

The Tenterden Terrier



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Winter 1974



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

The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

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Editorial

The Editor would like to thank all those readers who wrote to him after the appearance of the last issue and to welcome several new contributors to the magazine. Four additional pages have been added to the text and it is hoped to maintain the present size in future, although this will be dependent on a continuous flow of articles, letters and photographs being received at the editorial office. Contributions are welcome from all readers whether members or non-members and should relate to a subject connected with either the Kent & East Sussex or any other Colonel Stephens' railway. The editor will be pleased to help with the drafting of articles or give advice on the suitability of a subject for publication.

The circulation of the last issue increased by 1000 to 3000 copies and if this can be raised to about 4000 copies in future, the magazine will be entirely self supporting, notwithstanding that approximately 1200 copies are distributed to the membership without charge.



Next year will be the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Rother Valley section between Robertsbridge and Rolvenden on 2nd April 1900; the extension to Tenterden Town followed three years later. Meanwhile, the railway between Rolvenden and Bodiam remains largely derelict. If we are to reach Bodiam and its 90,000 visitor potential from the castle within the projected 7 years, the membership will have to give the railway a far greater degree of financial support than has hitherto been the case.

FRONT COVER

Terrier locomotive 'Sutton' and train during the opening ceremonies 1st June 1974

[Photo Donald Wilson]

Operating Notes

Locomotives

The workshops at Rolvenden have been extended to accommodate new machine tools, which include a lathe, shaping machine, radial drill and milling machine. The stores have been reorganised and a fitting shop built fairly quickly to allow repairs to take place on No. 22 (U.S.A.), 19 (Norwegian) and 11 (P Class) to enable them to run regularly in 1975. In addition, a compressor has been installed for driving air tools and Mike Hart puts in a plea for a $\frac{3}{4}$ " drive air spanner and any air hose. We shall be grateful if anyone can help with these items.

It is hoped that a two-road locomotive repair shed will be built at Rolvenden in the near future. This will be of steel frame construction and measure 40' x 60'. Pits and concrete flooring will be added in due course, when funds permit.

No. 10 (Sutton) should have been retubed by October and will be the third locomotive to have received this treatment since October 1973. In addition, the air pump has been restored, all valves, reservoirs, and pipe work completely replaced and the smoke box and side tanks given new plate work. This engine should be ready for service by mid-November and will be used as the main small locomotive for winter services.

Repairs continue on the boiler of No. 11 at the Medway College of Technology and completion is hoped for by Christmas. The motion and axle-boxes will be completely reconditioned in our new machine shop.

No. 19 has had all its small tubes replaced and has been fitted with new main steam pipes. To the delight of locomotive crews she has proved to be a very free steaming engine, capable of hauling four coaches with ease.

No. 23 (Austerity) entered service on August Bank holiday following minor repairs and this virtually new locomotive has proved to be a very capable, free steaming engine. Since the date of their introduction, numbers 23 and 19 have taken over as main engines from numbers 3 (Bodiam) and 22, although both are available if required.

The Great Western railcar has been handling Saturday morning services but has suffered from irritating small faults. We are in desperate need of a diesel mechanic who would be interested in helping to maintain this and our other diesel locomotives.

The ex Stewarts & Lloyds Robert Stephenson saddle tank had its first stationary steam test on 29th August and it is hoped to have a trial run shortly. Unfortunately this engine is slightly over the maximum weight limit but this problem may be overcome by appropriately limiting its coal and

water capacity.

The Southern Mogul was steamed for the second time on Bank Holiday Monday and moved up and down its siding. It is, of course, totally forbidden on the main line because of its excessive weight.

The Smith crane has been reconditioned but has been rendered temporarily immobile as the ropes have been condemned. When these are replaced this crane should prove to be a most useful item.

Mention must also be made of Dave Dine and Graham Patterson who have taken over the painting. They have made a magnificent job of No. 23. and will be painting No. 10 shortly and revarnishing No. 22.

Carriage and Wagon

Rodney Packham and his helpers have made an excellent job of No. 60, the 'birdcage' coach which is now being regularly used, having spent much of its recent life immobile at Northiam. By the time this magazine goes to print the South East & Chatham 6-wheel brake van, which incidentally is a very rare example, should be ready for use having been completely repainted externally.

In addition to maintaining the running stock, Rodney and his helpers hope to move to Northiam this winter to fully renovate the coaches that are still being stored there. Previous work had been confined to making the roofs waterproof. The coaches which still remain at Northiam are two Maunsell coaches and No. 62, the London & South Western Tricomposite vehicle.

Credit must be given to Paul Ramsden and Alan Castle who worked hard on Pullman No. 52, and put in several tables and Pullman seating. This renders it more suitable for catering and entertainment purposes.

Permanent Way and Clearance

As mentioned in the last edition of the Tenterden Terrier, work has now proceeded on replacing sleepers on the straight sections of track between the New Mill bridge and Wittersham Road. The section immediately beyond the bridge has been relaid with metal sleepers and it is expected that the Oxney straight section (running parallel with the New Mill Channel), should be complete by the new year.

Lifting and packing continues on the operating section and Derek Dunlavy reports that the line has stood up very well since we re-opened. About 200 sleepers are due to be replaced on this section during the winter.

John Miller has been busy as acting manager of the clearance branch and has been well supported

in his efforts by the Tunbridge Wells group. They have made excellent progress in the jungle towards Wittersham Road and this whole section should be well clear to loading gauge by Christmas. Other clearance workers have turned up all this summer with reliability and their efforts are appreciated. In some ways they have a thankless task and their efforts are not readily visible to those who visit the line.

The weed control on the operating section has been generally effective this year although we are suffering problems with later germinating Mares Tail and perennial water grass. Most of the track between limit of operation and Wittersham Road was also sprayed and control of annual weeds was good. Perennial woody weeds will be killed next year with brushwood killer. We would also like to express our thanks to Chris Chubb who sprayed all the loops and sidings at Tenterden, Rolvenden, Northiam and Bodiam.

Signals and Telecommunications

The signals department had a working week during the last week in July in order to install a new ground lever frame to control the crossover point at the Tenterden end of Rolvenden yard. The construction of the new workshop made it necessary to move the frame to a new position. A recently restored frame replaces the old one and channel point rodding has been used for the first time on the railway.

Work on the Tenterden installation continues. The first of the level crossing gate locks has been installed and will be connected to the signal box lever frame when a major overhaul to the latter has been completed.

An ex-S.R. lattice signal post is now ready for use as Tenterden distant signal (fixed). Work continues on the construction of a rail post for use as Tenterden's home signal. Younger members of the department are now restoring the necessary ground signals for the Tenterden installation.

As mentioned in the last magazine, an ex-L.B.S.C. crossing keepers hut from Mullbrookes' crossing on the Cuckoo line, is being erected at the Cranbrook Road level crossing. David Yorke has performed much restoration work on the basic timber structure, all rotten wood having been replaced or repaired, although about 200 slates are still required. Anyone who can help with slates or access to slates is requested to get in touch with Steve Donovan, Tel. 01-889-7911 or the S. & T. Dept. at Tenterden.

Crossing keepers are urgently required for duty at the Cranbrook Road crossing during the 1975 season. No special knowledge of the rules is needed,

as training will be given. Those interested are asked to get in touch with Steve Donovan. The frequency of duty is expected to be about once every 6 - 10 weeks.

Frank Davies reports that he is hoping to reorganise Rolvenden's central equipment rack so that the telephone system will become consistent with that in use between Tenterden and Northiam.

Catering

Several functions have been very successfully held to date and more will certainly be done in the catering department in the future. A 'Wine & Dine' special train was run during the summer using a Pullman and two open coaches. This was completely filled, 72 people being carried. The catering was provided by an outside firm. During July a wedding reception was held, again using the Pullman and two open coaches and 70 people were carried. Visitors to the railway at weekends will notice the attractive new green uniforms that the ladies now wear.

General Acknowledgements

We are grateful to John Chamberlain, works manager of Chipman Chemical Co., and Alex McFarlane for donating a gangers trolley from the company to the Permanent Way Dept. of the K. & E.S.R. This item will prove to be most useful.

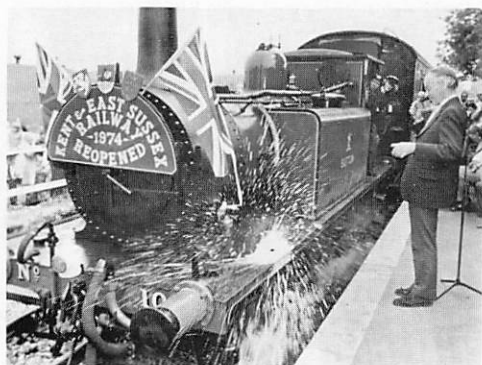
Recently, Charlie Kentsley moved from his cottage at the Station to a house in Rolvenden village. We are grateful to Charlie for his efforts over many years in making the yard and equipment secure and also for acting as an ambassador during the week when casual visitors called. We shall certainly miss him and hope that he and Mrs. Kentsley will be happy in their new home.

Old Copies of 'Model Engineer' are Valuable

If anyone has back numbers of Model Engineer that they are prepared to donate or sell for a small sum, they can contribute significantly to the funds of the Kent & East Sussex Railway. All proceeds are donated to the Railway and over the last twelve months I have raised nearly £500 from this source. Please contact Mr D.M. Randall, Birchley House, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent. Telephone Biddenden 291413

A Memorable Occasion

Some Impressions of the Official Re-opening Ceremony



*The Rt Hon. William Deedes MC.DL.MP.
Officiates at the opening ceremony
[Photo courtesy Kent Messenger]*

For anyone who has been associated with the struggle to save the Kent & East Sussex Railway Saturday 1st June, 1974, was a memorable occasion. It did not matter that public services had restarted last winter; this day was the real climax to a long and unique battle, a battle whose full and intriguing story has yet to be told. There, against all the odds, was proof positive of victory — an elegant white card conveying the joyous nature of the occasion in formal phrases:-

"The Directors of the Tenterden Railway Company Ltd. cordially invite to the official re-opening of the Kent & East Sussex Railway by the Rt. Hon. William Deedes, M.C., D.L., M.P."

What a privilege to be asked! When my wife and I walked down Station Road that day, we found the Station in gay and festive mood. There was the Cranbrook Town band, bunting, crowds in shirt sleeves and summer dresses, cars, officials protecting the platform, the bustling yard and, of course, the guests. Inside the Booking Office railway books and souvenirs were on sale and outside in the sun a special table had been set up for the elegant first day postal covers to be carried on the train. On the platform, seated, in rows, were the invited guests, including Robin Doust (Founder of the Preservation Scheme), Reuben Collison resplendent in Mayoral robes and chain, David Barham High Sheriff of Kent and owner of the Norwegian Mogul, Peter Brown the Appeal organiser, Sir Peter Allen the Chairman of the Transport Trust, Lord Dundonald and, perhaps most appropriate of all,

Bill Deedes, who helped the railway in its hour of need and without whose efforts it would surely not have survived.

After being introduced by Company Chairman, Stephen Bennett, Mr. Deedes delivered an eloquent and kindly speech praising the small band of determined men who would not take no for an answer, who had defied government, objectors and all manner of obstacles to keep alive the hopes of preserving at least part of the Kent & East Sussex Railway. Commending their success as an example of true democracy at work, Bill Deedes then moved to the platform edge, and "Sutton" steamed quietly up the platform to allow him to perform the opening ceremony in the accustomed way. Mr. Deedes' enthusiastic audience joined him on the special train and travelled on the now familiar first mile and a half, accomplished in grand style with "Sutton" at the front of the train and "Bodiam" at the rear. During the journey the passengers were given a progress report by Company Directors Derek Dunlavey and Simon Green on the plans for the restoration of the remainder of the line.

After the train ride, everyone was taken to the newly restored elegance of the Town Hall in a London double-decker bus. Negotiating the narrow station yard gate through a large crowd of spectators was not the least exciting event of the day, but this was accomplished without mishap. At the Town Hall, guests were given wine and an excellent buffet luncheon and the Chairman and directors moved among the party making everybody most welcome.

Throughout the rest of the day special trains carried the public on this official opening day — a day which formally ended one era for the preservation movement of the Kent and East Sussex, and opened another. The Railway is alive again, and we wish it a long and successful future.

Roger Crawford

Tenterden's Largest Engine

The Story of the Southern Mogul Preservation Society

The largest engine ever to be seen at Tenterden now rests in the siding behind the station platform. This is S.R. U Class 2-6-0 No. 1618 (B.R. No. 31618) and she is owned and has been lovingly preserved by the members of the Southern Mogul Preservation Society.

The Society was formed early in 1966 by some of the active Kent & East Sussex members, to preserve either an N or U class Mogul. At this time it was mainly the small tank locomotives or large express types that were attracting the attention of preservationists and it was felt that a Mogul, being a medium sized engine, would fill a gap in the types that were being preserved. Although the last of these locomotives was withdrawn by B.R. before the Society had time to raise sufficient funds to make a purchase, five were located in the scrapyard of Woodham Brothers at Barry, Glamorgan. Following an inspection, 1618 was found to be in the best mechanical condition and virtually complete, having been used to tow other locomotives to South Wales. A deposit was paid and in January 1969 she was moved by rail to a private siding near Maidstone. 1618 was only the second engine to leave Barry, the Midland 4F 0-6-0 on the Keighley & Worth Valley being the first.

For two years, regular working parties spent many hours cleaning and removing rust from the tender and from all the awkward places under the engine. The boiler cladding was removed and the thickness of the plates was tested by ultra-sonic means; a hydraulic pressure test was done at the same time. After de-rusting and priming, the boiler was expertly re-lagged and replacements for the cab fittings, removed by the scrap dealer, were obtained and fitted.

In 1972 it was necessary to find a new home for 1618 and the committee of the Society looked into several possible sites. As virtually all of the working members of the Society also worked for the K. & E.S.R. and had done so for a considerable time, it seemed natural that the railway should be considered as a permanent home for the locomotive. The Committee knew that 1618 would be too heavy for regular use on the K. & E.S.R. due to the axle loadings on the line, but it was felt that she would attract a great deal of attention from the general public at Tenterden and at the same time could be well looked after.

The tender was moved very easily by a conventional low loader in June 1972 but transfer of the engine was a far more complex matter as the weight and length meant hiring a special vehicle. The arrangements were finalised at short notice and the multi-wheeled transporter, with crew, arrived the evening of a Thursday in late October in readiness for loading the following day. Early on the Saturday numerous members and friends turned up to see 1618 on her way and accompanied by a police escort Tenterden was finally reached by the middle of the afternoon. The heavy vehicle caused a great deal of interest in the town and traffic stopped while the police cleared a path to allow progress to continue down Station Road. Unloading commenced quickly but it was not until Sunday morning that the job was finished and the juggernaut could make its way back to Yorkshire.

In the eighteen months since 1618 arrived at Tenterden, work has continued on her, not the least of which has been the removal, testing and replacement of the superheater elements and the replacement of the main steam pipes. She was



31618 at Southampton Central in the early 1960's [Photo courtesy S.M.P.S.]

successfully steamed for the first time on 15th May this year.

1618 is the sole survivor of a total of 50 U Class locomotives. She was built at Brighton in 1928 and was originally laid out as a K class 2-6-4 tank. However the Sevenoaks accident changed this plan, but had she been built as a K her name would have been River Hamble.

Dimensions of the U Class

Cylinders (2)	19" x 26"
Coupled wheels	6' 0"
Leading wheels	3' 1"
Boiler diameter	4' 7½" and 5' 3"
Boiler length	12' 6"
Firebox length	8' 0"
Grate area	25 sq. ft.
Working pressure	200 lb.
Heating surfaces: tubes—small	1034.0 sq. ft.
large	356.6 sq. ft.
firebox	135.0 sq. ft.
superheater	203.0 sq. ft.
	1728.6 sq. ft.

Weight in working order

On leading wheels	8 tons 16 cwt
On leading coupled wheels	18 tons 0 cwt
On driving coupled wheels	18 tons 5 cwt
On trailing coupled wheels	17 tons 5 cwt
Total engine	62 tons 6 cwt
Tender	40 tons 10 cwt
	102 tons 16 cwt

Coal capacity	5 tons
Water capacity	3,500 gallons

Rodney Packham

Details of the activities of the S.M.P.S. can be obtained from the Secretary, Rodney Packham, at 132 Church Rd, Swanscombe, Kent DA10 0HP.

The Appeal

Last October, the Tenterden Railway Company launched an Appeal for £50,000 to finance the restoration of the remaining 8 miles of track, which still remain derelict, over a period of 7 years. The services of a professional fund raiser were retained and an intensive campaign was mounted with a view to raising money both from members and non-members alike. The method adopted was for members of the administrative body — the campaign committee — to approach individually people within certain defined geographical areas, discuss the project with the aid of an illustrated brochure and endeavour to obtain covenanted gifts in favour of the Company. As a registered charity, the Tenterden Railway Company can recover income tax already paid by the donor, and so increase the capital value of the gift by over 40%. Those members of the Company who could not be approached personally were sent a copy of the brochure, a covenant form and explanatory letter.

One year after launching date, the campaign is unfortunately nowhere near achieving its target figure of £50,000, an amount in itself exceedingly modest in view of current inflation rates, and now almost certainly inadequate to complete full restoration.

The present position is as follows:-

Members	£	No. of donors
Covenanted gifts	8,700	39
Cash gifts	235	38
	8,935	77
Non-members		
Covenanted gifts	1,961	23
Cash gifts	870	59
	11,766	159

Sadly, only 6% of our 1,200 members felt it worth while making a contribution at all, and plans for the re-opening of most of the Railway will have to be postponed for the time being. The costs of the Campaign amounted to approximately £3,000 and cash receipts to date amount to £2,600, leaving an immediate shortfall of £400.

Needless to say further gifts will be appreciated, but the Board will be happy to accept loans of £50 and over from members. Full details can be obtained from the Treasurer, but as a general rule it is desirable that loans should be for a minimum period of 3 years. It should be emphasised that the money is required for capital works to improve facilities and extent the present limit of operation, and not for current revenue expenditure. The Railway is and must continue to operate profitably on the present short section of line.

Philip Shaw

Personalities of the Kent and East Sussex

2: Jack Hoad

Jack Hoad is a former employee of the old Kent & East Sussex Light Railway Company and now drives on the line at weekends as a hobby. He is interviewed for this series by Philip Shaw.

P.S. When did you join the K.& E.S.R., Jack?

J.H. I joined the Railway in 1928 when I was 14 and worked under fitter Porteus and his assistant Charlie Turner in the Shops at Rolvenden.

P.S. What was it like at Rolvenden in those days?

J.H. We all had to be fairly versatile then; I did some part time firing and one regular daily job was to fill up the rail motors with petrol first thing in the morning.

P.S. Tell me something about the rail motors.

J.H. The two Ford sets were here when I arrived, but I remember the Shefflex coming — it was brought in by road. The daily routine was for the set to be stabled at Rolvenden overnight, fill up first thing, and then run light to Tenterden to take the first passenger working to Robertsbridge. We sometimes fixed a wagon to the back for fish and parcels traffic from Robertsbridge. I used to drive occasionally, unofficially of course.

P.S. How reliable were they.

J.H. They weren't. We always kept a good stock of clutches and big ends, and many a time we had to have a taxi to take passengers on after a breakdown. I remember one occasion up at High Halden, Nelson Wood was driving and he suddenly saw a wheel running away in front of him and out into the fields. The axle had broken. The driver was on his own, as we didn't have guards and he uncoupled and came straight back with the undamaged half.

P.S. Was "Hecate" ever used in those days?

J.H. Once a year. On Biddenden Fair day we used her for cattle traffic between Biddenden and Headcorn. I can remember loading 146 trucks in a single day there once.

P.S. Did you ever meet the Colonel?

J.H. Yes, several times. When he was visiting the line we used to collect him at Robertsbridge and he would ride through to Headcorn, stopping en route. He gave me 2/6d. the first time we met — the Colonel was a great man for tips.

P.S. Did the Staff change around from one "Colonel Stephens" railway to another?

J.H. The fitters changed a bit — I remember one going to the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire and we borrowed a welder from the East Kent, from time to time.

P.S. I believe that you left the Railway for a time before the war?

J.H. Yes — after 6½ years I joined the Air Force as a fitter — servicing Ospreys', Gladiators', Walrus's, and the like. I came back in 1945 and passed out as a driver in 1951.

P.S. Tell me about the time when you were filming at Lydd.

J.H. In 1946 Jimmy Webb and myself spent 4 weeks at Lydd filming, "The Loves of Joanna Godden" with number 3. The Southern Railway provided the rolling stock. We stayed at the local inn, all expenses paid, and I remember we also got 30/- a day as extras.

P.S. I believe that you were firing on the train that was derailed near to the Rother Bridge in 1949.

J.H. Yes. There was a fifteen miles per hour speed restriction on that section whilst it was under repair, but the driver¹ was in a hurry and we went off the rails and into a ditch. The engine wasn't damaged much and the only casualty was guard Cyril Packham who was badly shaken up. Mr Austen laid the driver off for three days after that, and they had to get the Brighton and Bricklayers Arms cranes to lift the train.

P.S. What happened to you after the line closed?

J.H. I was transferred to Tonbridge as a driver and that's where I am now, except, of course, once a fortnight when I drive down here again.



[Photo Donald Wilson]

Enthusiasts Visit K&ESR Forty Years Ago

Back in the 'thirties' enthusiasts were far fewer than today, and organised visits were almost unknown. However, one body which made such visits was the Oxford University Railway Society, and the members decided that on June 27 1936 they would visit the Kent & East Sussex Railway. The party wanted to travel in the 'Royal Saloon' (No. 10) and this was agreeable to the management provided they bought 16 first class tickets. There were not enough Oxford men wealthy enough to do this so some members of the London Railway Club were roped in and the visit was on.

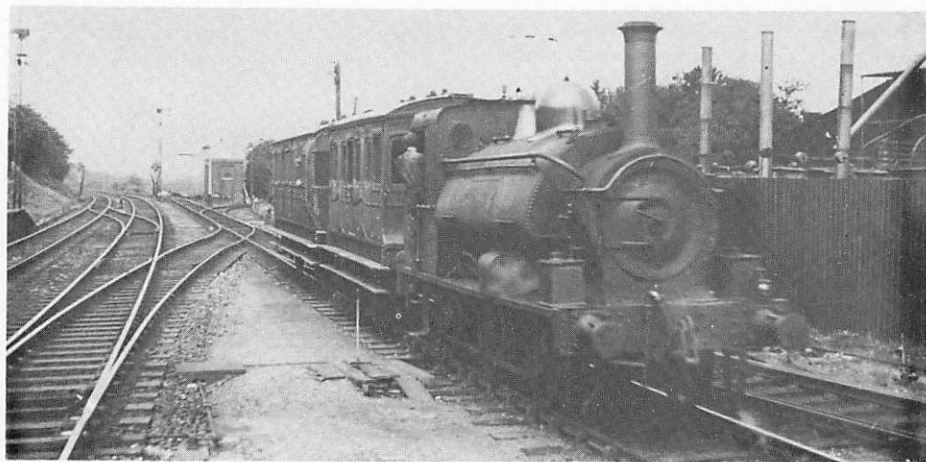
Having a car, I was able to 'observe' the visit as well as travelling on it, and it is revealing about the way the line was run at the time that my diary records that on that day the Shefflex railcar unit worked the early Rolvenden-Headcorn run, Terrier No. 3 worked the after-lunch Headcorn run and back all the way to Robertsbridge, while No. 8, the Manning Wardle, worked the after-lunch Tenterden-Robertsbridge trip and back through to Headcorn. Not only that but No. 4, the Beyer Peacock, was in steam at Rolvenden moving stock around.

Anyway, No. 8 duly arrived at Robertsbridge with the 'Royal Saloon' attached to the front of the ex-LSW 4-wheel brake coach which was the 'public' part of the train, and at 3.45 pm (this was a Saturday) we moved off. The saloon bumped a bit; the rails were still flat-bottom at that time and all a bit 'hogged'; but the comfort of the saloon itself made light of it, with deep single seats well padded. The coach comprised the main saloon, with a smoking compartment at the Headcorn end con-

taining three seats and entered through a door with fine inlay panels; there was only one door to enter the coach, in the middle; at each end three windows overlooked the track.

As we ran into Rolvenden we could see that two high-roofed ex-LSW coaches had recently arrived; the sidings on the north side were as usual crammed with derelict locomotives and carriages. At Tenterden Town the saloon was detached and No.8 prepared to work forward with the other coach to Headcorn. Meanwhile No. 3 crept in from Headcorn with a low-roofed ex-LSW brake composite. After some complicated shunting No. 3 ended up in the main platform with the saloon leading and the composite behind it. The party, having gulped a quick tea, went aboard again and we rolled off at 5.13 pm. This time it was to be a 'mixed' run and wagons were picked up at every station with a siding. We left Northiam with eleven wagons behind the train, and after crossing the road by the flour mills, to the accompaniment of long whistles as at all road crossings, we found the home signal unexpectedly against us. The driver eased the train to a stop with the wagons hanging with tight couplings on the gradient, so that when the signal came off and we started up there was no snatching and banging of buffers as there had been at some stations. The load must have been at least 50 tons and it was good work to start on a gradient of 1 in 70 without excessive slipping. So the train ran into the bay, the Society went over the footbridge to join the London train, and a memorable if short journey was over.

R W Kidner



The train at Robertsbridge with No 8; the Royal Saloon is nearest the engine

"The Move" "Ever seen a railway train
Wheel deep in the wheat . . . ?"

These opening lines of that delightfully nostalgic poem about our line seemed almost true to life back in the early summer — May 18th to be exact — when "The Move" as it had become known, from Northiam took place. A remarkable cavalcade which could certainly be described as a railway train made its slow way through the long grass that obliterates most of the rails on the 3 mile stretch to Wittersham.

It was in the summer of 1970 that we were successful in obtaining from the Longmoor Military Railway two S.E.C.R. "Birdcage" coaches for use on the Kent & East Sussex. These coaches were delivered to Robertsbridge by rail, and then taken to Northiam on the very last train ever to run from Robertsbridge prior to track dismantling of the section to Junction Road, in February 1972. The need to be able to accommodate more passengers in each train — their seating capacity is 70 compared with a BSO's 36 — was the prime reason for getting these splendid coaches back in to use again, and before this could be done they had to be moved to Rolvenden, across three weak bridges. A civil engineer was called in for inspection and following some remedial work, the bridges were passed fit to carry the proposed train, provided certain conditions were adhered to.

It was soon after 10.15 a.m. that "Arthur", the engine selected for the move, eased out of the yard and off down the line towards "the barrier" which is the present limit of passenger operations. As a 10 mph speed limit is in force beyond the barrier, it was nearly 11.30 am before "Arthur" chugged into the station, the first steam engine to visit Northiam for 8 years. Her passage through the "jungle" was evident by the varied assortment of wild flowers, grass and undergrowth on the motion and various other parts of the locomotive. She looked a strange sight, with a steel cable coiled around her smokebox door and a pump and hose perched on top of her boiler. In need of refreshment after the journey, "Arthur" moved to the end of the loop where the hose was uncoiled and connected to the main water supply in the cottages adjacent to the line. The move was to include a Maunsell coach and an ex-LMR brake van in addition to the two birdcages and the shunting was quite a complicated manoeuvre. At about 2.30 pm the procession moved on its way, crossed the A28 and plunged into the undergrowth. A gap in the vegetation indicated that we were approaching the 66ft span of the Rother Bridge and the train slowed to a crawl as we gingerly crossed the bridge. Another half a mile on, we came to the Hexden

Channel bridge, halting just short of it for an inspection. Our engineer had recommended that in order to avoid placing too great a stress on the bridge abutments, we should tow each coach over individually — hence the steel rope carried lassoo-style by "Arthur".

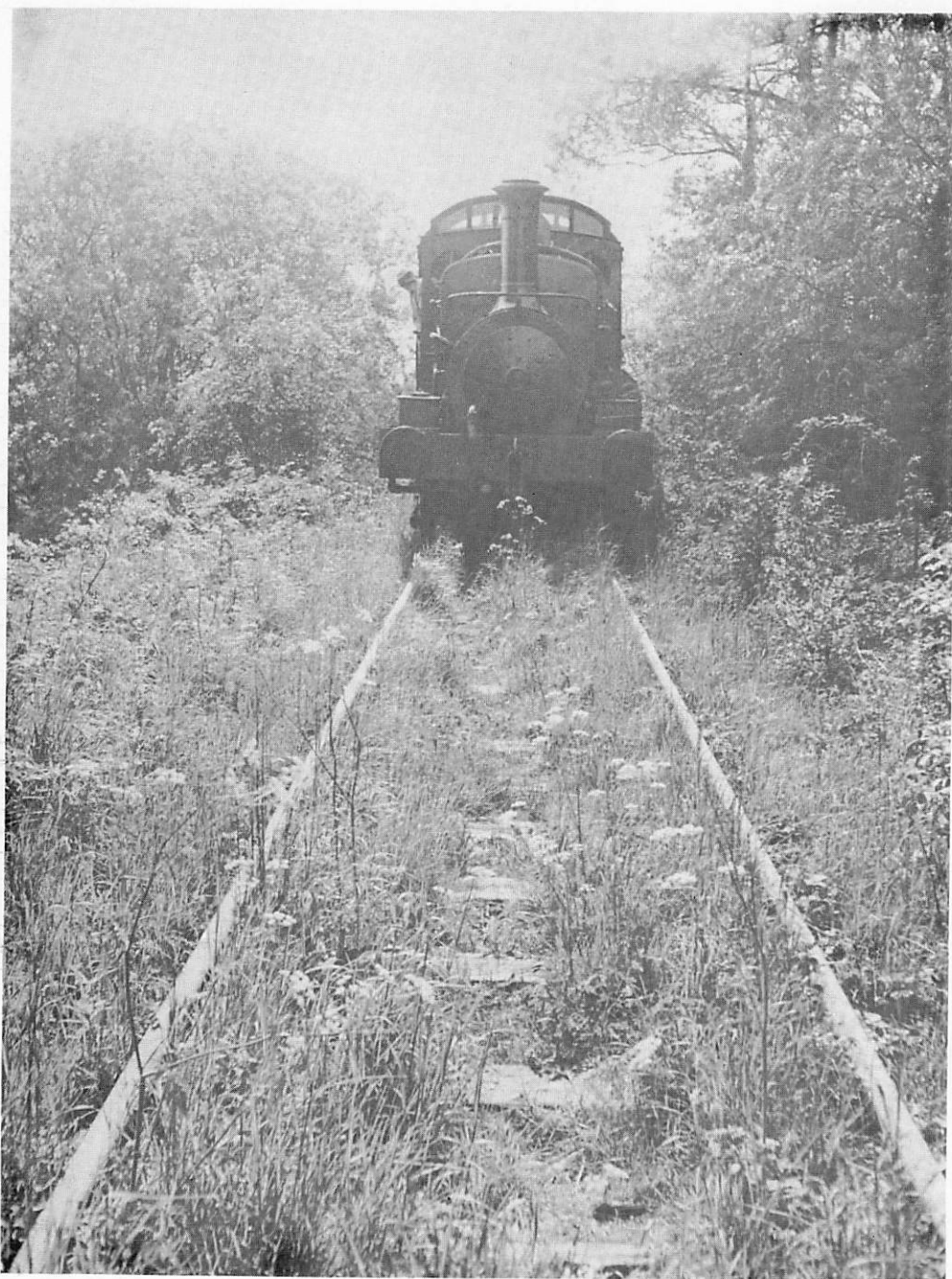
It was all hands on the rope as "Arthur" moved across the bridge in readiness for the first pull. Shouts like "Take the strain" and "Slowly does it" were followed by "Handbrake on, someone" until the first coach was safely over the bridge. The operation was repeated three times before the train was formed up again ready for the ascent of Wittersham bank. The thick hedges along the bank are quite a sanctuary for wild life and we disturbed the numerous small birds which flitted from bush to bush in front of us. As the gradient steepened, the train got slower and slower . . . until at last, she lost her grip and stopped. The slope had proved too great for our 1903 veteran with her 120 ton load. Backwards we went, a few hundred yards down the track, while the crew sanded the rails in front of us. Then "Arthur" tried again and once again failure. At the third attempt we moved slowly to the summit and coasted down the bank into Wittersham Road station pausing first at the ungated level crossing on the road to Wittersham village.

The "Shell" tanker stabled here for the weed killing gang to use as water storage came in very useful and the pump and hose were again put to good use to replenish "Arthur's" water tanks.

Soon we were off again, minus the Maunsell coach (left in the siding) along a track, which, thanks to the stalwart efforts of many clearance gangs, was now virtually devoid of vegetation. The final pause came at Newmill Channel bridge, and the same procedure of one vehicle at a time was adopted as before. At about 6.30 pm we were able to report to the signalman at Tenterden that the mission was complete. He arranged for the "staff" to be brought out to the barrier quickly and so, as we rounded the final curve, we saw "Bodiam" which had earlier been handling the schedule passenger service, whistling and coming head-on for us on the single track. However the "barrier" separated us and twenty yards short of it we halted. The padlock was unfastened, the barrier swung open and "Bodiam" back on to "Arthur" for a double headed run into Rolvenden in fine style.

Thus ended an unforgettable and nostalgic journey which particularly reminded the writer of the wanderings of Manning Wardles on the overgrown tracks of the Wissington Light Railway in the Fen country of East Anglia and other rural byways — now gone forever.

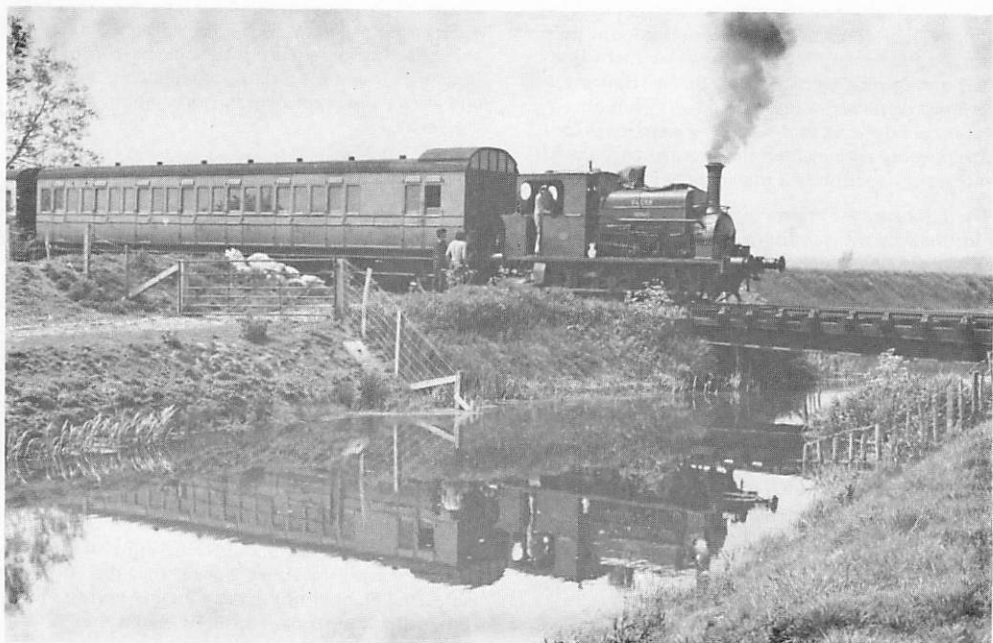
'Arthur'



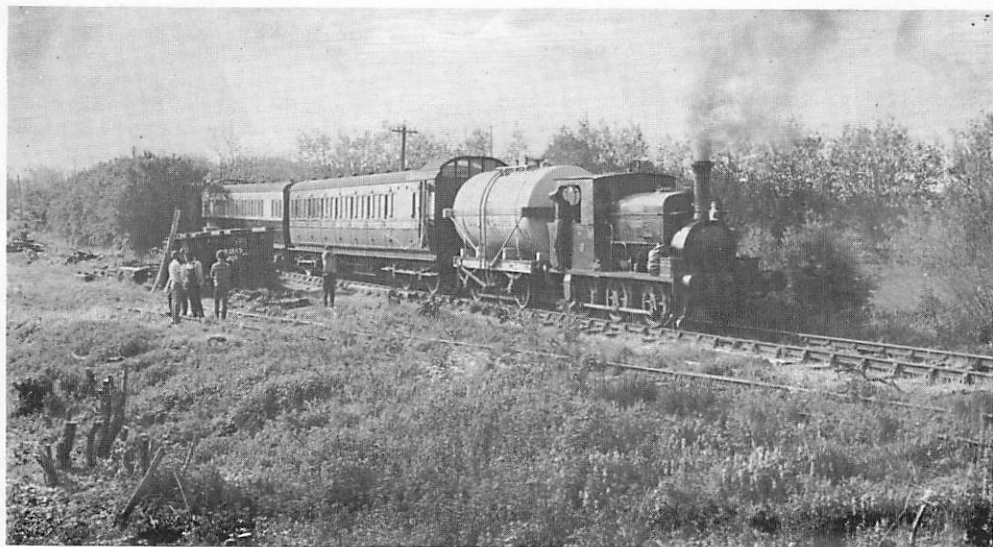
Leaving Hexden Channel for Wittersham

Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST 'Arthur' provided the motive power for stock movements from Northiam to Rolvenden on 18th May 1974

and also the first opportunity to photograph a steam locomotive on most of this section of line for eight years.



At Hexden Channel



At Wittersham Road

[Photos Donald Wilson]

Colonel Stephens' Royal Carriages

Amongst the varied selection of rolling stock acquired by Colonel Stephens for his lines were two carriages originally built by the London and South Western Railway for the use of Queen Victoria. These carriages were purchased for the Colonel's personal use as inspection saloons on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway and on the Kent and East Sussex Railway. As both carriages were provided with full observation windows at each end they were ideal for this purpose and enabled the Colonel to make his tours of inspection in a high degree of comfort.

The full history of these carriages is not known but the account that follows gives as full an account as is possible at the present time.

The elder of the two carriages was built in 1844 to the designs of Joseph Beattie. Externally this four-wheeled carriage resembled a luxurious road carriage adapted for railway use and was similar in the sweeping curves of its ends to Queen Adelaide's carriage from the London and Birmingham Railway now preserved at York. The carriage was painted dark maroon and embellished with the royal arms. Internally it was divided into two compartments connected by an internal door. One compartment took up to two-thirds of the carriage and was for the Queen and Prince Consort's use while the smaller anteroom was for the royal children and attendants. The compartments were lavishly furnished with sofas and armchairs and decorated and curtained with crimson and white silk damask. The floor was carpeted with Axminster concealing a thick rubber underlay to reduce vibration.

This carriage was promptly pressed into service for the state visit of Louis Philippe to Britain in October 1844. Louis was met by Albert in the carriage at Gosport and conveyed to Farnborough and thence by road to Windsor. The Queen accompanied Louis in the carriage on his homeward journey and a picture of Louis handing Victoria down from her compartment at Gosport duly appeared in the 'Illustrated London News'.

In 1852 this carriage was rebuilt as a six-wheeler and a higher roof fitted but in 1891 the centre pair of wheels were removed and the internal partition separating the two compartments was removed. Since a clerestoried bogie saloon carriage had been provided by the L.S.W.R. for royal use in 1887 it is likely that No. 7, as the L.S.W.R. now numbered the carriage, was no longer needed for royal service.

As early as 1848 the accommodation provided by the first carriage had proved insufficient and an ordinary carriage had been converted to provide extra space for the growing Royal family as a temp-

orary expedient while the L.S.W.R. designed and built a new royal carriage. Before entering service this second vehicle was exhibited at the Great Exhibition at Hyde Park in 1851. Like its predecessor it was unequally divided into two compartments and carried on four wheels. Details of its exact decoration are not available apart from the facts that it was sumptuously panelled in walnut and amply provided with mirrors, tables, armchairs and sofas.

Less is known about the second carriage's service with the L.S.W.R. and it is not until the late 19th Century that the story of both carriages comes to light again. Unfortunately, the hitherto accepted version of this period in their careers is open to considerable doubt. According to an article in the 'Locomotive Magazine' in 1925 based on information supplied by Colonel Stephens, both carriages were acquired by the Plymouth Devonport & South West Junction Railway in 1890 for use between Bere Alston and Callington. The younger of the two carriages was purchased from here for use on the Kent and East Sussex and the elder at a later date for use on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire. Later versions of the story add the information that the K.&E.S.R. carriage was bought from the P.D.S.W.J.R. in 1905. The difficulty with the above story is that the P.D.S.W.J.R. does not appear to have owned any rolling stock of its own until 1908 and the carriages could certainly not have travelled between Bere Alston and Callington until that date. The P.D.S.W.J.R. was opened in 1890 from Lydford on the L.S.W.R. to Plymouth and enabled L.S.W.R. trains to reach Plymouth without having to rely on the uncertain co-operation of the Great Western Railway. Although the P.D.S.W.J.R. remained an independent company it owned no stock of its own and its trains were operated exclusively by the

L.S.W.R. with L.S.W.R. stock. This continued until 1891 when the P.D.S.W.J.R. took over the narrow gauge (3'6") East Cornwall Minerals Railway from Callington to Calstock. In 1905 Colonel Stephens was employed to convert this line to standard gauge, provide it with carriages and locomotives and extend it across the River Tamar to link with the P.D.S.W.J.R. mainline at Bere Alston. This work was not completed until 1908 and it was not until then that the P.D.S.W.J.R. began to operate its own standard gauge stock. It is interesting to conjecture how the Colonel could have bought two carriages from a line which did not own any and would certainly have been unable to operate them over a line 1'2½" too narrow and crossing an imaginary viaduct. As yet nothing has appeared in the records of the P.D.S.W.J.R. or the K.&E.S.R. that

throws light on this curious chapter in the carriages' story nor have the somewhat fragmentary records of the L.S.W.R. given any satisfaction.

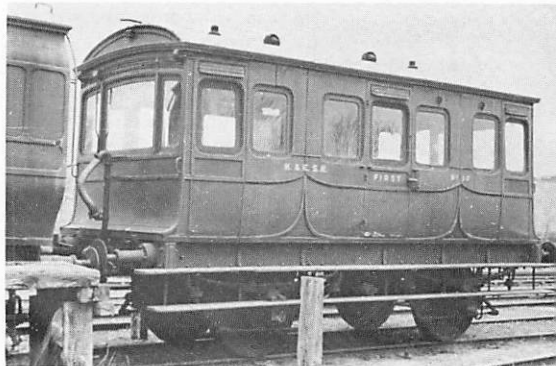
Whatever the means by which the Colonel obtained the two carriages and whatever the part played by the P.D.S.W.J.R. it is reasonably certain that by 1914 the 1844 carriage had arrived on the S.&M.R. as Number 1A and the 1851 carriage had reached Rolvenden as Number 10. 1A was painted blue with red lining and lettering but seems to have undergone no other major alterations from its condition as rebuilt by the L.S.W.R. in 1891. No. 10 appeared in a livery of dark brown with lining and lettering in yellow shaded with scarlet whilst its sofas and armchairs were reupholstered in grey. The mirrors and walnut panelling remained intact but a minor alteration took place in that the smaller compartment bore transfers permitting smoking. Both carriages were maintained in excellent condition as it was never known when the Colonel might suddenly appear and require their use.

After Stephens death in 1931 No. 1A seems to have been laid aside as inspection duties were then being carried out with a converted railcar trailer. On the K.&E.S.R. No. 10 began to see use in general passenger service particularly in the winter when its gas lighting gave it an advantage over other stock whose lighting equipment had long worn out. In 1936 the Southern Railway purchased No. 10, probably in part exchange for the bogie carriages nos 4 and 5 supplied to the K.&E.S.R. in that year. In 1937 a brief mention was made in the 'Railway Magazine' that No. 10 had arrived at Ashford, but there was no further news of its whereabouts for over 25 years. In the early 1960's the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society (as it was then known) was informed that the body of No. 10 was in use as a summerhouse at Plaistow in Sussex and efforts were immediately made to trace it. Sadly, these efforts were unrewarded. All that remained was the mere base of the body — the vehicle itself having been broken up only a few months previously.

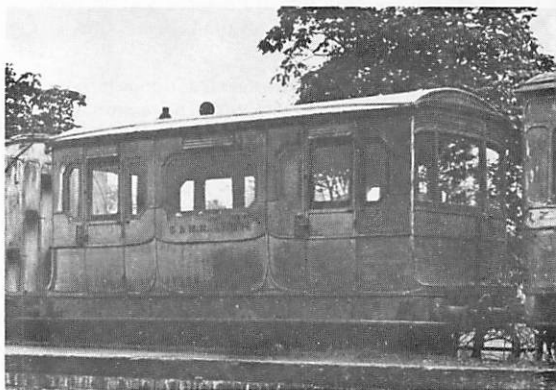
No. 1A remained out of use in the bay platform at Kinnerly for some years but was destined for no less an ignominious end. In 1941 the Army took over the S.&M.R. to service a chain of supply depots along its length and No. 1A was promptly annexed and refurbished for the use of officers and visiting dignitaries. It must have been a strange experience to be met at Shrewsbury Abbey station in an 1844 royal carriage coupled to a small four-wheeled diesel locomotive! When the War ended No. 1A was relegated to a humbler role in the

breakdown train and its condition began to deteriorate seriously. In 1953 1A was transferred to the Longmoor Military Railway where consideration was given to preservation. Its century of service had, however, taken too great a toll and in 1954 this magnificent relic was broken up as beyond repair. With the benefit of hindsight it is obvious that restoration would still have been possible but railway preservation was still very much in its infancy then.

Stephen Garrett



*K & ESR Royal Saloon at Rolvenden in 1935
[Photo courtesy Photomatic Ltd]*



*S & MR Royal Saloon at Kinnerley in 1938
[Photo courtesy L & GRP]*

The Robertsbridge & Pevensey Light Railway

The Kent and East Sussex Railway, opened in stages between 1900 and 1905, was to be just part of a much larger system of light railways in the area. Extensions of the K. & E.S.R. were planned to Maidstone from Headcorn, to Cranbrook and Appledore from Tenterden and to Rye from Northiam; as we know, none of these extensions was built.

A further line was planned to connect Robertsbridge and Pevensey. This was to be built by a company, independent of the K. & E.S.R., entitled Robertsbridge and Pevensey Light Railway Company; this company was to be incorporated under a Light Railway Order to construct the line, issued in June 1900.

The line, single track and 15 miles long (24 km), would have followed a difficult route through the Sussex Weald before dropping to the Pevensey Levels. It was planned to commence on the west side of Robertsbridge Station, opposite the K. & E.S.R. terminus, and to follow the Hastings branch of the S.E.R. south for about 1 mile before striking S.W. along the Darwell Valley (now a reservoir). Approaching Brightling it would have turned south through Ashburnham Furnace and Forge, the site of the last Wealden Iron working which closed in 1828 and through Ashburnham Park, but avoiding the Place itself to westward. After passing east of Boreham Street it would have run in an almost southerly course past Watling to Pevensey, terminating on the south side of Pevensey Station (now Pevensey and Westham) on the L.B. & S.C.R.'s East Coast line.

A second short line, just over 3 furlongs long (610 m) was planned to form a connection into the goods siding to the north of Pevensey Station; this would have run very close to the Roman walls of Pevensey Castle.

The line would have been remarkable for the severity of gradients in its northern half where it was planned to follow the land profile very closely. The final 5 miles south from Boreham Street would have been virtually level running across the marshes.

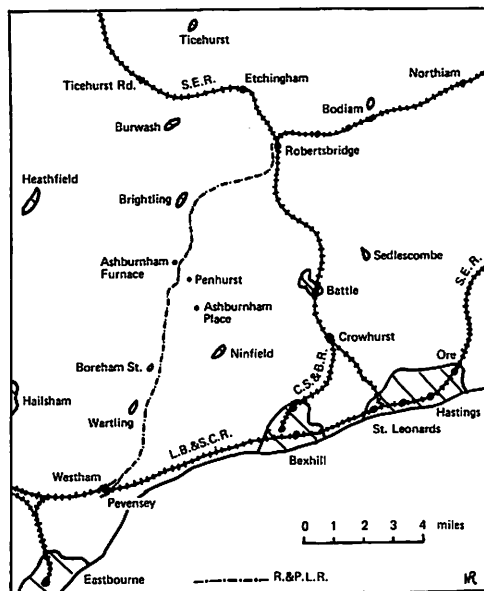
The only record of intermediate stations is of one to be built near Brightling; undoubtedly others would have been provided, most likely at Ashburnham, Boreham Street and Watling.

The line was expected to cost some £87,000 to construct; of this 290,000 cubic yards of cuttings were to cost £19,340, permanent way and fencing £29,260, sidings and cost of junctions £4,000, and stations £5,000. The 85 acres of land required were valued at just £10,000.

The Book of Reference, dated May 1899, shows that the promoters owned over 10 miles of the adjacent lands; prominent amongst them were the Earl of Ashburnham and Percy Tew of Brightling Park. It is interesting to note that a further promoter, Pelham Rawston Papillon of Crowhurst Park, Battle, was also a director of the rival Crowhurst, Sidley and Bexhill Railway, then in the course of construction.

With the promoters owning most of the route there were few objections to the proposed line. At the Board of Trade Enquiry in April 1900 only Mr. John Braye and Miss Mary Lofft, both of Brightling, objected on the grounds that the line could serve no useful purpose, there being less than 2,000 inhabitants within 2 miles either side of the route. No time would be saved in travelling from Robertsbridge to Pevensey; already it was possible to do the journey, by changing at West St. Leonards, in 38 minutes.

Sensible as the objections were, they were not proven and the Order was duly signed. This named five of the promoters as the first directors of the company which was authorised to raise £100,000 capital in £10 shares and a loan of £33,333. Three years were allowed in which to purchase land and five years for completion. The order also specified a maximum speed of 25 m.p.h. and an axle loading not exceeding 14 tons. The engineer was to have been A. T. Barry.



Robertsbridge & Pevensey Light Railway 1899

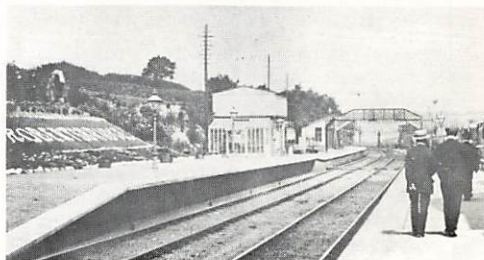
In 1903 the promoters applied for an extension of three years to purchase and complete — this was duly authorised by the Board of Trade. In 1906 they returned again for a further extension of time, stating that owing to the general financial depression it was impossible to make arrangements with contractors and other railway companies. However by then the K. & E.S.R. had completed their Headcorn Extension and were willing and able to assist the promoters by providing rolling stock and entering into working arrangements. In addition, several landowners had agreed to take the value of their land required in shares of the company. Despite objections, a further extension of two years was granted, and the company authorised to reduce its capital to £80,000.

This is the last record one can readily find of the Robertsbridge and Pevensey Light Railway. It faded into obscurity, possibly an early victim of the internal combustion engine. If it had been built it would have passed through a delightful and unspoilt corner of East Sussex but would

have been hopelessly uneconomic. One can imagine K.E.S.R. trains venturing far afield over the line perhaps even to Eastbourne!

Neil Rose

Sources: *E. Sussex Record Office, Lewes:- plans and sections. Public Record Office, London: Records of the Board of Trade, Railway Inspectorate and L.R. Commissioners.*



Robertsbridge in the early 1900's
[Photo courtesy Stephen Garrett]

From our Ticket Collection

One of the perks of being a director of a railway company used to be a free pass allowing unlimited travel over one's own railway. Directors, being a clannish lot, soon got together and agreed to issue passes for each other's lines, since this greatly widened the scope of travel opportunities; the Kent & East Sussex Railway was no exception, despite its small size.

The subject of our ticket article in this issue is First Class Free Pass No. 91 of 1945, which was apparently never issued. It is in the form of a small folder, printed inside as shown in the illustration, bound in dark red rexine, and bearing the Company's title and crest and the words FIRST CLASS 1945 in gilt lettering. Earlier version were probably in leather, but the postwar economy drive clearly resulted in economies even at director level!

These passes were issued from the Company's office at Tonbridge, and similar ones existed for other Colonel Stephens' lines, that for the East Kent Railway being identical to the Kent & East Sussex one except for the company name and the fact that green rexine was used in place of red.

Even after the 1923 grouping of the main line railways, it is surprising how many different private companies continued to exist, and the writer has seen a collection of passes held by Colonel Stephens between the wars which included

not only specimens from his own railways, but also from the Listowel and Ballybunion, Leek and Manifold, Derwent Valley and perhaps a dozen other lines all over the British Isles, many of them beautifully printed and bound in leather folders. It must have been a valuable privilege in the days when you really could get almost anywhere by train, even if you did need a suitcase to carry all the necessary passes around with you!

Robin Doust

KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY.	
FIRST CLASS FREE PASS No. 91	
Expiring unless previously recalled.....1945	
Pass Mr.....	between
.....	
Signature of Holder	
NOT TRANSFERABLE.	

The holder of this Pass may also be required to give a specimen signature.

This Pass must be produced for examination when called for by the Officers of the Company, and upon the day of expiry must be returned to General Manager's Office, Tonbridge, Kent.

The Holder is subject to the same Rules and Regulations as other passengers.

This Pass is granted upon the understanding that it is to be taken as evidence of an agreement that the Company over whose lines it is available are not to be held liable for any pecuniary or other responsibility to the Holder for loss of life, personal injury or delay, or for loss of or damage to property however caused, that may be sustained by such person while using the Pass.

W. H. AUSTIN,
General Manager.

Issued by

A Railway Now Almost Forgotten

"TENTERDEN? Over the other side and through the barrier . . . No, sir; I couldn't say about the next train. You'll have to ask over there." At that moment, with a shriek and a roar the Folkestone Boat Train thundered through Headcorn station, the giant locomotive belching sparks and smoke from its squat funnel. That 30 miles of track from Tonbridge to Ashford, dead level and straight as a die, was the fastest stretch on the whole system; she must have been doing 70 at least, for those old Southern Railway steamers, once they got going, could travel.

The express having gone through, I crossed the metals as instructed, and on reaching the "up" side, discovered a wicket gate leading to another section of platform. "Kent & East Sussex Railway", I read. "Trains for Tenterden, Wittersham, Northiam and Robertsbridge." There was no one about, except for some chickens in a crate and an elderly goat who, tethered to a lamp-post, was unconcernedly eating the rambler rose that grew along the fence.

Presently a head in a peaked cap protruded itself from the lamp room, and on observing my presence a shirt-sleeved individual emerged and proceeded to unlock the diminutive ticket office. Having purchased a ticket I resumed my vigil, till eventually three rather dilapidated carriages pushed by an ancient tank engine, back in, and with a bump into the buffers, clanked to a halt. The engine stood panting, as though exhausted by its efforts.

"Robertsbridge train. All stations to Robertsbridge," announced the peak-capped individual, and with

the assistance of the guard proceeded to load the livestock and other impedimenta into the van. I entered a musty compartment that smelt of stale cigarette smoke, and sat down to wait.

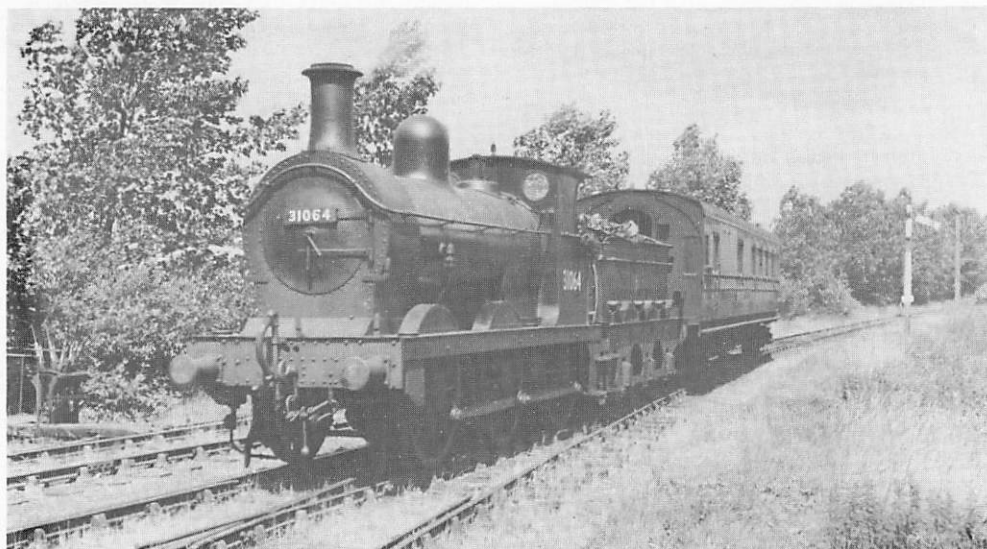
There was a long interval. The pantings of the engine had subsided, and I could hear the voices of the guard and driver, apparently discussing football. A wizened little man in well-worn breeches and leggings, whom I had noticed standing on the platform, walked down the train as though in search of someone. Having finished his conversation with the driver, the guard pulled out his watch. The little man in breeches glanced into my compartment and hesitated.

"You going on, Mr. Knocker?" enquired the guard. "We're just away." The door opened and the little man got in. The whistle blew, and the train started with a jerk. Having jolted over some points we settled down to our leisurely progress through the countryside. *CHUFF-chuff-chuff-chuff* panted the engine. *Clankerty-bump, clankerty-bump* went the wheels.

The little man, who seemed to have been eyeing me rather intently, leant over. "S'cuse me," he said, "You're not the gentleman wot was coming over to look at one of my hosses? My name's Bill Knocker."

"No," I said. "My name's Hopleaf. Have you got many horses?"

"Got a stableful; too many, I reckon. Still . . ." We talked of hunting.



Class O1 approaches Biddenden in the early fifties [Photo courtesy Peter Davis]

The engine gave a prolonged whistle. We clanked over a level crossing, and with much grinding of brakes the train came to a halt at Frittenden Road. The village itself lay two miles away, up on the hill. A signalman climbed from his box and handed to the driver a brass staff on which were engraved the words "Proceed to Biddenden". Without which, according to the Regulations, no further progress could have been made. With this as our talisman we went on our way, making great play on the whistle as we steamed slowly across the Headcorn-Tenterden road at Curtis Corner.

Thus did that single-track little railway meander pleasantly through the Weald and out on to the Rother Levels, from Headcorn to Robertsbridge, an Emmett-like survival of the Victorian age; nor can I believe that its share holders can ever have waxed very fat on their dividends. Its little wayside stations were usually a mile or two distant from the places which they were intended to serve, the original surveyor having been more concerned with contours than the convenience of the travelling public. Tenterden, it is true, had two stations a mile apart. But travellers to High Halden would get no nearer than the Man of Kent; the inhabitants of Rolvenden would be no better off than those of Frittenden, having two miles to go before they reached the railway; Wittersham Road station was at Maytham; while Northiam and Beckley were lumped together.

But all that was in character; for it was a very independent little line; and though it shared its two termini with its big brother, the Southern, one had the feeling that it disclaimed any connection with the "firm next door". Nor did anyone complain of its eccentricities. Doubtless when the line was built the inhabitants of the Weald were proud enough to have a railway of their own, even though it did

not always lie exactly on their doorsteps. Nor did they complain that the numerous level crossings—no less than 15 in that 22 miles of track—were mostly ungated. Were there not large warning boards — "BEWARE, TRAINS CROSS HERE"; and was not the whistle kept going for a full minute as the train approached? Horse traffic had to give way to steam; and when motor-cars began to make their appearance it was sometimes a game of "last across".

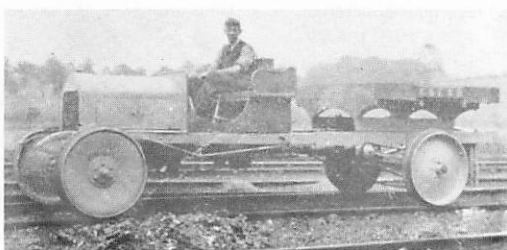
Nostalgically I remember those diminutive little locomotives with their high funnels and huge brass domes, all polished and shining; those quaint and exceedingly uncomfortable little carriages with their cane seats, upright backs, and oil lamps in the roof. They and their engines might have been designed by Emmett himself. Quaint they certainly were, but they had character.

Sad it was to see them replaced in the early 1920s by those extraordinary petrol-driven oddities which were nothing more than the notorious Tin Lizzie — the Model T Ford, fitted with flanged wheels and bereft of its steering gear. The driver sat behind a sort of joy-stick on which were mounted the throttle and ignition controls. No longer did the whistle sound out melodiously across the fields. It was replaced by a mere hooter. Romance was dead; but the little railway took a long time to die. It was of course the road that killed it; the end came on January 2nd, 1954. Though speed was never its strong point, we may still murmur *Requiescat in pace.*

"Hopleaf"

This article first appeared in 'Kent Life' for July 1965 and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of that journal. We are indebted to Mr S L Mann for bringing the reference to our attention.

???



The photograph above was found at the offices of Messrs Drake & Fletcher, Automobile Engineers, Maidstone, several years ago. No other record has been traced of this curious chain driven vehicle, which is shown

at Rolvenden and apparently has been converted to rail use from an early motor car or commercial vehicle.

[Photo courtesy D S Lindsay]

The Camber Tram

Childhood memories of the Rye and Camber Tramway

The short and popular name for a very short line — but what a delightful little line it was.

In 1911 my father and a friend had joined together to build a holiday cottage for the two families on the edge of the Rye Golf links, only 50 yds from the tramway track and not even separated from it by a fence. Our family was then living at Winchelsea, where the beach was too steep and pebbly to be attractive to small children but Camber sands with miles of shallow shore were ideal during the hot summer months.

The Camber Tram was second only in the affections of my brother and myself (aged 8 and 6) to the South Eastern and Chatham Railway as we knew it at Winchelsea station, where the two signalmen — Harry Hopkins and George Sivier were our best friends. At Camber one could hear the double delight of the SE & CR goods train shunting on the Rye harbour line on the far side of the Rother and the Camber tram stopping “by request” at one’s own doorstep at Camber cottage!

The joys of the Camber tram were many and various. First, of course, the engines themselves — “Camber” and “Victoria”, two diminutive 2-4-0’s with long and graceful chimneys and a third engine (was it called “Coronation”?) mysteriously stored at the back of the shed and only brought out on bank holidays or when “Camber” or “Victoria” was out of commission. “Camber” was painted bright green, “Victoria” a rather faded blue green and “Coronation” a rather dull greyish-black with red buffer beams. All were kept in spick and span condition by the two Rhodes’; “Pa Rhodes” we called the father who drove the tram, did the permanent way maintenance, shored up the sea embankments in the winter and was responsible for all the shed work at the Rye headquarters. Another delight was the hand propelled trolley

on which the Rhodes’ travelled up and down the line on maintenance work. Sometimes they could be persuaded to stop at Camber cottage and take we two boys on board for a short trip, even allowing us to help pull and push on the cross bar that operated the crank propelling the trolley.

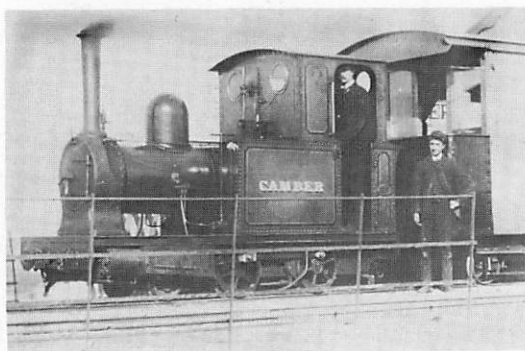
Fascinating, too, were the points at the various “runround” layouts, at Rye, at the Golf links and at Camber Sands (used only in summer). We used to watch spellbound as the locomotive operated the points and lifted the balance-weight in passing. My brother and I couldn’t do that — although we tried to when no one was looking!

Then there were the tickets, a tremendously thick clip of them carried by the conductor, with his bell punch machine on a strap over one shoulder. There were single tickets, returns at reduced rates, childrens tickets, golfers’ tickets, excursion tickets and party tickets — all in gloriously bright and varied colours. We used to pick them up in the carriages, at the stations and by the side of the track for I don’t remember any ticket collector.

If the day was particularly clear it was possible to see the tram set off from Rye station as we stood outside Camber cottage. Then we would watch it all the way, at its leisurely 15-20 miles an hour. As it passed by, there would be an affectionate wave to the Rhodes’ (often both would be in the cab) and we would follow it over the next half a mile until it stopped at the golf links.

When I last saw the tram in operation — sometime in the latter 1930’s a dull little petrol engine had replaced “Camber” and “Victoria” and when I next visited Rye in 1952 a large secondary school stood on the site of the tram station. The little tram, which had meant so much to we boys, had finally been killed by the motor car.

Rev. J E Anderson



[Photo courtesy Lens of Sutton]

Letters to the Editor

The Ford Rail Motors

Sir — The coaches were built by my family firm "Eaton Coachworks" in Cringleford, Norwich as agents for Edmonds of Thetford. The firm is no longer in existence and the premises are now occupied by Jewson and Sons Ltd who use it for their builders merchants business. I have been in contact with a man who was employed in our metal shop at Cringleford. He remembers working on the coaches as they were reinforced with metal plates. He put me in touch with a coach trimmer who remembers that they were constructed of teak, seats facing forward, padded and finished in rattan cane; a partition behind the driver, oil lamps for lighting inside which were made to swing. He said only two coaches were made and they were despatched by rail from Norwich Victoria Station. Swardston, Norwich

Peter Taylor

apart. When employed for 80 lb rails two additional blocks are used for each 30 ft length. The maximum load per axle provided for is 14 tons for the 65 lb rails and 18 tons for the 80 lb rails. No chairs are used, but holes are cast in the block in which trenails are fitted for the reception of dogs or fang-bolts. The blocks are not reinforced, and the moulds in which they are cast are very simply constructed. Unskilled labour with skilled supervision can be employed in the operation of concreting, which, we are informed by Col Stephens, is confined to days when, owing to climate conditions, outside work is not possible. We learn that 1 ton of cement will make 86 blocks of this size in use on this railway."

Sidcup, Kent

T G Burnham

Tenterden Town Station

Sir — As regards the early photo in "The Tenterden Terrier" of Tenterden Town Station building, one only has to compare that with the pictures numbered 74, 75 and 88 in "Rails to Tenterden" and it is fairly obvious that the building was transferred to Headcorn, probably on the completion of the extension.

Maidstone, Kent.

D S Lindsay

Colonel Stephens' Railways

Sir — I was pleased to see the note of the intention of the directors of the Tenterden Railway Company to form a Colonel Stephens museum. The announcement lists 10 railways. However, at the inquest into the fatal accident on the West Sussex line in 1923 Colonel Stephens stated that he was responsible for twelve different lines. What were the other two?

Orpington, Kent

Dr. P E Waters

Concrete Sleepers

Sir — I was interested to see that the production of concrete sleepers is proposed. Although these are generally thought of as a comparatively recent invention, the earliest experiments date back to the late 19th century and quite a few railways tried them out during the timber shortage in and after the first world war. Colonel Stephens experimented with them as he did with so many other modern developments and the enclosed extract from "Concrete and Constructional Engineering" for 1919 describes their use on the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway.

His design seems to have been quite an economical one and not unlike that now used extensively in France; it would be interesting to know if any survived until the line closed.

"The type of sleeper adopted by Col. Stephens is that of a pair of concrete blocks tied by a metal bar, which is in this case a length of signal rod. The tie-bar is not used with every pair of blocks, but four or more, according to curvature and other circumstances, are produced for each 30ft rail. This is shown in the illustration. The blocks themselves, when supporting 65 lb flat-bottomed rails, are 20 in by 12 in by 6 in, and are spaced 2 ft 2 in



From the Railway Archives

Colonel Stephens' message to his employees, 10th November 1919

Kent & East Sussex Ry.
Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Ry.
Worcester, Clevedon & Portlath Road Ry.
East Kent Ry.

Salford Terrace,
Tonbridge, Kent

10th November, 1919.

G. IR.

Railway Executive Committee,
35, Parliament Street,
Westminster,
London, S.W. 1.

September 29th, 1919.

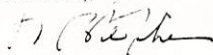
Dear Sir,

I desire to express, on behalf of the Company and myself, the most sincere thanks for the assistance you gave during the recent Railway Strike.

Your action is most highly appreciated, both by the Public and the Company. Small as the Companies are, your example was not lost, and tended to bring to an end a deplorable effort on the part of certain leaders of the Railway Trades Union, to reduce the Country to a state of starvation.

This action, fortunately, failed, and the thanks, not only of the Company, but of the Nation also, are due to the men who remained at their posts.

Yours faithfully,



To Mr Dobell,

Frittenden Rd.

PROTECTION OF LOYAL EMPLOYEES.

The following announcement has been made by the Government:

"Doubts having been expressed as to the position of Railwaymen who remain at or resume work, the Government desire to make it clear that they undertake not only to afford such men every protection during the present crisis, but also to safeguard their interests as Railwaymen against any measures or prejudice to which they may hereafter be exposed on account of such action."

H. A. WALKER,

Chairman Railway Executive Committee.

NOTE—Any measure or prejudice suffered must be reported with the least possible delay, and instant action will be taken.

[Courtesy George Dobell]

The 'Punch' Poem

Several readers have asked about the poem on the Kent & East Sussex Railway, extracts from which appeared in an earlier issue of our magazine and also in the Appeal brochure. The poem, written by C. Hugh Bevan, was first published in the summer number of 'Punch' for 3rd June 1946 and subsequently in Roland Emmett's book 'Home Rails Preferred'. It is reproduced opposite, together with the original 'Emmett' illustrations, by kind permission of 'Punch'.

The Editor would welcome a verse or two to commemorate the reopening of the railway. Do we have any poets within the readership?

Farmers' Train

The Kent and East Sussex Line

EVER seen a railway train
wheel deep in the wheat?
Poppies on the boiler dome;
wreaths of meadow-sweet
twined about the driving wheel—
burnished brass and polished steel;
puffs of steam like woolly lambs,
on the line to Bodiam?

His chimney's tall and thin and crowned
with a bell-mouthed top,
brass-banded
all round.
He's painted green like new spring grass
and he's always pausing
at the level crossing
to let the farm carts pass.

He sees real trains at Headcorn Halt,
where he's rather shy
as they thunder by
from lordly London to the Coast.
For they're very long
and he's very short,
and he wonders if they give him a thought;
but at Metherham you'll hear him boast
that his very best mate's
the eleven-eight—
the Dover Express that's never late.

BUT—
as soon as he gets out of sight
of the Main Line with its metals bright
then once again
he becomes THE TRAIN
and there's pride and swank
in every puff, as he goes chuff, chuff,
with a piercing whistle now and then
(get out of the way, you silly hen)
on his lordly way
to Newenden.

He puffs past farms,
he steams past barns,
to the Hahnenloren maids he tells tall yarns.
He's a sporting giant
at Freezing Hill,
he whistles the miller
at Northam Mill,
he puffs the day's mow
at the crossing gate
and says what a shame he's
five minutes late!
and snorts of course
it's the Main Line's fault!

He carries grain and he carries hops,
Wherever you hail him, there he stops!
In fact he's a friendly sort of train.
He takes out shopping farmers' wives;
he carries a load of bees in hives;
and he carries pigs,
and oats
and goats
and several boxes of lollipops
for the village kids
at the village shops.

He knows the Marsh and he knows the Weald,
he knows each wood and he knows each field;
with his bright green paints
and his glistering brass:
the rabbits stop
to see him pass.
And Aradria's just another station
on his twice-a-daily
peregrination!

