

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 55

Summer 1991



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

The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered charity 262481

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The Tenterden Terrier is published by the Tenterden Railway Company Ltd, three times yearly on the third Saturday of March, July and November. Articles, correspondence and photographs are welcome from both members and non-members and should be received at the Editorial office not less than two months before the due publication date. ISSN 0306-2449

Bodiam Castle

A National Trust Property



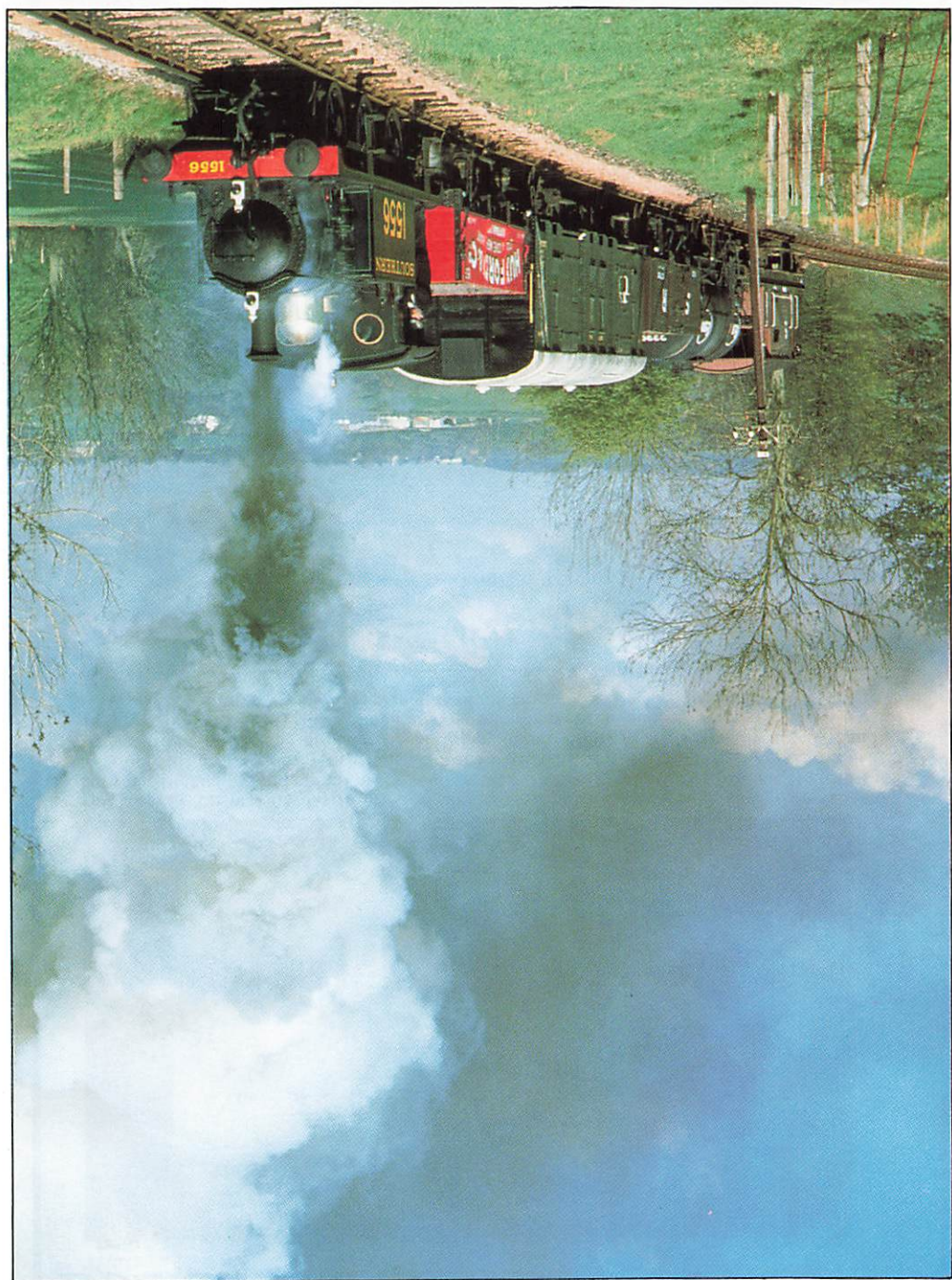
The Castle is open every day from April till October, but weekdays only November to March, between 10.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. or sundown if earlier. Closed over Christmas. Built in 1385 as a defence against the French, ruined in the Civil War, it still has a magical effect on every visitor. Inside one 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. Telephone Staplecross (058083) 436.

Great Dixter

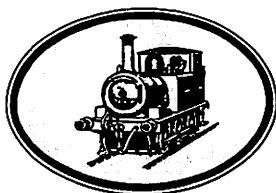


OPENING TIMES House and Gardens open **Tuesdays to Sundays inclusive** and Bank Holiday Mondays from 29 March to 13 October and 19/20 & 26/27 October. Open 2.00 pm. Last Admission 5.00 pm. (Garden open from 11.00 on 25, 26, 27 May, Sundays in July and August and 26 August)

The 500 year old manor hall is open together with the gardens, well known for a wide variety of plants. Some of the unusual plants have won awards at the Royal Horticultural Society shows in London. *1½ miles from the K.&E.S.R. station at Northiam*; follow the signposts in the village for a very pleasant visit. Telephone : Northiam (0797) 253160.



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Editorial

More than a Pipedream!

The commitment of British Rail and both the Kent and East Sussex County Councils to the success of the Robertsbridge project is both heartening and remarkable. Other regulatory bodies have yet to state their views and one or two landowners remain to be convinced. However, assuming the money is forthcoming it is fair to say that the project stands an excellent chance of success and through trains could be running to Robertsbridge again within the decade. Environmentally the Railway has much to offer to the area; for Robertsbridge it could breathe new life into a business community, hard hit since the building of the bypass, but without bringing back the traffic problems which threatened to destroy it in the first place. Thirty years ago the future of the Rother Valley seemed inexorably linked to the motor car – the twenty first century could herald a valuable alternative.

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Graphics by Vandyke Design
Printed by L & T Press, Luton
1991

FRONT COVER 73126 "Kent & East Sussex Railway" descends Tenterden Bank with the 2.15 pm Tenterden Town to Northiam train on 27th May 1991. (Brian Stephenson)

FRONTISPIECE "P" class 1556 heads the vintage train towards Tenterden Town Station on 21 April 1991. (Mike Esau)

From the Chairman

1991 so far is and will continue to be a year of change.

On the financial side D. Felton has hung up his gloves on the 31st March having achieved miracles with our managed funds over seventeen years for which our thanks are heartfelt.

A financial committee under the control of Allan Robinson has been set up, including Ray Collins and Philip Clark-Monks, with secondment when instructed or required. The control of this committee will pass to Paul Wilson in early course and it should be noted that the finance department will be fully computerised due to the massive increase in workloads.

I regret due to financial constraints i.e. budgetary control that we had to cancel the visiting locomotive from the Severn Valley Railway, however, another locomotive has arrived dictated by Locomotive Department requirements and this will be used if and when required.

I should also point out that Locomotive Department output is most impressive.

Passenger loadings would appear to be down but revenue both from the shop and catering are up.

The Board will have to raise new capital for a number of items, a new boiler for No. 3 Bodiam will cost in excess of £30,000 and we are processing future investment for our coaching fleet. For instance 'Theodora' will test our ingenuity.

At our board meeting on the 1st June 1991 full authority was granted to Robin Dyce to present a fully costed feasibility study before the 1991 Annual General Meeting to be held in April 1992. This study with costings for the section Northiam - Bodiam will be done in a most sensitive style, mindful of the present Bodiam site and the renovation work being done thereto by John Miller and his team, plus dovetailing in with the section Bodiam-Robertsbridge for mutual benefit of the two applicable companies.

From the Board Room

We welcome Robin Dyce to the Board of Directors: a steady Forestry and Clearance manager, he will find no dead or rotting wood here.

The prime concern, as with similar enterprises this year, has to be the security and health of our financial operations. A team of six, plus two part time staff, now replaces David Felton, the one man who, virtually single handed, carried the financial administration from the early years, until he was joined by Alan Robinson, very recently. We marvel at how he did it all: taking such major efforts as the Bond Issues, and the extension of the railway in his stride. He takes all our admiration and good wishes into a well earned retirement from the Board. Unfortunately Alan Robinson will be leaving Kent shortly. The role of finance director will be taken on by Paul Wilson.

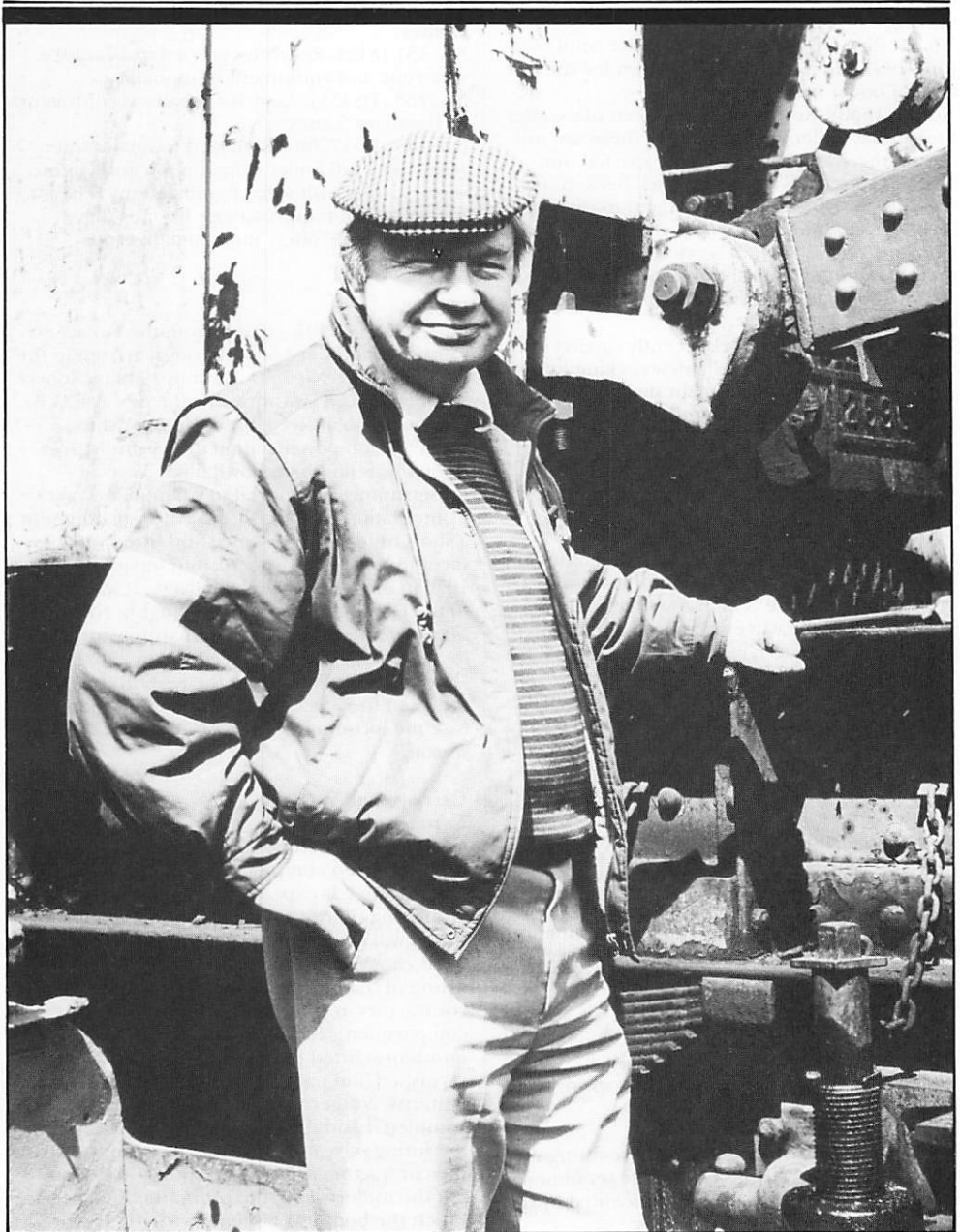
Still on the subject of finance, we watch the public's leisure habits closely, and are grateful for the media coverage and publicity currently being accorded to the Railway Preservation Scene. But, press and public support can be fickle. The cost would be tremendous if we just wanted to stay in the same place, but we have Bodiam and Robertsbridge to consider, as you will read elsewhere in this journal.

Beside all this is the sheer hard graft of maintenance and improvement of our existing sites and stock. As we go around the country, it is clear that no one does it better than we do. Our hobby is our pride and joy. The Directors themselves spend considerable time and energy fostering that excellence with careful husbandry which has given us Northiam, and all the recent worth while additions to the infra-structure, including Rolvenden signal box, and new mess room, an admin block and operating management office at Tenterden, and now looks forward to KESR trains at Bodiam and Robertsbridge, which will be brought into being by the same careful and caring professionalism from Directors, managers, other volunteers, and the small dedicated band of paid staff, to which, as Company Secretary during the past exciting seven years, I pay tribute.

Locomotives

The position on the locomotive fleet is as follows:

David Stratton  our Chairman



(Brian Stephenson)

Steam Locomotives

No.3 (Bodiam). Awaiting Board decision with regard to repair, which includes a new boiler.
No.8 (Knowle). It is planned to bring the locomotive's boiler into the yard shortly to fit new expansion brackets as the originals are missing.

No. 10 (Sutton). Available for service until 30th June 1991 when it will be withdrawn for the annual boiler inspection.

No. 11(1556). Re-assembly has taken place after the annual boiler inspection, but there are still several mechanical repairs to be carried out.

No. 12 (Marcia). The owner, Dick Beckett, has recently come down from Scotland to carry out further restoration work.

No. 14 (Charwelton). In service and recently used to haul the Special train, together with No. 10, in connection with the naming of Class 73 locomotive "73126".

No. 19 (Norwegian). Work recently carried out has included the fitting of a new rocking grate and making up modified main steam pipes.

No. 21 (Wainwright). The boiler received its final hydraulic test on 24th May 1991, and was due to return to Rolvenden in the third week in June. The smoke box is to be re-fitted following repairs.

No. 22 (Maunsell). An inspection by the insurance surveyor suggests that repairs similar to No. 21's boiler will be required, including a new front tube plate. The frames have been jacked up and the wheels removed and cleaned, prior to despatch to contractors at Liverpool for tyre renewal, hopefully in August.

No. 23 (Holman F Stephens). Ready for service having been tested in traffic on 19th May.

No. 24 (William H Austen). Back in service following its annual boiler inspection.

No. 25 (Northiam). Due out of service at the end of June for its 10 year inspection. When resources permit, the boiler will be removed from the frames, the frames lifted and axle boxes examined.

No. 26 (Linda). Re-tubing of the boiler has commenced and the annual boiler examination will be carried out before return to service.

No. 27 (Rolvenden). Still being driven hard by the younger generation!

Diesel Locomotives

No. 40 (Ford). Awaiting attention to springs and other items.

No. 41 (Ruston). In service.

No. 42 Out of service, pending the re-fitting of the intermediate wheels; a complete set of new axle box crown brasses has been provided by the Maidstone Area Group.

No. 43 (Titan). In service.

No. 46 (BR Class 03). Now expected to be ready

for trial running in July.

No.47 out of service.

No. 48 (BR Class 14). Return to service still under consideration.

No. 49 (BR Class 14). In service.

Cranes

No. 151 (815). Recently received its bi-annual wire rope and equipment examination.

No. 133 (DS451). Away for repairs at contractors in Heysham, Lancs.

No. 145 (DS17700). Returned to service after receiving a full boiler examination and engine repairs along with some modifications. The jib carrier wagon requires a new floor as the existing one is rotten and in a dangerous condition.

"7597"

On 29th May 1991 a visitor from the Great Central Railway at Loughborough arrived in the form of 0-6-0T No 7597. Built in 1949 by Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns for the new C.E.G.B. power station at Rye House, Hertfordshire, 7597 was in use on power station duties until 1971 when it was purchased by Railway Vehicle Preservations and moved to Chappel & Wakes Colne station in March 1972. After steaming for a short time, it was re-tubed and fitted with vacuum brakes before return to service in March 1976 in original indigo blue livery. It was moved to the Great Central Railway Loughborough in May 1982 and withdrawn prematurely in 1984 for re-tubing, being replaced by No.25 "Northiam" on loan from the K&ESR. It returned to service in November 1987, and will ease the locomotive shortage at the K&ESR this season.

Carriage and Wagon

Carriages

GER 6 Wheel Composite 81. Painting of the body has been completed in GER Maroon, and David Dine has expertly applied the lettering and lining. Varnishing will be carried out soon which will complete the exterior. Internally, the third class compartments are ready for the fitting of seating which is due back from the contractors in June. The first class compartments have had all the intricate mouldings fitted to the ceilings which have been varnished and painted to highlight the raised patterns. Numerous small jobs are being completed and the compartments prepared for the fitting of seating which is also due back from the contractors during June.

On the underframe, the prominent brackets to which the body was bolted have been removed as they were unsightly and incorrectly positioned in relation to the body. These were

the original brackets fitted to the underframe, which was originally an LMS passenger brake van (coded Store R). The body has been secured to the underframe in a more conventional manner by bolting the floor framing direct to the underframe members.

LNWR 6 Wheel Saloon 82. This coach has been fully repainted in LNWR livery of carmine lake and flake white and fully lined out complete with LNWR coat of arms.

The original vacuum brake cylinder was an obsolete type and beyond repair. A new cylinder was fitted along with new brake rigging to connect to the existing system.

The coach entered service on Vintage Sunday 21st April and has since returned to the workshop for fitting of the steam heating system and overhaul of the lavatory plumbing and fitting of roof tank filler pipes.

District Railway Coach 100. This coach entered service on Vintage Sunday 21st April having received 6 coats of varnish on the body. It returned to the workshop for adjustment of the springs and minor attention to the steam heat

system. It entered service on Sunday 26th May.

Maunsell CK56. Work has again slowed down on this coach and we are still awaiting delivery of the first class seats from the contractor. This will become the main project when GER 6 wheeler 81 is completed.

Pullman Car "Barbara". A new set of heavy duty batteries has been fitted which will improve the performance of the lighting while on Wealden Pullman duties. The gas and water systems have been overhauled and a new high performance water raising pump fitted.

Mark 1 Stock. CK87 has had the plumbing of both lavatories stripped down and overhauled as a result of numerous problems last season.

Brake coach 75, Petros, was used on a filming job during April which involved minor alterations in the guards compartment and luggage area and the brake end of the coach being painted brown and lettered "Air braked, 90 mph". The end has since been repainted black although the set number, 534, has not been reinstated.



Locomotive 7597 on hire to the K&ESR at Tenterden Town Station, June 1991. (Jim Berryman)

Wagons

L&Y Van 136. This has been repaired and fully repainted in L&Y medium grey.

SR Lowmac Wagon KESR 160, SR61048. This entered the workshop on 27th May 1991 for a full overhaul and fitting of a complete new floor.

G.W.R. Railcar Project

Work on No. 20 is proceeding at a steady pace at present, with the primary concern being the completion of repairs to the timber framework of the forward saloon. Replacement of the vertical-to-crossmember retaining brackets has also been undertaken, along with the vertical waist-level reinforcing brackets at this end of the vehicle. The structural reinforcing brackets at the front end have been located, and the "remains" removed, pending replacement with new items at a later date. Certain other internal brackets however, have been removed and inspected, and deemed re-usable. As a precaution against further corrosion, though, these have been zinc-plated, the plating process being carried out through the good offices of project member Dick Chapman and his firm.

Another task which will have been long

completed by the time this is published, is the removal of the Headcorn end domed cab roof section, which along with its counterpart from the Robertsbridge end, is due, at the time of writing, to be sent away for rectification of the corrosion damage incurred on the lower edges of these sections. Finally, No. 20 has now been berthed at the carriage shed end of the No. 3 carriage siding, where, for the foreseeable future at least, work can continue without interruption for shunting movements.

Permanent Way

Now that the winter work programme is coming to an end normal maintenance tasks can be undertaken. Spot resleeping continues and there seems to be a healthy contest underway to see if the youngsters can better the daily figure of the more senior members! With the new power auger figures in excess of 20 sleepers per day are being seen.

The section relaid this winter is settling in well, regular attention by the tamper will mean the removal of the restriction in the near future.

Another great morale boost for the department is the satisfactory outcome of the British Rail inspection for the running of the class 73, the



The flail in operation on the undergrowth between Northiam and Bodiam, near Dixter. March 1991.

(John Liddell)

investment in the track over the last 6 years has paid dividends.

Rotting timbers in the pointwork at Tenterden were replaced on two weekends from the 11th May. This involved the blocking off of the top end of the yard and stock being stabled at various locations around the railway. This was a complex undertaking involving close cooperation between the P Way and Operating departments. A total of 40 timbers from 8' 6" to 15' in 4 sets of points have now been changed.

The yellow crane that expired during the tracklaying fortnight is now back in service, allowing the department to catch up on a number of outstanding jobs. It is hoped that the red crane will be back with us in the not too distant future, as it has, at last, gone away for repairs.

Forestry and Conservation

The Group has now finished work on the Tenterden-Rolvenden section and has made a start on Rolvenden-Wittersham Road. At Willow curve a number of badly split and angled willow trees were cut down. These had the outside appearance of being quite healthy but when cut down were found to be badly decayed. It is hoped that this identifiable group of trees can be retained by pollarding, making them safe and easier to maintain.

The summer(!) months are being spent concentrating on clearing lineside vegetation adjacent to fields where high fire risk crops are growing. Wherever possible fire breaks are burned alongside fence lines to minimise the risk of fire spreading into the fields.

Andrew Webb, Richard Osborn and Robin Dyce have recently visited neighbouring farmers to discuss with them steps the railway is taking to reduce the chances of lineside fires spreading into adjacent fields and crops. Discussions have been encouraging and permission has been obtained for the railway's fire appliance to use farm tracks to reach sections of the track otherwise inaccessible to road vehicles. However, prevention is preferred to cure, and it is up to us all to be particularly vigilant to see that fires if they do start are put out as soon as possible.

The co-operation of the adjacent farmers with vehicular access to the track has been very gratifying although they have a common concern, shared by the railway, that the line must not become a footpath, particularly if people leave the track and walk across the

adjacent fields.

The annual weed killing train ran on Monday 3rd June, and due to greater growth of brambles in particular this year a wider area of trackside was sprayed.

The Maidstone Area Group kindly agreed to sponsor mechanical felling of the Bodiam-Northiam section of the line. A competitive quotation was received on the understanding that the Forestry & Conservation Group cleared the four foot area so the tractor mounted units could undertake their work without risk of derailling. Members of the Group spent over 600 man hours clearing the line using both chain saws and hand saws, and also with mechanical brushwood cutters. The work was undertaken in the weeks leading up to Easter, often in the most atrocious weather.

The felling was undertaken by up to three Ford tractors modified to run both on the road and on railway lines. For most of the time two of the tractors were fitted with flails, with sometimes a disc cutter being fitted to deal with thicker boughs.

Now that the felling work has been completed it will be possible to use Wickham trolleys and hand trolleys to enable an accurate assessment to be made of the railway infrastructure and to assist the feasibility study which is now being undertaken on the Northiam-Bodiam extension.

Building

Over the past few months the Department has concentrated on general maintenance of our existing buildings. This work will continue throughout the year carrying out repairs to rotten woodwork and, subject to volunteers, some repainting will be carried out.

Minor repairs have been completed to Tenterden signal box and a rain water pipe has been fitted to the rear of the box, this was not fitted when the box was re-erected in 1974 and consequently led to unnecessary rotting of the base plates.

At Wittersham gutters and pipes have finally been fitted to the signal box, again a job which was not carried out when the box was constructed. It is hoped that this will reduce the dampness in the lower sections.

Work continues at Tenterden on the granite setts, a time consuming but very rewarding task. Additional fence sections have been erected but a few more sections are required. If anyone

knows of any round top iron fencing please contact me, Dave Stubbs, at Tenterden Station. Or on 0634 33337.

Finally, our thanks go to Alan Wilcocks and his wife who have completely repainted Cranbrook Road gates followed by the crossing keeper's hut. They intend carrying out more painting throughout the summer and will appreciate any assistance.

Operating

Nineteen Ninety One has been as busy as ever for the Operating Department. As well as running the timetabled passenger service throughout the Winter months (including the "Wrong Snow" weekend when the advertised service on the K&ESR at least was operated) numerous engineers trains have been accommodated. Since Easter most running days have seen at least an hourly passenger service, with several days featuring a half hourly frequency, and the high level of additional charters, filming and engineers commitments has stretched the departments resources to the limits before we even get to the Summer "Daily Running" period. A big thank you is due to all those who have kept the show on the road so far this year.

As mentioned in the last "Terrier" a lot of work is currently taking place to improve the training methods in the department. Several individuals have undertaken to carry out formal instruction to supplement the "On the Job" tuition, traditionally the main form of training. In this connection number one cottage at Northiam which in recent years has been used only as a mess facility during extension work, is being converted into the Operating Training Centre. It is hoped that by the end of the Summer the various training courses now in preparation will be up and running, resulting in a much improved standard of training for all staff involved in the operation of the Railway.

The expansion of the Railway over the past ten years has led to a growth in the numbers of operating staff to over 150 directly involved with the running of trains as well as others in the Engineering Department who are the responsibility of the Operating Department for certain aspects of their work. A restructuring of the Operating Department Management is currently underway to strengthen the existing team and ensure that standards of safety and performance are maintained and improved. The Department has recently taken over the former General Office in the Station building as a base for the Loco. Guards & Signalling Inspectorate

and the Training Standards Officer (as well as the Fire, Health & Safety Manager) and also to bring all the paperwork associated with the Department under one roof.

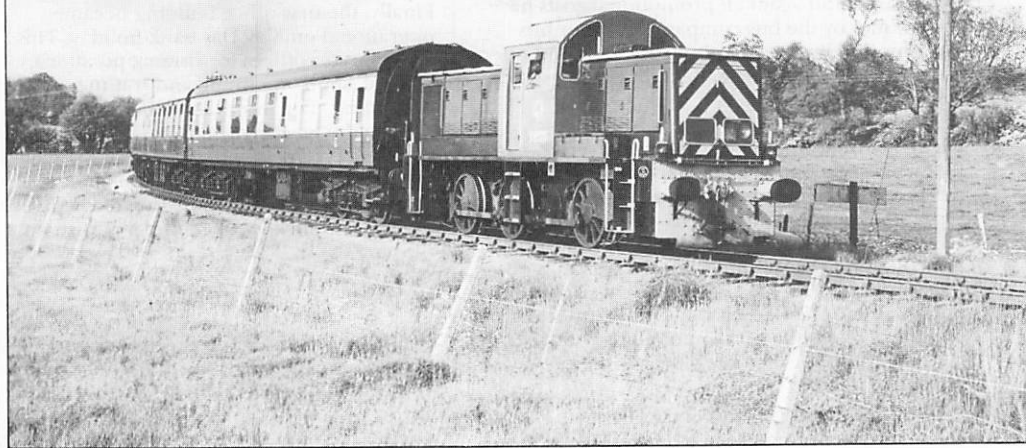
Finally the visit of BR Electro Diesel 73126 was a great success from the Operating point of view. Whilst on the K&ESR the Loco was manned by a BR Inspector, BR Driver (acting in a volunteer capacity & a member of the TRC) and a K&ESR Diesel Driver & Secondman. The various BR Staff involved enjoyed themselves enormously and were suitably impressed with our Operating Standards. A vote of thanks is due to our Loco Inspector Peter Wensley for his organising of the various crewing aspects of the visit and for making sure all went well whilst the Loco was on the K&ESR.

Commercial

The 1991 season is proving difficult to predict. The recession, poor weather and the loss of the "Northiam Novelty" effect have not helped our figures which although on budget are running below last year.

Marketing effort has been concentrated on partnerships to achieve maximum return on a minimal outlay. "Great Southern Railways" is a new initiative between ourselves, Bluebell, Watercress, Isle of Wight and Swanage Railways. 250,000 "Passports" have been printed, generously sponsored by Estate Publications in Tenterden and Ian Allan Ltd. These are given out at each railway when visitors buy their tickets. Having paid full fare at the first railway the visitor can visit each of the other lines at a discounted price, the hope being to increase the awareness of other railways in the South and to encourage more visits. Great Southern Railways was launched on 15th May at the English Tourist Board headquarters in London by ETB Chairman William Davis who drew attention to the significant role played by the five railways in Southern England – between us we achieve an annual turnover in excess of £3.5 million, and carry over ¾ million passengers. We have a combined membership of 16,000 with an estimated 1600 working volunteers and no less than 78 paid staff.

A joint promotion with Bellway Homes, builders of a new estate in Tenterden, allows anyone visiting their showhouse to bring one child free on the train of their choice if accompanied by an adult. All promotion costs, including a household distribution in Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Paddock Wood, are paid for by Bellway Homes. We have joined forces with East Kent Buses to encourage travel



D9525 banks the 5.55 pm Northiam to Tenterden Town train away from Rolvenden on 27th May 1991. The locomotive heading the train, number 25, had a clinkered fire.

(Brian Stephenson)



No. 25 makes its last run before overhaul, with the 5.55 pm Northiam to Tenterden Town train on Orpins Curve, banked by D9525, 27th May 1991.

(Brian Stephenson)

by public transport from Thanet (Margate, Ramsgate etc), Canterbury and Ashford to Tenterden and on to our trains. Presentation of a valid bus ticket qualifies for a 20% discount off our fares, and again all promotional costs have been met by the bus company. Another bus promotion involves Eastbourne Buses and offers travel from Eastbourne, Bexhill, Hastings and Battle to Northiam.

The Darling Buds of May television series, part of which was filmed at Tenterden Town Station, is proving an unexpected bonus with coach parties coming from as far away as the Midlands bringing 100 passengers every other Saturday throughout the summer. Local advertising featuring the Larkin family extols a visit to the Railway as "The Perfick Day Out" in another attempt to cash in on the popularity of the H. E. Bates stories.

The South East England Shire Horse Association arranged their "Heavy Horse Show" adjacent to Northiam Station on Sunday 2nd June. In connection with this, a half-hourly "park and ride" service operated from Tenterden and attracted additional business.

Readers of Railway World magazine will have their own "Steam Days" on 27th and 28th July, when the vintage train will run as an additional attraction. The previous week we will welcome 74 members of the Colonel Stephens' Society making their first official visit and travelling in the vintage set of 4 and 6 wheeled coaches.

Students from East Kent College will be assisting us in our first major market research exercise for some years in June, July and August, to learn more about our visitors, their origins and how they heard about us.

Press coverage has continued at a good rate. The Railway press have given us very good coverage of the Class 73 naming. The Robertsbridge Extension gets regular reports in local newspapers and we have featured on the front cover of a leading computer magazine, H.P. World.

Santa Special bookings opened in April, yes April, this year amidst some ribald comments. The decision has, however, proved to be a sensible one as over 300 seats have been sold already.

On the filming front, only one contract has been fulfilled this year when "Petros", suitably repainted to approximate the rear of the "Orient Express", was used in the BBC drama

series "Moon & Son" in which a girl is shot and falls from a train. The programme, episode 2, is scheduled for transmission in February 1992.

Finally, the new office building became operational on May Day bank holiday. This incorporates offices for visitor operations, finance, shop, operating and traffic co-ordinating. The internal mail rack is now re-sited in the meeting room area, where there is desk space, telephones and a photo copier. The old station office is now the domain of the Operating Inspectorate. Station Masters will now use the entrance lobby on the platform on running days.

Catering

This is the first bulletin since the reorganisation of the Pullman and Buffet departments under one heading - CATERING.

The year to date has been busy and a credit to all the catering volunteers who have coped well with the reorganisation.

The Buffet continues to flourish under the supervision of Margaret Howard who has welcomed a number of new volunteers this year - and would welcome even more! A new refrigerated sandwich unit is helping to achieve compliance with the new Hygiene Regulations and once it is known what the training requirements will be this will be put in hand.

Our new Rother Valley service is proving to be successful. On Sundays on occasions over 70 lunches have been served in less than 2 hours, which has tested the skills of the staff; on each occasion they have more than proved themselves. A highlight for the Rother Valley Ltd came on Thursday 23rd May when we were asked to provide luncheon for the guests attending the naming of the Class 73 locomotive. One hundred and twenty two sat down for lunch in four vehicles, all of whom were most impressed with the food and service provided.

The smaller restyled Pullman has proved to be popular with staff and diners alike, who appreciate the improvements to the food and service this allows. However, more volunteers will always be made welcome especially chefs who are in very short supply! Anyone interested in any area of catering should contact Margaret Howard or Stuart Phillips at Tenterden Station. Training will be given.

Shop

Once again an amazing start has been made to



John Miller painting the new fence at Bodiam with black tar varnish, April 1991. (John Liddell)

the current trading year in the Gift Shop. As reported in our last issue, sales last year surprisingly held up to expectation in what was a depressed year for most of the retail industry. These excellent results have continued into the current trading year, and figures to date are thankfully ahead of budget, and comparable with 1990 at this point. However the opening of Northiam in May 1990 was a great sales boost, and obviously this has to be borne in mind when looking at 1991 sales from now on.

Besides stocking the normal selection of souvenirs and novelties, there has still been a large demand for useful items knitted jumpers, sweat shirts, and hats have all continued to go well, with books and video sales still buoyant. It is hard to say what are popular buys, as selective stocking seems to have made most items easily saleable. However our sales of Thomas the Tank Engine products still stands out.

The Mail Order service offered in our last issue will be repeated in the next mailing of the Terrier and Rooter. The response although not high, certainly made it worth doing. Orders were from all parts of the country, and certainly items were identified for future sales by this route. Even though a regular mail order service may not be offered, telephone orders will always be considered.

As existing lines have been reordered, we have taken the opportunity of branding these with our new logo.

With longer opening hours now upon us, we must say a thank you to the loyal band of

volunteers who make the running of the shop so much easier. Obviously more help would not be turned away and if you feel able to give up a few hours each month then please telephone Angela Clark-Monks at the station.

Membership

At time of writing in early May, 180 new members have been enrolled during 1991. This compares with 157 and 125 during the same period in 1990 and 1989 respectively. 45% of the new members so far this year have been enrolled at the Information Kiosk at Tenterden Station, manned as ever, by Graham and Mrs. Summers. In this way, not only are new members 'signed up' before they can change their minds [!] but a considerable sum in postage is saved as the New Membership Pack is given there and then.

Unfortunately, there is always the other side of the coin; over 230 Full Members plus some linked Family Members are not fully paid-up either by reason of non-payment or because their banker's orders have not been amended to reflect the 1991 subscription rates. All will receive a final reminder at the time of this mailing.

Health and Safety

The department now maintains comprehensive records which are kept at Tenterden. Service of fire extinguishers and first aid boxes continues, and 12 people attended a 3 day Red Cross first aid course, successfully passing the examination at the end.

The Esso tank wagon is currently being fitted



John Liddell fitting new poster boards at Bodiam station, 9th June 1991.

(John Miller)

with a larger water outlet to fill barrels kept along the lineside. Controlled burning will be carried out this summer in areas of high fire risk, in conjunction with the Forestry department. With effect from 1st June smoking will be banned on all trains to reduce the fire risk, and training has been given to ticket inspectors and station staff in the use of fire extinguishers.

Rolvenden

On 5th May 1991 a new mess room was opened amidst a small ceremony performed by Molly Baker, wife of K&ESR driver Johnny Baker. The cost of this work was raised by the Rolvenden event last year, the improvement fund and donations from area groups. All donors are thanked for their contributions. The result has been a vast improvement on the previous accommodation. The old mess room will be converted to a tool and equipment store – a facility needed for some time. Other work in hand at Rolvenden includes the construction of a new cleaners' store, sand & locker room which will commence in August, and hopefully at a later stage an outside viewing gallery.

The Tenterden water column, which had become virtually unusable last year, was dismantled and overhauled at Rolvenden, and a new arm constructed.

Bodiam Project

Monthly working parties have continued and the whole length of the headshunt towards Robertsbridge is now walkable. Indeed, all the T.R.C. owned land has been cleared to the fences, and with his permission, a considerable length now owned by Mr Eastwood has also



The weed killing train out between Wittersham Road and Northiam, 5th June 1991.

(John Liddell)

been thoroughly cleared. We now await weedkilling to keep the track clear of vegetation.

Because the budget for Bodiam is very limited, we have concentrated our efforts on labour intensive work around the site rather than on the more expensive repairs to the station building. However, a start has been made on preparing the exterior of the building for repainting. The gulley between the canopy and the main roof has been repaired by Allan Tebboth and a start has also been made on painting the corrugated iron roof with bituminous paint.

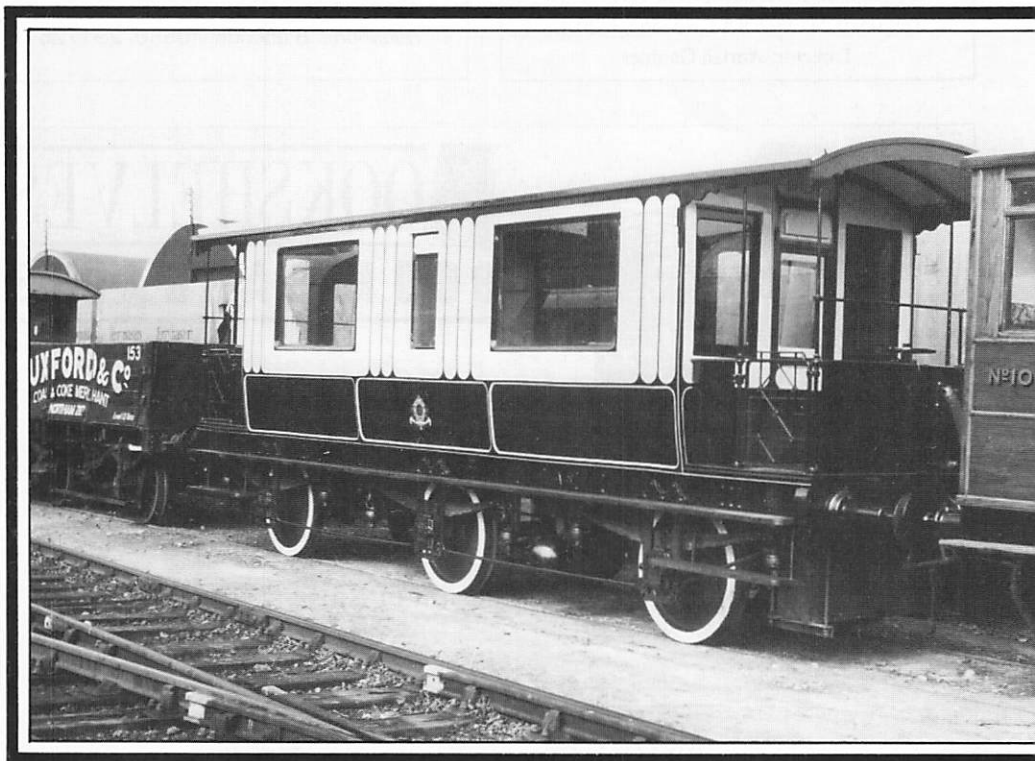
Following the report in the last "Tenterden Terrier", the Chairman of the East Kent Light Railway Society has asked us to clarify the position with regard to damage caused to the station forecourt. The facts are as follows: The owner of the vehicle concerned, a member of the East Kent Railway Society, made an unauthorised entry to the station site, accompanied by a haulage contractor and removed the wagon. As a result of this, damage

was caused to the station forecourt by the contractor's vehicle for which the East Kent Railway Society has not accepted liability. We are advised that the person or persons concerned were not acting on behalf of the East Kent Railway Society and we do not wish to imply that the Chairman or any of the other officials of that Society were necessarily aware of the trespass at the Bodiam site.

The first three poster boards (made by Tom Burnham with headers by John Liddell), have been erected and a start has been made on installing a new wicket gate from the public road.

Many local residents have been complimentary about the work at Bodiam and several have stopped to chat about earlier days at the station. However, we would still be very pleased to hear from anyone who has photographs of the forecourt area taken before 1948.

Details of further working party dates appear in the "Rooter" newsletter.



The newly restored L&NWR Engineers saloon at Tenterden Town Station, June 1991.

(John Liddell)



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Robertsbridge gets the Go Ahead

In the winter edition of *The Tenterden Terrier*, Peter Davis outlined the feasibility study that was to establish the practicability of re-opening the line back to Robertsbridge Junction. The conclusion was positive and on 23 May 1991 the intention to proceed with the scheme was announced. As I write these notes in early June, I find it hard to believe that only one year ago, the thought of seeing trains running into the main line station once again was just a nostalgic dream never to be made possible.

It all started in July last year when Mark Toynbee asked me to make discreet enquiries at the Robertsbridge end of the line as to who owned the trackbed that had been sold to landowners several years ago. My first problem was to question where the line ran. So completely had it disappeared near the bypass and under wheat fields, that only an old ordnance survey map provided the clues as to its whereabouts. Fortunately it was only in this area that obliteration had taken place. Most of the trackbed remains, albeit in a very overgrown state.

I soon established that we should need to negotiate with seven separate landowners, all of whom were farmers with the exception of one, a London based property company that owned the first trackbed spur from Robertsbridge station boundary to Northbridge Street, the first level crossing site on the old A.21 road.

Much to our surprise this piece of land came onto the market at the end of last year and was placed in a property auction at Gillingham. A very generous member and loyal supporter of the K&ESR bid successfully and donated this

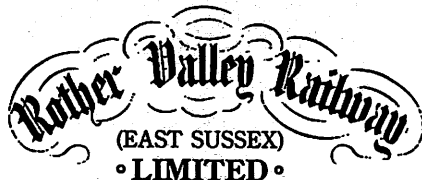
vital first half mile.

In the meantime things have been moving apace behind the scenes. A committee was formed under the operating title of 'The Robertsbridge Connection' and consisted of key members, each of whom agreed to undertake several crucial tasks to ensure success. These were as follows: Mark Toynbee – Chairman, Mark Yonge – Secretary and landowner negotiations, Derrick Bilsby – Liaison with British Rail, Peter Davis – project manager, Roy Seaborne BSc. – all aspects of planning, Gardner Crawley BSc. – civil engineering, Rick Edmondson Property evaluation and John Deblin FCA – financial consultant.

At a later date Paul Wilson, Tenterden Railway Company board member joined our team principally in the role of liaison between the two organisations.

Very early on the committee recognised that there were four key problems that needed to be overcome if trains were to ever visit the lower Rother Valley again. These were, landowners agreement to sell, level crossings, National Rivers Authority and finance. Because each of the above, with the immediate exception of finance, would prevent construction going ahead, negotiations have been carried out simultaneously to ensure that momentum has been maintained.

Of the six landowners involved four have expressed a willingness to allow trains to pass through their property. Positive negotiations remain to be completed with the two remaining farmers, both of whom are on good terms with the railway.



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It is planned that all three level crossings on this section will be of the modern power operated barrier type and conform to the latest Ministry requirements. As this is a specialist area, a level crossing consultant has been engaged and his brief will be to steer all aspects of the legislation, construction and implementation of the road crossings.

As it is widely accepted that the level crossings will constitute a major proportion of granting of a Light Railway Order, our consultant will additionally negotiate that on our behalf.

Drainage of the Rother Valley has been greatly improved since the line was first constructed. Indeed, historic documents indicate that the trackbed south of Salehurst was always troublesome due to frequent flooding. Naturally we have to ensure that our reconstruction scheme does not interfere with vital drainage points. Negotiations are in hand with the National Rivers Authority to ensure that the movement of water is not impeded.

Because of our belief that this scheme is achievable, the Board of Directors of The Tenterden Railway Company unanimously agreed that a separate company be set up with powers to raise the necessary finance to oversee and construct the line within a four to five year timetable. The company was incorporated at the

end of May as Rother Valley Railway (East Sussex) Ltd, the committee members, John Debling excepted, being co-opted as directors.

As can be seen elsewhere in this edition, support from British Rail has been phenomenal and a license of access to Robertsbridge station site was granted on the occasion of the Class 73 locomotive naming ceremony on the 23rd May.

The Orient Express reception lounge, formerly housed on platform 4 at Victoria Station, has been loaned to us and now resides in the former goods yard at Robertsbridge. This fine looking and spacious building, resplendent in Pullman colours will be our temporary office and information centre for the foreseeable future.

The next major hurdle will be finance and this will be the subject of a separate mailing. In due course, Rother Valley Railway (East Sussex) Ltd will be converted to a public company and an issue of shares will be made so that everyone can participate in this exciting project.

Mark Yonge

The Author would like to thank Upchurch River Valley Golf Course Ltd for the gift of wrought iron gates, thought to be of S.E.C.R. origin and from Newington Station, which will be re-sited at Robertsbridge in due course.

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Letters to the Editor

Carrying on a tradition

Sir – Is Mr. Buchanan on p.33 of the Spring issue referring to the 'print shop' on the platform at Rolvenden? He says it was a 'general printer', but I feel quite certain that when I poked my nose in in 1932, the old gentleman working there was in railway uniform.

Bow Street, Dyfed

R. W. Kidner

Raspberry jam and top hats

Sir – With my wife I visited Tenterden station on Good Friday. We both enjoyed our visit and I wondered whether you would accept some comments.

It must be about five years since I last visited you, – my wife has not been before. We were impressed by the attractive catering building and by the general appearance of the railway, particularly the shop and gardens. My wife noticed the number of young staff members and was impressed by their keen, helpful manner. How nice to see youngsters spending their leisure time in this way.

From my own point of view as an 'enthusiast' of a sort, I must say I don't like the raspberry jam colour of the coaching stock. It was in use circa 1955 on main line stock – but you are hardly a main line! I preferred the old K&ESR brown, even though it was indistinguishable from GWR livery; but I do like the SR green.

But that top-hatted station master! He really is not quite right – more like a hotel doorman. Top-hats may be correct at major terminals in the presence of royalty etc, but gold braid on a frock coat and a red tie is quite wrong. Red ties were worn by porters! I hope you will not mind my criticism; it is meant to be constructive.

I must not forget the video presentation which was most interesting and informative particularly for those who know nothing about Colonel Stephens.

We really did enjoy our visit – well done.

London E2

Maurice Hatch

The Robertsbridge connection

Sir – With reference to the Editorial in the "Terrier" Winter 1990.

Whether the extra 3 miles mentioned would be of "little interest to passengers" depends on the

question as to why they travel with us in the first place. Is it to look at the countryside usually seen these days only from the road, or is it the nostalgia and thrill of a trip on a genuine Steam Railway, I would suggest it is the latter, in which case a round trip of 20 miles would be better than one of 14 miles.

Moreover, a link-up with B.R. at Robertsbridge would provide, for example, an all-rail day-out for those enthusiasts with the true railway bug, and as has been said in the article "Back To Robertsbridge" the opening of Northiam has resulted in an increase in patronage, so there is reason to expect a further increase still if the line reaches Robertsbridge. Furthermore we are told also that there is a burgeoning tourist industry in the Rother Valley, how then can we ignore the final push to link-up with B.R.?

On another point, I gather from the steam railway Press that 7 running miles is quite a respectable distance in comparison with many other preservation groups, should we therefore not be giving more publicity to this matter with a view to increasing passenger traffic, and revenue?

I have to confess to being a recent convert to the K&ESR and a defector from the ranks of the internal combustion engine! (Vintage motorcycle, but I have not given them up) and perhaps I am "rushing in" but I take that chance, and I do admit to ALL the snags and money problems that lay between Northiam and Robertsbridge, but we must, it seems to me, have an aim – and go for it!

Eastbourne

Wilfred Smith

No rules, what rules?

Sir – The K&ESR was in a rather unfortunate predicament with regard to the signalling as the timetable, introduced soon after the Official Visit, was distinctly basic. With a service of three passenger trains each way, with just one in one direction going throughout the line, there was, apart from at hop-picking time, in theory, only need for signalling at Rolvenden and at Tenterden, both mainly for light engine movements. Some RCTS notes of 1952 mentioned the double headed Hop-pickers Friends train from Northiam through to London Bridge.

The arrangement whereby, for weight reasons, the two Terriers involved ran from Rolvenden to

Northiam, with an ex LSWR brakevan between them, had been changed. Instead the two engines ran light at an appropriate interval.

This was of benefit to the local taxi proprietors who were employed for returning the staff by road.

Although Biddenden had two platforms it is doubtful if any regular crossing of passenger trains ever took place there. There was certainly none in 1914.

Ironically, however, there was a crossing there on the last day of passenger traffic between an ordinary passenger train and a last day special.

Bristol

J. F. Burrell

Bodiam's chimney

Sir – Following the letters from Emma Shane and P. Cooper on the subject of Bodiam's chimney, I felt that I might be able to find the solution to the problem, having worked at Eastleigh during the period, and specifically on 32655.

Whilst now working in Scotland I was able to renew a contact with Bert Merritt, now retired, who was at that time the Chargehand looking after 32655's preparation for sale. Perhaps I can quote him: "I don't remember working on 32655, but I know a man who is a mine of information on steam engines. He does not know of any change of chimneys, only that about 6 were fitted with copper tops at Brighton in the early 1930s. The top of the casting was removed and a steel liner rivetted in. The copper top, hand beaten in two halves was rivetted to the steel liner and the top beaded over. Over the years the steel liners rusted away and the chimneys were nearly all replaced with the original cast iron type. It is quite possible that there was an unintentional chimney change, as when chimneys were removed, they

were put in a compound outside No. 2 bay, unlabelled, and brought back into the shop for fitting as required."

It would appear therefore the solution to our problem is that sheer chance was responsible for the change. Certainly, a photograph in my possession shows 32655 in BR livery, which it was not when sold, and there is evidence of recent smokebox work. Perhaps rusty liner disease caught up with 32670's chimney.

Scotrail, Glasgow

M. W. Knight

Good tea & clean loos

Sir – My early rides on the Railway, when it first re-opened, took place in an atmosphere which, with a few exceptions, suggested that passengers were a necessary evil, to be tolerated, little more.

How things have changed! All members of staff are now pleasant and welcoming. My elderly Mother was having difficulty in boarding the train, when suddenly, some steps arrived, with a cheerful gentleman to help. "When you get back," he said, "wait in the coach until we bring the steps for you."

The guards and ticket inspectors are also a great asset – especially the young ones, who must inspire young passengers to want to become members and work there themselves. Thanks to the staff, I now know that the strange waterways beside the line are crayfish beds – they had puzzled me for years!

Besides enjoying my own visits, I would now recommend anyone to visit the Kent & East Sussex Railway, to enjoy, as well as the ride, one of the best cups of tea and the cleanest loos (complete with HOT water) in Kent.

Whitstable

Elizabeth Davis



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Justins

Bodiam Robertsbridge East Sussex

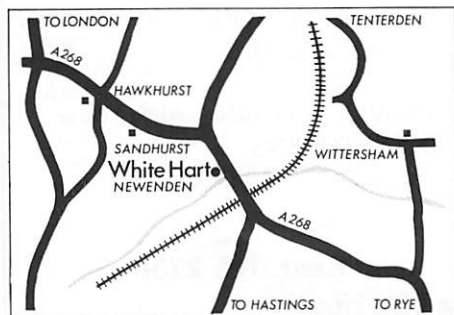
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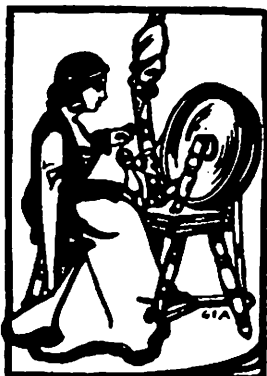
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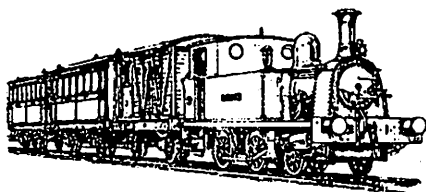
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Full Steam Ahead, with Network SouthEast

Thursday 23rd May 1991 – yet another milestone in the history of the Railway. Network SouthEast Class 73 electro-diesel locomotive number 73126 visited the line – the first time a British Railway locomotive has ever visited a private railway that is isolated from the mainline network.

Specially repainted in full network livery for the occasion, Number 73126 travelled by road on Tuesday 21st May from the Channel Tunnel Construction base at Sevington, near Ashford, having covered a 112 mile detour dictated by police regulations, due to weight restrictions on a bridge in Ashford itself. Highlights of the event were a naming ceremony for the locomotive as “Kent & East Sussex Railway”, and with it the launch of a new company Rother Valley Railway (East Sussex) Ltd, which will spearhead the plans to extend the line from Bodiam to Robertsbridge.

* * *

Number 73126 left Sevington at 2.00 pm on the Tuesday on a low loader and proceeded via Boughton Aluph and Challock, on to the M2 at junction 6, leaving it at junction 5 on to the A249. Following a 2 hour wait for a police escort, it then proceeded along the M20 to Swanley and then on to the M25, south to Sevenoaks, where it joined the A21. A 3 hour wait at Pembury for a replacement escort meant that the vehicle did not leave there until 11.40 pm, and arrived at Wittersham Road at 1.40 am on Wednesday morning, having travelled via Lamberhurst, Flimwell and Hawkhurst. Altogether the trailer was on the road for nearly twelve hours, for a journey that the average motorist could contemplate making in 45 minutes! On the final section between Rolvenden Layne and Wittersham, the driver's mate had to walk ahead of the lorry to watch out for overhanging trees.

The locomotive was unloaded on Wednesday morning and proceeded under its own power to Rolvenden where it was checked over and remained overnight. On Thursday, 73126 proceeded to Northiam, with BR Driver Jim Bannister from Gillingham in charge, to await the arrival of a special steam hauled train, with 100 invited guests, which left Tenterden at 12.30 pm and arrived at Northiam at 1.15 pm. During the journey the passengers were served a luncheon of cold poached salmon mayonnaise, fresh strawberries with cream, and coffee.

In his speech of welcome, Admiral Sir Lindsay

Bryson KCB, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex and Patron of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, referred to the value of the Railway to the community and the enhancement that the extension to Robertsbridge will bring to this. In his reply, Mr Geoff Harrison-Mee, Divisional Director – South Eastern, Network SouthEast, referred to this as a unique occasion. Network SouthEast regarded the K&ESR as a very professional organisation and saw the launching of the Robertsbridge plans as a joint business venture which would be of mutual benefit to both parties. Whilst Network SouthEast were not in a position to sponsor the project financially, they would provide considerable technical assistance and would like to see the extension opened as soon as possible. Indeed, many of the senior management were present today.

The unveiling of the new nameplate and the county crests of Kent and East Sussex was performed by Councillor John Perry, Vice-Chairman Kent County Council, and Councillor Harry Hatcher, Chairman, East Sussex County Council. Councillor Perry drew attention to the considerable tourist attraction of the line and wished it every success; Councillor Hatcher referred to the wonderful success of the K&ESR and his hope that the extension to Robertsbridge would go through.

The proceedings ended on a high note with Mr Harrison-Mee on behalf of Network SouthEast and Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson as Patron of the K&ESR signing the heads of an agreement “Whereby Network South East agrees to let and Kent & East Sussex Railway agrees to take the property hereinafter known as land at Robertsbridge Station”, thus giving the K&ESR a tenancy at its ultimate destination.

The train departed from Northiam Station at 2.15 pm, hauled by the newly named locomotive, arriving back at Tenterden Town Station at 3.00 pm.

Later on in the day 73126 headed a Volunteers special train to Northiam and back, and also headed Friday, Saturday and Sunday public services, with four departures each day and a fifth departure on Friday for a Network SouthEast staff special. The locomotive returned to Sevington on Tuesday 28th May.

Philip Shaw

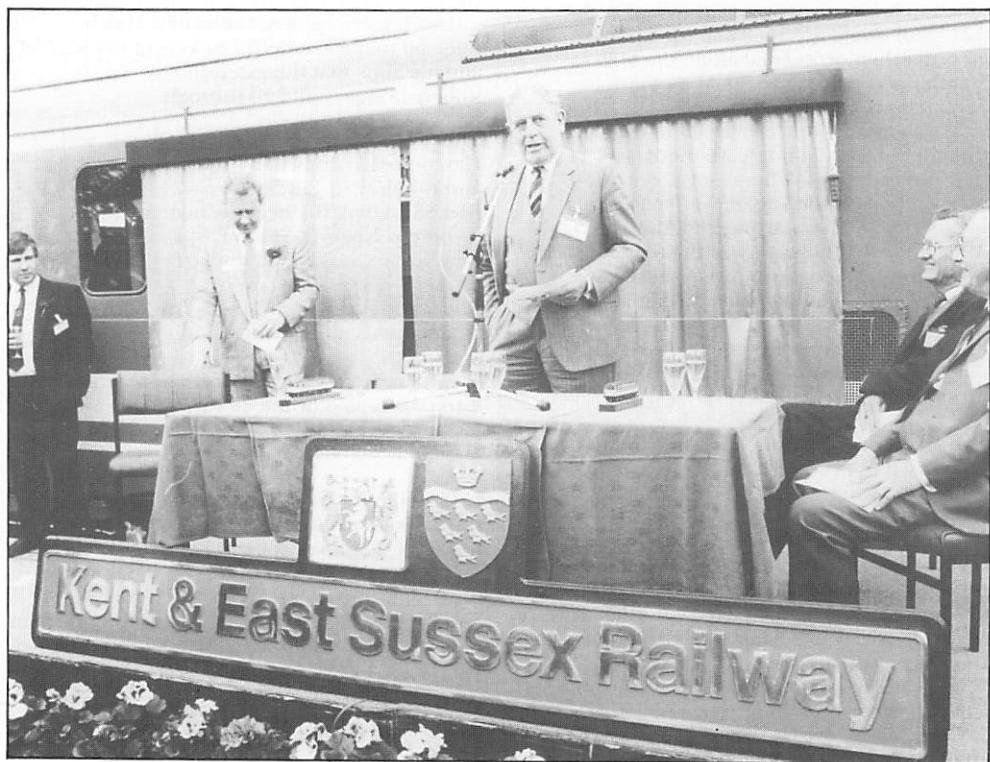
73126

Photographed
before the
naming ceremony
by John Liddell
and thereafter by
Jim Berryman



.... EN ROUTE AT DETLING

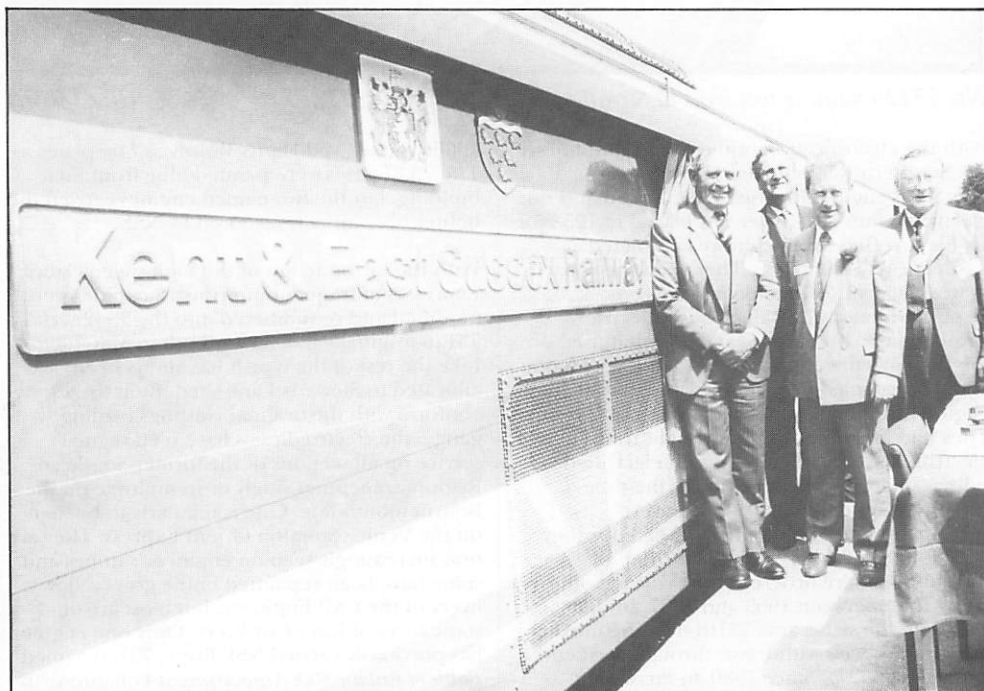
.... THE LOCOMOTIVE IS NAMED





.... ARRIVAL AT WITTERSHAM ROAD

.... KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY!



(Left to right:- Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson, Cllr John Perry, Geoff Harrison-Mee, and Cllr Harry Hatcher)

The Class 73 Electro Diesels



No. 73126 hauling tool vans at Streatham Hill, 12th July 1977.

(R. C. Riley)

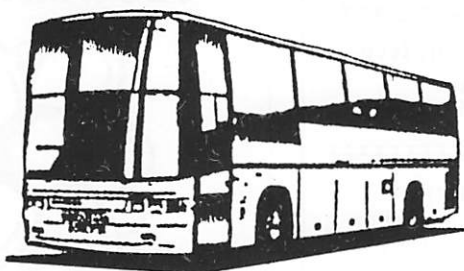
With the electrification of the Kent Coast lines the Southern Region needed some dual operation engines for use on electrified and non electrified lines. An order was placed in 1958 for six Electro Diesels which were completed at Eastleigh Works in 1962. These had the capacity of working as 1,600 hp locomotives on electrified lines, while an English Electric engine of 600 hp output similar to that used on the Region's diesel units was fitted. Each engine could be coupled in multiple with another such engine or to the SR multiple unit electric trains. They had the ability to work freight trains in the electrified area and shunt in non electrified sidings, many of which existed at the time. Initially numbered E 6001-6 they were subsequently renumbered 73001-6. Since they were found to be very useful a further 43 locomotives were ordered from Vulcan Foundry, being built between 1965 and 1967. Initially E6007-49, these became 73101-42 – the missing engine had been withdrawn through accident damage (E6027). Since 1980 an increasing number of these engines has been named. Of the 73/0 series 73004 carried *Bluebell Railway* plates (transferred to 73133 in 1989), while

73005 carries Mid Hants *Watercress Line* plates. The 73/0 series were painted blue from their building, but the two named engines carried the lighter blue initially favoured by NSE.

With the introduction of the high speed Gatwick Expresses at frequent intervals 12 engines were modified and renumbered into the 73/2 series. 73126 originally E 6033 was built in May 1966. Like the rest of the type it has always been allocated to Stewarts Lane shed. Built to conform with the original Hastings loading gauge, the electro diesels have seen regular service on all sections of the former Southern Region, sometimes singly or in multiple on the Bournemouth line. One is regularly to be seen on the Venice Simplon Orient Express. They are now increasingly seen on engineer's duties and some have been repainted in the grey/yellow livery of the Civil Engineer, but most are of some form of Inter City livery. Only one engine has previously carried NSE livery, 73109 named *Battle of Britain 50th Anniversary* at Folkestone in September 1989.

Dick Riley

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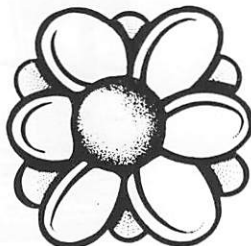
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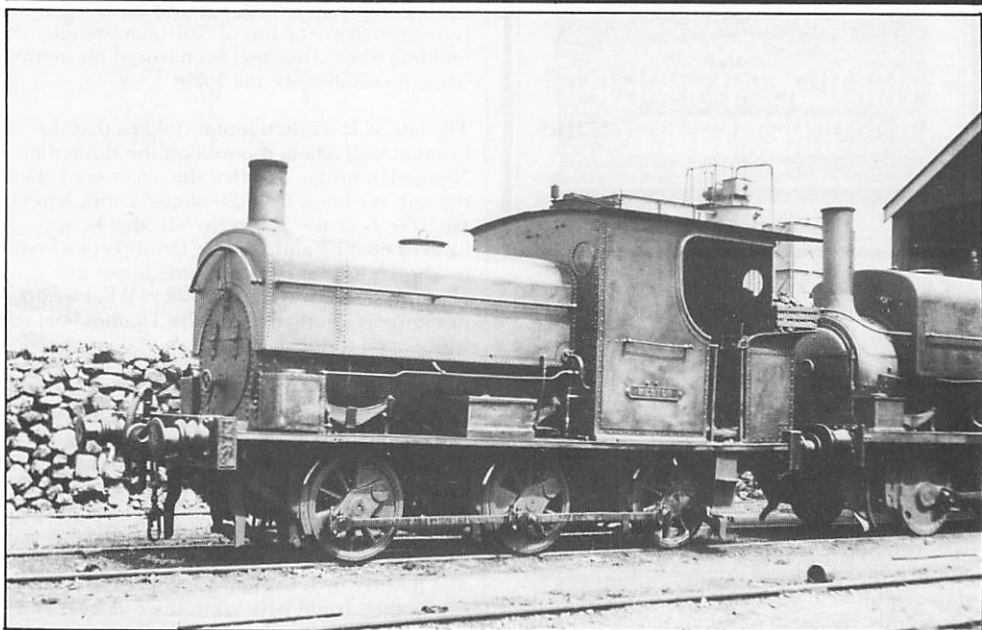


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Museum Update



Locomotive No. 3 "Weston" at Clevedon on 13th July 1935.

(S. W. Baker)



Since the last report a number of diverse items have been added to the Museum collection.

Firstly, a tenth locomotive nameplate has been secured following a nail-biting 'telephone auction', a new experience to the author. The nameplate is "WESTON" from engine No 3 of the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway, a Manning Wardle product built in 1881 and purchased second-hand in 1905. The engine had previously been in the ownership of the Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway as their No 7 "CWM MAWR".

The cast-iron nameplate is 27 inches long and the painting, yellow lettering on a red-brown background, appears to be original. The

nameplate was carried on the cab of the engine from about the end of the first World War until it was scrapped in 1940, since when it has been held in store by the Bristol Railway Circle.

Incidentally, a folder of background information on the nameplates has been placed in the Museum for those visitors who are interested in the subject.

A cast-iron owners plate from the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway has also been acquired at auction. This is probably from one of the company's fleet of goods wagons. Four such plates are known to exist and ours is the third to come onto the market over the past year.



The plate measures 10 inch. by 6 inch. and while the front was very rusty and shows signs of weathering, the back has evidence of original black paint and little signs of wear. We may assume that until 'saved', the plate was attached to the sole bar of a wagon and the back was therefore protected. The plate has now been treated with a rust inhibitor but no decision has yet been taken on painting.

A particularly interesting acquisition is a Peckett style locomotive lamp thought to have been supplied to the Selsey Tramway in 1897 as part of the equipment of engine No 2 "SELSEY". Apparently, the lamp was removed as a souvenir from the tramway's Chichester station at the time of the line's closure in 1935 and has been kept in the Chichester area ever since – a very similar story to that behind the donation last year of the "SELSEY" nameplate. (See *The Tenterden Terrier* No 52).

The lamp is the rear one, with a red lens, and appears to be identical to the front one (for which photographic evidence exists), except that the side panels of our lamp have scalloped instead of square corners. Unfortunately, there are no identifying marks but it is in working condition, complete with burner. The lamp is 11 inch. high, excluding handle, and is painted in what appears to be original post office red colour.

Amongst other items acquired, are photographs of the K&ESR in the 1960s and from a member of long-standing, we have received a life membership card of the old Kent & East Sussex Railway Association which was replaced by the Tenterden Railway Company in 1971. We have also received on loan a share certificate for the New Consols Tin & Arsenic Works (formerly Wheal Martha), which had sidings at Luckett and was one of the principal users of the East Cornwall Mineral Railway, reconstructed as the Bere Alston & Callington Railway by H.F.

Stephens in 1908.

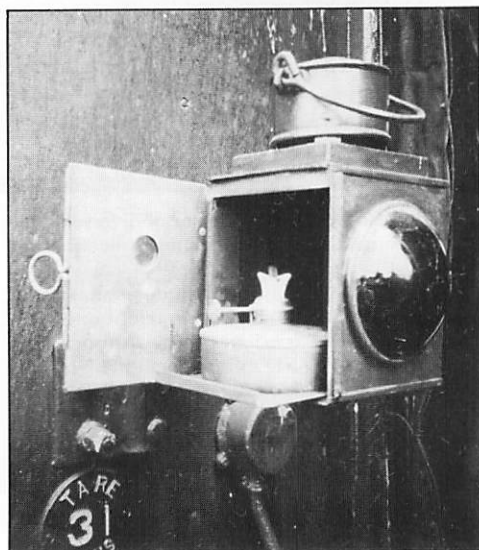
Perhaps the most bizarre of items taken into Museum stock are the oars to Colonel Stephens' rowing boat. These have recently been recovered from the loft of Northiam station building where they had been stored for many years, probably since the 1920s.

The late W.H. Austen junior, told us that the Colonel kept a boat moored on the Rother at Newenden bridge and that the oars were kept in the loft. We know from Stephens' family letters, (see *The Tenterden Terrier* No 52), that he was fond of boating and that the family kept a boat on the Thames at their riverside house at Hammersmith Terrace, Chiswick. What we do not know is whether or not the Thames boat was transferred to the Rother.

W.H. Austen gave the impression that the local boat was for Stephens personal use, but it could be that the boat was hired for "boating and fishing on the River Rother", a facility advertised on Rother Valley Railway timetable posters. Needless to say, no boating tickets have survived!

The oars are over 12 feet long, are painted grey and have 12 inch leather protective sleeves where they would have sat in the rollocks. The thought remains – whatever happened to the boat?

John Miller



Peckett type lamp, believed to be from locomotive "Selsey".
(John Miller)

Railway Memories of an 82 year old

My first interest in railways was when I was 8 years old, when, having made up all the models in the Meccano instruction book, I decided to make a model of a District Underground Coach, which ran on the local "Tube". Its size would have been Gauge 1 in modern terms, and having built a yard length of track with turnout, I spent many happy hours pushing the coach to and fro on the kitchen table.

My first holiday after the 1914-18 war was through the Country Holiday Fund, and the venue was Leighton Buzzard – I spent most of the 2 weeks on a footbridge crossing the L.M.S. main line.

Having enjoyed playing soccer at school, I forgot railways with one notable exception. This was a visit to a Model Railway Exhibition in the Horticultural Hall near Westminster. Here I saw an O Gauge layout by the Leeds Model Rly Co, and it almost certainly would have been L.N.E.R. – I was spellbound! After a quick walk round the other exhibits, I spent the rest of the time looking at buildings, scenery and all the things which are featured on a full size railway, and here they were 7 mms (?) to the foot!

The next step was visits to Finsbury Park L.N.E.R. station, where my brother and I watched the A 3's and 4's gradually increasing speed up the long climb from Kings Cross. When I married in 1935 my wife and I moved to Palmers Green and then later to Grange Park. By 1945 we had two children, a boy of 7 and a girl aged 2. The boy's interest in life was cars, and I made him a pedal car with dickie seat for his sister. However, my wife and son had bikes, and mine had a basket on the carrier for our daughter. This enabled us to go to Hadley Woods, which had the L.N.E.R. main line adjacent. Here the A4 and 3's were flat out and I believe Mallard made her 126 mph record on part of this stretch.

By 1954 we had a car, and on one of our outings discovered Rolvenden Station, where Charles Kentsley enrolled me as a member of the K&ES Railway Association (annual subscription £1) in 1961. I have a Newsletter headed "The Farmers' Line", K&ES Railway Association, December 1967, which apart from the Editorial and Progress Report, had the news that Barbara Castle's M.O.T. had refused the Association's application for a Transfer Order, which would have enabled it to purchase and operate the Railway. The Newsletter also reports on the

A.G.M. held in the Youth Centre, Tenterden (no date given), attended by some 150 members, including myself. The only names which I recognise are William Deedes M.P., P. Davis (Chairman), M. Dunston (Membership Secretary), C. Kentsley, and D. Dunlavy. Some time after this, I went to Rolvenden as a volunteer. I was given a "kettle" containing black paint, a brush, and instructions to paint the axle boxes of various stock. It was a memorable day, and when the drizzle turned to rain with a strong wind, I was advised to pack up. My next visit was a Bank Holiday, very sunny and hot. I was asked to join other volunteers, and we sat on flat wagons behind the B.T.H. Diesel down to Northiam Station. Here we lifted rails on to the flat wagons, which I couldn't possibly do now, 20 years later. We were taken back to Tenterden, where the Diesel unloaded the rails. I arrived home very tired and sunburnt.

On a subsequent visit to Tenterden I was offered the wreck of a pedestrian crossing gate, and asked if I could repair it. (My only school prizes were for woodwork and metal work.) Fortunately I had an estate car, and also a 24' x 12' shed which was my workshop, so in due course I returned the gate repaired and painted, and I stuck a small label on the underside of the bottom rail with my name and the date on it. I noticed recently that the gate is still in service after nearly 20 years!

I returned in April 1973, aged 64½, and started going to Tenterden mid-week, where I met Steve Whiteman and his friend George Goss. They were repairing and painting Tenterden Signal Box, and my carpentry skills came in useful notably when I fitted a piece of 6" x 3" to the corner just below the door, and it is still there. I soon became interested in the levers etc in the box, and as Steve was a B.R. signalman, I quickly became aware of the various operating sequences. This was to stand me in good stead when I joined a small group which was attending lectures given by Derek Dunlavy on signalman's duties. I was duly passed by a B.R. Inspector and issued with a Signalman's card.

I have just been re-reading "Tenterden Terrier No. 2" dated Summer 1973, suggesting that approval for the re-opening of the line was merely a question of the consent of the D.o.E.; No. 4 features "Sutton" waiting at Tenterden with the first train of the day.

Although I had not yet received my official



Jack Fox (centre) with the late Tom Waller (left) speaking to Driver Norman Denty on the footplate of Norwegian Mogul, Number 19. Date unknown. (Tenterden Railway Company)

"Signalman's" card, I am sure that I did midweek duties in Summer 1975, at first under the supervision of Clive Norman, and subsequently on my own. It was the beginning of many happy years in Tenterden Box until I reluctantly retired after duty on Christmas Eve 1986. Three events stand out in my memory, one when a train left without a red rear light, rectified by a 'phone call to Rolvenden; secondly when on a day when we were running School trains, I agreed with a request from a teacher to let her 8 young charges come into the box. It led to me having 7 more teachers and their 8

little charges in the box, and me having my lunch after the first afternoon train had departed! I like to think that my effort brought a lot of parents to visit and ride on trains. My third memory is of waiting by the track to collect the token when a green lizard appeared from under the crossing boards, heard the approaching train and dived for cover – the only time I have ever seen one of these attractive creates.

In February 1975 I became one of the founder members of the Maidstone Area Group, and

since I was the only one who was retired and had plenty of spare time, I was given the job of Publicity Officer. According to the Summer 1975 edition, monthly meetings of the Group were started in the Methodist Youth Centre in Brewer Street, and are still attracting good audiences, although the venue is now the Kimberley Clark Club, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone.

The Summer of 1975 also saw the start of window displays in various Building Society windows, with a small static model railway backed by 4 display panels. This idea was carried a stage further in the following years by converting the static model railway into a working model. Eventually it appeared in 14 towns throughout Kent and East Sussex, including Margate, Hythe, Canterbury, Faversham, St Leonards, Rye, Ashford and of course Maidstone, with two different exhibits, one featuring a model of Hexden Bridge and the other the Santa Specials.

Meanwhile the same loyal band of helpers continued to man the stand at the Kent County Show, with the help of a covered stand paid for by Maidstone Area Group. On one memorable

occasion a fierce guest of wind blew the stand backwards, but miraculously no-one was hurt.

In July 1976 the Railway was represented at the Kent County Show by Marcia on a low loader, accompanied by Pauline Edwards and myself, with a table and two chairs and lots of leaflets. Apparently the Show Committee were sufficiently impressed to invite us back in 1977 as an attraction, i.e. free of charge, and allocated a larger area suitable for 2 tracks to be laid. Marcia, operated on one, shunting trucks and setting off detonators. We had a pump trolley on the other track, and someone suggested that we should invite the public to pay 5p each (usually 4 at a time) for the doubtful privilege of pushing themselves along the track – in 1½ days we collected £80. In April 1978 the Railway Magazine printed my article about fund raising and publicity on the railway, and I like to think that this helped our passenger figures for that summer.

As an ordinary member I have usually helped at any fund raising activities, and one year won £10 for Group Funds by selling a record number of Christmas Draw tickets.

Jack Fox

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Last Train through Salehurst?

A welcome development in recent months has been the decision of the Tenterden Railway Company to proceed with plans to reinstate the section of line from Bodiam, through Salehurst to Robertsbridge, in order to provide a connection with Network Southeast. I am reminded that thirty years ago, on 11 June 1961, I witnessed the arrival at Robertsbridge of the final British Railways train over the K&ESR line. At the time I was in the second form at Judd School, Tonbridge, and fortunately I wrote about the occasion some three months later in a school essay. Hence I am able to recall the event in rather more detail than would otherwise be the case.

The train concerned (a Locomotive Club of Great Britain special entitled "The South Eastern Limited") had worked down from Victoria to Paddock Wood via Lewisham, Dartford and Maidstone West. It had then traversed the Hawkhurst branch before running via Tonbridge to Robertsbridge for the run over the K&ESR. This was in fact the last train on the Hawkhurst branch in addition to being the final BR train to Tenterden Town. The train also marked the demise of steam from most of Kent, as the following day saw the introduction of electric working on most of the lines included in Phase 2 of the Kent Coast Electrification.

I somehow managed to persuade my father to try and 'chase' the special by car. Shortly after lunch on that Sunday we set off from Sevenoaks and made for Paddock Wood, only to be told that the special had departed towards Tonbridge some considerable time previously. So we made our way to Robertsbridge, where we were told that the train was on the K&ESR line. Two coaches had been left behind in a siding, as the train had been loaded to nine coaches instead of the advertised seven. The complete train would have overtaken the pair of Brighton "Terrier" locomotives on the climb to Tenterden Town; even with seven coaches, this was by far the heaviest train ever worked over the line.

I strolled out to the level crossing. Before long, the single member of the station staff came out to discuss with the signalman in Robertsbridge 'B', the main-line signal box, how they would perform the operation of first shunting the two coaches back on to the main-line train, and then dispatching the complete train back to London. For some time they did not agree, higher authority having apparently decreed that the

only crossover in sight was out of use!

"Well," said the porter eventually, "I'd better do it his way and keep him happy." (It subsequently came to light that the porter was responsible for operating Robertsbridge 'A' box. This was little more than a groundframe, controlling the entrance to the goods yard and the junction with the K&ESR).

"You'll have to," replied the signalman. "Ring Rolvenden and see if it's left there yet."

"How many rings is it for Rolvenden?" asked the porter. "I've never had to ring through to there before!"

A short while afterwards, by which time the porter had gone back indoors, the signalman picked up the telephone. "It's three rings for Rolvenden," he said. A lengthy conversation followed, in which the signalman's words were clearly audible, as also was the porter's voice, albeit in his case not the words. It turned out that the special had not yet reached Rolvenden.

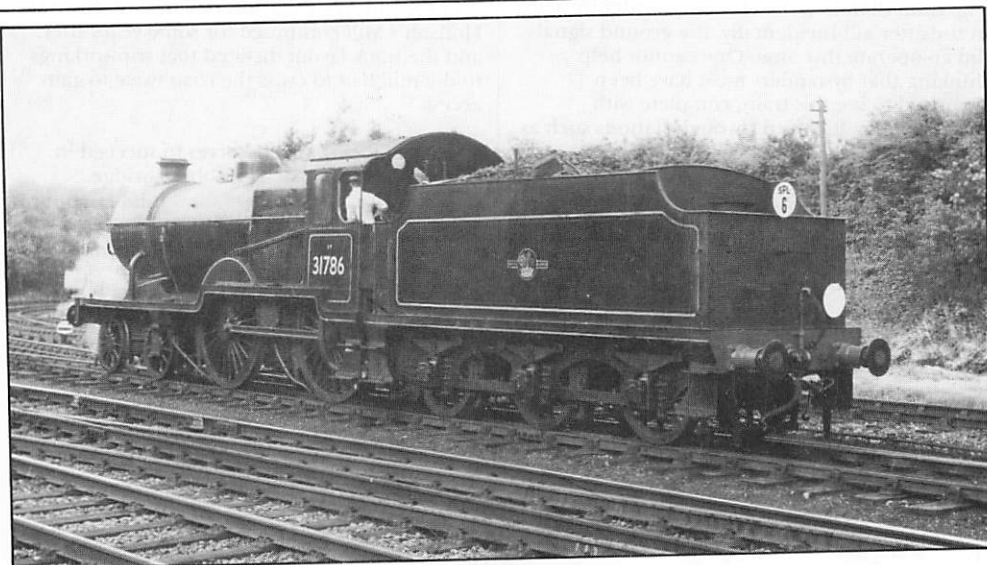
Some time later, 'L1' 44-0 No 31786 arrived light engine from Hastings, and 'D1' 44-0 No 31749 arrived tender-first from Tonbridge. Both were duly shunted into the bay platform. By this time a number of interested onlookers had gathered on the platform. Eventually, the porter walked along the platform announcing, "It's just left Bodiam!" A few minutes later, the leading "Terrier", No 32670, appeared on the curve connecting the K&ESR line. One could not help noticing how this diminutive locomotive was dwarfed by the two main-line engines.

The arrangement finally worked out, was that the train was halted outside the station while No 32670 collected the two coaches from the siding and shunted them back on to the train, before drawing forward into the down platform for the main-line engines to take over for the run back to London.

At this stage, an up Hastings diesel was approaching. The porter called out a warning to people on the up platform that it was passing through. However, it immediately became obvious that this train was going to stop, so he corrected himself, "No, it's stopping. I'll have to look at the timetable when I get back!" When the diesel had gone, the special started drawing forward into the station. The up platform provided an excellent vantage point for this



*No. 32670 entering Robertsbridge with the return working of the L.C.G.B. Special.
(Col. Stephens Railway Archives)*



*No. 31786 at Robertsbridge waiting to work the Special back to London.
(Steamchest publications)*

operation owing to the staggered platforms.

Seven of the coaches in the train were of Maunsell Hastings line narrow stock (three-coach sets 213 and 214 and former Pullman car "Theodora"), while the two nearest London were non-corridor vehicles. Bringing up the rear as the train entered the station was the other "Terrier", No 32662. I could not help reflecting how ironical it was that these engines had been renumbered into a Duplicate List as long ago as 1905, and yet some of them were still in regular service so many years later. Some, of course, had been sold out of LB&SCR service, No 32670 having passed to the original K&ESR in 1901. However, No 32662 was one of those inherited by the Southern Railway in 1923 directly from the LB&SCR, and as such was still Westinghouse-fitted, the Westinghouse pump being clearly audible as the engine prepared to move off the train. But when the porter-signalman attempted to 'pull off' the ground signal to allow the "Terrier" to move forward, the signal refused to co-operate! He then came out and pulled the cable, temporarily producing the desired effect. However, when he released the cable, the signal clanged 'on' again! "You'll have to come without it, then," he called to the driver.

Nos 31749 and 31786 duly backed on, ready for departure for Charing Cross via Swanley, Beckenham Junction and the Ladywell spur. The train then left, the crossover evidently being in use after all! Incidentally, the ground signal did co-operate this time. One cannot help thinking that bystanders must have been surprised to see this train, complete with headboard, as it passed through stations such as Bat and Ball.

When we crossed the footbridge to leave the

station, Nos 32670 and 32662 were being coaled from a BR standard 16-ton mineral wagon on an adjacent siding. "They're lovely little engines, you know," said an onlooker.

On that afternoon 30 years ago nobody would have dreamt that trains from the K&ESR might again reach Robertsbridge. Although the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society originally intended to preserve the whole line from Tenterden Town, this seemed to have been precluded after the sorry saga of Barbara Castle and the Department of Transport resulted in the Society's aims being reduced to preservation of the line only to Bodiam. In more recent times, the alignment of the new Robertsbridge Bypass seemed to make the possibility of restoring this part of the line even more remote. The South East Regional Office of the Department of Transport claimed that the Preservation Society raised no objections to the alignment of the bypass. If that is true, then I strongly suspect that those intent on preserving the line, were not made aware of what was being proposed.

There is no doubt that officialdom has treated the K&ESR very shabbily indeed over the years. Reinstatement of the K&ESR to Robertsbridge would be a marvellous triumph over the shadier side of officialdom. It was manifestly spurious to claim that traffic congestion would have been caused by K&ESR trains using the level crossing over the old A21 road; after all, rail traffic to Hodson's Mill continued for some years after, and the track layout dictated that tripworkings to the mill had to cross the road twice to gain access.

The K&ESR certainly deserves to succeed in restoring the line back to Robertsbridge.

John Humphrey

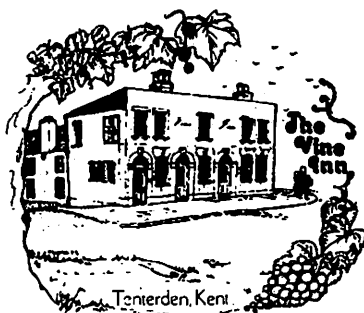
No. 32670 at Northiam with the Special.



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Controversy Resolved

In the last Tenterden Terrier we reprinted some extracts from the Railway Observer in 1938 and 1939 which gave two contrasting views of the Kent & East Sussex Railway at that time. In March 1943 the Railway Observer printed a further episode in the debate which is of particular interest for providing a glimpse of the Railway's day-to-day operation during the Second World War, a period when visits by enthusiasts were rare and published accounts of their visits rarer still.

KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY

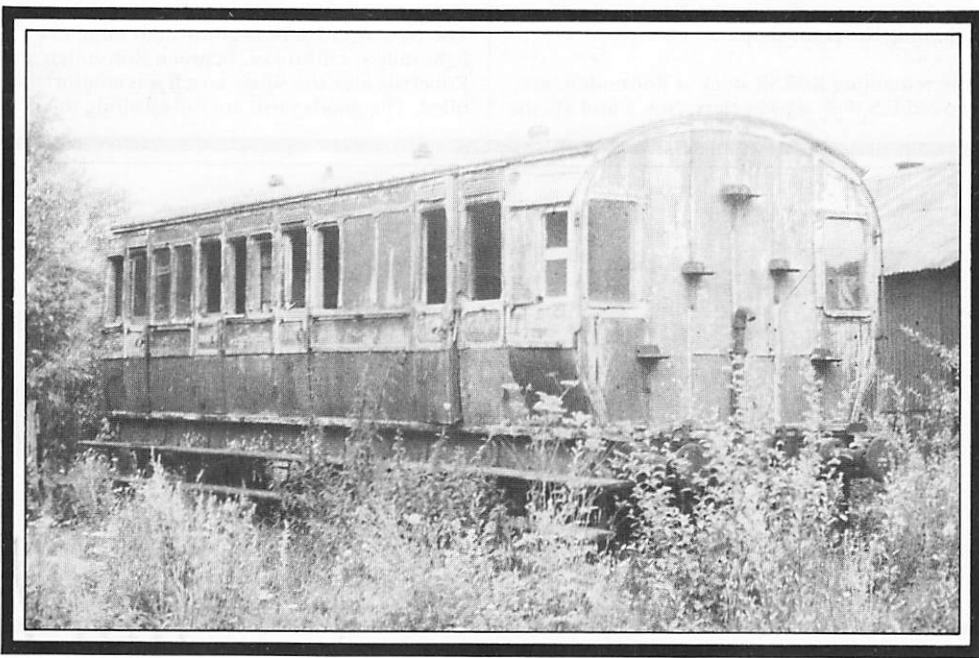
Some notes by R. A. WHITEHEAD

Old controversies which appeared to be without any definite answer at the time often turn up again after years have passed and when the point at issue can determine one way or the other. The other day in searching through my bound volumes of the R.O. I came across the notes on the Kent & East Sussex Railway in the November 1938 issue and their almost vehement contradiction from Mr E. L. Jones in the following issue. It is interesting to note who actually was correct. As I have made a detailed study of the line and visited it only a week ago, I think I can claim to be a fair arbiter. The track

has been extensively relaid and riding is very fair. At one or two points the train is inclined to pitch, but in the main I feel that this is due to the alignment and not to the quality of the track.

As I mentioned in a previous note some months back the two Rother Valley engines, 1 and 2, have been scrapped together with number 8. Neither 2 nor 8 did much work after 1938 as 2 was very worn and the boiler of 8 left much to be desired. No. 3 is undergoing a general repair which has been in progress for close on two years. The delay is not due to any fault of the line, but to the fact that there is only one fitter who must, perforce, carry out every job single-handed in addition to his normal duties of engine maintenance.

Carriages in use are Nos. 4 and 5, recently repainted and in excellent condition. The roof of number 5 has recently been refelted. Coach number 3 is also in use as a spare, and was used between Headcorn and Rolvenden on the day I travelled. It is very shabby externally, and is due for repainting, but the seats have been reupholstered and are very smart. The remaining bogie is awaiting repairs to the roof



No. 1 at Rolvenden in derelict condition, 1948.

(Col. Stephens Railway Archives)



The Pickering crane loading timber, probably at Frittenden Road. Date unknown.

(Col. Stephens Railway Archives)

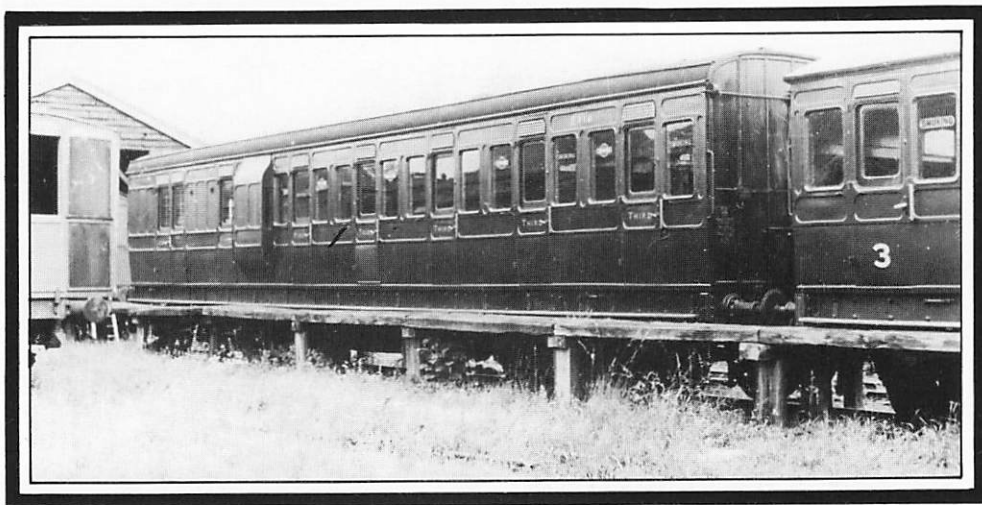
and general overhaul, including new upholstery and fresh paint inside and outside. All paint has been burnt off the interiors so it is evident that a good job is intended. Unfortunately the job has been shelved for a while pending repairs to the paint shop.

The engines in service at present are No. 4, the L.S.W.R. "Saddleback", Southern Terrier No. 2678 (formerly W14), which at one time worked the Hayling Branch, and a Southern 01 0-6-0 No. 1426, which arrived on Dec. 4th. Also at Rolvenden was No. 3440, an Adams 0-6-0. She was dead and standing in the "Hecate shed" adjoining the paint shop.

The remaining K&ESR stock at Rolvenden was two old L.S.W.R. six-wheelers, Nos. 1 and 19, the

former green and the latter chocolate brown, and a former L.S.W.R. four-wheeler, also brown. They are in a bad state and are out of use, though down for repair. Two open 10-ton wagons were standing in a siding lettered K.E.S.R. in standard small lettering, while the Midland breakdown crane stood on the opposite side of the yard. Though mechanically very sound the wooden details of flooring, etc., appear to be suffering from the effect of prolonged exposure to the weather. The small crane is at Wittersham Road where it is employed in loading logs.

The passenger traffic is gratifyingly large to a light railway enthusiast. Between Rolvenden and Robertsbridge the single coach was comfortably filled. The goods yards are full all along the line,



K&ESR coach No. 4, ex LSWR brake composite with elliptical roof coupled to coach No. 2, ex LSWR brake third with arc roof, at Rolvenden 14 August 1937.
(H. C. Casserley)

and I am told that it is quite usual to haul a dozen wagons out of Tenterden yard daily.

Timekeeping was not at all bad, though delay in starting from Headcorn caused a late arrival at Rolvenden. Journey time, however, was kept.

The stations are in a fair state of maintenance, and a porter is employed at each of the principal points. At the halts, of course, the guard officiates. All staff on stations have a black uniform with K.E.S.R. in red on the collar. In the matter of cleanliness the line ranks high. The coaches are kept very clean inside and out, and the locomotives are given reasonable attention by the one cleaner employed. Summing up, I feel that very few of Mr Jones' contradictions were justified.

Some points in Mr Whitehead's account deserve further comment:

– No. 3's protracted overhaul was eventually completed by taking the locomotive to St Leonard's shed where the Southern finished the job between air raids.

– Coaches 4 and 5 were the semi-elliptic roofed compartment brakes while 2 (the coach awaiting overhaul) and 3 were the arc-roofed compartment brakes.

– It is interesting that 3440 was not in use on the occasion of Mr Whitehead's visit; despite spending most of the War at Rolvenden this locomotive only seems to have been used in emergencies.

– Coaches 1 and 19 were actually four-wheelers and the unidentified four-wheeler was probably No. 4, a six-wheeler.

– The open wagons described were ex-L.B.S.C.R. specimens acquired during the War.

– It is nice to see the reference to the small crane being at Wittersham Road for loading timber; this seems to have been the main occupation for both cranes. Wittersham Road, Rolvenden and Frittenden Road were the main points for loading timber.

– The healthy state of traffic on the line almost certainly reflects the decrease in road competition during the War.

We are grateful for the permission of the Railway Correspondence & Travel Society to reprint Mr Whitehead's article and would remind readers that the Society will be pleased to supply a sample copy of Railway Observer and details of the Society's other activities on receipt of 2 x 17p stamps at 160 Hillend Crescent Clarkston, Renfrewshire G76 7XY.

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Book Reviews

The Station Now Standing, by Bill Pertwee, published by Hodder & Stoughton. 127 pages of photographs & text; price £14.95.

This delightful little book is an anthology of the author's "discoveries" amongst stations that have somehow escaped destruction over the years and remain largely untouched since the days of steam. Bill Pertwee, better known for his acting role, spent 18 months travelling up and down the country in search of suitable subjects for this book and has come up with a collection ranging from country halts in the heart of Wales to grand survivors of the industrial age at Darlington and Glasgow. Both the national network and private lines are featured including our own Tenterden Town Station. The beautifully restored capitals in the ornamental ironwork at Great Malvern Station are one of many unusual features that receive a mention, and there are a number of little-known sites that have caught the author's attention including Elmstead Woods – a leafy spot in Kent situated near to the southern end of the Chislehurst tunnel. Apparently it was built to the subscription of wealthy commuters who lived nearby; today the station is a listed building with flower beds and hanging baskets tended by booking clerk Peter Phelps. Travellers from the Kent coast will catch a glimpse of Elmstead Woods as the trains flash by – empty platforms except for old-fashioned wheelbarrows. Do trains stop there any more?

A Pictorial Record of Southern Signals, by G. A. Prior, published by O.P.C. 208 pages including 220 illustrations. Price £17.99.

Although titled as a pictorial record this is a

scholarly work with detailed text which will appeal to all students of the subject. In fact the title first appeared in 1977, but has not been available for a number of years and the opportunity has been taken to update and amend the original text. The author is well qualified for the subject, having worked in the Signals & Telegraph Department of the Southern Region and has held the post of Chief Draughtsman of the Signalling Record Society for many years. The charm of this publication is that the copious illustrations make it just as readable to the layman as to the professional signalman. The book brings together the motley assortment of signalling systems inherited by the Southern Railway in 1923 and the modernisation schemes thereafter, and whilst the K&ESR does not receive a mention as such, the section on single line working deals with systems used on this railway over the years.

P.D.S.

The Colonel Stephens Railways. A Pictorial Survey. By John Scott Morgan. (Second edition). Published by David & Charles, 1991.

Philip Shaw and John Miller, as revisers of the text, wish to draw attention to the fact that the text contains a number of errors that were pointed out to the publishers before publication. Accordingly they accept no responsibility for such errors.

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Vintage 1991

The K&ESR repeated its "Vintage" Sunday on 21st April 1991, featuring trains appropriate to the style of the 1920s, right through to the 1950s. Four locomotives were in steam, "Northiam", "1556", "Charwelton" and "Sutton". Three rakes of coaches were made up, including a Mark One set in early BR "Blood & custard" livery, the two Maunsell BSOs in Southern olive green, and a mixed set comprising the District Coach and newly restored L&NWR Inspection saloon. "Northiam" confined herself to duties on the Mark one set, but the other locomotives were interchanged. "Charwelton" also took time to haul a goods train between the half hourly services, comprising a PMV, open wagon, goods wagon and brake van. Another vintage day is planned for 20th October and a vintage train will also run over the weekend of 27th and 28th July in connection with the Railway World steam day, when it is hoped that the newly restored Great Eastern coach will also be in service.

P.D.S.



The 11.25 am Vintage train from Northiam to Tenterden climbs Tenterden Bank with "Charwelton" at the head.

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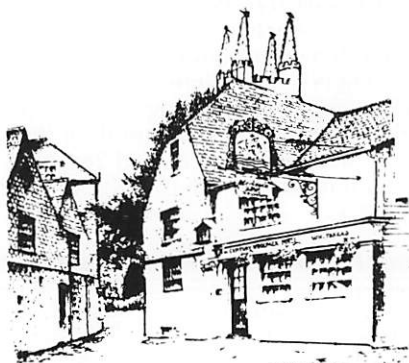


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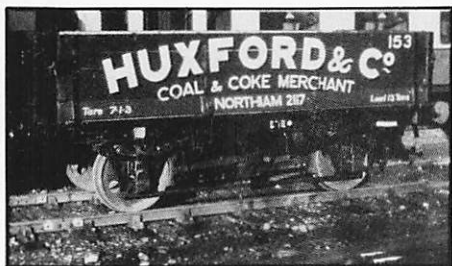
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The Special Trains of 1964

Nick Pallant recalls works and publicity trains run by the Kent and East Sussex Railway Preservation Society.

The excursion trains which ran on the Kent and East Sussex Railway during the years up to 1961, and which were organised by either enthusiasts or the Ramblers Club have been well recorded – particularly on film. Many people also have memories of the special workings during 1966 which cleared various items of our rolling stock from Robertsbridge yard as well as the later, similar, movements in the early 1970s.

Less well known are the occasional trains run by the original Preservation Society, particularly during 1964. These were made possible by the arrival of Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST Charwelton from the Park Gate Iron and Steel Company of Sproxtton, Lincolnshire, during the first week of January that year. Numbered 14 on arrival at the K&ESR, Charwelton was in reasonable condition and much more suitable for trips up and down the line than either of the Railway's other two steamable locos. (Both were 0-4-0 T's. Gervase the Sentinel was powerful but slow whilst No. 12, Marcia, had well worn valve gear and motion and was of limited draw bar horse power.) During the spring six three-plank wagons were purchased for £15 each from the Woolwich Arsenal railway system and delivered to Tenterden. Equipped with this modest but useful amount of rolling stock, the opportunity was taken to organise a works train. This was to be the most ambitious movement over the line since 1961 and was made necessary by the project then in hand to relay the loop at Northiam and plans to rebuild the platform at Salehurst. The train was to be made up of Charwelton, the six wagons and the Society's other Sentinel, the unservicable Dom. This last named locomotive, which had once been the engine portion of a steam railcar on the Jersey Eastern Railway had been leading a humble existence as test-load for Gervase and Marcia. She was now to serve in the role of brake van but with some of her upper bodywork panels removed to allow extra visibility. The chosen date was Whit Sunday, 16 May and the plan was to run to Northiam with rails for the new station loop, load up with rubble and proceed to Salehurst where the rubble would be used as a first step in the replacement of the halt platform. A diary for that year shows work connected with the train as having started by Saturday, 2 May and that the wagons were being loaded up at Tenterden on that date.

Unusually for a Bank Holiday, Whitsun 1964 provided three days of golden sunshine. Maidstone and District's express service E3 from London delivered the writer to Tenterden at around eleven o'clock where, after the short walk to the station he found that the loading up of the train was still in progress. This continued as the day grew very warm indeed and lengths of rail were, with the aid of Charwelton, hauled aboard the wagons some of which had their ends temporarily removed to allow this. Charwelton marshalled the train with its load of track components, and when at the end of the afternoon, this was complete, her fire was dropped and she was stabled on the siding behind the mess coach.

The volunteers then had the remainder of the evening to themselves. And what a glorious English evening it was, mellow and with the heat absorbed during the day reflecting from walls and pavements. From the mess coach came the smell of cooking and the sound of people laughing or simply talking to one another too loudly. Expectancy was in the air and there was an atmosphere which almost amounted to celebration. Vaughan Williams Folk Song suite might have formed an appropriate background, but it is not this, but music of a quite different type which recalls that evening. Dave Webber, a Loco department volunteer, had asked a few of us, round to his house so that we could hear a recently released LP (we didn't call them albums then) by a startling rhythm and blues group – the Rolling Stones. For so many of us who knew the K&ESR in the sixties, the music of the time, its fads and its fashions, do not have London as a setting but the Rother Valley, Tenterden and the surrounding countryside.

Although food could be obtained at the station this was usually regarded as little more than a snack and Tenterden High Street, never short of licensed premises, offered attractive alternatives. At that time the volunteers favourite pub was the Eight Bells, a hostelry which served excellent food over the bar and had as a landlord an ex RAF Sergeant, known through out the town as 'Happy'. This gentleman and his wife Kay were firm friends of the railway and more than a little tolerant of the lads from the station. Having heard all that the Stones had on offer, Dave Webber and friends joined the others, and in accordance with the celebratory mood,

quenched their thirst with a few jars. If memory serves correctly, the evening was topped off, as usual, by a visit to the fish and chip van in the High Street. Then it was back to the station, with a deep, rich quiet hanging over Tenterden and the stars of the Milky Way visible in bright swathe, unknown to a Londoner.

The coach was very crowded that night and several people (in spite of a committee ban) went back to sleeping in the booking office. An early start was made the next morning, and the first man awake was Kevin Blakistone who began lighting up Charwelton as the sun rose over the town. Everyone was issued with a circular explaining what was intended during the course of the day the words "This is not an excursion train" underlining its serious intent.

The train eventually set off in mid-morning, Charwelton running bunker first and making

easy progress down the bank to Rolvenden. For many of the volunteers this was, except for very short journeys, their first trip over the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Being Whit Sunday, there were many cars on the roads and although there had been no advance publicity word had somehow got around and there were numerous railway enthusiasts at every station. At Rolvenden advantage was taken of the water crane before the train ventured out across the marshy Rother Levels where the trees lashed the side of the train and intruded into Dom's cab. The train slowly crossed the undermined 1029 (Newmill Channel) bridge and steamed along, cutting its way through the undergrowth, the condition of the line keeping the speed down to 10 or 15 mph. It was a strange sensation to travel over the line in a train. The railway, particularly at the Tenterden end was familiar enough, but it was ground level familiarity. The familiarity of the grass and the weeds and the track; of the



No. 14 "Charwelton" with works train approaches Northiam crossing in 1964. (Alan G. Dixon)



Preservation Society motive power at Rolvenden in 1964. L to R: No. 10 "Gervase", No. 12 "Marcia", No. 14 "Charwelton" and No. 11 "Dom". (Tenterden Railway Company)

fishplates and sleepers. But this was to view the line from coach height and see the overgrowth and dereliction not as part of the railway, but as something which could be overcome.

The Rother bridge was crossed and Northiam came into sight. It was midday, the sun blazed out of a clear blue sky and the volunteers were beginning to suffer from sunburn and thirst. A crate of soft drinks had been brought down from Tenterden and a brisk trade was done before the components for the loop had been unloaded and the rubble for Salehurst loaded up. Then it was on to Bodiam, where more rubble was available. With the hop fields passing on either side, this was the first train to reach that part of the line for three years – but at Junction Road things started to go wrong. It had been realised that not enough volunteers had stayed at Northiam and Dave Sinclair was waiting with his van to take a party back to that

station. No sooner had this problem been overcome than the footplate crew realised Charwelton was going to run short of water before too long. There was a rapid retreat back to Northiam, where the train was left, and Charwelton ran as fast as the crew dared back to Rolvenden and the water supply. When the locomotive returned another problem had arisen – a shortage of coal. It was decided to abandon the whole operation and haul part of the train back to Tenterden, three wagons plus Dom being left in the siding at Wittersham Road.

To make up for the lack of coal, wood from tree cutting, and which had been loaded aboard the wagons was used as fuel. This was something for which Charwelton had most definitely not been designed. To ride up Tenterden bank in an unfitted wagon, with no brake van and dodging showers of red hot wood ash was an experience

not to be easily forgotten!

After this debacle there was a certain amount of muttering in the ranks about 'organisation'. (There had been a not dissimilar incident the previous year – see 'Trial Trip' in Tenterden Terrier Nos. 16 and 17). It, however, said much for the corporate spirit which had already built up that nobody appeared to clear off to some other scheme. The following day (a Bank Holiday) was used for 'rest and recuperation' in the form of a trip to the Eltham Traction Engine Rally. Be it understood, this was not skiving off but a quite appropriate flying of the railway's flag as one of the Garrett engines present belonged to a notable K&ESRPS figure – Mr. Ronald Cann.

Movement of the works train resumed the following weekend, and this time the rubble got to Salehurst and close to where Terrier No. 3 Bodiam was on loan to Hodson's Mill whilst the P class (now K&ESR No. 11) underwent repairs. I can imagine that those who have toiled in recent years to re-open the railway to Northiam are asking if these efforts ever achieved anything. Experience is, as always, a great teacher and the work carried out at least kept the line in good enough condition for when the rolling stock had to be moved later on.

Charwelton was by then showing signs of an axle box bearing running hot and the offending item was duly removed and a replacement obtained. This needed turning up, which was in itself a time consuming and tedious process. The necessary skills were to hand, and there remains an enduring memory of the lathe in Charlie Kentsley's workshop turning slowly whilst the ever patient Derek Dunlavey sat with his feet up, rolled-up fag in hand, amidst the aroma of Old Holborn and cooling oil. The basic problem was that Charwelton had been designed for shunting but was being used for longer runs. This was not to be the last time that she was to be seen jacked up, off her wheels and awaiting a new bearing.

During the autumn, and in part as a response to one of the regular BR ultimatums, the KESR succeeded in getting a good deal of publicity both in the press and on television. The highlight of this was a press day held on 3 October. The public were invited as well and both Rolvenden and Tenterden were opened for the occasion. The largest number of visitors cars seen up to that date arrived at Rolvenden whilst at Tenterden Town a large crowd had gathered. Charwelton, Gervase and Marcia were all in steam and the only passenger vehicle

available was the ex LNWR Woolwich coach which had arrived during August and had been part repainted in grey primer, but with the brake end red. One of the three plank wagons was also included in the formation to give a 'mixed' train appearance. Charwelton hauled the coach out of Rolvenden and up the bank at 10.30 am. A noticeably purposeful atmosphere was apparent at Tenterden, something aided by such a small feature as the 'Tenterden – Rolvenden – Wittersham – Northiam' roof board. The train proceeded back down the bank and then made a further trip up to Tenterden before departing for Northiam with TV film cameramen aboard. Charwelton was running well at this point and reached Northiam easily where she was able to run round on the newly relaid loop. After a 40 minute break the first passenger train on the line since closure returned to Tenterden having only to briefly stop to put out a fire amongst the inevitable weeds.

Gervase had meanwhile been trundling about keeping the numerous visitors at Tenterden entertained. Charwelton returned to a very warm welcome and the discovery that her right hand trailing axle box was beginning to run warm again. The train was intended to make one further journey to Rolvenden following which the coach would be returned to Tenterden. At Rolvenden Charwelton was taken off and Nos. 10 and 12 substituted. The sight of these locomotives, hauling their first passenger train ever, was unusual to say the least and possibly one of the few recorded instances, if not the first recorded instance up to that time of double heading on the KESR. Contemporary accounts say that the day ended with a barbecue cooked on a shovel in Charwelton's firebox. An item on Press day later appeared in BBC TV's then South Eastern News programme, Town and Around. Despite this, 3 October 1964 is possibly not as well remembered as it might be. It was one of the more successful events organised in the early days and, perhaps, showed what, given a fair wind, could have been achieved. It was the precursor of some things now associated with the 1970s and others which were not repeated until 1989.

(The above account is adapted from extracts of the proposed book about the K&ESR during 1961-71 which Nick Pallant is currently researching. Details are drawn from contemporary documents, notes made either at the time or a few years later and (least reliably) memory. All of the above is thought to be accurate but if you were there and can enlarge on what happened – or correct a point or two – Please write to him care of Tenterden Town Station.)

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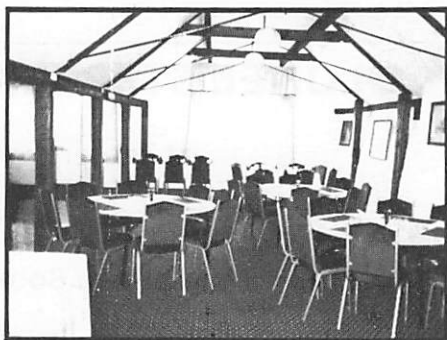
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