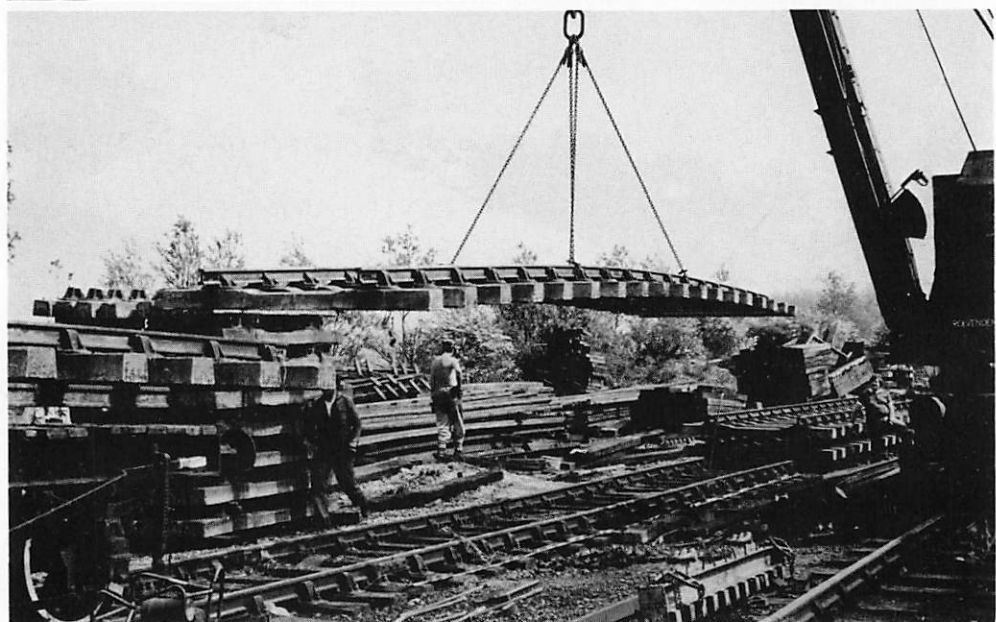
It was around 9 pm on Friday 19 May, that the phone rang yet again. However, this call was different; the 'P' class locomotive had just steamed over the A28 level crossing on to temporary track at Northiam Station. Somehow, through a combination of hard work, co-operation and good luck, our efforts during the working fortnight had been realised. We had laid 176 pre-assembled 45 feet long track panels, representing 1.5 miles of railway and a labour effort of over 500 man days (which also includes a significant number of lady days); truly a magnificent effort for a voluntary railway!

It is very easy to view the track now and be lulled into the false sense that we did all this in two weeks; our success was also due to prior preparation. I am not only referring to planning, but also to the dedicated efforts of two groups who over the last 15 months or so have prepared the track formation. Allen Tebboth and the Clearance Gang, and David Hazeldine, ably assisted by Kevin Hickmot, deserve credit for their work, much of which remains unseen and therefore difficult to appreciate – they prepared the foundations!

Our plan was to do the maximum preparation

before the fortnight, spend the first five working days building up a stockpile of track panels, then use the remaining time to both lay and build panels. Panels were to be constructed and stockpiled in Wittersham Road Permanent Way yard, using the railway's three steam cranes, loaded on to a panel train and propelled to the railhead where a hired crawler crane would lay them. While one panel train was at the railhead a second train would be loaded to ensure a rapid turnaround at Wittersham Road. Mainly because of resource limitations, the aim was to lay all the straight track from Hexden Bridge to Cyster's Curve, which is about 700 yards from Northiam Station. Not only was this achieved but we also managed to get through to the station itself!

By the end of the first week, including two days of track laying, we were just off Rother Bridge, and although panel production was slightly behind schedule all was going well. Then came the news that one of the steam cranes was out of action and would take days to fix. As the crawler crane was on contract, and volunteers had taken time off from work, we had to press on, although the remaining steam cranes would be unable to keep up with the panel building. The



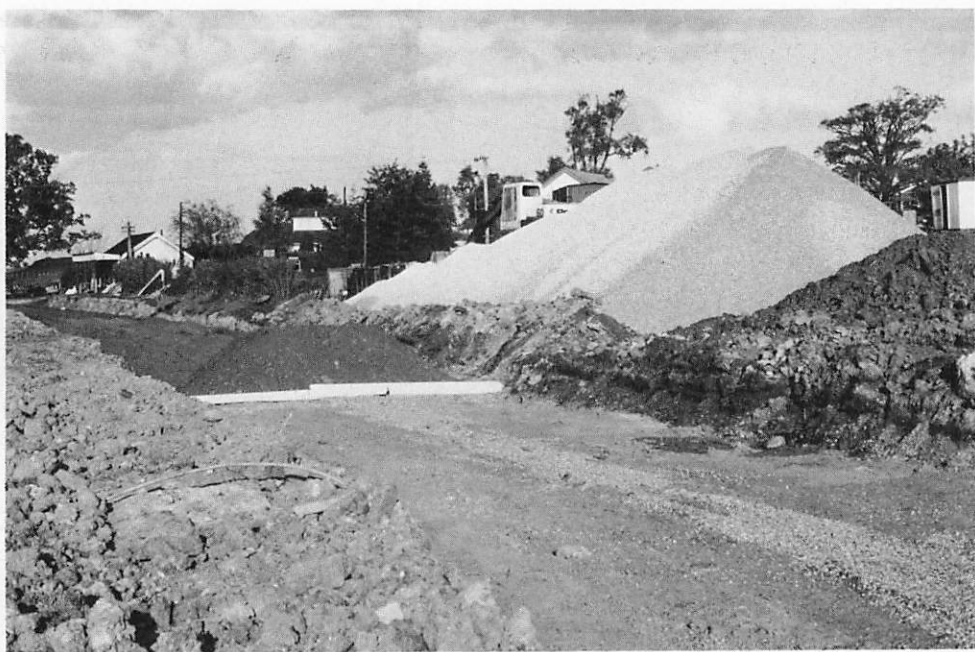
Loading a panel in Wittersham Yard on 19 May 1989.

(Neil Rose)



Gary Barker and the railhead team bolting up fishplates on 15 May 1989.

(Neil Rose)



Mountains of ballast at Northiam Station site, May 1989

(John Liddell)

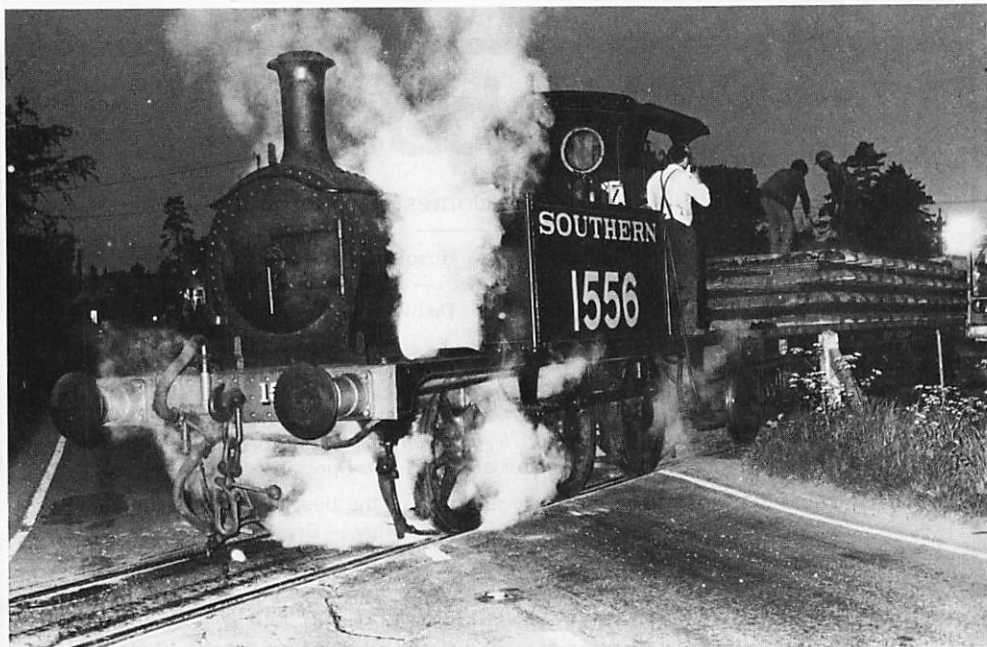
decision was then made to hire a rough terrain mobile crane and position it at Wittersham so that in conjunction with one of the two remaining steam cranes it could both make and load panels. On Monday morning we had our crane and by that afternoon we were over the Rother Bridge and a steam locomotive was in East Sussex. Then came the shock news that an expected load of ballast would be delayed for at least a fortnight because of fire damage to the crushing plant in Scotland. This was critical, as we had already contracted for a track tamping machine to arrive on 26 May after the ballast had been laid. Apart from financial penalties, there would be a significant delay with the project. Luckily we had a 1600 tonne stockpile of ballast at Northiam; all we had to do was to get to it – and we did! In the process we received excellent press coverage on radio, newspapers and two television networks.

As a civil engineering project, the scheme was relatively straightforward. But for it to be achieved by a volunteer group in a short time, shows the dedication, endurance and sacrifice that a large number of people are prepared to make for this railway. From this 'Colonial

Engineer' you have my heartfelt thanks. To those who did turn up and could not be employed all day please understand that at times we were overwhelmed by volunteers. Rather than turn people away in advance we decided that those who wanted to help would be allowed to do so.

Work at Northiam Station has continued and the majority of earthworks are now complete. The car park had been levelled, drains installed, platforms shaped and the track bed prepared for re-laying. We were fortunate to receive plant assistance from the Royal School of Military Engineering for a two week period and we are grateful for their assistance. It does not take much imagination to visualise the finished job particularly if one stands near the level crossing.

It would be nice to say the job is finished, but although we are well on the way we are not there yet. Working weekends have been planned and will occur each month, commencing in August. Your continued support is needed so please send off the slip enclosed with the current issue of the "Rooter".



Late Night Special: The first train across the A28 at Northiam on 19 May 1989.

(Jim Berryman)

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Book Reviews

Two choice publications from the Middleton Press

The East Kent Light Railway and Guildford to Redhill are the two latest books to be published by Middleton Press in their Country Railway Routes series. Authors, Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith are well known for producing attractive, well laid out pictorial publications which attract interest not only from Railway enthusiasts, but from those involved in local affairs. For this reason, they are distributed more widely than is the case with some transport publications. Both are priced at £7.95 and attractively formatted and bound in hard covers, which will fit conveniently in anybody's bookcase. They are on sale at Tenterden Station.

The East Kent Light Railway has not attracted a serious approach from an established author before and a well-researched publication such as this is therefore especially welcome. There are pictures of the line's various locomotives and stations, including the somewhat obscure and little photographed "Wingham Colliery" halt; several of the photographs extend to a double spread, which adds to the detail and interest. Many have not been published before, including some taken in the immediate post-war years. Photographic evidence of the Guildford, Wingham Colliery and Hammill branches was obviously not to hand, but for the reviewer, the choice photograph was of the Engineer's office at 23 Salford Terrace, Tonbridge, taken in 1937 by the redoubtable Ronald Shepherd. Apart from the missing nameboard, to the left of the front door, it is little changed to this day and it is easy to imagine W.H. Austen's clerks scribbling

away at their desks as their dwindling empire of light railways gradually drew to a close.

Guildford to Redhill is in somewhat different vein, but of no less interest, particularly as a cross country route that exists to this day and will attract increasing use with the onset of the Channel Tunnel. Apart from the Redhill to Reigate section, electrified in 1932, and to some extent operated as a shuttle service, the line is diesel worked, but electrification of the whole route is now a distinct probability. As with all the Middleton Press books, historic maps are produced for every station, along with tickets and timetables from the past. Photographs are notable for their clarity and there is a particularly interesting shot of Reigate Town (now Reigate) taken in the 1890s, complete with staggered platforms. The line had an interesting offshoot in the Dorking Greystone Lime Company's various narrow gauge lines at Betchworth quarry. Not far away, was "The Deepdene" a country mansion, purchased by the Southern Railway in 1938 as railway offices and used as such until 1966. The accounting functions of the East Kent Railway and the Kent & East Sussex Railway were also accommodated in this building, which is shown as photograph 72 in the book. Communication with the outside world was by despatch riders, and no doubt many a motorcyclist wended his way through the leafy lanes to Tonbridge High Street and up the steps to number 23 Salford Terrace to collect invoices and details of the petty cash!

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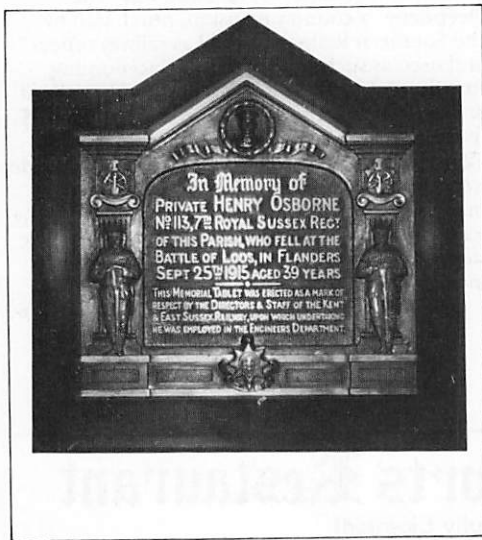
RICHARD & CHERRY SMITH & ELSIE SMITH

From the Railway Archives

Following my dip into the railway archives in the last issue of *"The Tenterden Terrier"*, I received no further information except that I now have a photograph of the memorial tablet in Salehurst Parish Church. This shows that I did not have the correct spelling of Henry Osborne's name and indeed his is the same as that of Albert Osborne, one-time batman to Colonel Stephens, strengthening the possibility that both were related.

For this edition, I thought I would stay with the early years at Northiam and reproduce the very interesting Rother Valley Railway share certificate. This is from the first issue of shares, for £60,000 divided into 6,000 shares of £10 each, to finance the building and equipping of the line from Robertsbridge to present-day Rolvenden. The shares were issued under the Rother Valley (Light) Railway Act which received the Royal Assent on 2nd July 1896. ***

The subscription list opened on Monday 18th



The tablet in Salehurst Parish Church commemorating Private Henry Osborne

(Author)

October 1897 and four days only were allowed for the issue to be taken up. Investors could pay for their shares in instalments: ten shillings (50p) on application; £2 on allotment, and up to five months to pay the balance of £7.50p in £2.50p instalments.

The certificate is signed by Sir Myles Fenton, Chairman of The R.V.R. and a director of the South Eastern Railway, and by Sir Roger Goldsworthy, a director of the R.V.R. and "late Governor of the Falkland Islands".

The certificate was presented to the Archives some years ago by Miss Kitty M. Comport, of Jasmine House, Northiam, (she died in 1980 aged 91 years). Kitty was the youngest of five children and Alfred, who purchased the share, was the next youngest. In 1897, he was a schoolboy aged about 12 years, at Rye Grammar School, then situated in the High Street opposite the George Hotel.

Alfred followed the building of the railway with keen interest and was determined to have a stake in it. He saved up his pocket money (and must have been given more by his relatives for £10 was then a substantial sum), and purchased his one share by instalments of £2.50p, the first on the 7th January and the last on 24th April 1899. Alfred was sent his share on 10th February 1898, before he had completed payment. By May 25th, Alfred for the first time received interest on his investment of one shilling and sevenpence (just over 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p) less income tax of one penny (less than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ p). By the 10th October 1901, interest had increased to one shilling and eleven pence (just under 10p) but two pence was paid in income tax! The company had powers to pay interest during the period allowed for construction at the rate of 3% per annum.

In 1981, I spoke to Miss Maggie Comport, then aged 92 years and living at Staplecross, Bodiam, and a cousin of Alfred and Kitty. She told me that at the turn of the century, the Comport family kept the Six Bells Hotel at Northiam. While the railway was under construction, Holman Stephens as the Engineer, was a well known and familiar figure in the locality. He occasionally took his meals at the Six Bells and Maggie Comport remembered him as a tall man with a long black coat who took a delight in children. Her father also ran livery stables at the Six Bells and was contracted to convey local people to Northiam station and meet arriving trains. It is highly probable that the horse drawn

*** In the event, advantage was taken of the Light Railways Act 1896, and the line was built under Light Railway Order No 64 obtained on the 8th December 1899.

Nº 35

THE

Nº of Shares — / —



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is the holder of *one* Shares of
Ten Pounds each Numbered *1000* to *1000* both inclusive
in the above Company, subject to the Provisions of the Act of Parliament
above mentioned and that there has been paid up in respect of each
of such shares the amount endorsed on the back hereof.

Given under the Common Seal of the Company
this *3rd* day of *January* 1898

H. Fisher

O. G. Stoer

Secretary.

Thomas Lewis & Co. General Agents

DIRECTOR.

The Company is empowered to pay interest out of Capital at the rate of 3% per annum upon the amounts paid up on its shares during the construction of the Railway.
NOTE, NO TRANSFER OF ANY PORTION OF THE SHARES COMPRISED IN THIS CERTIFICATE WILL BE REGISTERED UNTIL THE CERTIFICATE
HAS BEEN DELIVERED AT THE COMPANY'S OFFICE.

The Rother Valley (Light) Railway Company.

ST. MICHAEL'S HOUSE, CORNHILL, E.C.,

No. *34*

May 25 1899.

Sir or Madam,

I have the pleasure to hand you herewith a Warrant
for Interest on the Shares standing in your name on the above date,
less income tax.

I am, Sir or Madam,

Alfred Comport Jr Esq

Your obedient Servant,

O. G. STOER,

Secretary

Interest at the rate of 3% per annum, on amount paid up on your
Ordinary Shares to 31st January, 1899, £ : *1 : 7*

Less income tax £ - - : *1*

Nett £ : *1 : 6*

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vehicle shown on page 34 of *"The Tenterden Terrier"* No 44 was indeed from the Six Bells stables.

Maggie Comport remembered opening day, 2nd April 1900, at Northiam station. It had been arranged that a party of Northiam trades people would take a return trip on the evening train from Northiam to Tenterden (now Rolvenden). She along with other children and including her

cousins Alfred and Kitty went on foot to the station to see the party off and they then returned in the empty trains to the Six Bells.

If Alfred had been alive today, would he I wonder have bought a bond for the present day extension to Northiam.

John Miller
Archivist

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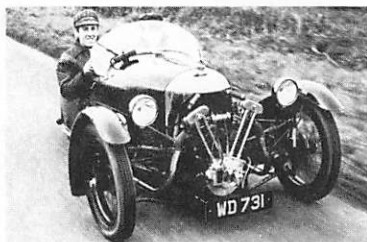
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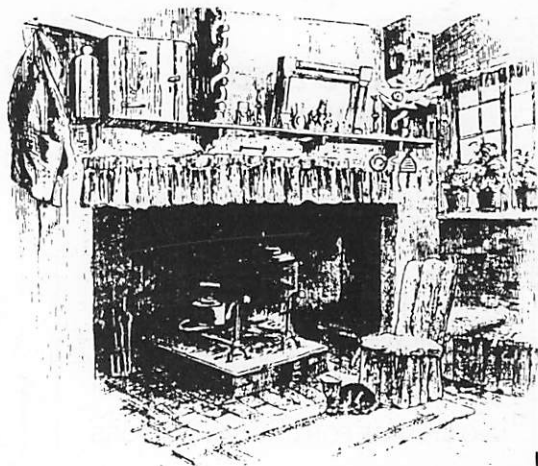
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