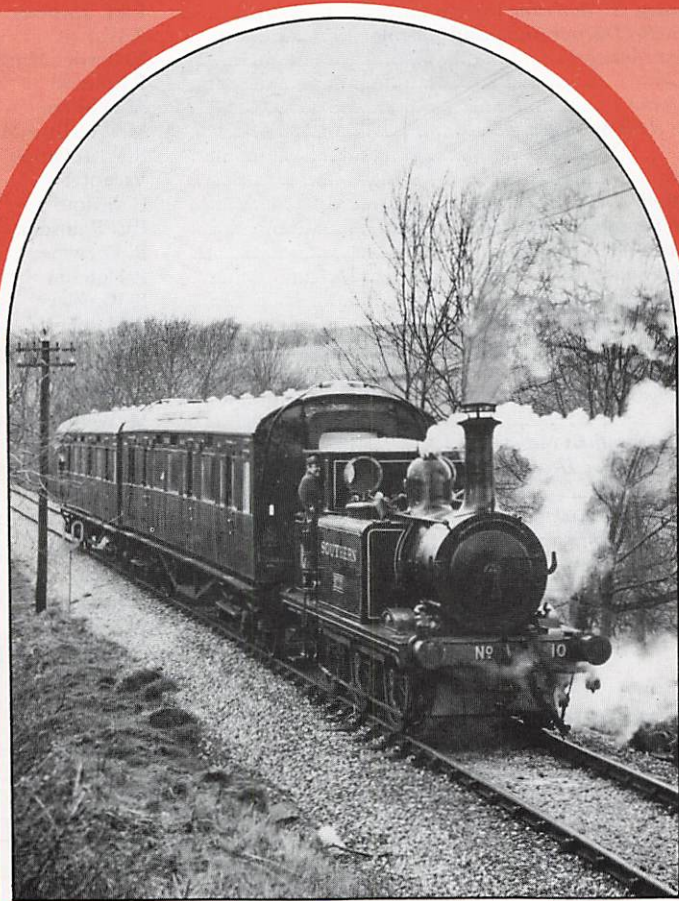


# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 53

Winter 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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K.W. Lee	D.M. Stratton (Chairman)	P. Wilson

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<i>Civil Engineering Department Director</i> .....	P. Wilson
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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.

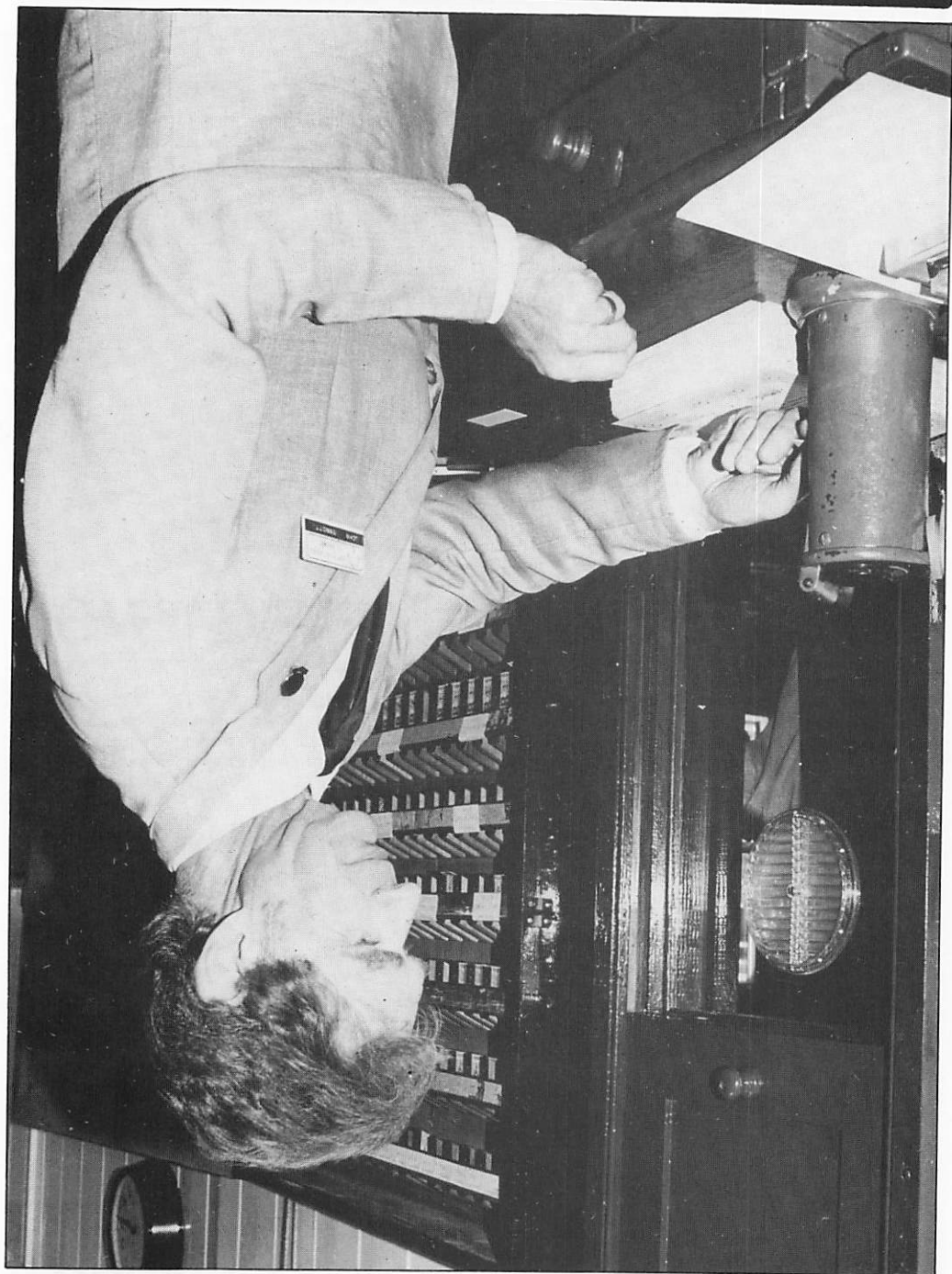
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## Great Dixter



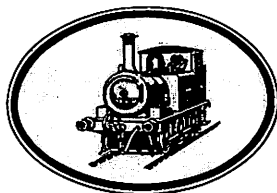
The 500 year old manor hall is open every afternoon (except ordinary Mondays) from April to mid October, also weekends October 20/21 & 27/28, open 2 p.m., last admission 5 p.m. The gardens, well known for the wide variety of plants is open earlier at 11 a.m. on May 26/27/28, Sundays in July & August, also August 27th. Some of the unusual plants have won awards at the Royal Horticultural Society shows in London. *1 1/2 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





# The Tenterden Terrier



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## Editorial

### Vision or pipedream?

The feasibility study in connection with a possible extension back to Robertsbridge is an unexpected development. A link with the main line would establish us as a "proper" railway in a way that we can never hope to achieve as an isolated section. For this reason alone, the concept is aesthetically appealing. As an engineering project, it is in no way so daunting as has been achieved elsewhere in the preservation movement; the capital cost, not so high as to preclude purchase through a separately launched company; the support - considerable and backed up by no less an ally than British Rail. At the end of the day, any negative factors may be essentially commercial. Although the additional three miles would open up a shorter route to Bodiam via Robertsbridge it would arguably add little of interest to passengers from Tenterden.

For Network South East the financial benefits at the Robertsbridge end are obvious; for the Kent & East Sussex less so. A modest fare for a relatively short journey may constitute the bulk of revenues, given the thriving National Trust shop and restaurant at Bodiam Castle. The operating economics will no doubt be carefully considered, but as a Charity, concerned primarily with preserving the whole of the Rother Valley Railway, should we be too concerned with these anyway?

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1990

*FRONT COVER No.10 "Sutton" climbs Tenterden Bank with a Robtenden-Tenterden Town "vintage train" on 25th February 1990.*  
(Brian Stephenson)

*FRONTISPIECE Chief Booking Clerk, John Emmott, in action at Northiam on 19th May 1990.*  
(Brian Stephenson)

# Lineside News



## Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

*Our first peak season, running through to Northiam, is now over. Not only have the volunteer resources been fully stretched but so also have the locos and track. Added to this was yet another bone dry summer with the almost inevitable lineside fires. Then, just as the summer was over the annual event came and with it the rain. Justice can sometimes be difficult to find.*

*The passenger numbers are up beyond not only our conservative predictions but also against most of the more optimistic ones. Mid-week days at Northiam have seen up to 300 or more passengers starting their journeys here. The fears that many more might take single journeys have proved not to be the case. However Wittersham has really been left to return to a somnolent state where trains might stop but might as well pass straight through for all the passengers who alight. The Permanent Way gang have largely taken over sole ownership. The high hopes for Wittersham when the station opened never seemed to come to fruition.*

*Looking forward to the winter gives an indication of the toll on the track that the summer has wrought. Most of the section from Wittersham to Newmill bridge is in need of renewal and this is another mammoth job requiring all hands to help out. This all indicates the scale of the task to be achieved before Bodiam, far less Robertsbridge, can be reached.*

## From the Board Room

by Ray Williams

Midnight oil continues to be burnt on a number of Fridays, but a recent all day Saturday meeting to discuss the future of the railway proved

useful, and the results were shared at a subsequent Volunteer's meeting, when (surprise, surprise!) those present found that they had very largely reached the same conclusions as the Directors. The organisation of these events was very largely in the hands of Derek Dunlavy and Andrew Webb.

The vexed question of lineside fires has taken up time at several recent meetings. The board is sensitive about the company's public relations, and David Stratton, as Chairman, makes considerable efforts to see that we act responsibly.

The two Finance Directors, Alan Robinson and David Felton, have continued in their efforts to make ends meet, with, if possible, an overlap. Their work load is probably the heaviest of all the directors. The full effects of this year's record business will not be seen until 1991. Meanwhile, the effects of the extension project, influenced by continuing high interest rates, have tended to dominate the figures.

A report has been received containing proposals for the development of the Tenterden Site. The board is grateful to Mark Yonge and his committee for this. At the other end of the line Mark Toynbee was commissioned to undertake a feasibility study with regard to an extension onto the Robertsbridge and Bodiam section. Clearly this has to be viewed in relation to what happens between Northiam and Bodiam.

Domestic/administrative matters inevitably creep into most meetings. Paul Ramsden and Raymond Williams have done some work on a standard contract of employment for company employees. The Company By-laws, and the Disciplinary procedures have also come under scrutiny. The writing of directors' job specifications is now standard practice, as an implicit self-assessment programme, and as an aid to future Board appointments, following the annual elections, to be reflected also in the conduct of the departments for which the individual directors are responsible.

At the AGM a proposal to increase the number of directors from 9 to 10 will have been tabled. It remains to be seen whether this attempt to spread the exorbitant work load will be approved by the members.

In a largely voluntary organisation, relationships within the Company are important. Managers and directors do interact, but, to a small minority of working volunteers, the board has been seen as too remote. It has to be remembered that all the directors are also

working volunteers, and are therefore in the same relationship with the "work force" as their fellow volunteers. Nevertheless, regular Volunteers Meetings are held, at which information is disseminated, and full and frank debate takes place.

### **Steam Locomotive**

No.3 (Bodiam): Quotes have been obtained for a new boiler for Bodiam. This matter is now being considered.

No.8 (Knowle): Frames and wheels have now been painted. The next step is to lower the frames on to the axle-boxes.

No.10 (Sutton): No.10 failed in service due to a hot left hand big end. This was repaired and the loco has run well since. It has just received a boiler washout and inspection.

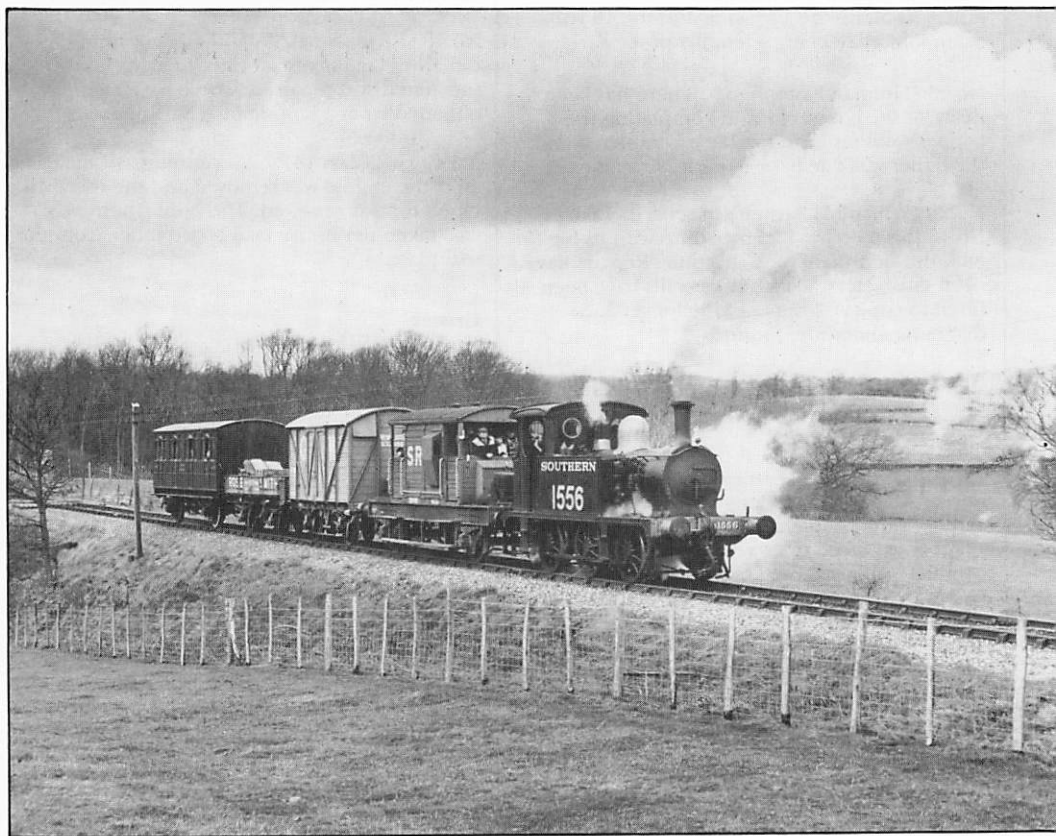
No.11 (1556): In service and running well. As for No.10 the P class has just received a boiler washout and inspection.

No.12 (Marcia): Owner Dick Beckett has been working on Marcia again and more progress has been achieved towards its overhaul.

No.14 (Charwelton): The boiler is now back permanently in position. A new smoke box door has been made by contractors in New Barnet. The boiler lagging and cladding have been refitted.

No.19 (Norwegian): Work progress has been slow due to holidays. However the work on the front end boiler supports has recommenced.

No.20 (GWR Railcar): Little has been done for about a year but work is now progressing again



*"P" Class 1556 climbs towards Cranbrook Road with a Rolvenden to Tenterden Town mixed train on 25th February 1990.*

*(Brian Stephenson)*

with up to 6 people helping once a fortnight. The gang have discovered Bob Jones' good work at the Robertsbridge end. He had renewed the old wartime steel screws which had preserved the woodwork very well. It is a different story at the other end where much woodwork, including the cant rail, must be replaced.

**No.21 (Wainwright):** The boiler is still at Messrs Hedges for its new tube plate and tubes. The frames still sit in the sidings, completed, awaiting return of the boiler.

**No.22 (Maunsell):** This loco seems reluctant to complete her 10 year stint before her boiler exam.

She failed in service just short of the level crossing at Northiam during August, when a piston nut broke. Fortunately damage was slight, though it could have been much worse, and the loco returned to traffic soon afterwards. Many other problems are surfacing and the 10 year exam looks like being a lengthy process.

**No.23 (Holman F Stephens):** There has been a delay, at the contractors, in completing the copper welding. This has been completed and the boiler was due back in early November.

**No.24 (William H Austen):**In service - Like No.10 this loco has had problems with its big end, the right hand one this time. Repairs have been satisfactory. Coal bunker rails have been fitted to cope with some of the longer loco diagrams sometimes found.

**No.25 (Northiam):** In service - performing well though it is due for a 10 year boiler lift next year. New brake blocks have been fitted.

**No.26 (Linda):**Has been in service but failed during August with leaking tubes. Before the extent of the problem is fully known a dozen or so tubes will need to be removed. It may need a complete renewal. Coal bunker rails have also been fitted.

**No.27 (Rolvenden):** Continues to be driven into oblivion by the younger generation.

#### **Diesel Locomotives**

**No.40 (Ford)** Repairs can be carried out as soon as time can be made available.

**No.41 (Ruston):** Returned to service after extensive repairs to the engine governor. This loco has been out of service since May 1989.

**No.42 (Hunslet):** Awaits staff to refit wheels, it

could also do with new axle-bearings.

**No.43 (Titan):** Out of service after sterling work, awaiting new seals for input bearing shaft of a now obsolete final drive.

There remains confusion over which loco really is 46 and which is 47. The Terrier has not been able to make a consistent story out of this and has randomly applied information against either number in the past. However the loco department assure me that 46 is being repaired and 47 is in store awaiting attention. Hopefully readers will be able to allocate previous references to the locos correctly.

**No.46 (BR Class 03):** Still in the shed for commissioning which proceeds only when staff are available, hence the work is slow.

**No.47 (BR Class 03):** Awaiting resources and staff for complete overhaul, like No 46.

**No.48 (BR class 14):** Awaiting restoration - radiator elements (ex a class 26 loco) being shortened and repaired. These have been obtained from a scrapman at St. Rollox.

**No.49 (BR Class 14):** Now running satisfactorily after the engine was removed and the metalstik type supports renewed. The opportunity was also taken to remove coal board muck from the seal plate.

#### **Cranes**

**No. 133 (DS451):** In service.

**No.145 (DS1770):** A match wagon has been obtained for the Grafton crane but a jib roller must first be fitted by C&W. After this repairs to the crane can be contemplated.

**No.151 (81S):** In service - in regular use refitting boilers, recently to Nos.19 & 14.

#### **Staff**

Simon Long has joined the full time staff at Rolvenden. Whilst Bob Forsyth and Paul Hatcher concentrate on the mechanical side as fitters Simon is employed firstly as a driver though he has many other jobs around the yard and railway in general.

#### **Carriage and Wagon**

**MK 1 Coaches**

Composite, CK86, was repainted in red and cream in June thereby completing the red and cream set which comprises the following: DBO 75 (Petros), TO 64 & 85, CK 86.



No 85 was put into the workshop for one week in early July for re-varnishing, bogie adjustment and steam heat pipe repairs.

No 64 was also put in for one week in early September for repairs to a defective vacuum brake cylinder which required the renewal of the rubber piston rolling ring.

The remaining 4 MK 1's are formed into a set which will ultimately be painted maroon. Details of these coaches are as follows: CK 87, maroon TO 65, maroon TK 63, brown and cream. Exterior in fair condition. Interior in poor condition, requires new flooring, panelwork repairs and revarnishing. Will be withdrawn in 1991 for heavy overhaul. BTO 73, brown and cream. Exterior bodywork in poor condition, corrosion in door panels and surrounding windows. Will be withdrawn in 1991 for heavy overhaul.

#### **Pullman Set**

BSO 53 (4432): Was put into the workshops during August for maintenance attention to bodywork. Exterior window frames were varnished and the roof canvas repaired and repainted. Some interior ceiling panels were repainted.

Barbara (No.52): Put into the workshops after BSO 4432. The roof was painted and bodyside paint work made good and varnished. Repairs and modifications have been carried out to the electric equipment and all the under floor cables have been renewed. A new set of gangway bellows were fitted to the Headcorn end to replace those temporarily repaired after the shunting damage in 1988.

PMV 74 (1808): Further repairs carried out to the gangway which was also damaged in 1988. Modifications have been made to the faceplate support brackets and suspension linkage in order to eliminate fouling when coupled with buckeye gangway stock. A new set of bellows will be fitted when the modifications are completed.

#### **Other Carriage work**

Maunsell CK 56: Little progress has been made on this due to more pressing commitments elsewhere. Moquette is on order for the first class seating. This is a reproduction of the original pattern which is being produced by a firm in Halifax. Quotations are being sought for the retrimming of the seats and it is intended to concentrate on this coach soon with a view to completing it early next year.

GER 6 wheel composite 81: This was shunted

into the workshop on 19th May, along with LNWR saloon 82, for completion of restoration work. Inspection of the body revealed that one side had weathered badly due to poor protection in the past by only being painted in primer. The whole of the side was stripped and fitted with new marine plywood panels and mouldings, at the same time the doors were repaired and strengthened. The door locks and handles are being fitted along with bump stops and grab handles.

Internally the ceiling panels are being fitted to first class compartments and the bodywork is being prepared for varnishing. The former luggage compartment, which is in the centre of the coach, is being fitted out as a guards compartment. A handbrake column has been fitted, connected up to the brakework and a vacuum brake application valve fitted. Seating for this coach is from a MK 1 composite coach and all seats have been stripped down to the frames for modifying and lengthening. They will be sent to contractors for trimming in authentic style moquette.

Two damaged axleboxes have been replaced, while the coach was jacked up. This also allowed easier fitting of steam heating equipment.

LNWR 6 wheel saloon 82: Severe rot was found in the verandah framing at one end of the coach. A complete new verandah and floor has been built and fitted which required the complete body to be lifted off the underframe by 6" to allow fitting of the tenon joints. Minor repairs have been carried out to the interior and 12 dining car armchairs have been stripped and varnished, they will be installed when the seat bases and backs have been retrimmed.

#### **Wagons**

SR 8 plank wagons 148 & 147 (11530 & 37064): were repaired during August and September. Both required numerous bodyside and floor boards renewed. No 11530 has had the Oleo pneumatic buffers removed and the original spindle type fitted. Both wagons have been repainted in Southern brown.

SER 6 wheel goods brakevan 102 (2010): Put into the workshops during August for a light overhaul including a repaint and repairs to the brakework. A small section of verandah framing has been replaced and repairs carried out to the verandah doors.

Three wagons (wood-framed dropside 110, flat 114 and Midland Railway goods van 135) have been removed from the running fleet, on 13th July they were craned off the sidings and put on



*H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester speaking to the assembled guests, on the occasion of the official opening to Northiam on 4th June 1990.*  
(Elena Esau)

static display at Tenterden. At the moment they stand on concrete but a section of track will be provided underneath in due course. The Midland van has subsequently been repainted in grey and a new roof canvas fitted. The other two will receive repaints soon. All have grease axleboxes, which require constant servicing, when in service, and also weak underframes.

Also put on display at Tenterden, but still in the running fleet, are the GWR twin bolster wagon 139 & 140 (nos 32337 and 32338). They were shunted onto the C&W workshop forecourt on 5th August.

#### **New arrivals**

7-3-90 ex-Ashford SECR PMV 2012 built in 1922. Converted in 1948 to a mess and tool van for mobile generating set, renumbered ADS1035: KE&SR No 89.

7-3-90 ex-Ashford. LSWR "ironclad" corridor third S730. Built 1923, converted in 1959 to riding van for Motive Power Depot breakdown train at Nine Elms. Renumbered D5228. Latterly based at East Wimbledon. K&ESR No 90. Purchased privately.

6-4-90 ex-Eastleigh. SR Lowmac wagon built 1923 at Ashford, S61048. Carrying capacity 21 tons. In 1963 transferred to internal use in Eastleigh Works and renumbered 081807. Purchased by Tenterden Rolling Stock Group.

13-7-90 ex-Stewarts Lane. SR Maunsell restriction O composite S5600. Converted in 1962 to inspection saloon DS70155 and used by Southern Region General Manager and Chief Civil Engineer. Latterly used as guards route leaning saloon. Purchased by TRSG. K&ESR No 91.

16-8-90 ex-York. Crane match wagon DS3141. Formerly SECR Composite coach built 1900 by Metropolitan Railway C&W Co. Converted in 1948 by removing body. K&ESR No 162. Purchased by TRSG. Will be used with steam crane DS1770 (K&ESR No 145). It will replace wagon No 146 which was converted from a match wagon to a bogie flat wagon in 1989.

24-5-90 ex-Hither Green. SR PMV S1228 built in 1935. Converted in 1950 to mess and tool van for Civil Engineers. The body had been damaged by fire which was the reason for its disposal from BR. Has been purchased by the



*No.10 "Sutton" and "P" Class 1556 gather speed out of Northiam with the return special from Northiam on the occasion of the official opening on 4th June 1990.*  
(Mike Esau)

Ashford Area Group to use the underframe for one of the LCDR coach bodies rescued from Ashford in 1986. The body will be removed soon.

### **Staff**

In May the full time staff in C&W was doubled by the employment of Steve Beastall as a carriage carpenter and joiner. Steve is also a volunteer and has been involved in the repairs of the LNWR and GER 6 wheel coaches. Maurice Dullen is in his second year with the company. He is largely responsible for the quick turnaround of coaches this year by carrying out repainting, varnishing and body repairs, in addition to helping on the 6 wheelers.

### **Permanent Way**

During the summer spot resleepering, and changing of broken chairs, has been undertaken from Tenterden to Willows curve. Observant passengers will have noticed the white crosses, marking rotten or otherwise finished sleepers, for many years. These are the ones now replaced. The summer heat has caused a fair number of problems, especially by the home signal at Wittersham Road where a large kink appeared during a mid-week service. Fortunately

two members of the gang were working on the railway that day and they were able to effect a temporary repair. The following weekend saw a gang at work to fix the problem a little more permanently.

It is this section of the line, which comprises the majority of the remaining metal sleepers, which is due for renewal during this winter. The metal sleepers have served the line well for many years but on ash ballast they have rotted away to virtually nothing in places. Work has already commenced, in Wittersham yard, to prepare for the renewals with concrete sleepers being repaired and laid out in preparation for the 9 weeks of intense activity required.

On 7th August a Plasser Theurer 05 tamper was bought privately from the Mid-Hants railway. This machine has been out on several occasions already and the department is slowly mastering the settings needed to operate it under all conditions. Several sections of track have been upgraded at a considerable saving compared with hiring in an outside tamper. This anyway is not always as easy an operation as it at first seems, if only because organising a single big operation is more difficult than several small

ones. This will become more important as time passes with the increases in both traffic and length of the line. The combination of tamper with the ballast regulator will allow us to perform this trackwork when we need it done and at the most appropriate moment rather than just once a year.

### **Signals and Telegraph**

Rolvenden signalling seems to have settled in well now and be operating relatively free from problems. Newly appointed manager, Peter Lawrence has spent much time upgrading the arrangements for the single line Tablet instruments used between Rolvenden and Tenterden. These have failed a few times causing pilotman working to be substituted. Generally operator experience is rising, as well as robustness of the equipment, hence failures are becoming less frequent. The mechanical locking of Rolvenden signalbox is being upgraded. The previous locking was deemed strong enough for only temporary use. This has been done over a two week period at the end of September.

The Orpins siding ground frame, which has been delayed since the opening of the signalbox, is now complete under the leadership of Graeme Richards.

Preparatory work has also started on the ground frame for Wittersham P.Way yard siding. However this is a larger job involving a seven lever ground frame in a small, unobtrusive, hut, hence it will take some time to complete.

The overhead pole route continues to be maintained to its usual high standard. Several poles have been renewed on the Northiam to Wittersham section. The wiring for the float switch at Hexden bridge is now complete. The switch will warn the signalman at Wittersham when the bridge abutments might be flooded and hence possibly subject to scouring. It only remains to install the switch to complete the circuit.

### **Building**

The building department has had a break, from laying granite setts in the Carriage and Wagon forecourt at Tenterden, when joists were fitted to the shed extension at Rolvenden. Further work will be carried out on the extension when the Rolvenden staff have completed the steel work and corrugated sheeting.

The remainder of the Headcorn waiting shelter has been moved to Northiam. It is hoped to erect this building shortly. Wadhurst signalbox

has also been moved to Northiam to await restoration and erection. It has been stored, for the last 3 years, on a local farm after being dismantled.

Our thanks go to Stan Colyer who, between opening and shutting Cranbrook Road gates almost every Saturday this year, has hung a new door and carried out general repairs to the crossing keepers hut here.

At present the building department consists of four people meeting on average every other weekend. Unfortunately the amount of work in prospect is far more than four people can cope with. A look around the railway will reveal that many of our existing buildings are in need of repairs and essential maintenance. If anybody is interested in assisting us please contact Dave Stubbs on 0634 33337 or at Tenterden Station.

### **Operating**

The period of weekday running this year has meant a bigger than ever requirement for operating staff with six weeks of two train services every day. A total of 85 timetabled weekdays have been covered along with numerous specials mainly in connection with the extension but including a number of filming and charter trains.

A huge thank you is due to all those volunteers who have given up holidays to run the trains and without whom the welcome improvement in the company's financial position would not have been possible.

The extension to Northiam has meant a completely new pattern of services which by and large has worked very well. Timekeeping has generally been good and even timetable alterations to meet the demands of our popularity have been handled well by the operating staff. The detail of the 1991 timetable is being finalised at the moment and obviously the lessons learnt in 1990 will be taken into account.

Finally it is encouraging to note many new faces in the operating department (and new names on the rosters). To all newcomers a warm welcome and big thank you for getting involved. As always we want to see many more trainees in the various operating grades and look forward to seeing more prospective guards, signalmen, and loco crews soon.

### **Fire, Health and Safety**

The long hot and dry summer following the relatively dry winter has caused problems with



an increased incidence of lineside fires. The department has attempted to prevent some of the worst effects. Steve Beastall and Stuart Phillips have provided mid-week cover with the various fire-engine owning volunteers covering the week-ends. Loco crews have made efforts to prevent causing fires in the first place and it is also the crews who provide the best cover once fire breaks out. Many times small fires have been put out, before leaving our land, simply because the guard now has a fire beater. This provision, along with increasing the numbers of beaters on the trackside, have all helped. A committee, chaired by Robin Dyce, has been formed to look into finding additional ways of preventing, and once started putting out lineside fires. They will report by Christmas and maintain a monitoring role afterwards.

The annual round of checking first aid boxes and fire extinguishers started again at the beginning of October. The department is going to run a first aid course. Various departments have provided nominations but there is space for a few other volunteers if anybody would like to join the course. Just let Vanessa Toynbee know at Tenterden Station.

### Forestry and Conservation

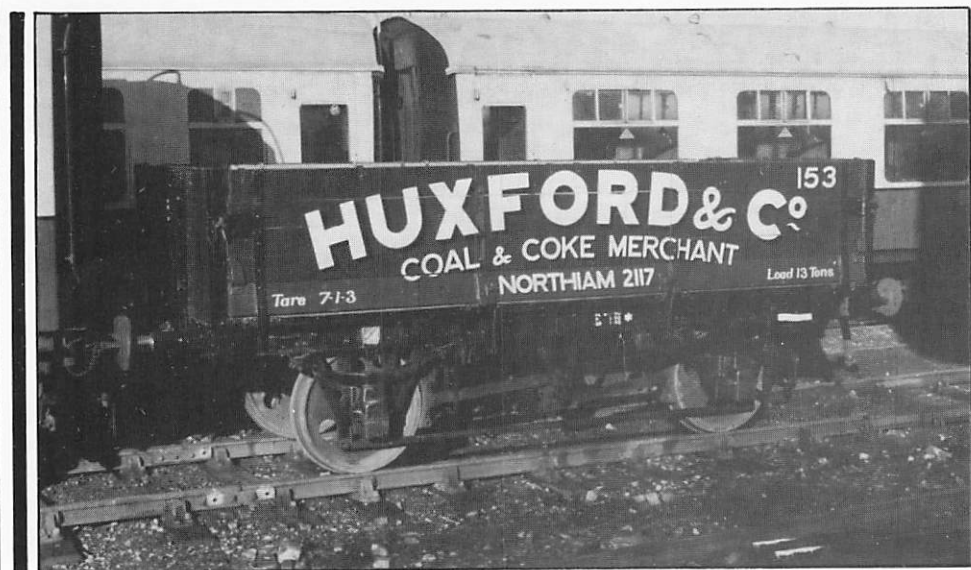
Forestry and Conservation group have continued to clear Tenterden headshunt on the residential side as far as Turners Avenue accomodation crossing. One of the main jobs in the area was to burn large quantities of garden

rubbish thrown over the fence by our neighbours. The clearance of the other side of the track, with an overwhelming growth of S & T equipment, roof trusses and other assorted hardware, has been abandoned for now. It is hoped to deal with the remainder of the headshunt, beyond Turners Avenue, over the forthcoming winter if suitable arrangements can be made to move the stock out of the way.

The group's main task is now to start clearance all over again working down Tenterden bank and on towards Wittersham Road; a task which is likely to emulate the painting of the Forth bridge now that 7 miles of running line are open. If board agreement is given it is hoped that clearing the line between Northiam and Bodiam can start soon.

### Membership

As forecast in the Summer Terrier, membership figures are on course for a healthy increase for 1990. At time of writing [mid-September] 430 new members have joined compared with 375 for the whole of 1989. This is indeed good news and, hopefully, our volunteer figures will also show an increase now that a Volunteer Recruitment Officer has been appointed. Provided the impetus of the 'Northiam Syndrome' can be maintained and the subscription increase for 1991 does not cause an increase in the drop-out rate, the paid up membership could top the 3000-mark within a couple of years.



Wagon No.153 in Huxford livery at Tenterden, February 1990.

(David Dine)



*The recently acquired Plasser & Theurer tamping machine, 25th August 1990.*

*(Brian Stephenson)*

#### **Filming**

The railway has been used as a location for Yorkshire television's filming of the H.E. Bates story "The Darling Buds of May", starring David Jason. This will be a 13 part series to be shown in January 1991. The railway sequences will be used in episodes 1,3 and 4. Members of the railway were also involved with their fire appliances.

Matchbox Toys have also filmed an advert for TV and Cinema, showing their latest portable model railway. This is due to be transmitted in early April 1991. Still photography had its day in early September with photographs for a Swedish travel firm. The pictures depict small children sitting forlornly on the platform after being evacuated from London. This is for a world-wide poster campaign, whether the U.K. qualifies is not certain, however our name is on the posters.

#### **Wealden Pullman**

During August 'Diana' was put into daily service offering on-train Buffet Service and it proved very successful. On Sundays Peter Broyd and crew provided Sunday Lunches for pre-booked, and passing, passengers. This proved to be a tremendous success.

The Pullman has been fully booked since April/May with a waiting list of up to 50. This season has again seen the burden of the crewing fall on a dedicated dozen members. The team really must be expanded so contact Stuart Phillips, at Tenterden, if you want to help. The Pullman's reputation is well known for its quality of menu and high standard of service. To keep it this way means new faces are urgently needed. Bookings for next year are already on file prior to actioning on 1st January. To all those

members who have helped on the Pullman this year - thank you.

### Daily Running

School visit numbers were up this year against expectations but as ever our Education staff rose to the occasion - no one went away disappointed. The August timetable proved to be very successful, passenger wise, with numbers carried up substantially on 1989. The few isolated cancellations and breakdowns were dealt with by the train crews professionally. One notable incident proved that the system works when an elderly gentleman became ill shortly after joining the train at Northiam. The train was then made non-stop to Tenterden with all crossings manned, ensuring that it arrived as the ambulance did. The passenger was rushed off to Ashford and at the time of writing was alive and well at home in Guildford. Those who were on the platform at Tenterden will always remember the feeling that the High Street, just short of the church, looked the more likely stopping point

for the train as it rounded the last bend approaching the station.

As ever more volunteers are needed as Station Staff. Graham Hukins would like to hear from anybody who can spare a day or so meeting people every now and then.

### Colonel Stephens Shop

During the summer the need for more adequate display facilities has been met by completely reshelving the shop. The way forward was shown when the display and storage unit was completed. The rest was straight forward, if time consuming. The wood used was second hand and now presents the stock much better than the previous arrangements, by using sloping and flat shelves where appropriate. A new, but second hand, counter was found and installed providing a display case for the more delicate items. It remains for the interior lighting to be added to this. The process of removing old, and slow to sell, lines has continued and the new



*S.R. Maunsell restriction O composite S 5600 arriving at Wittersham Road on 13th July 1990. This vehicle was converted to an inspection saloon in 1962 and used by the Southern Region General Manager and Chief Civil Engineer.*  
(David Dine)



items on sale provide better choice for our customers. A more commercial buying policy has led to profit margins being improved. As customers return they expect to see a varied variety of goods. We continue to offer this with the same friendly service that has seen many a familiar face return, especially for their Thomas the Tank Engine Christmas presents. The inclusion of local knitwear, pottery and woodcrafts has widened the base further, and is only one of the many reasons why we are reviewing turnover 213% up on 4 years ago.

### Footplatemen of the year

One of the heats for this competition organised by *Steam Railway* was held on 14th July, based at Tenterden. This was done with minimal disruption to the ordinary service. Three separate activities had to be undertaken by each of the 9 teams competing. Firstly a rules and theory test was held. Questions here were much the same as our own drivers and firemen get for their exams. This test did sort out some of the teams. Next came the shunting test in Tenterden yard using No.10 (Sutton). This was known territory for most crews but teams did manage to lose points. Lastly came the passenger stock working. A rake of 4 coaches were taken from Tenterden to Rolvenden and then back up the bank again. Some teams made what can only be described as timid, though successful, ascents. Others, notably the Nene Valley crew, who have worked on the North York Moors railway, made a much more brisk ascent. Everybody agreed that they had enjoyed the day and the challenges presented. The Nene Valley crew won the day and have progressed on to the final, at the Dean Forest railway.

The day was rounded off by taking all crews and judges on a trip to Northiam and back between the last service train and the Pullman.

*Simon Long, who has recently joined the full time staff at Rolvenden.* (R.E. Ruffell)



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## **Tenterden**

At long last a solution is in sight to the lack of office space at Tenterden. The old mound at the station entrance has had the "Wendy house" hut removed, latterly used as the operating department office, and 4 Portakabins installed in its place to form an administration block. These are now being internally fitted out and will provide commercial offices, an operating office, computer room, photocopying facilities, a small meeting room, and storage space primarily for the shop, though space for stationary and leaflets is also to be provided. The current Station Masters office, in the station building, will revert to being just that, with the duty operating controller sharing the office.

Guards will also sign on duty here and find all the relevant notices posted.

Work on laying the granite setts in Carriage and Wagon forecourt, continues steadily by the building department. A large Southern Railway yard gate has been installed at the yard entrance during September, this was acquired from Paddock Wood station and given to us by Network Southeast as it did not fit in with the improvements carried out at the station. Removal of the gate was undertaken in April. C&W are now on the look out for a suitable style

closing gate post to enable the entrance fence-line of the the yard to be completed.

## **Rolvenden**

The shed extension has been re-started and should be weather-tight by November. A large amount of work remains to be done including much electrical work. Some of this is quite expensive. A 10 year plan is being prepared for the board. Envisaged are another shed extension, more volunteers facilities, and new shed lighting.

## **Northiam**

The water column supply valve proved not to work well so one of an improved design was ordered. This was fitted in late June. Loco crews are now heard to complain that it is too heavy to operate but none can complain of wasted water anymore. Another coat of paint is still needed on the column - any volunteers?

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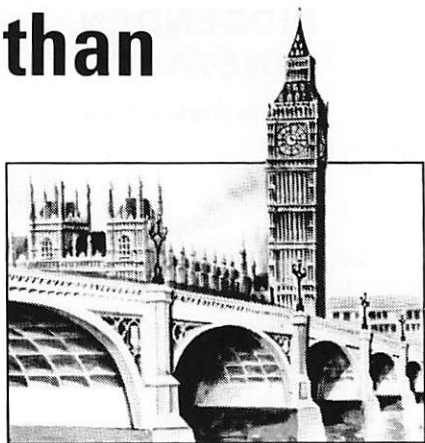
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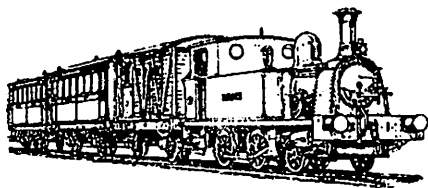


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# Back to Robertsbridge?

**Former Company Chairman, Peter Davis, outlines the feasibility studies that are being undertaken to establish the practicability of re-opening the Rother Valley section in its entirety.**

The promoters of the original scheme to revive the K&ESR planned to reopen the entire 13½ mile line from Robertsbridge to Tenterden. This was to be operated as a serious transport undertaking, with a daily passenger and freight service, together with weekend tourist trains. Indeed, their prospectus bore many similarities to that of the Rother Valley Railway of 1896, even then Bodiam Castle figured prominently as a source of tourist traffic.

As is well known, this scheme failed, ostensibly because of ministerial disapproval of the many level crossings, four of them over A class roads. In hindsight, it has to be admitted that the scheme really had a credibility problem. Remember that in the early sixties the only standard gauge railways in operation were the Bluebell, shuffling harmlessly to and fro in the middle of nowhere with not a major road in sight, and the Mid-leton, shunting a few goods wagons round industrial Leeds. It was not generally accepted that a long standard gauge line could be viable, though, of course, we now know otherwise.

By 1967 the K&ESR was effectively dead and buried. Only after several years of heroic struggle on the part of the line's many well wishers, was a potentially viable tourist railway rescued from the wreckage of the original scheme. The price that had to be paid was the abandonment of the 3½ miles between Bodiam and Robertsbridge. This avoided level crossings of two A class roads but effectively severed the Railway from the National system for ever.

At this time attempts were made to secure the abandoned trackbed for possible use as a footpath, thus preserving the right of way. However, even this was denied the Company, the official reason being that ownership of the land could not be transferred without the necessary statutory powers, i.e. a light railway order. Not quite true perhaps, but sufficient reason for the Company to quietly drop the proposal.

Since then and in line with British Rail's obligation to offer redundant railway land to the neighbouring landowners, the right of way has been sold off piecemeal. The last section, from

Northbridge Street to Robertsbridge, being disposed of to a speculator only last year.

So we come to 1990, a momentous year for the revived K&ESR, with the reopening to Northiam resulting in increased patronage, which has brought renewed optimism to the Company. At this stage minds were turned to the next phase of the restoration, Bodiam. This is still a fairly long term prospect, but will the Railway be as welcome there as it is at Northiam?

Bodiam village is already inundated with tourists to the point of saturation, particularly at peak holiday times and weekends. The station site is very compact, with no parking space and is not really suitable as a terminus. That apart, there is official concern that the burgeoning tourist industry of the Rother Valley is causing unacceptable overloading of the local road system.

An answer to this problem could be to restore the Railway to Robertsbridge, once again providing an East to West link along the Valley. With park and ride possibilities, together with rail connections to the principal tourist catchment areas this would seem an attractive proposition.

Your Directors have therefore commissioned a study into the feasibility of building back to Robertsbridge. Very briefly, the problems involved fall into four distinct categories. Acquisition of the land, gaining statutory powers for the construction and operation of a new railway, the construction itself and raising the necessary finance. Each of these objectives would, at first contemplation, seem unattainable. Nevertheless, in the short time that the study team has been active, about six weeks, many encouraging facts have been established.

The course of the Railway is now owned by six individuals and indications are that two thirds of the land required for reconstruction, including a ½ mile deviation at Junction Road, could be made available.

Positive support has been promised by Network South East, who would like to see a cross





*The line East of Salehurst Halt, c 1956.  
(Colonel Stephens Railway archive)*



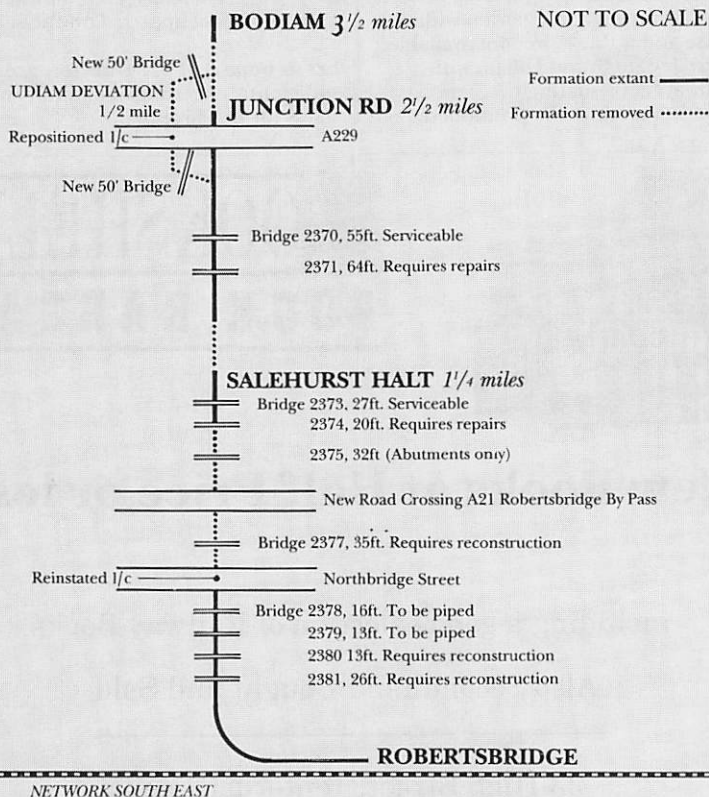
*Junction Road Halt, c 1952.  
(Colonel Stephens Railway archive)*

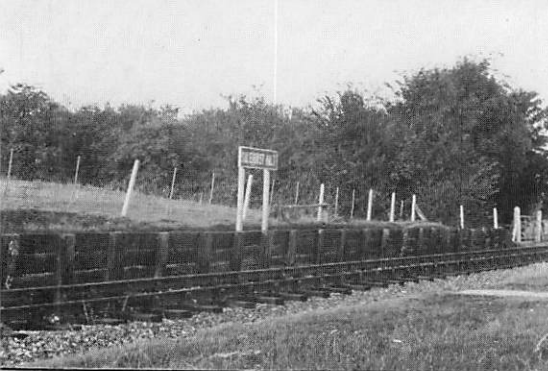
platform interchange at Robertsbridge. This aligns with their present policy of encouraging the reconnection of private lines.

Informal discussion with the National Rivers Authority has indicated that some existing bridges can be piped. Also, they would not

object to the new bridges necessary for a proposed deviation.

Many local people have expressed support and the Village of Robertsbridge, something of a backwater since being by-passed, would seem to eagerly await the return of the Railway.





*Salehurst Halt, 20th August 1952.*

*(J. H. Aston)*

Further informal discussions have taken place with the highway authorities and other interested parties.

From a practical point of view, at least 1 mile of formation has been returned to agriculture. At Udiam Farm the former cottages have been converted into an attractive and valuable house, the formation runs through the garden within 30ft of the house and is therefore, not available. It is proposed to deviate round Udiam with  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of new railway, necessitating two new bridges over the Rother and a re-positioned

level crossing over the A229.

The magnitude of our proposal can be best summarised by the diagram.

The course of the line between Bodiam and Northbridge Street is level along the valley floor. It is, or was, raised a couple of feet above flood level, with numerous piped culverts in addition to the bridges shown, which span the Rother or its tributaries. It is believed that reconstruction of the formation would be relatively simple. Also, our advice is that unlike the lower Rother Valley, a sound base for bridge construction is not too far below the surface.

How we cross the Robertsbridge By-Pass, how we acquire the remainder of the trackbed and how we can raise the finance, are questions that cannot be answered at the moment.

Suffice to say, that development or reinstatement of railways as an answer to traffic congestion and pollution is a popular topic these days. There are even ministerial murmurings of approval on the subject.

Let us hope that our Directors are now sufficiently encouraged to authorise project status for this proposal.



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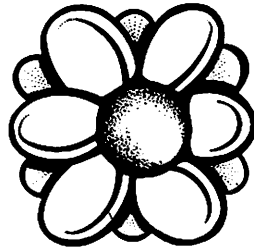
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# A Family Affair

Over the weekend of 22nd and 23rd September, the Railway organised another of its "low-budget" events, this time to generate funds for the shed extension at Rolvenden.

For an outlay of less than £5,000, over £10,000 was taken at the various railway organised sections of the proceedings. Some 300 exhibitors were booked, and 600 car loads of visitors and 1500 pedestrians came to enjoy themselves. The trains carried 2300 passengers over the whole weekend.

Whilst the attendances in no way compared with those at the Great Steam and Country Fairs of years gone by, the financial risk was minimal even in the event of a hopelessly wet weekend.

The main arena events were at Rolvenden; a fairground organ played there during the day and many steam traction engines, vintage cars and military vehicles turned up as well as trade exhibitors. At Tenterden, there were craft stalls and a jazz band. The carriage shed was open for inspection and a Permanent Way gang, in Edwardian dress, replaced sleepers in one of the sidings. The carriage and wagon display included collectors' items, model railway and boats.

The Catering tent at Rolvenden was much improved on last year and our own buffet team put on a superb spread, the bar being manned by the Wealden Pullman team, rather than having outside contractors as previously.

The weather was not particularly kind; on Saturday, rain caused almost half the booked exhibitors not to turn up. Sunday, by comparison, dawned fair but it rained in the afternoon. Around three times as many visitors came on Sunday compared with Saturday.

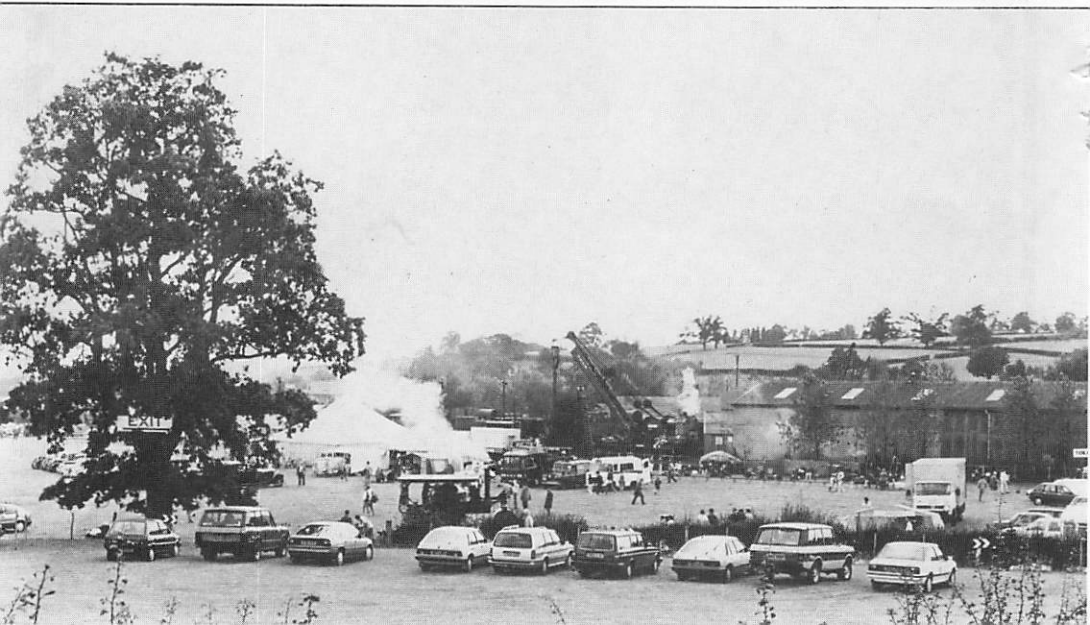
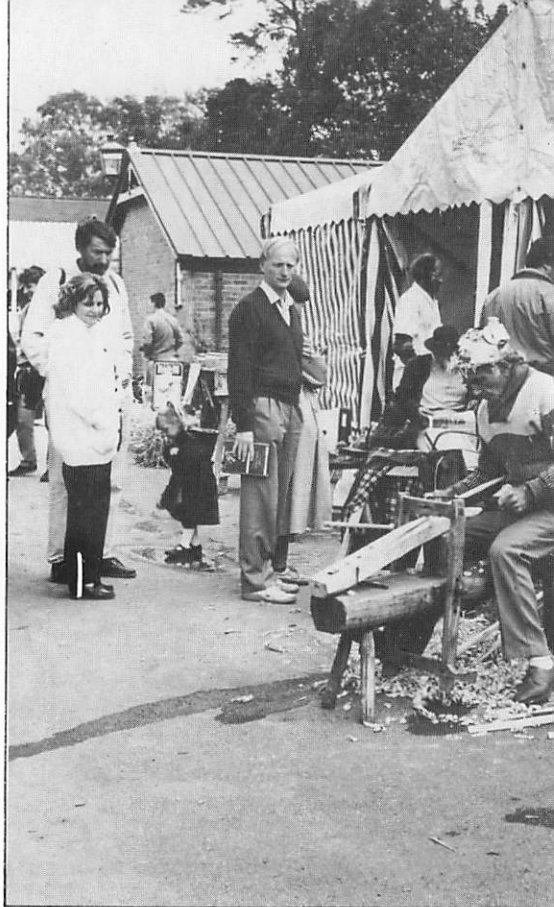
The general consensus of opinion was that this was a much better organised event than in 1989; car parking was much improved with facilities at both Rolvenden and Tenterden. The volunteer organisers appeared to enjoy themselves and arranged the usual party to include exhibitors, on Saturday night. Now we have to decide what to do next year!



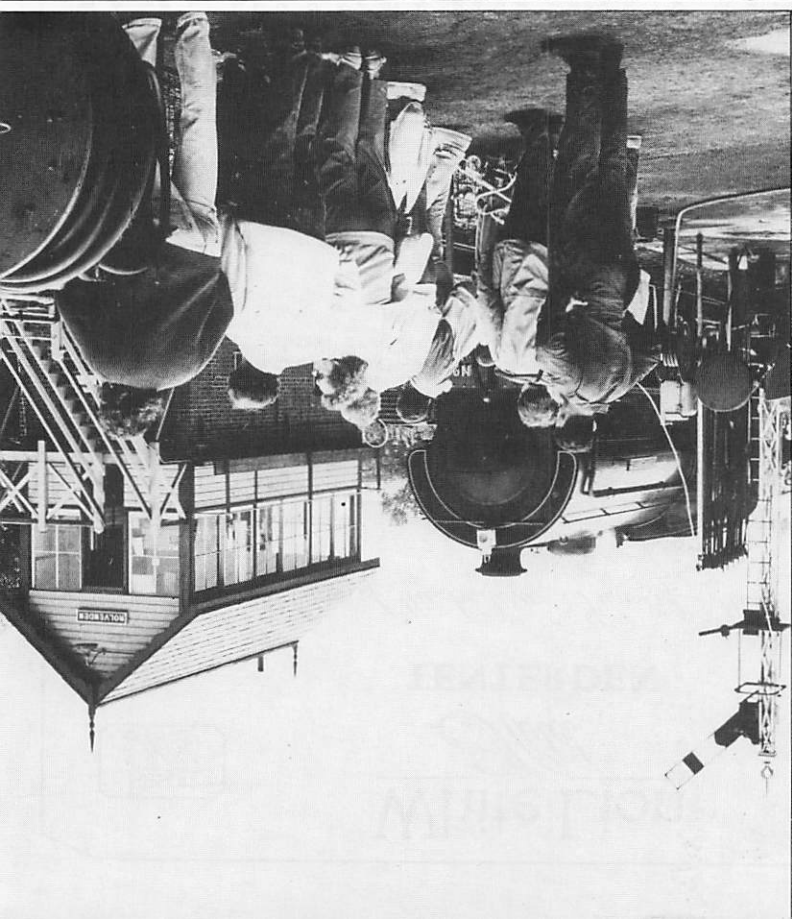
*1956 Vintage Leyland bus arriving at Rolvenden on 22nd September 1990. (Mike Esau)*

# A Family Affair

Photographed by Mike Esau  
at Tenterden  
and Rolvenden  
on 22nd August 1990.







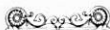


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# Keeping the Locomotives in Trim

## Duncan Buchanan outlines the tasks undertaken at Rolvenden motive power depot.

To some the completion of the Northiam extension and the subsequent openings, are the end of a chapter in our history. We must now take breath, bring in some income for our labours and await the next extension scheme - presumably to Bodiam. However things are not all that they might seem and in reality the extension of the line by over two miles brings in a new set of problems. Those which existed before are, at least, changed. As a starting point the workings of the Locomotive Department will illustrate some of the problems, some of the work necessary and maybe give a few people, less well connected with the innermost technical workings of the railway, an insight into the breadth of the undertaking.

Put simply the purpose of the Locomotive Department is to provide locomotives to pull carriages, for passengers, and wagons, mostly for engineers' trains. In running a preserved railway it is presumed that steam traction will be the main provider though we should not forget diesels.

The train service this year, compared with last, calls for almost twice as many trains to be run and for longer distances, especially during the high summer season. This means that locomotives are in more frequent use than previously, thereby reducing the available maintenance time. The locomotives and fitters have therefore to work harder than ever before. Diesels have been substituted on several occasions and even for complete diagrams. There have been a number of locomotive failures and this has further stretched the fitters, both paid and volunteers. However, these problems should be put into perspective and the regular maintenance is the starting point for the efficient running of the department.

Each steam locomotive is run for 18 to 20 days between washouts. The definition of a day's steaming is self-evident but one should note that steam tests and other miscellaneous activities also count against the total. At a washout not only is the boiler literally washed out and purged of residues, for example water scale, but a full inspection is made, including the motion. This latter activity is part of planned preventive maintenance. Many points are looked at and checked, by selected qualified and experienced

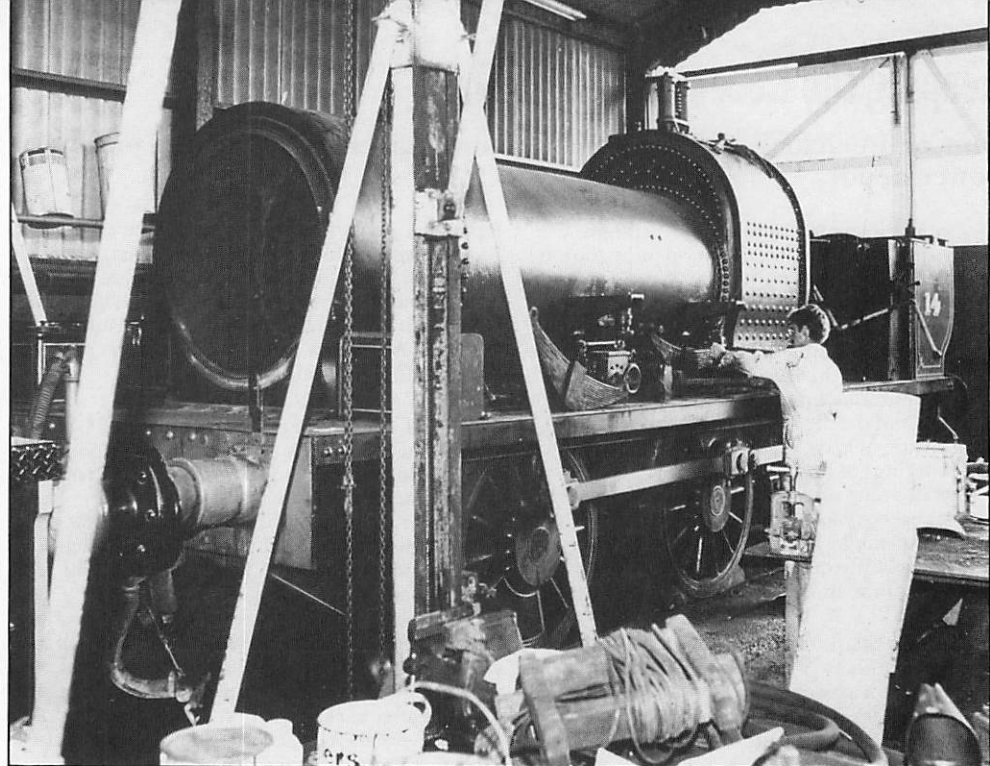
persons. A washout is really the same as a car service where little might be done but much is checked. Problems should be found, that if found early require a simple solution, before a complete embarrassing failure while running a service. A washout will normally take a complete day, if nothing untoward is found.

Annually each boiler must be inspected by an Insurance Company Surveyor. He is appointed by our insurance company not only to protect their interests, which is understandable considering the potential damage an exploding boiler could cause, but to also provide friendly advice and assistance. The safety valves and other parts as requested are dismantled beforehand. After a successful visual inspection the locomotive will be reassembled and a steam test conducted. During the test the boiler is inspected at full working pressure. Again, many things are checked including the operation of the safety valves, to see that they operate at the correct pressures, for leaks or potential leaks and the general condition of the boiler.

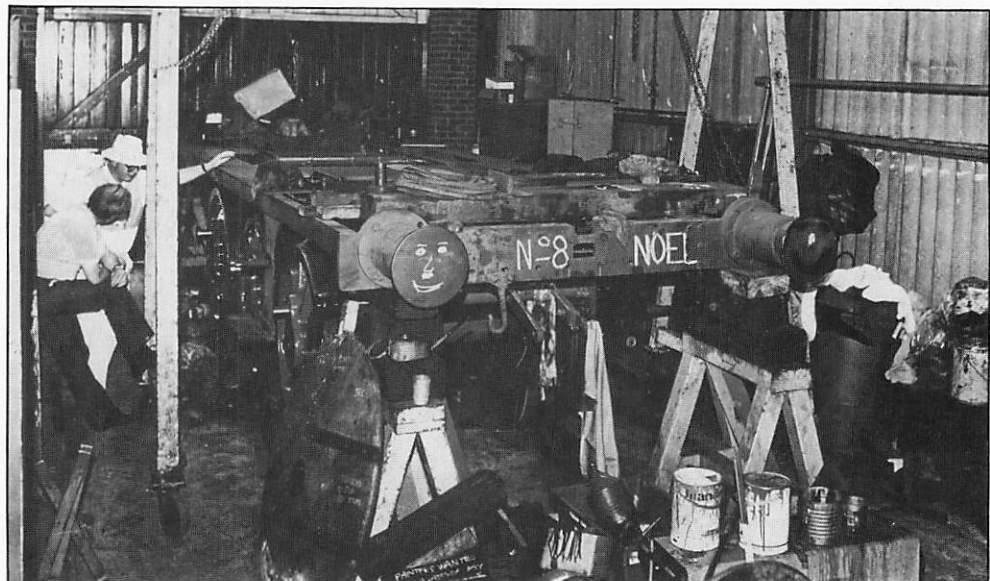
Every 10 years the boiler must be lifted out of its frames and given a complete visual inspection. It is at this time that the opportunity is normally taken to correct many minor ailments, to the boiler and mechanical parts. Most boilers need a certain amount of attention and so repairs are effected to stays and welding. The Insurance Surveyor reappears to inspect everything thoroughly at the various stages during the work. Included are a hydraulic test where the boiler is filled with water and pressurised to 1 1/2 times its normal pressure. Failures may mean that a boiler is not given a certificate or possibly a reduced one for 2 or 3 years. After the boiler is restored to its frames and the locomotive is fully reassembled an equivalent to the annual steam test and inspection is conducted. Only after this can running-in be contemplated prior to a return to service.

Due to the fact that from time to time all steam engines need major attention to the motion in addition to the boiler, and indeed perhaps a repaint, 10 year lifts can take months, or even years; at best they are a little uncertain in their timescale.

In addition to routine maintenance the



No. 14 "Charwelton" in the workshops on 25th August 1990. The boiler has recently been re-fitted.  
(Brian Stephenson)



Terrier No. 8 "Knowle" on 25th August 1990, awaiting the lowering of the frames on to the axle boxes.  
(Brian Stephenson)



*Locomotive Department Manager, Bob Forsythe (left) and Bernard Sealy carry out a boiler washout on No. 22 "Maunsell", 25th August 1990.*

*(Brian Stephenson)*

Department must be able to cope with "failures" - hopefully a rarity, but always a possibility. It is only after this that re-builds can be undertaken. No.8 Knowle, No.19 the Norwegian, and No.21 Wainwright are current examples; the skills required here are at least as great as those for a 10 year boiler lift and often more.

The tasks carried out in the workshops at Rolvenden are many and varied; they range from the use of a scraper and rag to clean frames, to the operation of lathes and welding gear. Because boiler work is very technical, especially from the welding side, most boilers are now sent away on contracts to be returned with their appropriate certificates. This is not as straight forward as it seems because the management of a contract is difficult and time consuming. The contract must be drawn up carefully so that both sides understand the terms and misunderstandings are reduced. Somebody is appointed to visit the contractor regularly and approve every stage of the work before it is hidden by the next stage. It is a credit to the Rolvenden team that few problems occur with our contractors. Nevertheless there are times when locomotive frames have been at Rolvenden awaiting boilers - Rolvenden prides itself that it can at least keep up with events!

Many people have asked why this or that other class of locomotive is not represented on the K&ESR. It would be nice to see a greater variety. However the engineering consequences could be more far reaching than at first apparent. Each locomotive uses certain standard tools and for those that we have, most are available. For example blanking plates have been manufactured for testing the main steam pipes which are individual to each class. More would have to be made if we obtained, say, a standard tank. This extends also to such things as injector cutters. These are needed to re-seat the valves within an injector, which wear out over a period of time. From the engineering point of view we can probably cope with Southern engines, Austerities and the like, but LMS, or other, engines are different. The Norwegian and Charwelton are already giving us problems as we do not have some of the specialist tools required for them.

As most will know, the original workshops were on the other side of the Newmill channel. This is now occupied by the Rother Valley Timber works and we are left with a cramped site between the platform and the fence where two siding roads used to exist. The present shed is a cramped affair. None of the space available in the great railway workshops like Doncaster and

Swindon exists here! Instead the limited space between, and around, the two shed roads is made use of as a workshop. Despite the lack of space a separate area is set aside for lathes, drills and milling machines. Over the years two pits have been built over the length of both available roads. Normally the door end of No.1 road sees regular washouts whereas No.2 road is used for longer term maintenance, including often diesel maintenance. As the railway expands we will have to do something to make more space available.

Diesels are sometimes regarded in an inferior light to steam but their importance should not be underestimated. Very few movements in Rolvenden yard could happen without diesels and they must be available at literally the touch of a switch. A year or two ago the diesel department acquired a complete 40ft container as its own separate workshop. However work still continues in the open for much of the time as space is very limited. The advent of the class 14 has brought us firmly into the turbocharged era and with it relatively sophisticated pieces of machinery. Expert advice must be summoned from time to time and just like a car, some of the parts need replacing frequently. Certainly the Permanent Way department could not survive without the use of diesels and increasingly bigger diesels at that. Gone are the days when a Wickham and trolley could ballast the line!

The yard at Rolvenden in recent years has seen many improvements. The old collection of buildings which had served us for many years have gone and in their place are mostly containers. Whilst the ideas are not new, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, for example, has much the same system, we have managed to squeeze a lot into a small space. Two separate pits exist in the yard to allow servicing of steam locomotives and maintenance at the same time. Further plans are in hand for the site including provision of a viewing gallery where visitors may wander safely. In addition the staff mess facilities will be extended and improved. The old, almost sump like quarters, are to be removed and the extension to the shed will provide new mess facilities and even a shower! Before long, I suggest, people will be queuing up to help us at Rolvenden.

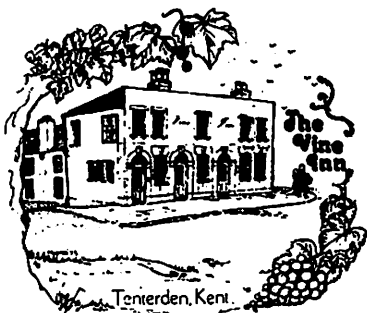


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# A Pre War Controversy

*In the days when the railway enthusiast was less well served with books and magazines, not to mention television and video programmes, one of the best sources of information on the current railway scene was to be found in The Railway Observer, the journal of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society. Here were published reports from members up and down the country of their observations of every aspect of railway operation from the main line express to the humble branch line. The operations of the Kent & East Sussex Railway were not ignored amongst these reports and give some fascinating insights into the line's history. However, one drawback of relying on such observations was that they tended to be subjective. What might prove pleasing to one observer did not always do so to another. The following extracts from 1938 and 1939 show that even then the operation of the Kent & East Sussex could excite controversy.*

**November 1938:** Notes made August 30th and 31st and September 1st. Most of the stations are clean and smart, apparently recently painted. The line is clean through every station, and on the whole between stations. Much re-sleeping is in process, and rail renewals seem to be with a heavier type of rail. Riding is quite smooth and speed good, between shunting movements, which cause a certain amount of delay. Passenger traffic fluctuated, but sometimes was extremely good, as the hop-picking season was in full swing. This has also brought increased goods traffic.

At Rolvenden 0-6-OST No. 8 (formerly *Ringling Rock*), and 2-4-OT No. 2 *Northiam*, were standing in the open outside the shed. "Saddleback" No. 4 was in the shed, also 2-4-OT No. 1 *Tenterden* under repair, and a fairly recent newcomer, S.R. 0-6-OT No. 2655 (still carrying S.R. No.). Of No. 7 *Rother* and No. 9 *Juno*, the tenders are at the end of one siding, the chassis at the end of the next (with the remains of "Terrier" No. 5), the boilers and dome-covers outside the shed and the cabs beside the main line beyond the station, so these two veterans are fairly widely disintegrated. *Hesperus* on the S. & M.R., is thus the last of the line, and it is hoped she will live for many years.

In another siding is the Pickering Rail-car, partly dismantled, and in the other sidings around are most of the original wagon stock of the K & ESR, somewhat dilapidated, also several of the earlier carriages, including the chassis of one of the bogie carriages supplied in 1905. In the paint-shop were two railcar sets, one with trailer

wagon, apparently being repainted.

During the hop-picking season (and also for several months back) it is understood that all trains are steam-hauled. The turns were shared, on the above dates, between "Terrier" No. 3 and S.R. small 0-6-OT No. 1556, said to have arrived a few days earlier, on loan. S.R. bogie carriages Nos. 2684 and 2714 were in use as passenger stock, as well as K & ESR Nos. 1, 2 and 3 carriages. Locomotive No. 3 was smartly kept, painted green with black bands and white lines, and from what was seen of her, on a brief exit from the shed, No. 4 is in similar condition, but the remaining locomotive stock is not in such good condition. It does not look as if Nos. 2 and 8 will do much more, if any. It would be a pity if No. 2, after attaining "stardom" as the famous *Gladstone*, should drop out of existence.

**December 1938:** We have received from Mr E. L. Jones a letter in which he contradicts many of the statements concerning this line published last month. He writes: "... Few of the stations are clean and smart, and some practically devoid of paint. There is a luxuriant growth between the lines over practically the whole system. Much re-sleeping is necessary, and in certain cases the sleeper has rotted away from the chair leaving the latter attached to the rail while the former hangs loosely below. Riding over certain sections, (particularly that between Rolvenden and Tenterden) is very bad, and general speed is extremely low. (The information regarding shunting is perfectly correct). Passenger traffic seemed very slight, although goods traffic was quite good. The information regarding the derelict locomotives is accurate, but I cannot agree with the writer again on the subject of No. 3, which was by no means smartly or cleanly kept. I cannot understand the remark that the days of No. 2 (*Northiam*) are numbered since I had several journeys behind her about that time, and feel fairly sure that No. 8 was in use on one occasion, since when passing her she was apparently in steam. Regarding S.R. No. 1556, said to have arrived a few days earlier. This also I cannot understand, since I saw her as long ago as Whit-Monday, passing through Rolvenden on a passenger train, and I certainly saw her a fortnight before the notes were taken."

Since cleanliness of stations, and adequate track maintenance, are to some extent matters of opinion, it is perhaps the case that the enthusiast is prepared unduly to praise the

efforts of a most interesting line; but in the matter of locomotives in "running order", it is strange that there should be such divergence of opinion.

Coach No. 2684 is an ex-L. & S.W. bogie composite brake. It is painted and lettered in standard S.R. style but is not inscribed "Southern Railway".

**January 1939:** Referring to the comments of Mr E. L. Jones in the December issue, the write of the notes in question would like to add a few words in reply.

With regard to S.R. No. 1556 the information was obtained locally and was passed on in good faith, but the information of Mr Jones is, of course, first hand and plainly shows that this locomotive spent a much longer time on the line than was indicated to the writer. No. 8 has been suffering from boiler trouble and has done little work this season. (This seems to be confirmed by a note in the Dec. *Railway Magazine*). No. 2 has worked from time to time during the season but the main point is that only two locomotives in steam are required each day for the summer service and probably less in the winter, when it is understood that the rail-car sets (in process of overhaul and repainting at the time of the writer's visit), take over parts of the winter service. The K & ESR therefore appears to be overstocked with locomotives, viz., Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8, also S.R. No. 2655, and are reported to have taken over (or at any rate obtained on loan) S.R. "Saddleback" No. 3334. The maximum requirements appear to be four locomotives, and as nos. 3 and 4 are still active, there does not appear to be much use for Nos. 1, 2 and 8. It seems unlikely that No. 8 will be re-boilered and the best that can be hoped for No. 2 is that Nos. 1 and 2 (the former partly dismantled at the time of the writer's visit) may be combined into one rebuilt locomotive, as was reported to have been done with at least one of the "Terriers" owned by this group of lines.

With regard to cleanliness of stations, line and No. 3, the writer has photographic evidence of these, and although admittedly there were some grassy stretches between stations, so much relaying was in progress that the words "on the whole" are thought to be justified. Probably the explanation of the difference in opinion is that the relaying had proceeded apace just prior to the writer's visit. At any rate, notes could be written up while travelling. The overall timings do not show a high rate of speed, but allow time for shunting, and certainly on the journeys of the writer, the trains moved very briskly between stations. On two journeys between Tenterden and Robertsbridge the end-to-end speeds, deleting shunting time, were at 18.8 and 19.8 m.p.h., which represents quite good running when the maximum allowance is borne in mind. (R.K.C.)

Another correspondent writes: "There seems to be some doubt as to the date of P 1556's arrival on the K. & ESR. It was noted on the 11.15 from Robertsbridge to Tenterden as long ago as 17/2/38."

*The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society still publish The Railway Observer and may be contacted with 2 x 17p stamps for further details and a specimen Railway Observer at 160 Hillend Crescent, Clarkston, Renfrewshire G76 7XY. We are grateful to the R.C.T.S. for their permission to print the above extracts.*

**Stephen Garrett**

## **What was it like in 1938?**

The late B. K. Cope photographed the line extensively on 31st August 1938. A selection of his photographs reproduced on the next two pages show fairly marked differences of smartness and decay at the different sites.



*Tenterden Town; generally tatty?*



*Northiam; smart and tidy?*



*Wittersham Road; rustic?*



*Rolvenden, with dismantled cabs from The Ilfracombe Goods; grassgrown and derelict?*

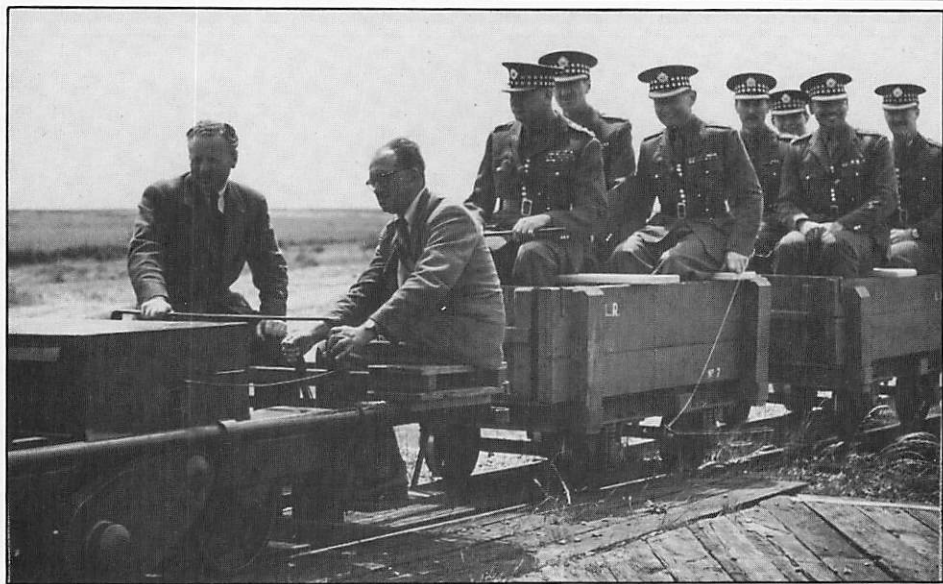
# The Military Railways of Lydd

## Part 2 Narrow Gauge

The bulk of the standard gauge Lydd Military Railway was closed in 1927, including the connection to the Southern Railway at Lydd Town station. Subsequently, a 60cm [2 foot] gauge system was built, much of it on the former standard gauge trackbed. However, there was no connection to and from the SR station. Construction commenced in 1936 from the camp to Holmestone; later extensions were built to Juries Gap, Galloways and Brickwall areas; the system being completed by 1940 and, therefore, available for the build-up to the second world war. [Holmestone is of particular interest to naturalists. In the 12th century, the area was planted with holly trees - the Holmestone Hollies. Surprisingly, the wood survived on the shingle to become a renowned heronry, herons then being a delicacy in great demand by the Gentry. Today, the hollies survive, protected by the military environs. Although the herons have long since departed to reside elsewhere on the Marsh, the area is, undoubtedly, of great scientific interest].

Currently, the 15 mile system is largely intact although some disused and overgrown track can be discerned outside the present camp perimeter fence; being narrow gauge, altering the route to suit the changing demands of military requirements is relatively simple and cheap. The railway is used mainly for the transportation of mobile targetry and conveyance of materials and maintenance personnel.

Mr. Sydney Percival lives in retirement at Bethersden, near Ashford. Now in his 87th year, Sydney served a three year apprenticeship with Vickers Armstrong at Sheffield. He also attended Sheffield Technical College on a day-release course on engineering. In 1928 he applied for a job at Lydd camp. He was taken on for a trial period of 1 month, and stayed for the next 41 years! Attaining the rank of Chief Technical officer, he supervised a civilian staff of 40 including fitters, turners, welders and carpenters. Due to his initiative, many



*H.R.H. The late Duke of Gloucester inspects Lydd Camp, probably 1957. L to r, Colonel Fielden (Ret'd), Sydney Percival, Chief Technical Officer. Motive power is a Jinx, without target attachment. (Kentish Express)*





*Lydd Camp locomotive shed, March 1990. Note Hunslet No. 36 just visible and single tipper wagons on the left.*  
(Norman Johnson)



*Bogie coach used by M.O.D. maintenance Lydd Ranges, complete with gas heating. August 1990.*  
(Norman Johnson)



*A Jinx takes a sharp curve on the ranges. Date unknown. (Sydney Percival)*

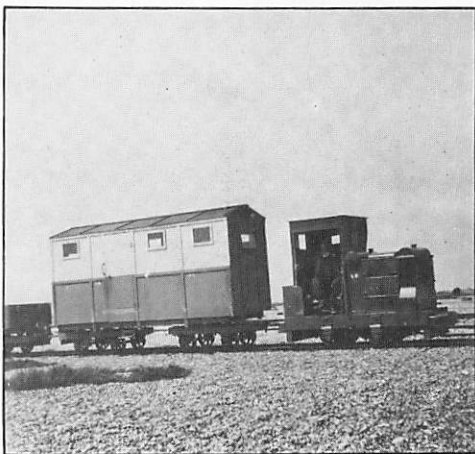
experiments were undertaken on the narrow gauge railway and many improvements were implemented. This resulted in a very interesting and unique system which is still in operation.

Normally, two diesel locomotives were available at any one time, a third undergoing maintenance. Steam was not employed. At the present time there are four locomotives on site. A 1933 28HP Ruston and Hornsby 0-4-0 [ Works No. 191646] is destined for the Museum of Army Transport at Beverley, North Humberside. The second, No. 36, is a Hunslet 0-4-0 diesel-hydraulic built in 1971; originally designed for underground working it found no scope for such employment at Lydd: Weighing 4 tons in working order it has a maximum speed of 7mph and a maximum tractive effort of 2100 lbs. The remaining two locomotives are also 0-4-0s, a Simplex built in 1942, and another Hunslet, No. 37, built in 1971 and rebuilt by Andrew and Barclay as recently as 1988. All locomotives at Lydd were fitted with cabs [a virtual necessity at such a windswept location] high-level exhaust pipes and hand brakes.

A number of 4-wheeled and bogie open wagons were employed, being used, inter alia, to transport maintenance personnel around the ranges. Three bogie coaches were built later [unbraked, in common with the wagons] not, apparently, for the passengers' comfort but because time was lost on wet days whilst personnel dried out! One remains in use today sporting the luxury of a bottled gas stove/heater. The original 3-link couplings on

the vehicles were replaced by a flattened steel bar with a hole at either end similar to a link-and-pin coupling. This gave a superior ride by eliminating 'crash and snatch' on braking and accelerating respectively. In order to carry mobile targetry, up to 40 dumb-wagons were employed. These were hauled by wire ropes laid between the track and terminating at winch-houses of which there were three built at various locations. The linesides were banked with corrugated iron/timber and shingle to ensure that targets were shot up, not the wagons. From this developed the most interesting aspect of the railway. This was a series of 4-wheeled Wickham trolleys self-powered by small petrol engines, the complete vehicles [42 in all] being known as 'jinx'. The nickname originated from the fact that they 'jinxed about' on the constantly curving track to present difficult, ever changing angles to the gunners. Targetry was attached, the petrol engines were started and off went the jinx on a pre-set route. Control was achieved by steel ramps fitted between the rails which made physical contact with levers, linked via a servo system to the throttle, beneath the jinx. Depending on the lateral position of the ramps, the vehicles were accelerated, slowed or stopped. Much experimentation was required initially in order to perfect the system.

The permanent way was well built and maintained with steel sleepers [wood at the rail joints] and flat-bottomed rail weighing 25 lbs per yard, although much of the system was subsequently relaid with 35lb rail and wooden sleepers. At the height of activity, 6 platelayers were employed full-time on renewal and maintenance. Sharp curves, loops and spurs



*Ruston diesel hauling a mixed at Lydd Camp. Date unknown. (Sydney Percival)*



*Hunslet No. 36 on Lydd Ranges, March 1990.*

*(Norman Johnson)*

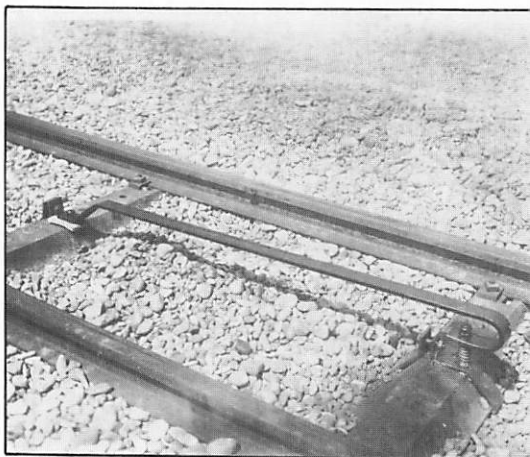
abounded but there were also long, straight stretches where the locomotives were able to achieve their maximum speed of 7mph [or 15mph if a jinx]. The Lydd Military Railway is of great interest and it is hoped that it will be retained for many years to come. However, the whole working system is within a restricted area and public access is not, repeat not, available.

I would like to thank, most sincerely, Col. C.T.F. West and Maj. [Ret'd] M. Gunton who, on behalf of Lt. Col. J.M. Umbers Commandant, Cinque Ports Training Area, kindly consented to my research at Lydd Ranges, Ted Carpenter of Lydd who provided names to contact, photographs and much general information and Driver Eddie Pitt. Also Major J.A. Robins, Honorary Railway Consultant of the Museum of Army Transport, Beverley, who has taken a keen interest in the research and subsequent articles, not forgetting Sydney Percival without whose first-hand knowledge of the narrow gauge this article could not have been written.

**Norman Johnson**

*In part 1, reference was made to tank-carrying well-wagons. In fact, these were new bogie wagons specially designed and produced at the behest of the Railway*

*Executive Committee to carry the [then] new 'parallelogram' tank. Having an upturn at each end which brought the wagon deck up to the height of the top of the buffer beam, an impression of a shallow well-wagon could be given. I am grateful to Maj. J.A. Robins for this information.*



*"Jinx" central ramp. Date unknown.*

*(Sydney Percival)*

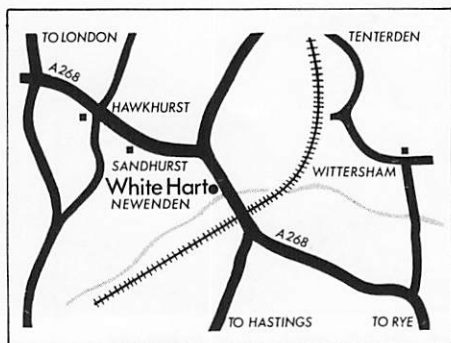
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# Twenty Years of Company Membership

An update by Membership Secretary, Norman Johnson

In *The Tenterden Terrier* No. 38N, Winter 1985, the then New Members Secretary, John Head contributed a statistical analysis entitled 'Fifteen Years of Company Membership'. Since that time, a further 1750-odd members have passed through the books making a total of some 8200 since the Company was formed. Over the last 5 years, membership [of all categories] has grown by nearly 17%. An average net growth rate of 3.4% per year is not exactly gripping but at least the figures are rising steadily. The 1989 subscription increase, although the first for 4 years, resulted in a small net loss of 29 members but the extension to Northiam with the upsurge in passenger loadings, together with membership advertising on the Railway, has, currently, completely reversed the situation. At time of writing [mid-September] the net membership for 1990 is 204 up on the whole of 1989 - a satisfying increase of over 7.5% with 2 1/2 months of the year still to come.

The annual drop-out rate continues between 13% and 8%-too high if a really solid base of members is to be retained for any length of

time. However, looked at another way, since 1985 between 87% and 92% of our members have renewed their subscriptions each year!

Family membership continues to grow steadily; even the subscription increase of 1989 did not result in a net loss here. The category now forms 33% of total membership compared with 28% in 1985.

1986 was the first full year in which members joining during the second half of the year were offered half subscription for that year only if they paid for the following year at time of joining. This has proved remarkably successful, almost all applicants agreeing to this. However, the drop-out rate is higher than the average: 1988: 35%, 1989: 36% and 1990: 28%. I wonder why?

Where do our members live now? Predictably, the distribution is very similar to that which prevailed in 1985. The main change is North East Kent where the membership has dropped to 9% [12% in 1985]. Most still reside in

**The membership year by year**

Year end	Full/Associate members	Family members	Total members	New members joining	Percentage renewals
1971	801	—	801	801	—
1972	1262	—	1262	558	88%
1973	1149	—	1149	225	73%
1974	1343	—	1343	403	82%
1975	1418	—	1418	371	85%
1976*	1361	—	1361	305	74%
1977	1540	—	1540	342	88%
1978	1642	—	1642	358	83%
1979*	1603	—	1603	277	83%
1980	1722	342	2064	688	86%
1981	1740	540	2280	560	83%
1982*	1653	573	2226	337	83%
1983	1635	617	2252	351	85%
1984	1762	701	2463	487	88%
1985(*est)	1770	700	2470	340	89%
1986	1789	732	2521	326	87%
1987	1822	755	2577	331	90%
1988	1890	820	2710	313	92%
1989*	1851	830	2681	375	87%
1990**[To mid-September]	1924	961	2885	430	92%

\*Subscriptions increased from beginning of year; adult rates: 1971 £2, 1976 £3, 1979 £4, 1982 £5, 1985 £6, 1989 £8.

\*\*Northiam Extension opened and Membership advertised throughout Railway.

Maidstone and Medway 12% [13%] although strict comparisons between areas is difficult as size and population per area differs quite markedly. Nevertheless, it is strange that East Anglia has only 1% of the members, half that of overseas! On a strict county basis, Kent has the highest score with 54% [56%] with Sussex a very poor, but improving, second of 16% [13%]. We look to Northiam to further redress this position.

Hopefully, most members view their membership as supportive rather than for what

they get out of it. However, the benefits offered are very good indeed; a real bargain if one takes advantage of travel concessions, bookshop discount and Family membership in particular. Indeed, *The Tenterden Terrier* is almost worth the annual subscription alone.

Finally, congratulations to 244 of the current members. These stalwarts were among the first 1000 members to join the Company in 1971. Indeed, members no. 1, 2 3 4 and 5 are still 'on the books'.

#### Where our members live now. 1985 figure: [ ]

TENTERDEN ASHFORD	and Rolvenden includes Headcorn, Charing, Wye, Lydd and New Romney	7% [6%] 7% [5%]
EAST KENT	approx. line of Whitstable and Hythe and east thereof	9% [8%]
HASTINGS	includes Rye, Robertsbridge, Battle, Bexhill	9% [8%]
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	area bounded by Westerham, Wrotham, Paddock Wood, Staplehurst, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst, Etchingham, Heathfield, Uckfield and Edenbridge	10% [12%]
MAIDSTONE AND MEDWAY	includes Faversham, Sittingbourne, Isles of Sheppey and Grain, Rochester, Gillingham and Chatham	12% [13%]
N.E. KENT	includes Dartford, Gravesend, Swanley, Parts of Kent not included elsewhere	9% [12%]
SUSSEX COAST	from Pevensey to Littlehampton and Arundel, includes Hassocks and Lewes	5% [3%] 2% [2%] 6% [6%]
REST OF SUSSEX		6% [7%]
SURREY		
LONDON	All London postal addresses	
EAST ANGLIA	Addresses in Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk	1% [1%]
BERKS, BUCKS, MIDDLESEX, HERTS AND ESSEX		6% [8%]
REST OF UNITED KINGDOM		9% [7%]
EUROPE		1% [1%]
REST OF WORLD		1% [1%]

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# Letters to the Editor

## Lydd Military Railway

Sir – One item not included in the track plan of the Lydd Military Railway in your issue No. 52 is a passing loop which commenced 14 chains from the end-on connection with the southernmost siding in the Lydd SER goods yard.

It is recorded that the rails of the Suakin-Berber Railway when returned to the UK were split between the Shoeburyness, Lydd, and Aldershot railways. It may be therefore that the Lydd line was first laid with tight rails, for horse-working, and relaid 2-3 years later when the *ex-Berber rails* and engines became available. According to the Locomotive Magazine, the two Manning Wardle engines built for Lucas & Aird, the Berber contractors, were painted up in Berber Railway livery and arrived thus at Lydd, after a short stay in the 'Berber Siding' at Plumstead.

The Metropolitan Railway Carriage & Wagon Co. carriage mentioned could have been one of the two rigid-eight-wheeled saloons built by that company for the Berber Railway, though both were somewhat later recorded as being at Shoeburyness.

Llandre, Dyfed

R.W. Kidner

Sir – I was most interested to read the account of the military railways of Lydd in the last Tenterden Terrier. The station building to be seen in the photograph of Lydd Camp (p.42) has a distinctly "light railway" appearance.

An instruction in the South Eastern & Chatham's service timetable for August 1901 stated that only four-wheeled vans were to be used for the baggage of troops conveyed to Lydd, so that they could be sent on over the military line from Lydd station to the Camp. Presumably six-wheeled stock was thought to be too prone to derailment.

According to the Industrial Railway Society's Pocket Book 'C' the Manning Wardle 0-4-0 saddle-tank 'Trafford' went from Lydd to the firm of J. Grayson Lowood & Co. Ltd. of Deepcar, Yorkshire, in 1927. It had been one of quite a large order from Manning Wardle for Walker's Ship Canal contract.

Sidcup, Kent

T. G. Burnham

## The Kipling connection

Sir – There are some very interesting features of the letter from Rudyard Kipling to Colonel Stephens.

Kipling would seem to be referring to flooding and the lines in the west would be the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead (which traversed low ground) and the Torrington-Halwill line, then under construction.

Kipling would have been familiar with the area of the latter when he was a schoolboy at Westward Ho! Although the Bideford Westward Ho! and Appledore did not open until long after Kipling's time there and did not seem to have any connection with the colonel.

Kipling refers to the pass sent to him by Stephens as from Robertsbridge to Paddock Wood. Does this mean that he confused his junctions or did he have some special reason for wanting the pass made out to Paddock Wood? For Kipling to be involved in eccentric correspondence is not unknown. He wrote to a farmer complaining that hay from his carts had fallen off onto the hedges of Batemans. The farmer kept up a protracted correspondence with Kipling on the subject and when someone asked him why, said that he obtained a number of autographs of Kipling and was able to sell them.

Bristol

J.F. Burrell

## Which Terrier's chimney?

Sir – It is a generally well known fact, that when the Terriers were first built, each carried a "Copper Capped Chimney".

Many of the Terrier at some stage had these chimneys replaced, although this was not true of all Terriers.

Terrier No. 32655 was among those whose chimney was replaced. On the 9th of May 1960 it was officially withdrawn, with a mileage of 1,396,027. Upon which it was sold to the newly-formed "BlueBell Railway Preservation Society". They wished to restore it to its original style (although retaining the A1X style too!) They decided that to complete the effect the engine needed a "Copper Capped Chimney". As the original had been replaced, a substitute had to be found.

An article of BlueBell's reads "and, to put the icing on the cake, so to speak, substituted a Copper Capped Chimney from old Poplar."

From such a statement one would naturally assume the latter to have been scrapped. Oddly enough this was not the case as the engine continued to run until, withdrawal in November 1963.

The engine in question is, of course, the KESR'S No. 3 Bodiam (Built as No. 70 Poplar).

But, if Bodiam's original chimney is on BlueBell's No. 55 Stepney, then when was it removed from Bodiam?

Which chimney does Bodiam now carry?

And how did blueBell manage to end up with 32670's Copper Capped Chimney on 32655?

Is there any one out there who can solve this mystery?

Kew, Surrey Emma Shane (aged 13 years)

#### **Titles**

Sir - I note the proliferation of grand sounding job descriptions on our Railway, and am prompted to submit a few of my own for consideration.

Train driver could become Locomotive control officer. Booking clerk would be Point of sale travel assistant. Guards might be called Traffic service managers, and Ticket inspectors Travelling audit supervisors. Signalmen could become Train movement controllers, and the Permanent way gang Operational routing multipersons.

Whatever horrors are thought up next, when I get in a train (sorry, steam traction conveyance) can I remain a passenger and not be a customer?

Ramsgate

Mike Corney

*The correspondent would no doubt be served with a cup of tea on the train by a Commis Chef de Rang working under the supervision of the Maitre d'Hotel! - Editor.*

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# Life as a Lengthman

*Arthur James Smith was born at Sandhurst on 16th July 1908 but since childhood has lived in the Tenterden locality. For 13½ years, during the 1930s and '40s, he worked for the K&ESR as a permanent way lengthman. He now lives in retirement at St Michaels with his sister-in-law Miss Polly Booker.*

**JOHN MILLER** recently talked to him about his work on the railway.

**J.M.** What was your job before you went to work on the railway?

**A.S.** Oh various. For sometime I worked for the Weald of Kent Transport Company which was run by Captain Palin who lived at Bethersden. The depot was in Station Road, Tenterden, on the old Edwards' Brewery site and I worked as a van delivery driver, mostly on nights. Amongst my jobs was the collection of the early morning newspapers from Headcorn station, and I also did some servicing of the vehicles, which included Albions, Thornycrofts and a 14 seater Bean bus. I always liked the mechanical side of things. The depot was later taken over by Newberry, a Battle firm, and run as a jam factory.

I then worked as a coalman for the Ashford Co-operative Society which had a coal wharf at Tenterden Town station, and delivered coal from a one-ton Morris lorry.

**J.M.** When did you join the Kent & East Sussex?

**A.S.** I can't remember the year - but I worked there for 13½ years.

**J.M.** How was the permanent way work organised on the line?

**A.S.** Well, the line was divided into sections with a ganger in charge of each. Pizney Beach was the ganger in charge of the Biddenden gang where I was usually attached, though I sometimes worked with the Tenterden gang where Jessie Masters was in charge. If there was a big job to be done, men from the different gangs would be brought together - for instance, I was sent to work with the Northiam gang under Dick Hills when they were relaying track at Bodiam - that was a big job. But for most of my time I worked with the Biddenden gang.

**J.M.** Who was in overall charge of the track?

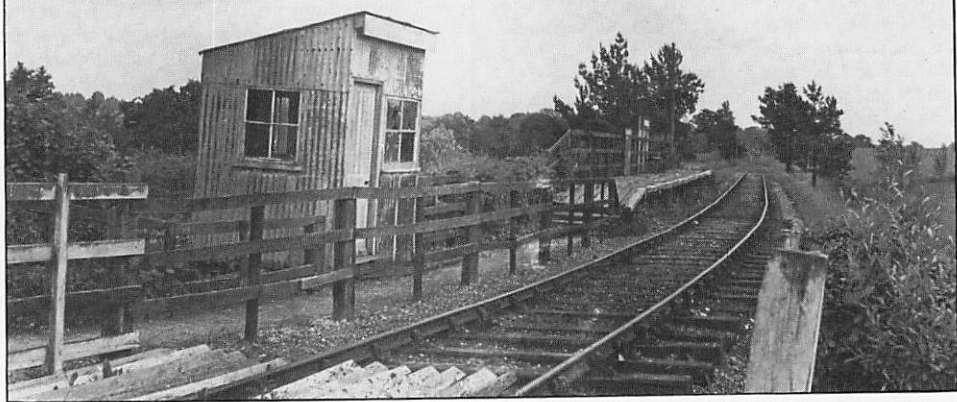
**A.S.** The head ganger for the whole line was Bill Padgham who lived in the staff bungalow at Wittersham Road. He used to inspect the lower sections on a pump-trolley because of the risk of floods but this wasn't done on my section.

**J.M.** Tell me about life with the Biddenden gang.

**A.S.** A gang usually had four men though during the war we were often reduced to three. Dick Milton, who lived at 17 St Michaels Terrace, was also in my gang and we would bike to Biddenden each morning - or in winter, walk if it was snowing. At Biddenden we were joined by another lengthman called Brown who was a bit crackers, and Pizney Beach would be waiting for us. "Come on, Come on", he would say if we were in any danger of starting late. Pizney used to wear straps around his legs" and smoked a lot - he made his own pipes out of cherry wood. Our working day was from 7 am to 5 pm, except on Saturdays when we finished at 3.30 pm. Sunday was a day off unless there was overtime to be worked. There were no paid holidays. I was paid 30/- (£1.50p) per week which I had to collect and sign for on Saturdays from George Dobell at Tenterden Town station.

**J.M.** Were you set down or picked up by train at your working point?

**A.S.** Goodness no, we walked to and from the nearest station with our basic kit - a bar and a keying hammer. Other tools were kept in a lineside hut with a big padlock on the door. Particularly before the war, the Sunday 'vultures' - diddycoys - would nick any tools they could lay hands on. We collected our orders; it might be several lengths to be keyed-up, and this was entered on our time sheets as we finished each job. If trains weren't running, we had the use of a pump-trolley and we could get up some speed on these. Grass on either side of the track was cut by scythe and the 'four-foot' was weeded with a Dutch hoe. We also repaired fences, gates and crossings and any other jobs along the line. I replaced all the telephone line between High Halden and Biddenden by working overtime on Sundays. There were lots of adders along that part of the railway and



*St Michaels Halt, c 1935, looking towards Tenterden, with the hut in which Miss Goodall waited for custom.*  
(Eric Graves Festiniog Collection)

Polly's brother-in-law was worried about them getting into his house, which was across a field beyond High Halden - so he used to shoot the snakes with a double-barrelled shotgun.

We took sandwiches for our lunch and brewed tea in the permanent way hut. Some of the men, if they had had a few drinks, would look for big black slugs and put them between bread and eat them - it used to turn my stomach over to watch.

J.M. Did you have look-outs when working ?

A.S. No, not really. We were issued with detonators and put these down if we had a bit of funny track. Hot weather might cause a swinger (kink) so detonators were put down to slow the train but we could usually put it right quite quickly.

The permanent way trains used to make the engines work hard, particularly up Frittenden bank. During the war ballast was brought in via Headcorn and there might be nine or ten loaded wagons plus some bullhead rail off the Southern Railway. The engine usually left the wagons in the Biddenden sidings.

J.M. Did you see much of William Austen senior?

A.S. Old Austen used to come over quite often - usually on a Saturday or Monday. He came from Tonbridge via Headcorn and caught the K&ESR ordinary service train. Young Austen, known to the men as 'The Youngster', also came quite often and he or Bill Padgham decided on the track maintenance work and any other jobs that had to be done.

J.M. Were you issued with any protective clothing by the Company?

A.S. No, none whatever.

J.M. Did you have free travel on the railway ?

A.S. We didn't bother with privilege tickets for trips on the K&ESR because all the staff knew each other and we were never asked to show a ticket, but I did have privilege tickets to Hastings when I was doing a bit of courting.

J.M. Did work as a lengthman include any other jobs?

A.S. Yes, I should say so - all sorts of jobs. I often had to work at Tenterden. I used to clean out the tank on the water tower and sometimes climbed to the top of the wind pump to oil the moving parts. Old Austen,

who could sometimes be a bit bad tempered, used to like me to cut the privet hedge at the back of the Tenterden platform flower beds. He used to say "I like you to cut that hedge Arthur - you get a nice straight line on it". He didn't normally use the first names of staff.

The yard crane was used to load and off-load timber and when working there I used to look across to the livestock pens. The pens were filled with sheep and cattle and then the drivers (stockmen) went off for a drink in the High Street. When they came back to work, I often saw them walloping the sheep with bats (sticks) but the R.S.P.C.A. Inspector used to be about and would keep an eye on them.

I was also sent down to Rolvenden for odd jobs and saw Sammy Austen the fitter (he also liked a drink) and Jimmy Norton's father who ran the print shop.

J.M. In view of your previous experience with van deliveries, were you asked to help out driving the Bedford lorries?

A.S. No, I was never asked to do that - the lorries had their own drivers and of course, Tom Beech was the driver of the railway's own horse drawn cart which was used to move some of the larger loads in the Town.

J.M. Living so close by, you must have seen a lot of St Michaels Halt?

A.S. I should say so! Another of my jobs was to maintain the fences built of old sleepers, along the front of St Michaels Terrace, which was a K&ESR responsibility. Did you know the allotments on the other side of the road, opposite the Terrace, belonged to the railway? The halt's gone now, of course, though the Scots pine on the other side of the track just past the site of the platform, which I remember when I was working, is still there.

I remember Miss Goodall, who lived in Grange Road - she used to sit in the hut at the end of the platform and issue tickets and accept parcels to be sent by train, and local people could collect parcels. what a boring job!

J.M. What do you remember about working during the war?

A.S. Well, we used to hear the siren and if an

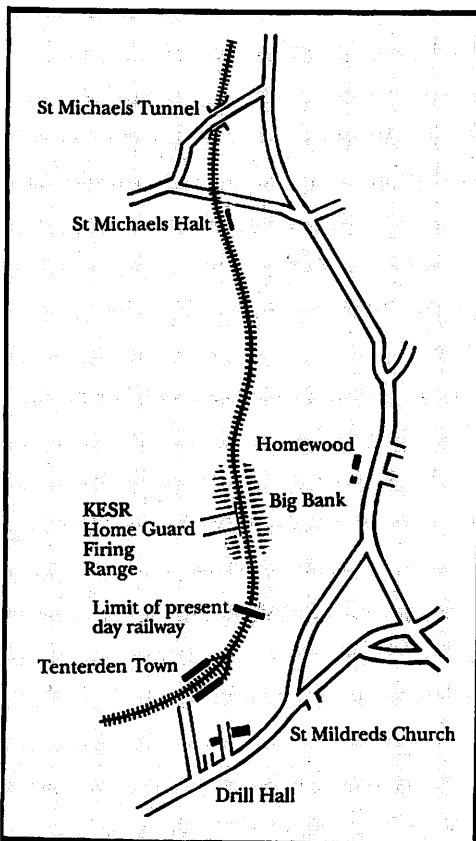
enemy air-raid was in progress we dropped down into a ditch for cover. I certainly remember the G.W.R. engines with the Army trains which used to travel up the line via Headcorn.

On one occasion, the Army support train came to a stop where I was working along the line. There was a kitchen in the formation and the Army cook put his head out of the window and we got chatting. He offered me some old kitchen knives which I accepted - I still have them and use them in the garden.

At first, one of the rail-guns was kept at Tenterden but it was moved down to Rolvenden because of worries that enemy aircraft might attack the gun and in the process damage St Mildred's Church.

J.M. Did you join the K&ESR Home Guard?

A.S. Yes, I had to - all the staff had to join.





*Arthur Smith with his sister-in-law Polly Booker at their cottage in St Michaels, August 1990.*  
(John Miller)

J.M. Was it just for railwaymen ?

A.S. Oh yes, it was an entirely railway Home Guard unit - part of Southern Railway unit, as I remember. I was issued with an army uniform with fore and aft cap, belt and a .303 rifle which I kept at home. I was also given an army gas mask as well as my civilian one. I once had to go somewhere in Home Guard uniform (I forget which town) and was given a free meal by the Salvation Army!

Cyril Packham, who was a guard and lived in Mayor's Place behind the High Street, Tenterden, was the unit Sergeant and Arthur Harris, porter and relief guard, and Bert Sharpe, guard, were both made Corporals. We drilled at either Tenterden station or in the Territorial's Drill Hall in Church Road. Firing practice was held on a range below the 'big bank' (about 700 yards north of Tenterden Town, behind Homewood School) with the targets set against the railway embankment.

J.M. What were your duties as a Home Guard member ?

A.S. Well, that depended on our railway shifts but our job was to guard the railway, mainly at night. I had to patrol a length of track between Tenterden and High Halden

armed with a rifle but no torch - and I was issued with a clip of five bullets and three detonators. There were worries about spies who might undo bolts in the fishplates and so sabotage the railway and we were warned the spies could be women! There were also doubts about some of the prisoners-of-war in the neighbourhood, some of whom were allowed to wander freely. In fact, I had come across prisoners walking back along the track at night after a visit to the pub. The army trains and rail-guns were guarded by regular soldiers. In the dark, along the track, it used to put the fear of God into me when a voice suddenly called out "Halt, who goes there?".

J.M. What about after the war?

A.S. In 1948, following nationalisation, I was sent to Ashford to be passed out to drive a motor-trolley and I brought the trolley back from Ashford to Rolvenden. I used to drive the 'high-ups' about on it and took them on trips as far as Robertsbridge.

J.S. Did you like working on the railway ?

A.S. We had our ups and downs but yes, I enjoyed it - I had some good mates. Jessie Masters, Dick Milton and I worked well together as a gang. I still regularly walk along the trackbed from St Michaels Halt and sometimes I turn round and fancy I can see myself walking back around the curve from the tunnel with my bar and keying hammer over my shoulder. . .

#### Notes

- A The Wittersham staff bungalow was situated on what is now the car park, close to the main road.
- B An old agricultural custom to prevent rats running up the inside of trouser legs.
- C What is now Mercers car repair business was the site of the cattle market livestock pens and at one time was personally owned by Colonel Stephens.
- D When the Headcorn extension was under construction in 1904, Grange Road had to be raised on either side of the level crossing to avoid the necessity of a bridge, the K&ESR thus became responsible for the upkeep of the retaining wall.
- E The K&ESR Home Guard formed part of the 28th, 1st Southern Railway K Battalion, Home Guard, under the command of Lt.Colonel J.A. Plummer.
- F The Drill Hall is now part of the Tenterden Club.
- G The motor-trolley was of the Wickham type, with the passengers seated on benches behind the driver but without any form of cover.

*I am grateful to Arthur Smith for his patience in answering all my questions and for his generosity in donating his old permanent way tools to the museum collection.*





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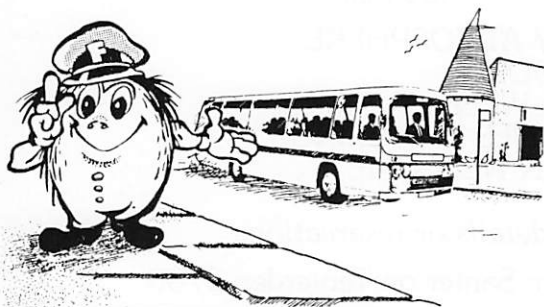
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