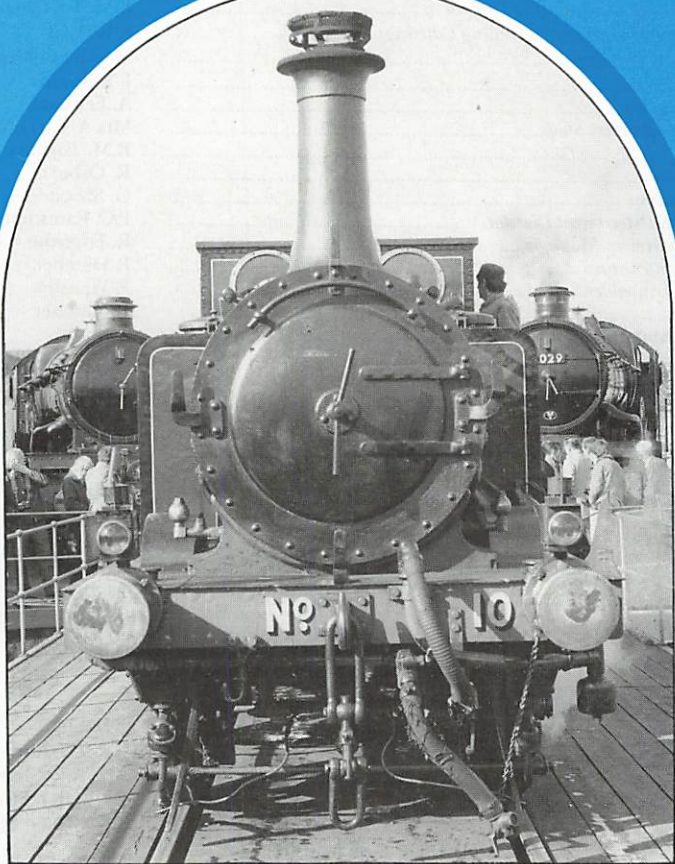


The Tenterden Terrier



Number 51

Spring 1990



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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THE TENTERDEN TERRIER

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Bodiam Castle

A National Trust Property



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

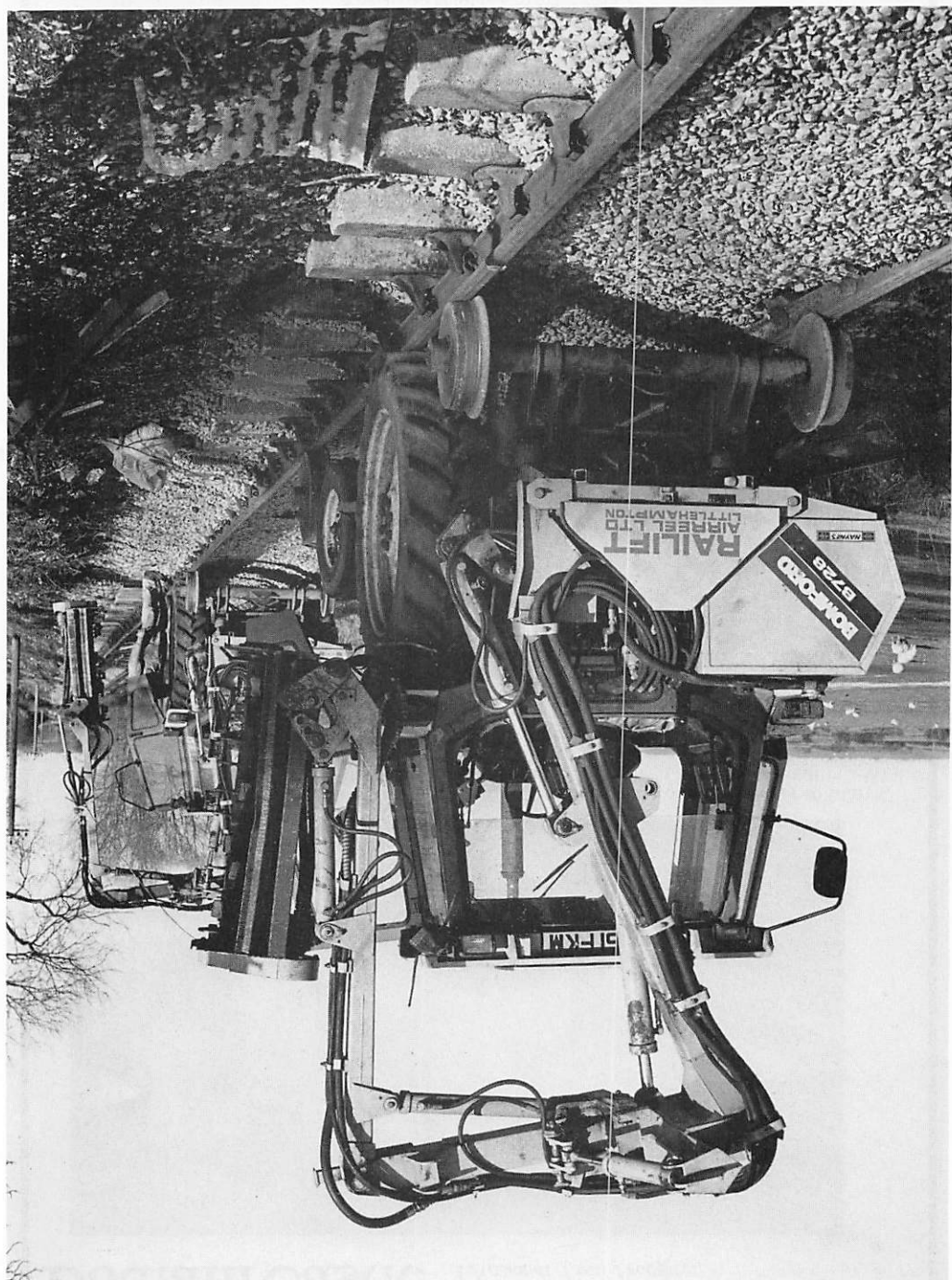
Telephone Staplecross (058083) 436.

Great Dixter

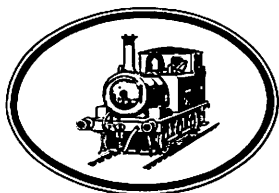


The 500 year old manor hall is open every afternoon (except ordinary Mondays) from April to mid October, also weekends October 20/21 & 27/28, open 2 p.m., last admission 5 p.m. The gardens, well known for the wide variety of plants is open earlier at 11 a.m. on May 26/27/28, Sundays in July & August, also August 27th. Some of the unusual plants have won awards at the Royal Horticultural Society shows in London. *1½ miles from the K.&E.S.R. station at Northiam; follow the signposts in the village for a very pleasant visit.*

Telephone: Northiam (0797) 253160



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*FRONT COVER: No. 10 Sutton on the turntable at Tyseley, Birmingham, during the King & Castles weekend, 14th October 1989.
(Robert C. Jones)*

*FRONTISPIECE: Rail mounted tractor flails awaiting clearance work to commence at Northiam, 23rd December 1989.
(Brian Stephenson)*

Editorial

The Number One Railway

The presentation to the Kent & East Sussex of the A.R.P.S. award this year for an "outstanding contribution to railway preservation" is a tremendous boost to morale at a time of immense activity. The award, given for the professionalism of its voluntary marketing and also engineering staff in the construction of its extension is timely, given that passenger numbers continue to grow at a time when we most need them – for the main line from Tenterden, shortly to be extended to Northiam. Of course, the business is still highly seasonal with over 40% of passengers carried in the peak months of August and December. Suffice it to say that the discriminating visitor, seeking peace and quiet – no ice creams, few children, may well choose to come on a wet day in January – when two coaches and a "Terrier" will be more than adequate to convey a handful of passengers and their luggage!

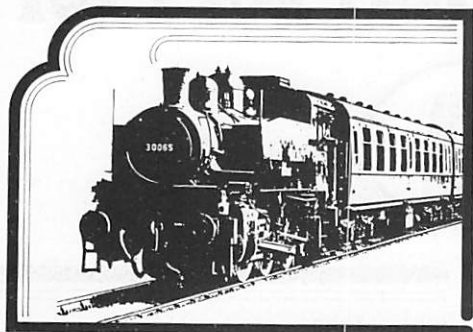
* * * *

At the end of last year, Harry Benbow retired as Advertising Manager for *The Tenterden Terrier*, a task that he has carried out with enormous success and enthusiasm since 1975. We would like to place on record our thanks to Harry for raising many thousands of pounds for the Railway from this source over the years, and also to welcome Alys Shaw, the Editor's wife, to the Terrier Team as the new Advertising Manager.

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1990

Lineside News



Compiled by Philip Shaw

Regrettably, we have to report the resignation of Neil Rose from the office of Assistant Editor and compiler of Lineside News. Neil found it increasingly difficult to undertake what had become almost a burdensome task with Lineside News. It seemed at times, that although everybody wanted to read it, very few were prepared to contribute, unless asked a thousand times!

The Editor has compiled, at short notice, as many reports as possible, he makes no apologies for the brevity of the text (or gaps in the reports), which has been reproduced virtually as received. The good news is that Duncan Buchanan has agreed to take over this important section of the magazine with effect from the July issue. Given the right degree of support, I am sure that he will make a valuable contribution in his own inimitable way.

Finally, thanks must go to Neil Rose for the sterling work that he has done since the Summer issue of 1987. Not only has he compiled Lineside News most meticulously, but also contributed articles and photographs on a variety of subjects, always well written, researched and readable. He will be greatly missed.

Steam Locomotives

It is with much sadness that we have to record the death of Ken Morris, who passed away on 22nd January 1990. Ken had been a regular volunteer steam and diesel driver for almost ten years and was also involved in staff training. Ken lived at Watford and was Traction Supervisor at the Cricklewood Motive Power Depot of British Rail. On his visits to Tenterden he usually stayed at his holiday home in Winchelsea. Our

sympathy goes to his wife Olive, and he will be greatly missed by all his friends on the K&ESR.

* * * *

The Winter's news concerning the fleet is as follows:-

No. 3 (32670/Bodiam): Contrary to recent Press reports, funds are not available for a new boiler and work cannot therefore proceed at present.

No. 8 (Knowle): Further progress has been made on the restoration of this locomotive.

No. 10 (Sutton): Having returned from Tyseley, this locomotive is expected to work Sunday services during February.

No. 11 (1556): Currently in use.

No. 12 (Marcia): Boiler repairs continue at the contractor's premises in Chatham.

No. 14 (Charwelton): No progress due to lack of staff!

No. 19: All the remedial work on the boiler has now been completed by the contractor, W M G Hedges at Chatham Dockyard, and it has been returned to Rolvenden. It was found necessary to replace some 120 flexible stays in the firebox end but both the experts at Rolvenden and the Cornhill Insurance boiler inspector are satisfied the whole boiler is now in good order after an hydraulic test at 255lb/sq in.

As soon as shed space becomes available, the next move will be to lower the boiler into the frames and rebuild the front support and parts of the smokebox. Meanwhile work on the tender proceeds slowly but surely. Given a steady supply of voluntary labour at Rolvenden it is hoped that the locomotive could be returned to service some time in 1991.

No. 22 (30065/Maunsell): Withdrawn for annual boiler inspection.

No. 23 (191/Holman F. Stephens): Boiler repairs are being carried out by C H Thompson of Oldham. In addition, work on the frames is progressing.

No. 24 (William H. Austen): Ready to be "run in" after boiler and motion repairs.

No. 25 (Northiam): Withdrawn for annual boiler inspection.

No. 26 (Linda): Serviceable.



Signalman, Peter Lamont, at work in the recently commissioned signal box at Rolvenden.

(Jim Berryman)



No. 10 Sutton and "P" class 1556 heading the first freight of the day up Tenterden Bank on staff training day, 9th October 1988.
(Mike Esau)

Improvements to the workshop include the installation of two new machines, a 26" Buller Shaper and a medium sized lathe. The compressor shed has been re-vamped with a new Hydrovaul pump to back up the existing twin pump.

The Locomotive Department has vacancies for steam locomotive cleaners, with a view to eventual promotion to firemen and drivers. Applicants must be aged 16 years or over. Please apply to Mr J Baker, c/o Rolvenden locomotive depot.

Diesel locomotives

On the diesel fleet, the following news has been reported.

No. 40: The BTH BO+BO has now returned to traffic after attention to a number of minor defects.

No. 43 (Titan): Formerly painted in yellow, this locomotive now sports a Brunswick green livery, with red buffer beams. Attention has been given to the electrical system.

No. 45 B.R. class 04 D2205 has now left the K&ESR for the West Somerset Railway, where it will be overhauled and used in service. The

arrangement is that it will return to the K&ESR in the late 1990's.

No. 46 B.R. class 03 D2023: Commissioning work is progressing well, the engine has been started and the electrical system has been completed. A number of teething troubles have been dealt with. The locomotive has been repainted and British Railways transfers will be affixed. Testing will continue in the coming weeks.

No. 49 B.R. class 14 D9525. This locomotive is running well, following attention to the engine cooling and braking systems.

Carriage & Wagon

Maunsell BSO 54 entered service on 2nd December having received a heavy overhaul and restoration to Southern railway livery carrying original number 4443. It was put straight into use on Santa Special trains and is now used on the winter services.

Maunsell CK 56 is receiving repairs to the main body framing with several new sections of hardwood timber being fitted. The roof at the first class end is being rebuilt along with two compartment partitions and once this is completed work can start on refitting the

Steam Locomotive Mileages

| No. | 1989 | 1988 | Total since 1974 or entry into traffic |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|---|
| 3 | — | — | 4425 |
| 10 | 365 | 1280 | 8829 |
| 11 | 323 | 1371 | 2994 |
| 14 | — | 1194 | 4100 |
| 22 | 2157 | 640 | 13304 |
| 23 | 2287 | 1728 | 19009 |
| 24 | — | — | 14078 |
| 25 | 2074 | 2273 | 13211 |
| 26 | 1212 | 1720 | 2932 |
| TOTAL STEAM MILES | 8418 | 10706 | 82882 |

Diesel Locomotive Mileages/Hours

| No.Type/Name | 1989 | | 1988 | |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <i>Miles</i> | <i>Hours</i> | <i>Miles</i> | <i>Hours</i> |
| 40 BTH BO+BO | 115 | 71 | 284 | 141 |
| 41 Ruston 0-4-0 DE | 12 | 6 | 508 | 276 |
| 43 Drewry 0-4-0 DM | 478 | 343 | 487 | 208 |
| 45 Drewry 0-6-0 DM | — | — | 5 | 10 |
| 49 BR C1.14 0-6-0 DH | 592 | 521 | 202 | 56 |

Steam cranes were in use as follows.

| | 1989 | 1988 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | <i>hours</i> | <i>hours</i> |
| 133 Taylor & Hubbard 10 ton D5 451 | 222 | 162 |
| 145 Grafton 10 ton DS 17700 | 84 | 25 |
| 151 Ransomes & Napier 36 ton DS 81 | 120 | 83 |

compartments and resheeting the bodysides. It is intended to complete this coach as soon as possible to provide a companion for BSO 4443.

Great Eastern Railway bogie No 63 was shunted into the workshop on 1st October for what was hoped to be a quick tidy up and revarnish along with running gear repairs and modification.

Unfortunately, a large area of dry rot was found in the main body framing at one end of the coach and this will require extensive rebuilding. The entire bodyside panelling has been removed and also all the ceiling panels which has revealed several other areas of severe rot. This discovery will obviously delay restoration work but a full survey has been carried out on the body condition and it is hoped that rebuilding work will start soon.

It will be completed in GER teak livery and will be used as an observation saloon which will

initially work with the Maunsell coaches.

Great Eastern Railway 6 wheel coach No 81 was put into the workshop on 7th January for work associated with a BBC film contract. One second class compartment has been cleaned of old paint and varnish and the entire compartment, including the ceiling, has been varnished to simulate an Irish Railways compartment as required for filming purposes. A mock oil lamp has also been fitted to the roof. Most of the doors have been fitted with new door handles and locks and new stepboards and brackets have been fitted. The roof has been fitted with a new canvas, the old one was lost in a storm before Christmas.

While the coach was in the workshop the remaining compartments, which were not required for filming, were stripped of paint and varnish and repairs carried out in preparation for refitting the interiors. Repairs were also



U.S.A. Class 30065 "Maunsell" waits to come off shed at Rolvenden, ready to take its turn on the Santa trains, 23rd December 1989.
(Brian Stephenson)



One of the Hedgehog Services tractors at work near the Rother Bridge on 23rd December 1989.
(Doug Barrow)

carried out on the running gear including refitting the missing buffer which involved modifying and machining a replacement.

It was shunted out on the 4th February in readiness for the filming and will return to the workshops for completion of restoration including fitting of seating in the late Spring.

Wagon 153 was completed on 7th January following repairs to the body and floor and repainting in private owner livery of coal merchant M. Corke, Northiam.

Wagon 121, LNWR Flatrol, was shunted into the workshop on 2nd December following limited use on the extension work during November and December. It will receive a full overhaul including repairs to buffer and drawbar springs, floor plates and handbrake.

Operating

The delayed opening of Rolvenden Signal Box caused a few problems for the Operating Department. With commissioning not taking place until December 1st with the first crossing of trains required on the 2nd things were tight even by K&ESR standards!! The Operating staff in all grades, however, took to the new installation well and a successful Santa Service was operated. The dawning of December 2nd revealed thick fog, hardly ideal conditions for the introduction of a new Signalling system. All concerned are to be congratulated on the professional approach adopted to the whole operation.

The two train service featuring crossing of trains at Rolvenden has greatly improved the pattern of service we can offer; if resources are available the hourly 'standard' service to Northiam could be stepped up to half hourly with trains crossing at Rolvenden and Wittersham Road, an interesting prospect.

Whilst Operating flexibility on running days has been increased vastly, the opening of the new signal box and the conversion of the block system in use from 'One Engine in Steam' OR Token Working, to solely Token or Tablet working has caused problems with Midweek engineering operations. Until further S&T work is complete it is necessary to open Rolvenden box for any moves to take place in that vicinity, obviously a problem for an all-volunteer operation. Hopefully the amount of midweek opening required will be minimal until the work is completed.

The running of trains in the normally 'Closed'

season has meant that staff have had to be found for working passenger trains as well as engineers trains. The 'quiet' service does however enable some valuable staff training to be undertaken.

On the Staffing side, Nicola Sime has stepped down as Guards Roster Clerk, the demands of a growing family having taken their toll! A big thank you is due to her for doing what is an increasingly complex and time consuming job. Happily she will still be seen on the Railway with her Station Master's (Mistress's) hat on. Richard De Coverley has replaced her in the 'Hot Seat', and we wish him every success.

Finally, new volunteers are always needed and anyone interested should contact Neil Sime on Maidstone 765556.

Signals & Telegraph

Rolvenden signal box was commissioned in time for the start of the Santa Special running in December. A big thank you to all members who helped us with achieving this in time.

Departmental work is now concentrating on the installation of ground frames at Northiam, Wittersham and Rolvenden. Wittersham Road's wiring is being upgraded to make it compatible with Rolvenden and ready for extension of services to Northiam.

The Telecommunications side has been busy providing all the telephones for Rolvenden as well as the emergency telephones for the extension.

Building

Work on the laying of granite setts in front of the carriage shed at Tenterden was suspended at the end of January to enable time to be spent at Northiam. Some three-quarters of this task has now been completed and the fence between the loop and yard re-aligned and raised to the level of the setts. During January the support posts of Rolvenden Station canopy were moved towards the rear of the platform to comply with present regulations.

At Northiam the construction of the toilets was started at the end of January. Contractors carried out the foundation wall and blockwork and both contractors and volunteers contributed to carpentry, electrics, plumbing, plastering, wall tiling and decorating. It has been decided to erect the recently dismantled shelter from Headcorn on the up platform. This requires only a modest amount of repair work before it can be brought back into use -



*Laying temporary track panels at Northiam to accommodate spoil trains, Boxing Day 1989.
(Brian Stephenson)*

unlike some other structures now piled at Northiam, which present a jigsaw of unidentifiable components!

Any volunteers wishing to assist with the completion of the buildings at Northiam should contact Dave Stubbs at Tenterden Station or on Medway 33337.

An unfortunate accident occurred in February, when a BBC vehicle backed into the lavatory block at Tenterden Town station, resulting in severe damage to the porch of the "Ladies". It looks as though much of the porch brickwork will have to be rebuilt.

Forestry and Conservation

Recently, it became apparent that the group could assist in the obtaining of a £10,000 Derelict Land Grant by undertaking the

clearance of blocked drainage ditches along the extension. With the long hot summer last year, much of the extension trackside became overgrown particularly with grasses and brambles. The work had to be completed by Christmas and the only realistic way of achieving this was to hire two tractor mounted flails. These machines, operated by Hedgehog Services of Faversham, are basically standard tractors with rear mounted flails but with the addition of four steel rail gauge wheels which can be hydraulically lowered onto the track, raising the road wheels clear. Traction is provided by hydrostatic motors in the front axles but greater speed can be achieved by lowering the road wheels which can propel the tractors at up to 19 mph on the tracks – very exciting!

After three visits, the flails had completed their

work leaving the heavier trees and clearing up to be undertaken by the group. Many of the larger willows will give rise to maintenance problems in the near future and so the opportunity is being taken to remove the most troublesome prior to the introduction of passenger services. As far as possible small groups of blackthorn, hawthorn and willow are being retained.

Members of the group have also been very pleased to assist John Miller in the clearance of Bodiam Station. A welcome must be extended to the South Wealden Team, Hastings Conservation Volunteers, who on 21st January 1990 started clearing the track from the level crossing at Bodiam back towards Northiam. This length was last cleared in 1984 when the Bodiam – Dixter Halt services were run. Hopefully this length can be cleared again without too much effort whilst the Northiam – Dixter section, last cleared some 12-13 years ago, must await another year at least.

Bodiam Project

The severe storms which hit the area during the last week of January, caused flooding along the Rother Valley and structural damage to the station building. At the Robertsbridge end, the finial has been smashed and half the bargeboarding ripped away, along with the first row of corrugated iron roofing. There has also been some damage to the canopy. Fortunately, the cost of repairs will be covered by insurance.

Meanwhile, the whole station site has now been cleared and work has started towards the headshunt. Working parties commence at 10.30 am on the following Sundays:

18th March

8th April*

6th May

10th June

8th July

12th August

*Note change of date to that previously published



Bodiam Station on 23rd December 1989, showing clearance achieved last Autumn.

(Brian Stephenson)



Austerity No. 25 climbing Tenterden Bank with a Santa Special on 26th November 1989.

(Mike Esau)

Membership

At the time of the AGM in late Autumn, there were 1851 Full, Associate and Honorary members plus 830 Family members. This represents a small reduction of 29 members of all categories over 1988; to be expected following a subscription increase.

During the Santa Special season, an 'Instant Membership' table was set up in the Tenterden Station Exhibition Centre. This resulted in the recruitment of 35 new members of various categories. The exercise must be seen as a success, contributing to a total of 52 new members during that period compared with only 14 during the same period in 1988.

Attention is drawn to the potential loss of revenue by members who do not subscribe under Deed of Covenant. By agreeing to pay annually an amount not less than the annual subscription pertaining at the commencement of the Deed, the Railway is able to recover the income tax paid by you on that part of your income used to pay the covenanted amount. There are approximately 325 covenantors out of 1851 Full members; if all the non-covenantors entered into covenants, the Railway could be up to £4000 per annum better off at no extra cost to individual members. You are urged to consider subscribing in this way if you have not yet paid for this year. Even if you have paid, please set up a covenant now to commence in 1991. Forms are readily available from Membership / Renewals Secretaries, or from Tenterden Station (a note in the Membership Pigeon will suffice). However, please note that you must be a UK taxpayer and be prepared to enter into a commitment for

four years. Please note also that paying a membership subscription by banker's order does not in itself constitute a subscription by Deed of Covenant. In order to avoid confusion, if the 6th and 7th digits on the envelope label are 30, a valid covenant is already held, or you will already have been invited to renew one which has expired. Please avoid duplication.

News from Area Groups

Ashford. The Group was, as usual, represented at the Model Railway Exhibition in the Town, now in its 14th year. Activities in 1989 have raised nearly £900, most of which will be devoted to the restoration of two four wheeled carriages. It was expected that a PMV, purchased to provide under frames for one of the carriages, would be moved to Wittersham Road in February. The Group is looking for a second PMV for the other carriage, which could be sited at Tenterden for a period, fitted out and used as a classroom for school parties in the summer, until it is required for the under frames. In conjunction with the Maidstone Group, Ashford is paying for new rollers for the Company's printing press at Northiam, so that this section can continue to make a valuable contribution. The complete programme for 1990 can be found in the Rooter, and a copy can be obtained from Eric Graves on Ashford (0233) 623687.

Croydon. A Slide Show will be held at The Small Hall, Magdalen Centre, Canning Road, Addiscombe, Surrey, on 12th July 1990.

Maidstone. Steve Thundow has taken over as Chairman.



U.S.A. Class 30065 runs through the new Rolvenden passing loop with a Santa Special train on 9th December 1989.
(Jim Berryman)



Welcome Santa!
(Jim Berryman)



Angela Clark-Monks, our new Tenterden Shop Manager.
(Jim Berryman)

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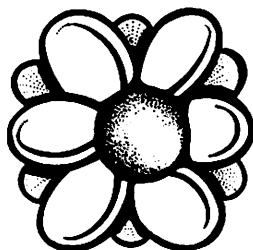
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Where do we go from here?

Commercial Operations Director Mark Toynbee outlines some of the background to our present success and puts forward some personal views for the future.

The presentation to our railway of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies' Annual Award is a great triumph and is a most fitting start to the new decade. The award is made to the railway that has made an "outstanding contribution to railway preservation". This triumph comes just a year after we were runner-up in Ian Allan's Independent Railway of the Year Award.

It was only a few years ago that the Kent and East Sussex Railway would not have been in the running for the A.R.P.S. Award and languished somewhere near the bottom of Mr. Allan's league table. The change round in our reputation has not been easy, and even now, arouses great controversy in mess rooms and in the correspondence pages of this magazine!

Having arrived at the top we must take care that we are not pushed from our pedestal through complacency. Future policies must ensure that we continue to set high standards of commercial and engineering excellence. When I first started representing our railway at meetings and other events, the Kent and East Sussex was either unknown – "Are you the Bluebell Railway?" was the most usual comment from people or, in the eyes of those who knew of us, there was a patronising and condescending attitude towards our activities: "Oh yes, THAT railway. You've never really got off the ground, have you?" We were regarded as something of a lame-duck!

Today, the awareness of the railway is far greater and the support for our cause is almost embarrassing! My primary role as Public Relations Officer, and more recently Commercial Operations and Marketing Director has been to develop that awareness. It has not been an easy task. Our image and product ten years ago was poor. Two seemingly identical green Austerity tank engines pulled a rake of tatty Mark One carriages along a length of track beset with speed restrictions. There were no toilet facilities for visitors, no proper car park and little of interest at Tenterden to keep people on site. No wonder that our passenger numbers seemed to be stuck in a rut at just above the 40,000 level.

We did not have the big engines, Edwardian

rolling stock, lovely scenery or the large conurbations on our doorstep that have benefited other railways. Instead we had a rustic charm and unique history which correctly portrayed could be just as appealing if not more so, than the product offered by other railways. The chairman of the time, John Miller, persuaded the private owners of some of our locomotive fleet to paint their engines in more interesting and varied liveries. Austerity "Northiam" was the first and it still looks good. A feature on railway preservation in *The Daily Telegraph* of 30 December 1989 outlined the achievements of Britain's 73 private lines. Its author toured some of the brand leaders with a photographer. The photograph that accompanied the article was not a Bulleid Pacific, Black 5, a Duchess, an A4 – it was a humble 0-6-0 saddle tank, our own "Northiam", packaged and presented in a way that makes its public appeal just as great as a mighty tender engine!

We have proved that the appearance of a steam locomotive is more important to most visitors than the size. Small engines working hard on our steep gradients are a major selling point and our new advertising will reflect this theme. While our main market will always be the family, a trial Vintage Sunday, aimed primarily at the enthusiasts was held on Sunday 25 February. Its success will be carefully monitored to judge the value of staging more similar events in the future.

Passenger numbers have increased by over 80% in eight years. Revenue has risen by more than 200% in the same period. It may seem to many members that our commercial policy has been one of unchecked growth, regardless of its effect on volunteer morale and our light railway image. The truth is that volume growth had to come to make our railway viable. The increase in numbers has gone hand in hand with a policy of raising the optional spend of our visitors. This is the extra money that visitors will spend over and above the train fare. The performance of our gift shop and buffet at Tenterden, both the responsibility of fellow Commercial Director Ken Lee, has been ahead of budget targets for a number of years. However the continuing growth of our visitor figures is putting both

outlets under increasing pressure. Their expansion and enhancement has become a priority and the Board appointed Mark Yonge to chair a working party to come up with proposals. Its findings are awaited with interest. As always it will be essential to ensure that any development is in sympathy with our light railway roots.

An exciting development is the long-awaited appearance from the Carriage Workshops of the first Maunsell coaches and other vintage rolling stock. The high standards of restoration are a credit to the railway and already appreciated by our visitors. With more historic coaches in traffic, running in service on a regular basis, we

will be able to raise fares in real terms to reflect the improvement in the product and will allow us to improve profitability without overstretching our resources. Some passengers may be discouraged to travel by the price but it is better to carry the numbers of passengers we can handle, and to earn a healthy profit, than to chase ever higher numbers, reaching a stage where we lose all our light railway atmosphere and end up as nothing more than a people-moving conveyor belt. There comes a point when the extra locomotives, coaches, passing loops, visitor facilities and staff resources to carry more people cost more than can be earned in fares. Our revenue accountant Alan Robinson, always on the ball and reminding me



Commercial operations Director Mark Toynbee (left) and Chairman David Stratton receiving the A.R.P.S. award at Birmingham on 27th January 1990.
(John Grose)

almost weekly of commercial targets, would be the first to tell me when that point was reached.

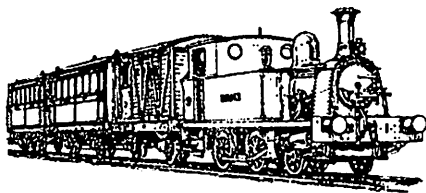
Our present fare rate is 27p per mile, somewhat below that charged by other similar railways but direct comparisons are always difficult. Part of the package offered by the Bluebell is the ability to walk around their locomotive sheds at Sheffield Park and to view their impressive fleet. This alone is worth at least 50p on the fare, but sadly, our engines are tucked away at Rolvenden.

The introduction of first class on trains has brought in extra income and demonstrates our ability to raise the optional spend with no extra effort. Over Christmas first class seats on Santa trains were in great demand, the £1.50 premium being no deterrent to those desiring a little extra comfort – or is it just snob value? Train catering is the next area for exploitation. The opening to Northiam lengthens journey time to 1 hour and 20 minutes. A refreshment service will enhance the trip and increase revenue. Another useful spin-off is that train catering will go some way towards reducing the overcrowding in Tenterden Buffet. The Board has agreed to the creation of a full-time Train Catering Manager to run the Wealden Pullman and to develop new business. It is hoped that an appointment can be made in the Spring.

Critics of our present policies are quick to say that some of the character of the old railway has been sacrificed in the search for profitability. I do not wish to reopen an argument that has dominated the letters pages in this magazine for some two years. We have tried to develop the railway with care and sympathy, retaining its own identity and livery wherever possible. We have avoided diversification into other public attractions, as seen at the Dart Valley, and all our developments are relevant to the needs of our customers. I would love to have seen the railway in the 1940's and 50's. Sadly as a mere youngster of 30 I have never seen main line steam, let alone charming rural byways. However we should all be aware of our history, ensuring that future generations can enjoy visiting an outstanding and highly individual railway, reflecting the message that it is a substantial part of the old Kent and East Sussex, not an attempt to recreate the might of the Great Western or the Southern in a short stretch of branch line – even worse would be to become lost in the dull anonymity of the British Railways era: a policy proposed by some of our supporters. That is done far better than we ever could by the Worth Valley for example. Besides British Railways' contribution to our history was to close the line. Our aspirations should be somewhat greater!

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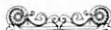


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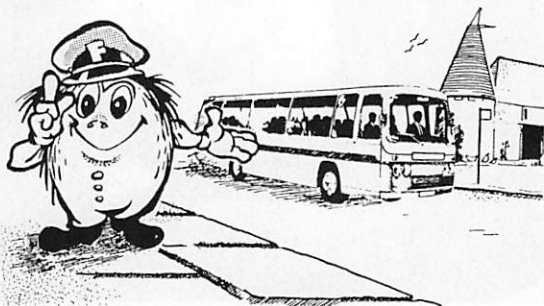
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Sutton in Birmingham

In the early 1980's I used to share a house with Donald Wilson, then the KESR Commercial Director. Of course, there was no choice but to join up as a member of the KESR but, due to my heavy commitments at Tyseley, it was not possible to volunteer. Nevertheless, I did find myself taking the occasional "Wealden Pullman" booking on the telephone and, one winter, Donald came back with a boot load of toys and wrapping paper

So, the scene was set for locomotive exchanges. Constantly, over breakfast, Donald suggested it would be a good idea to send a Tyseley Pannier Tank down to Rolvenden for a Season. I always countered by saying that we only had one but when the second Pannier Tank had been restored then we would think about it. It only took Donald a couple of days after he heard 7760 and joined 7752 in service at Tyseley to insist that one of the engines came to Rolvenden. Everything went well and it was a

joy to hear 7752 barking up Tenterden Bank with five coaches after only having had a yard to shunt in for nearly ten years. I even came down with my overalls and had a trip on the shovel. The KESR graciously agreed to let us the Terrier in return. I do not think one had ever been so far North before. In 1989 we took up the loan.

When "Sutton" arrived we steamed it specially for a members club night and had by far the largest turnout of members ever - 120 I think - to come and have a ride on the first steaming. "Sutton" proved to be a popular little engine and spent many Sunday afternoons running back and forth over our passenger shuttle line, both on the old line with the replica GWR Wooden Halt and, since August, on our new two platformed line past our restored Great Western signalbox and signals, the incline at the North end of the Museum bringing sharp exhausts from the chimney.



Hallowe'en special.

(Robert C. Jones)

"Sutton" featured in most of the 1989 events at Tyseley and starred at our "King and Castles" weekend, hauling the passenger train in conjunction with "King Edward I". "Sutton" also featured hauling the Ghost Train at Hallowe'en. I wonder if the KESR would appreciate the pumpkins and the mask which the engine carried that day?

"Sutton" was admired by all and liked by our operating staff who found her easy to handle. It was also splendid to hear the Westinghouse Brake Pump in action which was a strange noise in Birmingham. Everyone was anxious to "have a go" on the regulator or the shovel and even David Ward, the BR InterCity Charter Trains Manager who came up for a visit to discuss main line operation, had a drive for a trip or two pronouncing it a "splendid little engine".

"Sutton" shared the shed with many larger engines and spent several days in the company of "Kolhapur", "Clun Castle", "Defiant", "King Edward I" and "Scots Guardsman" all on the main line certified list and, although Tyseley is connected to the BR main line, sadly it was not

possible to take "Sutton" out on to foreign metals. May be one day! Other smaller interesting engines which shared the shed with "Sutton" were our "Cadbury" No. 1 Side Tank, the National Railway Museum's "Cornwall" and "Henry" the Museum's oldest engine, being built as recently as 1901 and the mascot of our very popular and rapidly growing children's club. Sutton has also seen the Midline "heritage" diesel fleet, sprinters and various modern BR diesels including the Merry Go Round Coal Hoppers on their way to Didcot. The pace of life around Birmingham must have meant a very different holiday for this olive green engine.

We are delighted to have had "Sutton" at Tyseley. Throughout her stay she only needed routine maintenance which shows that the Rolvenden works know their job well. The exchange of the two engines has been very satisfactory from the point of view of both organisations and we hope there will be many more to come. Many thanks for the loan of "Sutton".

Michael Whitehouse

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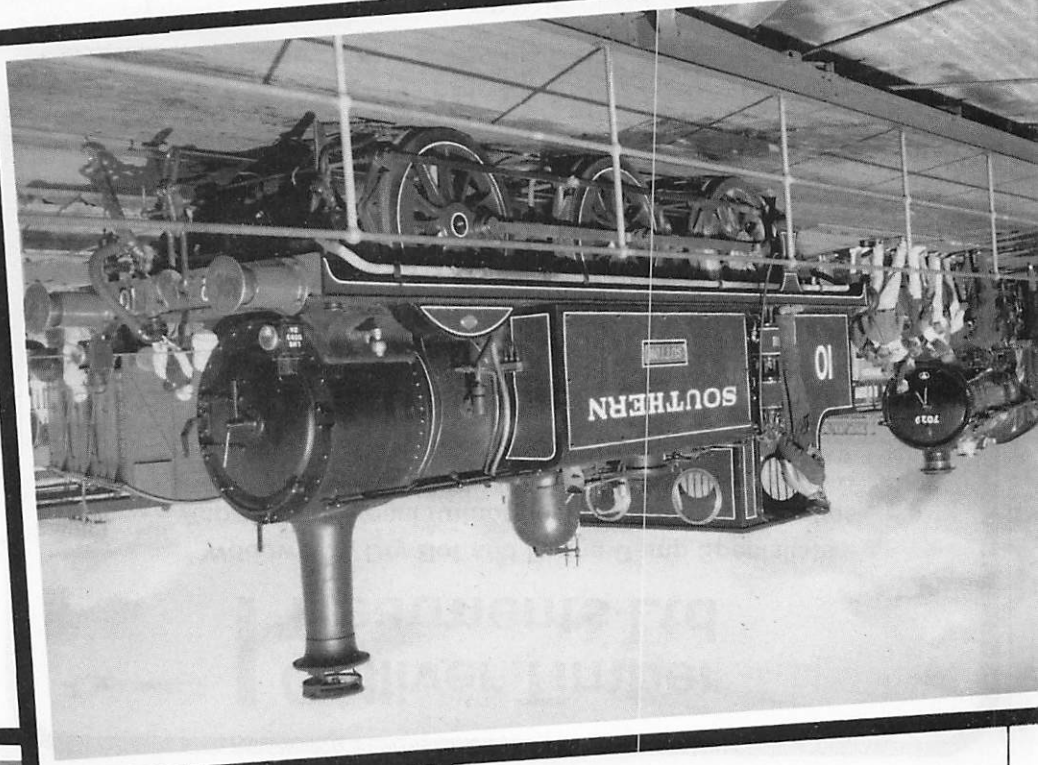
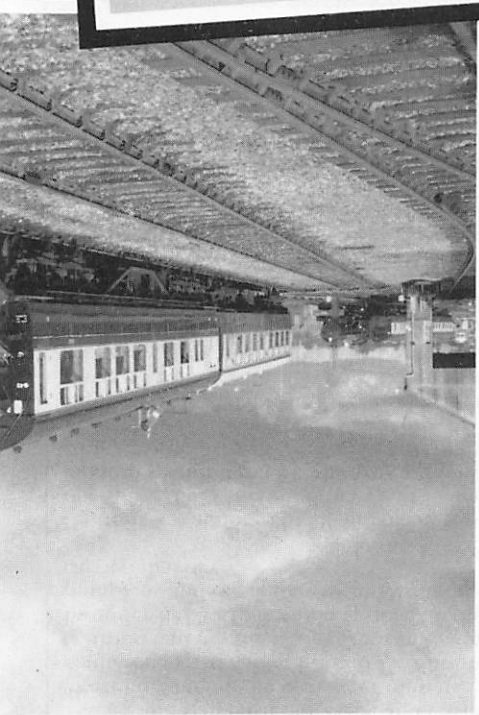
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A Visitor Abroad





Terrier locomotive No. 10 "Sutton" visited the Birmingham Railway Museum at Tyseley during 1989 and featured in most of the events. During the "King and Castles" weekend it hauled passenger trains in conjunction with King Edward I, when it was photographed by J.A. Field on 14th October 1989.



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Duncan Buchanan



The Santa Specials are over but not without incident, nor the disposal of over 14,000 mince pies and hundreds of bottles of punch. Whilst we got our part right, just in time, some passengers did get a shock to their system. A family from Gravesend turned up in time for their train, having booked their seats and checked the date. The only thing amiss was the tickets – they were for the Bluebell Railway! This was unfortunate, to say the least, but the commercial people rallied round, found some spare seats on the fully booked train and managed to sell the required number of tickets. The family were reported to have said that they have travelled for the last four years on the Bluebell Railway Santa Specials at Tenterden. It only goes to show how little the average passenger knows, or wants to care, about the details of the operation. So long as the engine is in steam and goes "Chuff" at the correct moment they are happy, despite ignorance of the difference between a Schools class or J94 Austerity.

The beginning of a year is the normal time to reflect on things past and predict the future. The beginning of a decade only emphasises this. There are other reasons, where the KESR is concerned, not least the impending opening to Northiam. As the railway was extended beyond Rolvenden in stages to Wittersham the commitment needed was relatively limited. One engine and a set of carriages. On arriving at

Northiam we have moved into a different league with the potential to run 3 separate trains simultaneously. We intend to run a daily 2 train service for 6 weeks in summer, plus other weekend days. All this, and much more, is obvious but indicates how far we have progressed, or changed, from what went before. The Rother Valley Inn, at Northiam, is where the first group met, in the early 1960s to save the Colonel Stephens line and few then can have imagined what it would become. Some are happy, though many mourn the passing of the dream to resurrect a bumbling mixed train taking hours and shunting anywhere and everywhere. The future for us is clear, namely to provide a tourist railway service. It is what pays and what we can provide. There is a place, but only on the periphery of the action, to recreate mixed trains, Terrier hauled specials, and quaint wayside stations. The tourist railway (or populist railway) is what pays and is here to stay.

Through the 1990s we will see the line grow in capacity. The great problem will be staffing the line. Volunteers come and go. Many disappear due to family commitments though some will return one day. What is apparent is that extra volunteers do not suddenly appear just because we extend the line. The number of volunteers may have increased over the years but not by the numbers really needed nor in proportion to the length of line we run over. Other railways have commented on the increasing average age of their volunteers and the inevitable worries about finding volunteers in the years to come. We do have some comfort in the age group of many of our Ticket Inspectors but this is a small number and is unlikely to provide all those we require.

One of the success stories, especially for the hard core of the working volunteers, has been the Rolvenden Locomotive Improvement Fund. As the title suggests the fund has been set up and run mainly by Rolvenden based volunteers. By running a monthly draw, with over 300 subscribers each paying £1 a month, it has been a great success. The funds have been boosted by 2 Christmas draws and the Steam and Transport event last October. The main reason behind the fund is to provide things the volunteers need that, whilst they are not essential to the railway, are desirable. The building of a second loco pit in Rolvenden yard is the first big use of the funds. This pit is larger than the previous one and should cope with all the requirements in the foreseeable future. Now that two train operation will be our normal basic service, having pit space for only one loco at a time is an unnecessary aggravation.

Kent & East Sussex 'Workplates'

Since none of Colonel Stephens' railways actually built their own locomotives it is curious that at least three of them should have found it worthwhile to produce brass or iron 'workplates' carrying the name of the owning railway in full. These plates were used by the Kent & East Sussex Railway, the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway and the Weston Clevedon & Portishead Railway and were usually oval in shape although square or oblong examples are also known. Curiously, whereas the KESR and S&MR fixed their plates on their locomotives, the WC&PR chose to use their plates on their carriages.

On the KESR only four locomotives were equipped with these plates. These were No.3 *Bodiam*, No. 7 *Juno*, No. 8 *Hesperus* and No. 9 *Rother*. The three locomotives purchased new from Hawthorn Leslie, *Tenterden Northiam* and *Hecate*, came with large Hawthorn Leslie plates which were obviously considered adequate for whatever purpose the management had in mind and the second No 4, acquired in 1932, appears to have arrived too late to qualify for a plate. However, there seems no good reason why No. 5 *Rolvenden* should not have been so fitted.

Comparing KESR practice with that of the S&MR may give a clue as to the period when these plates were fitted. On the S&MR, plates were fitted to *Gazelle*, *Severn*, *Hesperus*, *Morous* and the second *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*. Plates were not, however, fitted to the three Terriers

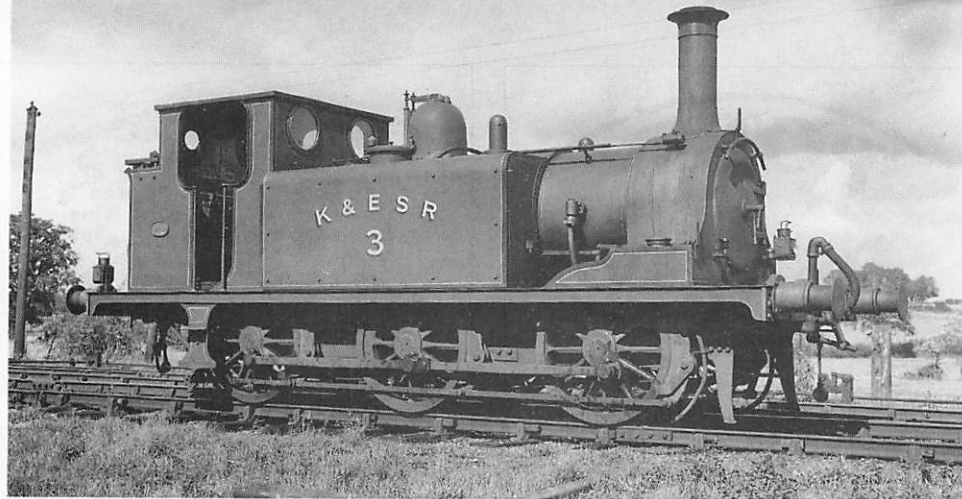
obtained in 1921 and 1923 nor to the *Colliers* obtained in the 1930s. As there do not appear to be any photographs of S&MR or KESR locomotives carrying these plates prior to the First World War there seems to be a good chance that these plates were fitted for some identification purpose connected with that war. Certainly there were provisional plans for Kent & East Sussex locomotives to be evacuated in the event of invasion and some sort of identification would have been useful under these circumstances.

The fact that the East Kent Railway and the Selsey Tramway evaded government control during the War lends some slight weight to this argument by explaining the absence of plates on those lines. The absence of plates on the WC&PR locomotives might similarly be explained by the fact that all but one were clearly identified by their various makers' workplates. The exception was *Hesperus* but, as with *Rolvenden* on the KESR, every hypothetical rule needs an exception!

The fact may, of course, be that these plates were merely vanity decorations and that too much should not be made of their presence or absence from particular locomotives, carriages or even railways. Their existence constituted, nevertheless, yet another link in the mysterious web binding together the various railways under Colonel Stephens' management.

Stephen Garrett





No. 3 Bodiam at Rolvenden, date unknown. Note works plate on the side of the cab.

(Rail Archive Stephenson)

The "worksplate" shown here was mentioned in an advertisement for an auction of railwayana held at Myers Grove School, Sheffield, on 16th December. A catalogue was sent for and luckily the item was illustrated and could be identified as an owner's plate. The likelihood of one of these becoming available had seemed remote and it was felt to be too important an item to be missed. Arrangements were made for a contact of Doug Lindsay to bid on our behalf. At first, an upper limit of £300 was set but at the last minute it was decided to raise this to £350. In the event, we secured the plate for £320 which doesn't leave much in our museum and archive budget for 1990. The railwayana collectors journal "On the Line", thought it "a great bargain" and we hope members will think so.

We have established that the plate was one of a pair acquired some years ago from Ashford Works. About 1972, the original owner sold the pair for £25, one going on display at Chasewater, Staffordshire, and the other was resold to the Winchcombe Railway Museum,

Gloucestershire. The first owner was informed that the plates were from No 4 "Hecate" but as the locomotive left the K&ESR in 1932 it seems unlikely that the plates had survived at Ashford for so many years. Much more likely is that the plates were removed from No 3 "Bodiam" in 1949, when at Ashford she exchanged her K&ESR livery for that of British Railways. It is the Chasewater plate, after 17 years on display there, that we have acquired.

The plate is cast iron and measures 10 in x 6in and will shortly be displayed in the Museum in Station Road.

An interesting comparison may be made with what is undoubtedly a carriage and wagon owners plate. Two examples of these are in the museum collection. These also are cast iron, measuring 9½ in x 2½ in, and presumably would have been fixed to the solebars, though as far as I am aware, no photographic evidence exists.

John Miller



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An analysis of passengers carried in 1989

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Our passenger business (excluding Pullmans) increased by 4.4%, and the increase was once again in full Adult Returns at the expense of lesser journeys.

As with all previous years the Santa Specials broke all records. We ran 80 trains as against 54 last year – an increase of 48% – and passengers were up by 20%. Average loadings were much reduced from 218 to 177 which made Santa's job far easier and gave the passengers more comfort. For the first time Passengers were allocated a numbered seat in a specific coach and this system was much appreciated by the public. Thanks must go to Mike Murfin and Beverly Wright for the hours of work entailed since September in dealing with the bookings.

Platform ticket sales were down again this year by 1200. There was no adverse reaction to the increase to 30p.

Rolvenden re-opened in October but only 13 passengers were carried. Thanks to Ian Bowyer and the few for their attendance during the

year. I would like to express my appreciation to Ernie Stockdale, who has had to relinquish the job of Station Agent due to ill health, for all he has done over the years and we wish him well for the future.

The Pullmans and Charters were down by 766 but this was caused by the necessity of DIANA being taken out of service for essential repairs for several months.

First Class travel increased in popularity and over 4,200 people elected to pay the supplement.

Although the overall figures have improved, a close analysis of all the figures should be conducted and lessons learnt from what they disclose. As in all previous years, the main traffic is generated in August and by the Santa Specials. Together they accounted for 42.5% of our total train riding customers in 1989 and this must surely give a number of members food for thought. We look forward to 1990 and to the extension to Northiam. I have about seven new booking clerk recruits so hopefully manning won't be a problem. All we shall need are the paying customers!

John Emmott

| | 1988 | | | | 1989 | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Op Days | Trains | Passengers | Av Train | Op Days | Trains | Passengers | Av Train |
| March/Apr | 15 | 92 | 9073 | 99 | 18 | 115 | 9647 | 83 |
| May | 12 | 67 | 5722 | 85 | 12 | 78 | 5813 | 75 |
| June | 23 | 123 | 8078 | 66 | 22 | 114 | 6748 | 59 |
| July | 26 | 139 | 9975 | 72 | 25 | 131 | 8585 | 66 |
| August | 31 | 161 | 14796 | 92 | 31 | 164 | 15588 | 95 |
| September | 14 | 62 | 4250 | 69 | 14 | 76 | 5174 | 68 |
| October | 11 | 48 | 2281 | 48 | 10 | 32 | 2771 | 87 |
| November | 4 | 15 | 831 | 55 | 4 | 12 | 1197 | 100 |
| December | 13 | 60 | 12283 | 205 | 12 | 89 | 14435 | 162 |
| Basic Services | 149 | 767 | 67289 | 88 | 148 | 811 | 69958 | 86 |
| Wealden Pullman/ Charters | | | 3486 | | | | 2720 | |
| Privileges & passes | | | 2754 | | | | 3191 | |
| Totals | | | 73529 | | | | 75869 | |
| Bookings from: | | | | | | | | |
| Tenterden | | | 66060 | | | | 68543 | |
| Rolvenden | | | - | | | | 13 | |
| Wittersham | | | 464 | | | | 629 | |
| On trains | | | 765 | | | | 773 | |
| | | | 67289 | | | | 69958 | |

From the Railway Archives

The Levetts of Court Lodge Farm, Bodiam

On a cold day in January 1906, little Erica Goodman aged 5½ years arrived at Robertsbridge station with her family. They had travelled from Staffordshire and were on route to Bodiam to stay with an aunt, Mrs Marian Elsam, at Ockham House which was, and still is, on the other side of the road from Bodiam station. The children played on the sloping floor of Robertsbridge station waiting room while they waited for the train to take them along the Rother Valley to Bodiam.

Eighty-four years later, Erica, now Mrs Levett, well remembers the perforated laminated wooden bench seating along both sides of the carriage. The Goodman children were to stay with their aunt while Mr Goodman settled in to his new business as a pharmacist at Hastings. Over the next few years, the children continued to visit Bodiam by train, staying with their aunt until about 1912, when she moved to Beacon Oak House at Tenterden, and then staying with other relatives in the village.

In 1915, a friend living at Brighton described his journey on the K&ESR in a letter to Mrs Levett. He was on his way to stay at Tenterden and wrote:

"This is a pretty place isn't it? I walked to Rolvenden and back yesterday, I may say that my walking BOTH ways was quite a mistake as I thought the train would meet me there but it did not. I WAS pleased! On Monday, when I came, I had to wait 2¼ HOURS at Robertsbridge owing to an alteration in the timetable. It seemed nearer 2½ years to me. I

think I read every paper that the limited bookstall provided. I was quite startled and frightened by the speed of the K&ESR express! Also by the novel way of taking tickets. Having lovely weather here".

In October 1923, Erica married Reginald Levett who farmed at Court Lodge, situated on the hill behind Bodiam Castle. When purchased in 1907, the farm extended to 207 acres of which 50 acres were given over to hop gardens. The original sale notice claimed the farm "was a few minutes from the Railway station"

Prior to their marriage, Reginald's father, Bertram, retired to a nearby house known as Oakside, which he had completed the previous year after 11 years of building. The house is now known as Justins. The Levetts had farmed at Court Lodge since 1855 the chief crop being hops which were taken by farm wagon to Bodiam station for onward conveyance to London Bridge and the hopfactors. The family also despatched plums and apples to market by rail.

Bertram Levett had used the railway since its opening in 1900 and it was undoubtedly he who put aside the Rother Valley items illustrated with this article. The 1905 invoice is particularly interesting, if only for the lengthy disclaimer on liability which occupies nearly a third of the paper. It is addressed to Bertram and is for the carriage of 219 iron pipes from Bricklayers Arms and five sacks of gypsum from Battle.



A load of hop pockets about to depart from Court Lodge for Bodiam Station, 1920's.

(Collection Mrs E. Levett)



Court Lodge, Bodiam, February 1952.

(Collection Mrs E. Levett)

M B. Levett Esq.

STATION

Bodiam

Dr. to THE ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY Co.

For carriage of Goods, &c., to

Bodiam

THE ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY COMPANY

Give Public Notice that they will not be accountable for any article conveyed by this Railway, unless it is entered and signed for as received by their Agent; nor will they be responsible for the loss of, or damage done to money in Cash or Bills, or Promissory Notes; or Securities for Money or Jewellery, Bullion, Plate, Clocks, Watches, Trunks, Rings, Marbles, Lace, Furs, Writings, Prints, Paintings, or other valuables; nor for damage done to China, Glass, Wearing Apparel, Musical Instruments, nor for the loss or damage of any Goods put in returned Wrappers or Boxes, nor for any Goods left until called for or to order, or left or warehoused for the convenience of the parties to whom they are consigned, nor for the loss or damage of any Packages insufficiently or improperly packed, marked or described, or containing a variety of articles liable by breaking, to damage each other, nor for the leakage arising from bad casks or coppers. The Company will not be answerable for the loss or damage of any Goods while in their Warehouse or Store, arising from fire, civil commotion, tempest, or Act of God. They will not carry Aquafortis, Oil of Vitriol, Gunpowder, or other Goods of a dangerous quality (unless by special agreement); and any person sending the same without giving written notice to the Company is liable by Act of Parliament to a Penalty of £10, which will be strictly enforced. And that with respect to any Animals, Luggage, Parcels, Goods, or other articles Booked through by the Company, or their Agents, for conveyance partly by Railway and partly by Sea, or partly by Canal and partly by Road, such Animals, Luggage, Parcels, Goods, or other Articles, will only be so conveyed on the condition that the Company shall be exempt from liability for any Loss or Damages which may arise during the Carriage of such Animals, Luggage, Parcels, Goods, or other articles, by Sea, the Act of God, the King's Enemies, Fire, Accidents from Machinery, Boilers and Steam, and all and every other Dangers and Accidents of the Sea, Rivers and Navigation, of whatever nature and kind soever, in the same manner as if the Company had signed and delivered to the Consignor a Bill of Lading containing such condition. No claim for loss or damage will be allowed unless made within three days after the delivery of the Goods. All Goods in charge of this Company will be held subject to a general lien for money due for the Carriage of such Goods, and also for the general balance owing by the Owner or Public Carrier of such Goods to the Company. If the charges thereon be not paid, the Goods detained will be liable to be sold after twenty-one days' notice, excepting perishable Goods, which may be sold forthwith. The delivery of all Goods will be considered complete, and the liability of the Company cease, when they are placed at the door of the Consignee.

Bradbury, Agnew, & Co. Ltd., London and Manchester.

| Date. | Description of Goods. | From | To | Weight Tons. cwt. qrs. lbs. | Rate | Carriage | Paid on. | Delivery. | Total. |
|--------|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|------|----------|----------|-----------|--------|
| Jan 31 | 219 Iron Pipes & Bolts | Bodiam | Bodiam | | | | | | |
| | 1 Steam Pump | | | 3 4 0 0 | | 72 | 11.5 | | 2 0 9 |
| Feb 17 | 50 casks Gypsum Article | | | 5 0 0 0 | | 47 | 11.3 | | 15 10 |
| | | | | | | | | | 2 16 7 |

Payment by return will oblige
Yours truly W. Mitchell
Paid W. Mitchell
24/2/05

ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY.

NOTICE.

ROBERTSBRIDGE FORTNIGHTLY AUCTION STOCK MARKET.

SPECIAL TRAINS WILL RUN AS UNDER

ON THE FOLLOWING DATES—

1900,

Monday, April 30th,
May 14th, 28th,
June 11th, 25th,
July 9th, 23rd,
Aug. 6th, 20th,

Monday, Sep. 3rd, 17th, 25
Oct. 1st, 15th, 29th.
Nov. 12th, 26th,
Dec. 10th, 24th,

| | P. M. | | P. M. |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Tenterden | dep. 3.15 | Robertsbridge | dp. 4.20 |
| Wittersham Rd., | 3.26 | Bodiam | ,, 4.34 |
| Northiam | ,, 3.35 | Northiam | ,, 4.50 |
| Bodiam | ,, 3.51 | Wittersham Rd., | 4.59 |
| Robertsbridge | ar. 4.5 | Tenterden | arr. 5.10 |

The Ordinary Passenger Train Service will be as under—

UP.

| | WEEK-DAYS. | SUNDAYS. |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Tenterden | dep. 7 30 9 30 10 13 9 48 | 1 8 5 36 0 36 5 30 |
| Wittersham | 7 41 9 41 10 24 9 59 | 1 19 6 46 9 46 6 41 |
| Northiam for Beckley .. | 7 50 9 50 10 33 10 8 | 1 28 6 55 9 55 5 50 |
| Bodiam | 8 0 10 6 10 49 10 24 | 1 44 6 11 10 11 6 6 |
| Robertsbridge Jn. | 8 20 10 20 11 3 10 38 | 1 58 6 26 10 26 6 20 |
| London | arr. 10 9 1 23 1 23 12 18 | 3 54 8 55 — 8 48 |
| Tunbridge Wells .. | 9 3 11 50 11 50 11 10 | 2 42 7 10 — 7 5 |
| Hastings | 8 55 10 55 11 37 11 37 | 2 36 7 11 11 4 9 44 |
| Eastbourne | 9 48 12 36 12 36 12 36 | 3 44 8 10 — — |
| Lewes | 10 42 12 39 12 39 12 39 | 4 26 8 26 — — |
| Brighton | 11 9 1 7 1 7 1 7 | 4 56 8 56 — — |

DOWN.

| | WEEK-DAYS. | SUNDAYS. |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| London | dep. 6 50 8 25 9 36 11 39 | 8 8 — — |
| Tunbridge Wells .. | 7 46 9 48 10 48 1 26 | 0 — 9 53 — |
| Hastings | 8 0 10 36 10 36 1 39 | 0 — 7 45 5 55 |
| Brighton | — 7 50 7 50 10 35 4 0 | — — 1 50 — |
| Lewes | — 8 16 8 16 11 10 4 37 | — — 2 16 — |
| Eastbourne | — 8 35 8 35 11 17 4 46 | — — 2 59 — |
| Robertsbridge Jn. | 8 32 11 10 11 10 2 8 0 32 | — 10 30 6 28 |
| Bodiam | 8 46 11 24 11 24 2 22 0 40 | — 10 44 6 42 |
| Northiam for Beckley .. | 9 2 11 40 11 40 2 38 7 2 | — 11 0 6 58 |
| Wittersham Road | 9 11 11 49 11 49 2 47 7 11 | — 11 9 7 7 |
| Tenterden | arr. 9 22 12 0 12 0 2 58 7 22 | — 11 20 7 18 |

(a) Wednesdays and Saturdays excepted.

(b) Wednesdays only.

(c) Saturdays only.

All Trains 1st and 3rd Class.

Cheap Return Tickets will be issued to London from Robertsbridge in connection with the 7.30 a.m. Up Train on Wednesdays only. Fares: 1st Class 10/6, 2nd Class 7/6, 3rd Class 6/3; and to Hastings, 1st Class 3/-, 2nd Class 2/-, 3rd Class 1/5.

Every effort will be made to ensure the connections with the Trains of other Companies as shown, but the same cannot be guaranteed.

All enquiries on Traffic matters to be addressed to Traffic Office, Robertsbridge, and all suggestions or complaints to

H. J. STEPHENS,
GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE,
TUNBRIDGE.

Of note in this first year of operation is that first, second and third class fare are advertised from Robertsbridge 'Junction' to Hastings and London. The connecting companies are given as the South Eastern Railway and the South Coast Railway. Stephens' initials are wrongly given as H.J.; Northiam is said to be for Beckley and Tenterden is of course the present day Rotunden, then the terminus.

Even more remarkable is the survival of the receipt, the original of which is a deep pink colour.

Mrs Erica Levett continued to live at Court Lodge for 30 years and the railway occupied an important place in her life. Occasionally, she rode in one of the Ford back-to-back railbuses which she still remembers with some horror, "the noise was terrible and the vibration so bad that I carried on shaking after I had got off!" Tickets were purchased on route and she recalls the guard clambering along the running boards to take the fares. The sound of the train whistle was also useful to farm life. Each morning the cream was skimmed from the milk to make butter and if this was completed by the 7.30 am train whistle, Mrs Levett knew she was on time for her husband's breakfast.

As a major hop grower, the Levetts competed for the quality of their hops with Guinness Hop Farms Ltd who owned eight farms in the neighbourhood. Guinness's used fertilizer made from "town waste" (the residue of London refuse collections, which contained ash and paper decorations amongst everything else!) but Levetts used farm manure and fur waste, mainly rabbit and very smelly, obtained from furriers, which was thought to be a better product. The same hop pickers came back year after year and were collected from the station in farm wagons. About 150 came to Court Lodge, mostly Londoners of Irish origins. Mrs Levett reminded me that until the late 1920s, the K&ESR had some competition for the carriage of bulk supplies from the River Rother barges. These brought beach, sand, coal and timber from Rye to a wharf just below Bodiam Castle. The nearby bridge, built in 1796, was by then the limit of navigation on the river.

In 1942, Mrs Levett's three children were evacuated with their schools by rail to the Welsh Borders and she has provided us with the K&ESR invoice for the carriage of the children's luggage from Bodiam station. During the war, Bodiam was a restricted area for civilians. It was known as a 'fighter zone' and the coastal barrage balloons could be seen from Court Lodge. Altogether, 19 bombs and three landmines fell on the farm killing three rabbits and a mouse! Later in the war the area was known as 'Doodle Bug Alley' following the start of the German V1 guided missile offensive.

In 1953, Mrs Levett left Court Lodge to live at Water Mill Cottage, where she stayed for 19 years, and in 1972 left Bodiam altogether to live in retirement at Hastings. Although it became

CHEAP DAILY RETURN TICKETS

are issued as follows

| | 3rd class |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Tenterden and Robertsbridge | 2/10 |
| " " Headcorn | 1/8 |
| " " Northiam | 1/6 |
| Robertsbridge and Tenterden | 2/10 |
| Northiam " " | 1/6 |
| Headcorn " " | 1/8 |

Children under 3 years of age; when accompanied by an adult may travel free. Between 3 years of age and 12 years of age at half fare.

For particulars as to rates for Goods and Parcels apply to any Station or to the Managing Directors Office, Tonbridge, Kent.

H. F. STEPHENS,
Managing Director.

ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY.

Improvement of AFTERNOON HASTINGS SERVICE.

On and after MONDAY, JANUARY 28th, 1901, the Train leaving Robertsbridge at 2.33 p.m. will leave at 2.50 as under, reaching Tenterden at 3.32 in connection with the Train leaving Hastings at 2.20 p.m., or fifty minutes later than at present.

DOWN.

| | p.m. |
|---|-------|
| LONDON - - - | 12 48 |
| BRIGHTON - - - | 11 40 |
| LEWES - - - | 12 12 |
| EASTBOURNE } via St. Leonards, West Marina { | 1 5 |
| HASTINGS - - - | 2 20 |
| ROBERTSBRIDGE - - - | 2 50 |
| BODIAM - - - | 3 1 |
| NORTHAM - - - | 3 13 |
| WITTERSHAM ROAD - - - | 3 21 |
| TENTERDEN - - - | 3 32 |

No other alteration in December Time Bill.

By Order,

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S OFFICE,
TONBRIDGE.

January, 1901.

Applies to December Time Bill.

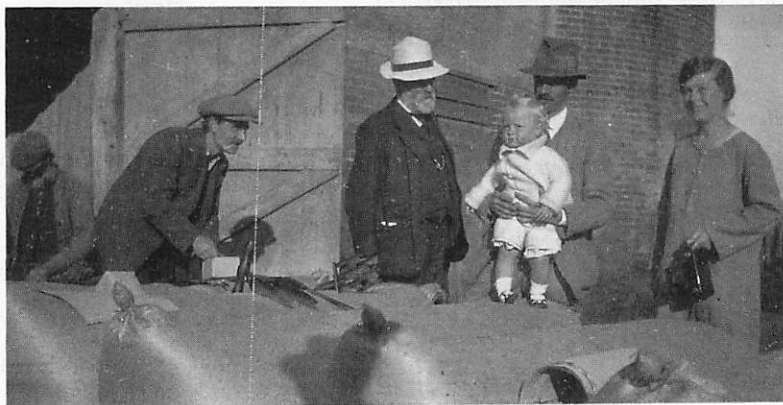
The 'improvement of service' handbill dated January 1901 was printed off-centre on what appears to be odd scraps of paper - an early indication of economy?

the Kent & East Sussex in 1904, Mrs Levett always thought of the railway as the Rother Valley line – and still does. A permanent local reminder of the family remains in the name of Levetts Lane, Bodiam, sold by them to Guinness's for the construction of 28 cottages. Another family connection with the K&ESR is provided by David Levett, a nephew of Mrs Levett, who until 1984 had for some years been

on the paid staff of the present Company, helping with the restoration of the line.

I am indebted to Mrs Levett for the loan of her papers to write this article and for her patience in replying to my queries. We are also grateful to her for the gift to the Archives of several items of railway ephemera, some of which are illustrated.

John Miller, archivist



Mrs Levett with husband Reginald, son Roger and Father-in-law Bertram. A sample from the hops is being taken for the factor.
(Collection Mrs E. Levett)

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More travels in Kent & Sussex

In The Tenterden Terrier No. 48 Gordon Webb described the appearances of the Kent & East Sussex Railway in the works of the novelist Sheila Kaye-Smith. Other railways also appeared in her writing and Gordon now describes some of these other literary expeditions.

The starting point in my previous article was the chapter in *The Weald of Kent and Sussex* (1953) in which Sheila Kaye-Smith took a detailed trip along the Kent & East Sussex. For most of the other trips described in that book she abandoned the railway for the road. She explains this change with regret: "The total distances covered by many of these lines would today be more quickly travelled by car – indeed I have beaten the train from Crowborough to East Grinstead on a bicycle – but they certainly did open up the hidden country of the Weald, and many of my young memories are set in friendly, talkative railway carriages . . . all the company one meets today in a country bus."

This does not totally exclude railways from appearing elsewhere in the book. She comments favourably on the fine service of trains on the Cuckoo Line but recalls less satisfaction with East Grinstead as a centre of communications: "East Grinstead was a great railway centre. I use the past tense because nationalisation threatens to rob it of at least two of the four lines that converge at its two stations. These are on two different levels . . . in my youth belonged to two different companies, who carefully arranged their timetables so as to avoid any possible connection."

For someone so familiar with the Kent & East Sussex it is strange that she has to confess never to have travelled on the Hawkhurst Branch; indeed she had only ever once seen a train on that line. As if to make up for this omission she manages to construct an extremely eccentric itinerary in *Shepherds in Sackcloth* (1930) where a character has occasion to travel between the vicinity of Bodiam and Sandhurst to Brighton. The route chosen is " . . . the old familiar struggle through Hawkhurst, Tonbridge and Lewes to the coast." There is evidence to suggest that the novel is set in the late twenties so that I would have thought that a more direct route would have been by Bodiam Station to Robertsbridge, thence to Hastings and the coast line direct to Brighton. Elsewhere in this book a clergyman comments on the "London Brighton and South Coast Religion". I have heard of this but I do not know exactly what it means.

Roundabout journeys are a common phenomenon in her novels. In *Iron and Smoke*, set before the First World War, a journey from Yorkshire to Heathfield finishes up not at Heathfield Station but at Battle whence the family landau, drawn by two horses, carries the characters the ten miles to Heathfield. Elsewhere the difficulties of travelling across the grain of the railway network, even by the most direct route, are well described in this journey from Heathfield to a fictitious destination near Canterbury: "He had usually left about ten, catching a train at Battle at 11.35, which brought him to Hastings twenty minutes later. She found a train leaving Hastings soon after one, and arriving at Ashford at 2.14. Then came a long wait, as a slow train to Canterbury was wanted, and there was none before half-past three." Eventually the station at 'Easternhanger' is reached at the end of the afternoon, with still six miles to go by horse and trap, arriving after dark. Nowadays the same journey would most likely be done by car, door to door, in about two hours. For timetable buffs, a comparison of pre-1914 train times with those in the novel might prove an interesting exercise.

The journey just described would have passed through Rye which features in her best known novel, *Joanna Godden* (1921): "Her sister came at Thomastide, and Joanna drove in to meet her at Rye. Brodnyx had now a station of its own on the new light railway from Appledore to Lydd, but Joanna was still faithful to Rye." The line referred to is the New Romney Branch and Brodnyx appears to have been based on Brookland which did have a halt on that line. Joanna eventually takes a trip on the line "She got out at Appledore and took the light railway to Brodnyx. The little train had a strange air of friendliness as it jogged across Romney Marsh. It ran familiarly through farms and back gardens, it meekly let the motor-car race it and pass it as it clanked beside the roads. The line was single all the way . . . Joanna climbed down on the wooden platform."

This novel eventually became the basis for the Ealing Studios film released in 1947 under the title *The Loves of Joanna Godden*. In the film the title role was played by Googie Withers, while her younger sister was played by Jean Kent. More importantly the role of the locomotive was played by Kent & East Sussex Railway No. 3 *BODIAM* disguised for the occasion as a S.E.C.R. locomotive. The scene featuring No. 3 is the meeting of the sister at Rye described

earlier but was actually filmed at Lydd where presumably filming was less likely to be interrupted by the arrival and departure of the day's timetabled services.

Apparently so many of Sheila Kaye-Smith's readers wrote in to her publishers to enquire of the subsequent fate of the heroine that she was constrained to write a sequel, *Joanna Godden Married* (1926). From the point of view of the Stephens' Railways enthusiast this was fortunate as the heroine was now placed in West Sussex, creating the opportunity for the authoress to bring in the Hundred of Manhood & Selsey Tramway, which in 1924 became the West Sussex Railway. Not unusually, she felt it necessary to indulge in name changing: "*So during the last days of June the Selsey Bill Railway took Joanna many times to and fro between Chichester and Sidlesham.*" There is no apparent reason why the name of the railway is different in the book as the names of real places for once remain unchanged.

This was actually the second appearance of the Selsey line in her work. In *Isle of Thorns* (1913), mostly set in the Ashdown Forest area and involving much travelling between Rowfant, Forest Row, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath, there is a change of scene to West Sussex: "*At three o'clock the little motor-train from Selsey to Chichester ran into Sidlesham Station.*" The reference to 'motor train' is curious as the novel pre-dates the introduction of petrol railmotors on the Selsey line. Although the expression was commonly used at this period for push-pull trains it is not one that Sheila Kaye-Smith uses elsewhere nor was push-pull operation a feature of the Selsey Tramway. It is possible that it was a phrase she had picked up from reading timetables without actually understanding what was precisely meant by the description.

Sheila Kaye-Smith did not ignore other forms of public travel in her books. In *Little England* (1918) there is much detailed information about tram routes in Hastings and the duties of



"*Ringling Rock*" runs into Chichester with a mixed train from Selsey on the West Sussex Railway.

(*Lens of Sutton*)

* * * *



* * * *

No. 3 "Bodiam" at Lydd Town in 1946 during the filming of *The Loves of Joanna Godden*. The Station has been renamed Brodnyx as can be seen from the nameboard.

(Colonel Stephens Historical Railway Archive)

a First World War bus conductress and *The George and the Crown* (1925) includes some telling descriptions of the life of a rural bus conductor in this period: "I'm to be a conductor on the Downs Omnibus Company's bus between Newhaven and Uckfield. I shall wear a fine coat with brass buttons. You'll be proud to know me." Such a declaration could just as easily have come from a guard or ticket inspector on one of the local railways at that time as would the following passage: "The work was arduous, but he liked . . . helping old women with heavy baskets, children on their way from school, mothers with large families . . . (and) throwing out drunken men who tried to travel

without a ticket." As many of our volunteer train and station staff would testify, the rewards and trials of serving the travelling public have not changed much over the years. Hopefully fare evasion by intoxicated passengers is not planned as part of our drive to recreate the authentic atmosphere of rural travel!

Which almost brings us back to the Kent & East Sussex just as the following descriptions of the fictitious Doleham Valley Railway in *Mrs Gaily* (1951) almost do: "All the heat of the summer's day seemed to burn on Doleham Valley Station. The unshaded platform breathed like a stove; the flowers

glared against the wall of the station-master's garden, the blue sky leaned and ached upon the roof." Does that sound familiar? Or this? "The ticket office and general waiting room of Doleham Valley Station contained a single six-foot bench . . . (and there was) a disordered chamber behind the booking office. Here branch-line goods awaited delivery by the slow travail of the station van, and several times a day the telephone rang unanswered while the station-master acted alternatively as signalman and porter." and finally: ". . . Old Chaffage hurrying along with a red flag to guard the gateless level crossing, but soon with a lot of noise and clouds of escaping steam a small train appeared and drew up at the platform. This must be what he called the 'up train', though it could be going no farther than Sandlake Junction on the main line ten miles away, it consisted of a saddle-tank engine, a single third class carriage and a couple of trucks."

This, surely, is the archetypal Kent & East Sussex station and train between the Wars or in that late period before Nationalisation. Elsewhere in the novel there are other clues: the railway is single line, it runs beside a river, it is in Sussex. The temptation to believe that this is the valley of the Rother can hardly be

resisted. Sandlake Junction could be Robertsbridge, Doleham Valley Station could be Northiam; but I do not think so. Robertsbridge is less than ten miles from Northiam and there is no stationmaster's garden surrounded by a wall. Elsewhere there are other clues to the locality and I am inclined to think that this is an imaginary line running along the Brede Valley. Sandlake Junction could have been derived from Senlac, a substitute name for Battle used elsewhere by Sheila Kaye-Smith. There is a real Doleham Halt which overlooks the River Brede on the Ashford to Hastings line and whilst these in no way match the station or line described they would seem to provide a clue to the intended location of Doleham Valley and its railway.

There are many other references to railways, real and imaginary, in the works of Sheila Kaye-Smith but this concludes my account of those on her home ground. I am grateful, as I hope you are, to that fertile mind which recorded the daily working of many railways but which returned so often for inspiration and detail to her local line, the Kent & East Sussex.

Gordon Webb

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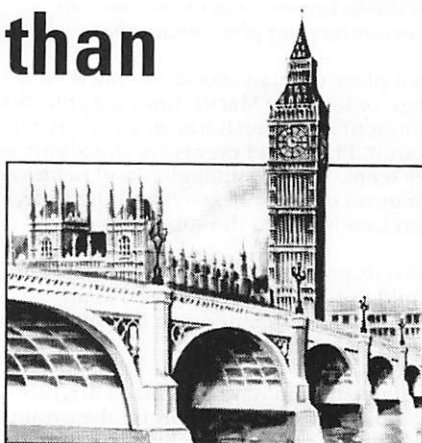
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A Signalman's Tale

"Ding! Ding!"

Two beats sounded on the block bell, the Tenterden signalman acknowledging my message that the train was entering the single-line section from Wittersham Road. I watched the locomotive lay down a smoke screen as it gathered speed; the first train I had signalled for six months was safely on its way back up the line. I replaced the starting signals to danger and returned to my bench.

It is always a quiet spot, even on a hot summer's day; few vehicles pass over the adjoining level crossing. The nearest houses are hidden from view. The oddly named hamlet of Potmans Heath is a mile away across the Levels, while eastwards Smallhythe can just be discerned in the distance.

The station is hemmed by pastures and golden corn fields, lines of reeds and willows marking their boundaries. Low ridges, cloaked by woods, rim the valley. Shades of yellow, green and blue gently blend together, making a landscape of constantly changing colours and patterns. Swans, herons, geese and ducks forever criss cross from one waterway feeding place to another.

It is a place of many moods, situated on the fringe of Romney Marsh. Known as the 'Sixth Continent', the Marsh has an air of mystery about it. Places and events are not always as they seem. Tales of smugglers and nefarious doings on desolate beaches and the wide, open Levels add to the superstition.

Given its proximity to the Marsh, perhaps I should not have been surprised at an incident that happened one day last year when I was signalman.

The late autumn day had started brightly enough. Dew still lay heavily on the ground and a light breeze whisked fallen leaves around in eddies. I opened up the signal box as usual, made contact with the Tenterden signalman and brewed up whilst waiting the first train. All was in order and the morning passed uneventfully. The permanent way yard saw a brief active period when a diesel engine fussed around shunting wagons before returning to Rolvenden with a short works train.

The first passenger train of the day arrived, disgorging passengers to watch the locomotive detach, run round and couple up again, before piling back on board again ready for departure. At the time trains still ran to Hexden Bridge. Slowly the train climbed through the cutting, the locomotive noisily propelling behind, to disappear out of sight over the summit. Some minutes later a whistle heralded the train's return and it was quickly on its way back towards Tenterden.

As I watched the train get smaller into the distance I remember thinking that visibility was deteriorating. The coaches finally faded into greyness near Gazedown Wood, the other side of Newmill bridge. The wind had dropped and the sun shone halo-like behind thin cloud. Perceptibly, my horizons gradually closed in as a bank of mist rolled down the valley, carpeting the fields. I could no longer see Newmill bridge; then the trees near the line also disappeared from view. Gone were the houses at Potmans Heath. Soon I was in my own white world, unable to see more than a hundred yards or so in any direction. The mist lay moist and clammy everywhere.

I could barely make out the water tower and signals beyond the platform but little more. I was struck how quickly the conditions had changed. Sounds travelled across the levels in the still air: I could hear cattle and sheep but how far away I could not judge.

I debated whether we should stop the train services but I could make out my fog clearance point, the shunt signal at the far end of the loop which if I could still see there was no cause to suspend operations. The signal lamps were still alight from the previous evening, so perhaps I was misled into believing visibility was better than it really was. I telephoned my colleague at Tenterden who told me that all was clear his end. We agreed that trains should still run, I promised to inform him should visibility deteriorate further. A few minutes later I was offered the lunchtime service on the token instrument. This I accepted and soon afterwards was advised the train was on its way to me.

Twenty minutes later, the approach signals

having been pulled off in good time, the train appeared out of the mist, sounds of its approach evident well beforehand. The routine runround, trip to Hexden Bridge and return all passed uneventfully. I exchanged single line tokens with the fireman on the train's return past the signal box and shouted a greeting. The train paused briefly at the platform before slipping into the enfolding mist.

"Ding! Ding!"

The Tenterden signalman returned my entering section bells and I entered the time in the signalbox register. I listened to the locomotive's exhaust fade into the distance. Closing the door on the miserable clammy air, I made myself cozy by turning up the mantles on the gas lamps – there are no electric lights here – and settled back on my bench to while away the time with a book. I was soon well engrossed and was only vaguely aware of the passage of time.

"Ding! Ding!" a pause, "Ding!"

I was startled by the train out of section bells, a little muted perhaps but a glance at the clock showed the train was now due back at Tenterden. I acknowledged the message as usual, recording the time. I noticed that the block indicator pointed to line clear. Almost immediately I heard a further single bell calling my attention which I acknowledged. This was followed by a quartet of rings. I was surprised to be offered a train so quickly, especially a non-stop passenger train, but with a clear section I had no reason to refuse it. Accepting it, I watched the galvanometer needle quiver indicating that a token had been withdrawn at the other end.

I searched for the latest traffic notice, wanting to confirm that this train had been diagrammed. The box's copy was missing but I was not unduly bothered knowing we had run several lunchtime Pullmans in recent weeks. I tried the telephone but, inexplicably, the circuits were dead. I awaited the train entering section signal but it never came.

Time passed slowly. Dimly I heard a locomotive's whistle somewhere in the distance. It was repeated several times, long mournful sounds drifting through the mist. Later, I recalled this was when I began to feel uneasy. Why was the locomotive whistling so much? Perhaps the driver was being cautious

in the limited visibility. I picked up the telephone again, hoping to make some reassuring contact; when alone imagination can do funny things, even in daylight hours and it is comforting to speak to someone.

Another whistle, seemingly much closer. I glanced at the register and saw that almost thirty minutes had elapsed since my last entry, the normal time for Pullman luncheon trains. With a small locomotive attached either end for operating convenience, I anticipated the train to pass through the station non-stop and to wait at Hexden Bridge until the next service train arrived at my station. I remember thinking the diners would not have much of a view while they waited.

I opened the crossing gates, the lamps flickering in the misty air. Back inside the box I lowered the signals and, almost immediately, there was a whistle which I took to be the driver acknowledging the clear home signal. I waited on the veranda of the cabin, ready to exchange tokens with the rearmost locomotive's fireman.

The train materialised through the mist at the far end of the station. Smoke and steam billowed from the little locomotive at the head of the train, adding to the gloomy atmosphere. I recognised it as our ex-SECR 'P' class engine. I looked back for the second locomotive but it was obscured from view by the carriages.

Much closer now. The train was travelling faster than I expected. I saw that the locomotive was stained and grimy, not its usual smart SR livery. A man leaned out of the cab looking towards me but did not see me. I did not recognise him.

Where was our normally smart Pullman set? Instead there clattered past me two old bogie coaches, sagging, stained timber panels between the doors, droplights sealed shut. I saw dirty brass handles and long hand rails, broken running boards the length of each coach; droplights were all secured up. A face stared at me from a duckett window in the second coach. Then nothing. Where was the second steam engine?

I stood transfixed, an icy chill enveloping me. The final pair of wheels rattled on the pointwork, over the level crossing. A red lamp flickered at the rear, rapidly fading as the train crested the bank, slipping back into

the mist.

A final glimpse of red. Then nothing. No whistle. No sound. Silence. I don't know how many minutes passed. A hoot. I saw a car waiting for the crossing gates.

"When are you going to open this crossing?" I heard a voice ask impatiently.

In a trance I opened the gates and the car sped past. I wondered how long had I kept it waiting. On return to the cabin I saw that the signals were still pulled off so I put them back to danger. How could I miss seeing the rear locomotive? Automatically, I recorded the time in the register.

Suddenly the telephone rang. I lifted the receiver but I was unable to say anything. I half heard a voice at the other end say that a blown fuse had been replaced and that everything should now be working properly. Something had made contact with the wires. Suddenly, I jerked to attention, listening very intently. The voice was going on about the up passenger train being very delayed and was only now leaving Rolvenden for Tenterden. In disbelief I let the telephone slip from my grasp, leaving it to swing on its cord.

Sometime later, I don't know how long passed, I heard feet on the steps.

"Hullo. Is everything well? Are you all right?" someone called.

I looked up, the mist was clearing. I was joined in the box by another signalman whom I knew well.

"I was sent to see if anything was wrong. You lifted the receiver when we telephoned but didn't say anything", he said cheerily.

He went on "Did you hear the message about cattle, young heifers they were, breaking down a fence and escaping on to the line? Caused all sorts of problems in the mist. They kept running along the line and wouldn't be caught. They even ran into the low wires by Newmill bridge which probably caused the fuses to blow. Eventually they were turned into a field near Pope's Cottage. They haven't half disrupted today's services!"

I told him about the train that had passed me in the mist, going in the opposite direction.

"But the up train has only just arrived at

Tenterden and nothing has been sent your way." He was more serious now.

I repeated that 1556 had passed hauling a train of strange antique coaches. I emphasised I received block bell codes which I had properly acknowledged.

"Those bells must have been caused by the cattle brushing the wires together before they fused. The rest must have been your imagination!" The other signalman was insistent.

I protested that a train had passed me and must still be at Hexden Bridge. I told him to look for himself. I remembered the entries I had made in the register.

"Look, here are its times, all properly recorded! I thought it was the Pullman but it must have been some special working which I wasn't told about!"

A momentary frown crossed his face.

"You must have been dreaming. It's all in your imagination." Then he added "I assure you no train has come this way. And if you think you have seen 1556, look into Rolvenden shed – you will find it's being repaired!"

I shook my head in disbelief. I realised he thought I had an over active imagination in the mist. Clearly I was unfit to continue my duty and I was not surprised when he told me that he was taking over from me for the rest of the day.

I descended the steps from the box. Instead of getting into my car, I was in no fit state to drive, I made my way along the track westwards, following the passage of my train. Approaching Hexden Bridge I came to the sign 'All trains stop here'. A few yards on the wooden barrier, usually locked across the rails, lay to one side of the sleepers. I continued over the bridge to the last length of rails.

Nothing, no train, just empty trackbed stretching towards Northiam.

So it was my imagination! As I turned to retrace my path I looked down. The railheads shone brightly, rust free. Something had recently passed this way.

Neil Rose

Letters to the Editor

Bodiam to Robertsbridge

Sir – As a new member I am keen to see the Railway succeed, so I was a little concerned at the negative responses to the ideas of Jonathan Dalton, Robin Doust and Christopher Davis to complete the line to Robertsbridge.

I have recently been to Robertsbridge and noted the new by-pass, which as you rightly said cuts the old track bed. But since the road in question is only a single carriageway, a modern fast acting level crossing could be installed with little difficulty and disruption to the traffic on the A21.

The benefit of the railway linking up as it used to would far outweigh any problems with crossing the Robertsbridge by-pass. For a start, a link up with British Rail as has happened at Alton with the Mid-Hants Railway, with connecting services, the increase in tourism and trade to the Tenterden Chamber of Trade are all instant benefits. As well as many more unforeseen.

I am fully in favour of pushing the line through to Robertsbridge, its rightful conclusion. If it is not, the line will remain a difficult to get to backwater and will never achieve its full potential.

I look forward to hearing your views on this matter.

Ewell, Surrey

Brett Scillitoe

The Company gave an undertaking to the relevant authorities at the time of the granting of the Light Railway Order not to proceed with the section from Bodiam to Robertsbridge for ever, and it was only on this understanding that the application for the Tenterden to Bodiam section was granted. – Editor.

And so to Bodiam . . .

Sir – Knowing John Miller's insistence on accuracy, I feel I should point out a mistake in his article on Bodiam station in the winter 1989 issue of the *Tenterden Terrier*. The fireplace was not installed for a "Bootsie and Snudge" series but for an unmemorable comedy series with the same actors entitled "The Train Now Standing", filmed at Bodiam in 1972. The BTH diesel-electric painted light grey was the unlikely motive power and one of the unfortunate SE&CR birdcage coaches sported a purple livery to represent a royal saloon!

Hartlip, Kent

Mark Yonge

The Colonel's Pipedreams/from The Railway Archives

Sir – With reference to the article in No. 49 on the Wantage Tramway, the history of the second Hurst Nelson car is not quite as stated. It ran as a private carriage on the Nidd Valley Light Railway for some years from 1904, but was returned to the makers in 1910. The truck was used for another purpose, and two years later the body was re-used to form a car for the Wantage Tramway. The 1912 plate was therefore correct.

The platelayers' trolley on the lower photo on p. 47 of your Winter 1989 issue was a Northiam when I visited the station on 31 August 1932. This could mean that it is the correct date for the shots, or perhaps it was always kept there. A feature was a spring-loaded pedal for applying the brakes; the man of the left seems to have his foot on it.

Llandre, Bow Street, Dyfed

R.W. Kidner

Where are they now?

Sir – with reference to issue number fifty of the *Terrier*, may I comment on one or two points please.

Firstly your editorial asks the whereabouts of members of Gordon Laming's 'South London Group'. To my knowledge there are four surviving regular volunteers; Kevin Jarvis (Pullman Bar manager and Diesel Driver amongst other things), Nick Wellington (S&T Dept and Operating Dept), Mark Stutchbury (Diesel Driver and Steam Fireman) and myself (Operating Manager). It should also be mentioned that the Thameside Group which flourishes as an 'umbrella' for many Volunteers in the SE London/NW Kent area was formed by members of the old South London Group. If any 'Lamingites' are reading this letter then come on down and see us, you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Secondly congratulations to 'Nessie' Toynbee on an excellent article on the Fairer Sex's involvement in the Railway. As one who married one of (the then) few young lady volunteers some six years ago the recent influx of ladies is to me a good thing (keeps the men in order!!). I feel that there are few, (if any) jobs that the ladies cannot do and I can only echo Vanessa's appeal to 'come and get involved'.

Maidstone, Kent

Neil Sime

Book Reviews

Brazilian Sketches by Rudyard Kipling, published by P.E. Waters & Associates. 64 pages in A5 format of text and illustrations. Obtainable from the Publisher at 105 Highland Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 4HA, price £3.95 post paid.

Paul Waters has compiled Brazilian Sketches from the original seven articles published in the Morning Post between 29th November and 20th December 1927. Apart from inclusion in the Sussex edition of Kipling, no longer readily obtainable, they do not appear to have been published elsewhere. Archive material in the Colonel Stephens Museum confirms that Kipling was an acquaintance, if not a friend, of Colonel Stephens and was supplied with a courtesy "free pass" on all the Stephens lines. Stephens and Kipling sometimes shared a compartment together when travelling up to London – Kipling, of course, lived at Batemans and maybe used Etchingham Station nearby.

In the article entitled "The Romance of Railway Building" Kipling writes – "There came up in my head the memory of another line – in the milk trade – several miles long laid out just below winter flood mark of an English Valley. At intervals, therefore, it is immobilised. On one occasion I met a Director, who said that six

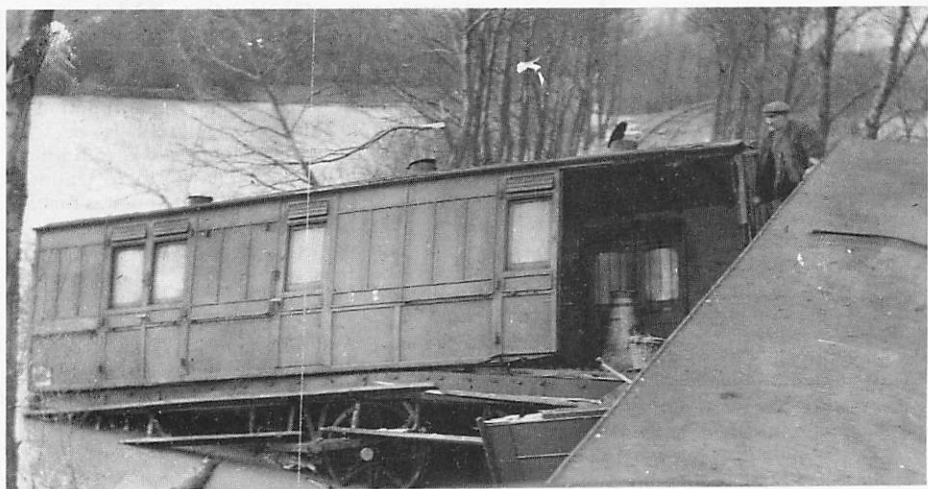
passengers and the milk van were sitting afar off, in cold water. And what are you going to do, said I. Oh the passengers can walk (Do 'em good). Do you know where one can borrow a pair of horses?"

If the reference is indeed to Stephens, the dialogue is true to form. This interesting little book provides a tantalising introduction to the Kipling Connection, which justifies further research.

P.D.S.

The Island Terriers by M J E Reed, published by Kingfisher Railway Productions at £4.95 covers the history of the eight Terrier Class locomotives that operated on the Isle of Wight. It succeeds in combining detail with readability and the text is supported by an excellent selection of photographs. The book does not confine itself to the activities of these locomotives whilst on the Island but also covers their careers before and after their periods there. Once again the impression is reinforced that no two Terriers were alike and since two of our own locomotives are described in detail this book will be of particular interest to members.

S.R.G.



The "Wreck of the Hesperus" at Padgham Curve in February 1916; note milk churns in damaged van.
(Colonel Stephens Historical Railway Archive)

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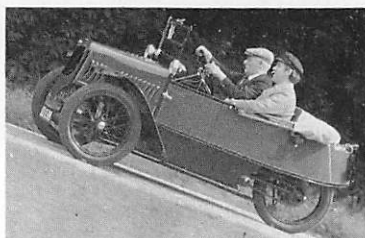


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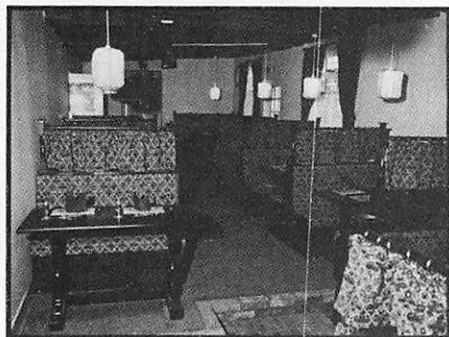
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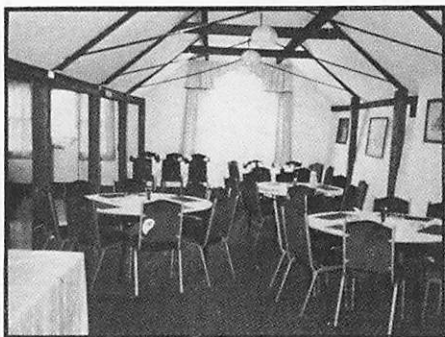
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