

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 73

Summer 1997



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Proprietor of the Kent & East Sussex Railway

The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

(Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.)

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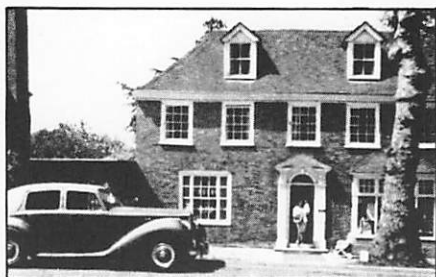
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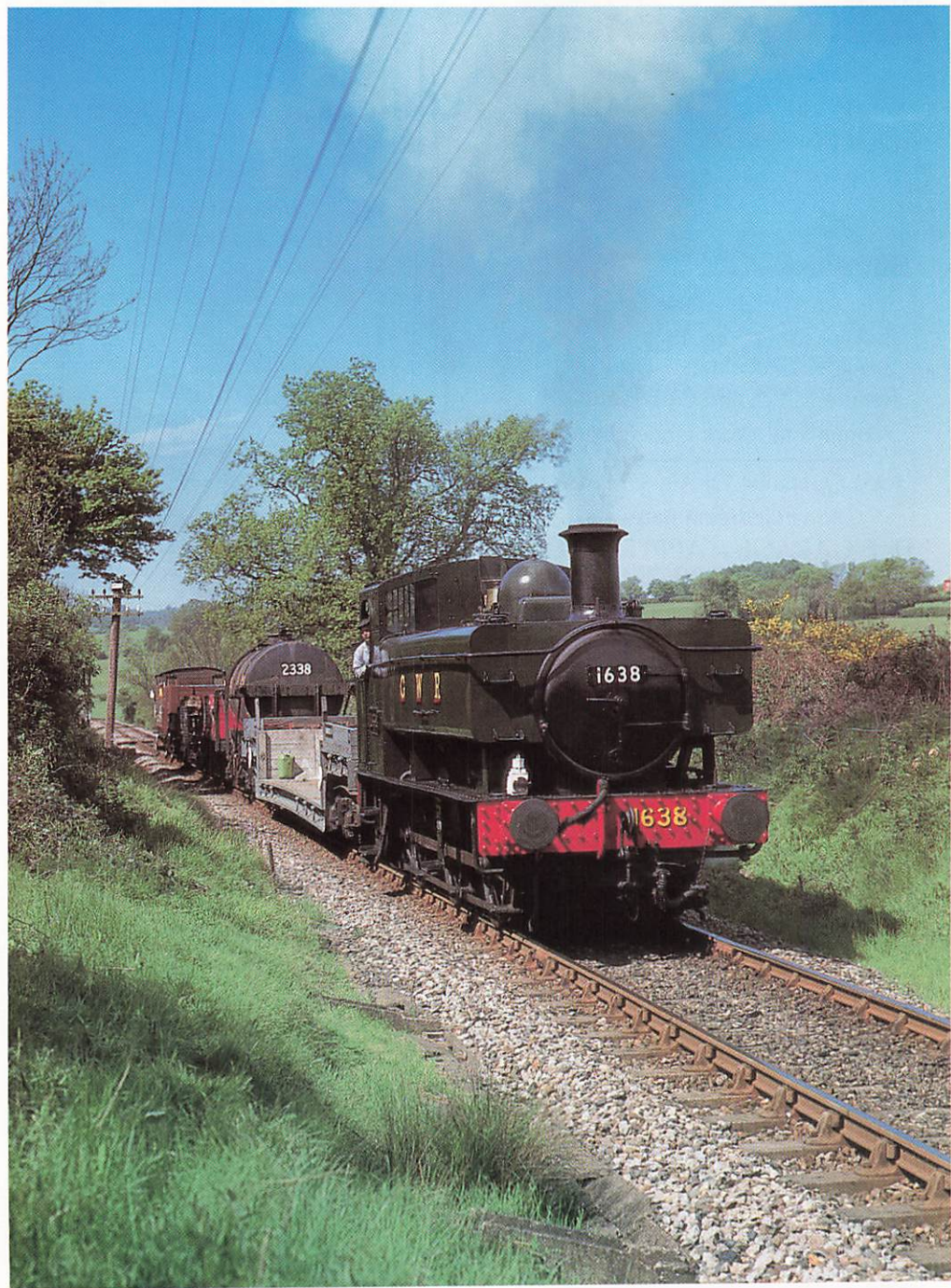


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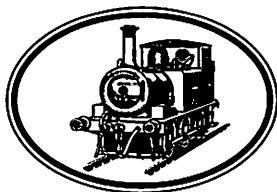


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ON BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY:

1556 approaches Cranbrook Road, running light from Rolvenden for its last day's work on Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May 1997 (front cover) and 1638 climbs Tenterden Bank with a Wittersham Road to Tenterden goods on the same day (frontispiece).

(Brian Stephenson)

Editorial

The Austen Heritage

One cannot help but be impressed by the general improvement in standards and facilities at Tenterden – suddenly, it seems, everything is coming together. The buffet has been refurbished, the gift shop re-fitted and the carriage shed and forecourt are tidier than they have ever been. A new visitor car park has been constructed, which merges sensitively into the countryside and the Col. Stephens Museum is now open to visitors. Sadly, horror still exists in the carriage sidings at the back of the carriage shed, where ruins of past glories still abound. Fortunately these are only visible to visitors when everything useful is out, but as Nick Pallant and Duncan Buchanan hint at in their thought provoking article in this issue, is this perhaps the time for an Austen-type clear out, right down the line?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Duncan Buchanan has been seriously ill for some time and has not been able to contribute any current input to this issue. In consequence, we have not had the benefit of his very considerable technical knowledge and Lineside News, in particular, is but a shadow of its usual self. Hopefully he will be fit and well in time for the next issue and in the meantime all readers will, I know, wish to send their best wishes to him for a speedy recovery.

Lineside News

COMMERCIAL Visitors

The season has got off to a busy start with passenger numbers for March, April and May totalling 20,453 compared to last year's figure of 16,297. This represents a substantial increase and although this was bolstered by an extra five days running during the Easter school holidays (on which over 1,000 passengers were carried) and the excellent results from Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine Fun Days in early May, the underlying increase is around 5%.

Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine Fun Days

The first of the year's two Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine events was moved to the normally quiet May Bank Holiday weekend and held over three days – 3rd, 4th and 5th May. The enduring popularity of the stories about cheeky engines rather caught us on the hop with over 5,300 passengers travelling during the three days and a further 700 visitors paying for entry to Tenterden Town Station.

Bank Holiday Monday was the busiest of the three days with well over 2,000 passengers and the bigger than expected crowds led to long queues at the entrance gate and the Station

Compiled by Philip Shaw

Refreshment Rooms – this was despite a quicker booking system introduced to speed up the issuing of tickets at the entrance. Further refinements and special catering arrangements will be made before the event on 20th and 21st September!

Monday also saw some unusual train formations as, in order to maximise capacity, the Class 108 DMU vehicles were used as trailer cars. Mark 1 CK No 86 was marshalled between the two driving cars to form a three-car train which, for much of the day was hauled by the P Class and Charwelton.

The event activities were as good as ever with all staff playing their part, from engine drivers whistling for water, to Devious Diesel stealing the troublesome trucks, leaving his guard behind, trying to pull passenger trains and generally misbehaving – much to the annoyance of The Fat Controller and the delight of the hundreds of children watching from the platform. Chris Wood was again magnificent as The Fat Controller and ably supported by Maggie Palk and Sheila Edwards who shared the part of Mrs Kyndley while Daniel Janes and Cathy Roberts as narrators brought the whole event to life and



Class 33 Crompton diesel "Ashford" at Rolvenden on 2nd June 1997. This locomotive has already attracted controversy in our correspondence columns.
(Philip Shaw)



The Last Day. 1556 passes Orpins Curve, returning to Rolvenden prior to withdrawal from service, and below, the smokebox is cleared of ash for the last time. (Neil Rose)



made sense of the extraordinary spectacle that unfolded in the sidings!

Many thanks to everyone who helped make the event such a success, especially to those members who came along 'off duty' and then rolled up their sleeves and helped out.

Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

The remodelled shop has attracted many favourable comments from staff and visitors alike – the light and airy atmosphere being a complete contrast to the rather dark and oppressive interior of the previous design.

The original shelves were revarnished and re-used and have been supplemented by the judicious use of some new shop fittings, specifically wall-mounted hangers for the display of T-shirts and sweatshirts and two bookcases which were purpose-built by Philip Clark-Monks who also constructed the new counter. Smart new curtains, made by Angela Clark-Monks, now screen the storage area underneath the bottom shelves.

A careful review of the range of stock offered was carried out prior to the refit and a number of new lines have been introduced, including reproduction poster-prints, surname keyrings

and loco name badges. These enamel badges in the shape of a locomotive have a range of 300 or so forenames and have proved extremely popular with adults and children alike – in fact almost 300 were sold within a week of their introduction!

Of course, a few lines have been phased out and the space devoted to others has been reduced. The most notable of these is books, which had suffered a decline in sales in recent years as a result of competition from book clubs and discount book stores. The range now displayed in the shop includes Middleton and Oakwood Press series with many titles of local and/or light railway interest plus budget priced pictorial books. Most of these are within the price bracket for impulse buying. Other books previously stocked in the shop are now for sale in the foyer of the Colonel Stephens' Railway Museum to allow customers time to browse. These changes seem to have worked with the decline in book sales having been reversed.

Catering

The upturn in business experienced last year has continued unabated with the Wealden Belle Saturday evening dinners and Sunday lunches proving as popular as ever. Additionally several charter trains have been operated for some clients, while others have booked meals on scheduled trains. A series of lunches for the social club of a Belgian company saw between 50 and 70 diners served aboard the 12.30pm train on Saturdays from 17th May to 7th June with a further 70 booked for Sunday 15th June.

The longer-than-expected overhaul of RU69 has meant that all on-train catering is being serviced from the PMV and Pullman Car 'Barbara' so military-like planning has gone to ensure that all the bookings could be honoured. The arrangements for 17th May are a good example, 76 passengers took morning coffee on the 10.30am, the train having been laid up the previous day. Danish Pastries and insulated urns of hot water were loaded on to the train shortly before departure. When the train returned at 11.55 the dirty crockery and cutlery was carried to the Station Refreshment Rooms to be washed as the PMV was in use for the lunch train.

The set was then shunted to the sidings and the Wealden Belle moved into the platform, ready for the Belgians to board for a pre-lunch drink at 12.15. This train had also been laid up the

previous day and conveyed a non-dining car for our other passengers. By 12.30 the Belgians had taken their seats and as the train steamed out of Tenterden Town Station the first course of Melon with Parma Ham was being served. Two further courses – Roast Turkey with all the trimmings and a choice of puddings – were also served and cleared during the 1hr 25min trip to Northiam and back with coffee poured as the train slogged up Tenterden bank.

Meanwhile the crocks from the morning's train were washed, dried and carried back onto their train in readiness for the 2.30pm train on which 44 afternoon teas were to be served. On-board, Meg Gooch relaid the tables ready for this service so that everything was ready by the time the lunchtime train returned. Once the diners alighted the two sets were again swapped and the insulated urns, this time accompanied by scones and cakes, were again loaded onto the train. Two of the waiters switched from the Wealden Belle to the service train to serve tea whilst the others set about cleaning the Belle and laying-up ready for the evening dinner train and another 42 meals!

All in all the day went extremely well, the only hiccup was that the milk for the afternoon tea was overlooked – the waiters realised almost as soon as the train set off and shouted a message to the Cranbrook Road Crossing Keeper who, in turn, telephoned the signalman at Rolvenden. The fridge in the loco mess was duly raided and as the train arrived at Rolvenden there was the signalman complete with several pints of milk – easy!

Railway Experience Days

The Winter series of weekend Railway Experience Days (RXDs) quickly sold out and additional Fridays were added on 25th April and the 9th and 16th May. These too were fully booked but the busy Summer schedule prevents any further days being slotted in until Friday 12th September. This date is also filling up quickly as are the weekend dates in November.

In addition to our own RXDs, the railway was hired at the end of April by Clive Groom for his 'Footplate Days and Ways' courses. Whilst here, he made use of pannier tank No 1638 with a heavy freight train and both he and his pupils enjoyed their time with us.

Filming

The line was used as a location for a 'Keystone

Cops' – style advertisement for Ford Escort on Thursday 17th and Friday 18th April. The Class 14 (D9525) and a goods train featured in the sequences, filmed at Cranbrook Road level crossing with the gates removed. The story involved the cops attempting to rescue a girl tied to the track. They parked their van on the crossing and untied the girl and then found the van would not start – a cloud of black smoke from the exhaust was accompanied by all four wheels falling off and still the train was charging towards the crossing!

The special effects were very good, but it took hours to rig and consequently traffic along the road was controlled by two policemen (paid for by the film company) for most of the two days. Several of the shots involved closing the road completely for short spells. The local residents were intrigued by the goings on but were relieved to find that the flashing warning lights and other modern props used by the film crew were only temporary – clearly they prefer living next to a quaint historic railway and do not wish to see any unnecessary modification.

As if the farce and confusion of the film crew were not enough, the Class 14 suffered a turbo charge failure on Friday 18th April. Fortunately the passing shots had been done but there were still some approach shots to do – so for the

afternoon the train with a dead D9525 at the head was propelled into the shot by the 08. This didn't have quite the same turn of speed as the Class 14 – especially uphill so some of the sequences were filmed as the train rolled downhill and the film will be run backwards!

Two weeks later the BBC came to film scenes for a forthcoming children's drama entitled "The Phoenix and the Carpet". Set in 1903 on an unidentified line, the P Class and Victorian Set were used with all logos and identifying lettering covered – indeed the P ran as No 556 for the day!

As the action was supposed to be in the middle of Winter, the locations were carefully chosen to avoid Spring flowers and trees full of green foliage. The dialogue and interior shots were filmed at Wittersham Road Station with the carriages being rocked and lights panned past the windows to simulate movement. The windows themselves were frosted by applying Epsom Salts and Beer – what a waste of Epsom Salts! Despite all these precautions the crew could not control everything – at one point, filming had to be 'cut' as a cuckoo started singing in the middle of the dialogue!

Two locations were used for passing shots, the first was on Wittersham bank with the pine trees



36 ton crane in action at Tenterden. Note station cat in foreground.

(Humphrey Atkinson)



The new station car park at Tenterden under construction, 3rd March 1997.

(John Liddell)

as a backdrop and the second was at Hexden Bridge where there is a short section with no trees. A second train including a well-wagon and the Class 08 was used by the special effects team to spray snow on the lineside. The anomaly of filming frosty scenes on a glorious Spring day was highlighted after one take near Wittersham Road when the P hauled its train up the bank and through the snow scene for a near-perfect run-past – meanwhile just out of shot smoke began to rise from two small lineside fires caused by sparks thrown from the loco!

LOCOMOTIVE

Following completion of the winter programme of running maintenance for the operational locomotives most of the labour resources are now taken up with operational support, maintenance and washouts. The increase in service requirements and special charter work is adding considerably to the workload and in consequence progress on overhauls will experience a slowdown.

Steam locomotives

No 3 (Bodiam) Progress on the manufacture of the new boiler at Israel Newton's continues apace and pressings for the new firebox are being manufactured. The outer shell welding has been completed. Repair of the regulator 'Jay' pipe by cast iron welding has been completed in readiness for internal component fittings, setting out and making up.

No 8 (Knowle) The tanks have been temporarily fitted to allow marking out of external components such as handrails. After this, the boiler can be cladded and tanks properly fitted. Many smaller parts, pipe runs and air reservoirs are being overhauled and made ready for fitting. In addition, riveting of beading to the cab and bunker sections has been completed.

No 10 (Sutton) The Bluebell Railway Locomotive Department is making a new pattern for Terrier locomotive cylinders, which we shall be able to utilize. However, this is likely to take some time, as it is a spare-time volunteer project.

No 11 (P Class) Although performing well, this locomotive had to be withdrawn on 4th June following expiry of the 10 year boiler cycle. An operational and maintenance integrity review will be undertaken, hopefully drawing on advice from former members of the staff of Ashford works, where, incidentally, the locomotive was built.

No 14 (Charwelton) In service and due a boiler inspection this summer.

No 19 (Norwegian) Repairs to the boiler at the Chatham Steam Restoration Company's works are proceeding. These include replacing corroded sections of the firebox, a new foundation ring and the fitting of stays and rivets. The work to date is at the welding stage and regular inspections have been undertaken. The quality of workmanship is very high.

It is not known exactly when the boiler will return for fitting, but the frames have been prepared and cleaned for its acceptance.

No 21 (Wainwright) In service.

No 22 (Maunsell) The overhaul is now complete and the locomotive was steamed down from Tenterden to Rolvenden on 27th May and performed very well. It awaits further testing and commissioning.

The last major task was the fitting of a new brake valve and associated pipe work.

No 23 (Holman F Stephens) New slide valves were fitted last winter, together with repair work associated with the recent boiler inspection. This involved new rivets for the firehole and the fitting of a new firehole protector ring. It is hoped to repaint the locomotive in authentic K&ESR livery later this year.

No 24 (Rolvenden) In service following last winter's repairs, which consisted of new piston rings, re-grinding piston rods and repairs to the left hand big end bearings.

No 25 (Northiam) With the completion of the motion overhaul, boiler repairs are now being attended to. This includes the major task of renewing the crown stays. All the old stays have

been removed, most of the holes re-tapped and new stays are being manufactured for fitting. In addition, formulation rivets and brick arch studs are being changed. Repairs to the smokebox tube plate, which involves fitting a protection plate and re-riveting, has been completed.

Loco 1638. In service for its final months before withdrawal this summer for a major overhaul.

Diesel Locomotives

Class 14, No 48. This locomotive is having new water cooling pipe sections made up. When the lubricating oil cooler is re-fitted, further engine testing will take place.

Class 14, No 49. This loco has received a service exchange turbo charger following seizure of the existing component. It awaits painting in due course.

08 Shunter. In service following winter inspection and servicing.

Ruston. Remains in service.

Drewry 03. Recent work has been undertaken to examine the fluid clutch transmission oil seal leak. To improve access, modifications to the output drive shaft have been carried out. The locomotive is currently stabled at Rolvenden for operational examination.



Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop, following the re-fitting last winter.

(Graham Hukins)



Filming at Cranbrook Road. A Ford 'Police' van is without tyres on the level crossing as a train approaches, 18th April 1997.
(John Liddell)

Class 33 Crompton Diesel. This locomotive arrived on 22nd May having been purchased by a group of members. Initially, a safety inspection will be carried out to enable commissioning. The loco carried the name 'Ashford' during its B.R. service, although the plates are not currently attached.

Cranes

10 ton Grafton. In store, with tarpaulin fitted for protection.

10 ton Taylor Hubbard. This is due for a boiler inspection in July, when the opportunity will be taken to carry out major repairs this summer by a specialist gear company.

36 ton Ransoms Rapier. In service following a re-tube last winter. Due a boiler inspection in July.

Management systems

A review of purchasing and procurement arrangements has been carried out by Clive Young, our new Carriage & Wagon Manager. His experience in these areas will ensure that best value for money is received.

Locomotives on loan

We received Bellerophon from the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway on 21st May to assist with our high summer services. It needs some work on the motion before being put into revenue service. An ex LMS 'Jinty' locomotive was also due to arrive from the same Railway in mid June. These locomotives will provide cover for

the shortage of motive power this season, due mainly to the unexpected failure of No 19, which is now undergoing major repairs.

Shed/yard improvements

As a first step to the project of installing new doors to the locomotive shed, the electrical supply to various services has been re-instated, including new trunking over the doors.

Steel grating has been installed in the No 1 road inspection pit, which had suffered from wet and slippery conditions and steps have been taken to prevent bird ingress in the shed generally.

The installation of a new drilling machine is continuing, subject to the availability of volunteers to complete the work. Two tanks on the oil store roof have been replaced as the existing tanks were corroded and a new roof has been fitted to the running store, following winter storm damage.

Personnel

Barry Holmes has recently joined the full time staff on a three day week basis to assist with the workload over the high summer. The Board has sanctioned the recruitment of a school leaver as an engineering apprentice in September, so that some of the specialist skills of the older generation will not eventually be lost to us.

Wants List

We require help in the following areas.

Painters for Terrier No 8 'Knowle', which is at its sub-assembly stage.

Fire bricks of standard brick size, of the type found in old storage heaters, for heating hearths.

Heavy duty tarpaulins.

Drills up to ½ inch diameter.

Rags for locomotives cleaning and lighting up.

Lockable cabinets and cupboards for tool and equipment storage.

THE TERRIER TRUST

Work continues to return the original K&ESR Terrier No 3 Bodiam to service in time for the millennium. Purchase is now complete and the Trust is financing the building of a new smokebox for the boiler, due for completion in 1998.

In order to establish what work is needed on the chassis the Trustees decided to commission Ian V. Riley (Engineering) of Bury, Lancashire to carry out an examination at their works. This firm has established a good reputation for the quality of its work on steam locomotives. Their estimate will be used as a basis of an application for Heritage Lottery funding. If this is successful we could have most of the restoration done at Bury, with considerable advantages over the work being done at Rolvenden where it could be delayed by maintenance of the working engines.

Thus events are moving rapidly. If you have not already become a Trust member please consider helping us by doing so. Gerald Siviour may be contacted on 01580 764990.

CARRIAGE AND WAGON

Visitors and staff will have noticed that various ideas anticipated in the previous report did not develop as planned! Despite considerable input both by paid staff and volunteers, the remodelling of PMV No 1808 took longer than anticipated and work to RU No 69 has also been delayed. As a result Pullman car 'Barbara' was temporarily retained in traffic for the early part of the 1997 season. National Lottery Heritage funding is being sought for the restoration of 'Barbara' and possibly also of Theodora. Car No 349 is to return to its owners during 1997, no date having been arranged when this report was compiled. A more than suitable replacement is on the way. Watch this space for further news!

PMV 1808

The tired old catering vehicle which entered the carriage shed just after Christmas has now been

totally transformed. There is now a spacious, bright and modern interior, all power and water systems having been thoroughly renewed or overhauled. A second water tank has been added and the bodywork renewed where necessary. A new British Standard gangway was built from scratch by Senior Foreman Chris Cheney using the class 108 dmu's design as a pattern. The vehicle has initially operated in shop grey, but when it stands still long enough it will be completed in SR olive green. The project took about three months and was thought to have involved nearly as much work as the record breaking restoration of SE&CR No 2947 which was completed in a year.

Mark 1's

The bar has now been fitted to RU No 69 and other structural work is in progress. The renewal of the electrical systems on this vehicle are now underway. Additional resources were found to be necessary and we have been pleased to welcome electrician Dennis Seymour to the Department on a short term contract. To further speed up the job, and as the paintwork is in basically good order, it has been decided to revarnish the 'blood and custard' rather than apply the proposed spurious Pullman livery.

SE&CR six wheeled brake van

With the pressure of other projects, work on this vehicle has slowed. The brake rigging has been rebushed and reassembled and will, hopefully, prove much more efficient. At the time of writing the vehicle can be run although through vacuum piping and a guard's handle (to allow the van to work as part of the mixed train) remain to be installed. External paintwork, except for some lettering, is complete and the inside is receiving attention. After further investigations, it was discovered that red ends would have been historically inappropriate and they have been completed in the same colour as the rest of the bodywork.

SE&CR Birdcage

Between everything else, time has been made to continue renewal of the build rail on this vehicle. This will enable the body to be lowered back on the underframe in due course. The resulting return to mobility should allow us to make more flexible use of shed space.

G.W.R. Railcar Project

Since the previous edition of the 'Terrier', it is pleasing to report that positive progress



Thomas Weekend, 3rd to 5th May, the Fat Controller and Mrs Kyndly are pictured with several young visitors.

(John Liddell)

continues to be made with the Railcar's restoration. At the time of writing (May), the majority of the Robertsbridge-end driving-cab's timber framework has now been reinstated, and awaits only the completion of a windscreen pillar and a few minor sections for the full effect, while various metal reinforcing brackets have been manufactured and fitted to the structure. The overhaul of the cab electrical switch-gear also continues apace, with a number of the components having been subjected to a thorough clean, followed by a fresh coat of paint.

As a prelude to the Railcar's entry into the Carriage and Wagon shed, an event which will hopefully have taken place by the time this report is published, both cant-rails have been assessed, and an order placed for the required amount of timber necessary to undertake this task. It is hoped that the replacement of these items will be one of the objectives achieved during the period the vehicle has been allocated undercover.

PERMANENT WAY

The Winter's work programme at Popes Cottage

Cutting was finished to both time and cost. This was despite having to work through some of the worst weather seen this year. The old 91½lb rail on wooden sleepers was removed and the cutting was dug out to allow the new track drains to be installed. The replacement 95lb rail on concrete sleepers was then fitted. The track was then ballasted up, regulated and tamped to its new top line. During March the department's rail welding gang once again returned to the Rother straight to continue where they left off on the long task of welding up 2 out of 3 joints. Thus reducing rail end wear.

We have again been overhauling 95lb concrete sleepers in Wittersham yard. This was brought on by the necessity to move over 500 of them to allow us to replace the yard boundary fence and also to allow the movement of the spare type 8 tamper from the back siding onto a short section of isolated track by the yard gate. The sleepers will be used during this year's working week (8th to 16th November) on Orpins Curve. The tamper was lifted over during April along with a mark one coach and two wagons at Tenterden. This was done by a specially hired in 120 ton crane.

With the coming of Spring the department's work has moved to Bodiam Station, where we have been removing the spare track materials that are owned by the Tenterden Railway Company from where they were being stored on an adjoining property to an area opposite the station building. These materials will either be used at Bodiam for the new loop line (if we receive the Lottery money) or in the mainline between Popes Cottage and Willows Curve to replace the last length of the old 91½lb rail on the current operating section if we do not. Whilst we were there we also took the opportunity to do some general house keeping on the site to make it a bit more presentable.

The junior P/Way gang have again been doing sterling work at Tenterden, replacing both life expired sleepers and point timbers, greasing fishplates and packing of the joints. They were also involved in some enabling works in the S&T siding, in readiness for the lifting of the GUV van into place. A joint operation between the two gangs has taken place twice during the last three months. The first was work on No 3 siding at Tenterden, where three 75lb track panels were removed, the ground dug out and sub standard concrete sleepers with siding grade 95lb rail fitted. The second was during the installation of two isolated sidings in the area beside the toilet block at Tenterden in readiness for the coach and wagons that are now sited there. The gang has now moved on to Cranbrook Road where they have started spot resleepering the rotten wooden sleepers.

SIGNALS & TELECOMMS ENGINEERING

March got off to a bad start for us, with a burglary at Wittersham Road box (reported in the last 'Rooter'), where signal repeaters and telephones were stolen, leaving the box unfit for use on the Saturday. By mid Sunday afternoon, most of the equipment had been replaced, although the black bakelite fittings are not as attractive as the brass indicators they have replaced. The Station was hit again in early June, when four oil lanterns were stolen from the platform lamp standards.

The fire in the Administration block also created further work, in isolating and replacing damaged telephone cables, and dealing with failures of the telecomms processor that manages all our incoming lines.

Both these incidents created extra workload, but

particularly preparation of our insurance claim, and arranging repairs.

Another working week was held in early March to further the new workshop and stores accommodation project, Friday and Saturday being spent in preparation and clearance for the work to follow. Sunday and Monday kept the 10 tonne Taylor Hubbard crane busy building two retaining walls of redundant concrete sleepers to retain the embankment where it has been necessary to excavate into the embankment for the extra ground space, and the setting out of concrete sleepers to support the vehicles to be grounded.

Monday also saw the delivery by road, of a 4 wheeled steel bodied CCT (Covered Carriage Truck), basically a medium sized parcels van, purchased from Three Bridges.

Built in 1961, as M94772, but latterly numbered ADB977113, and used for the conveyance of spares/stores to St Leonards West Marina depot, it had sat disused at Brighton since around 1988.

This was immediately moved to Tenterden where cutting off of the brakegear and other items below solebar level was carried out over the Monday afternoon and Tuesday, along with a similar, but more extensive process on the GUV van 93717.

Wednesday saw the 36 tonne crane steamed and prepared ready for the first lift, of GUV 93717 off of its bogies, turned 180° and placed on to support pads of redundant concrete sleepers, its final position. However, delays in removing the remainder of the underframe equipment from the underframe, and arranging the lifting tackle meant that actual lifting did not take place until well into the afternoon. Getting the vehicle to sit in the right place, and flat on the sleeper piles proved a challenge, and in the end, the vehicle was temporarily placed down and a fresh start made in the morning, when staff were fresher.

This achieved the desired result, and attention turned to the placing of the CCT referred to above.

Before this could be done, however it was necessary to raise the 'outriggers' of the crane, move to the new lifting position, and then pack and set them, ready for lifting. (Most cranes, particularly rail ones, do not lift on their wheels, but extend 'legs' known as outriggers which are then packed out onto firm ground to support

the weight of the lift).

Similar problems were experienced in getting the CCT to sit down level on the sleepers, and again this was aborted, and completed the following morning (Friday).

Following this, there remained the not inconsiderable task of tidying up all the scrap, shunting all the coaching stock back to its correct place (some usually have to be outberthed at Rolvenden during these operations). This was finally completed around 10pm on Friday night, leaving everything ready for the beginning of the weekend.

Particular thanks must be extended to a considerable number of staff and others who do not normally work for the department, including Adrian Landi, Richard Halliwell (Crane driving), Paul Hatcher, Chris Horton (Crane Supervision and slinging), numerous traincrew, including John Houselander, Barry Holmes and Dave Campbell, finally not forgetting Chris and Dave Tibbatts (Catering), who kept us well fed all week.

Now that both vehicles are grounded, work on fitting out has proceeded more speedily.

The CCT has been completely reglazed, and is temporally in use as a store for some of the fixtures and fittings for the workshop itself. The GUV (workshop) has been fully painted internally, a further full partition erected, and the lighting wiring completed. The bare timber floor in the stores and office has been covered with a top quality industrial flooring, thanks once again to the generosity of Marley Floors Ltd. of Lenham.

Peter Watson has been kept busy rebuilding seven out of the eight end doors to the vehicle, which had varying amounts of dry rot in them, yet this has been caught early enough to avoid complete replacement of the whole door structure.

Work is particularly concentrating on the electrical stores, in order to enable us to move out of the former S&T coach (S7400S) as quickly as possible.

Assistance with painting of the roof and exterior would be particularly welcome; please contact Nick Wellington on 01622 844306 (weekday evenings).

BUILDING

The Outside Maintenance Team have continued

with improvements at Tenterden, helping the Commercial Department decorate the refurbished shop as well as repairing and repainting the information kiosk and erecting signs around the site. A further pair of platform seats have been rebuilt and new running-in boards for the North end of Tenterden and Wittersham Road await signwriting.

Tenterden signal box has been repainted to remove the effect of colour variations in a faulty batch of paint.

Cranbrook Road and Rolvenden level crossing gates and fences have been washed down to remove road dirt accumulated during the winter.

Our Northiam working week was blessed with fair weather and a good turnout ensured that many of the scheduled jobs were accomplished. However, it was disappointing to suffer heavy showers on Thursday afternoon, the very day that Dave Stubbs was in attendance with a bricklayer to tidy the unfinished retaining walls behind the station buildings. Alas, they remain unfinished though some progress was made.

The appearance of the galvanised fence protecting the rear access ramp has been improved by reducing its height to 1.2m, removing one rail and painting it black.

The level crossing gates were repainted for the first time and the flanking picket fences treated with black tar, the contrast looking very smart. The post and rail fence on platform two was also treated with black tar. The intention to repaint the running-in boards was thwarted by their poor condition so it was decided to make up new ones, in the meantime a start was made on repainting the posts and mountings.

Advantage was taken of many hands to position the remaining copings on platform two. They are now correctly located on timber packing and await bedding and jointing, a task that can be carried out easily by two people.

A good start was made on replacing the old gents lavatory, not as a going concern but as a utility building, this time with a roof. This will fill the rather awkward looking gap at the end of the main building as well as meeting our obligation to Rother District Council to retain the original structure.

Apart from the regular members of the maintenance team we thank Andy Fielder, John



'Gazelle' arrives at Tenterden and enters the Colonel Stephens Museum, 20th February 1997.

(John Liddell)

Liddell, Dick Coombs, Veronica Hopker and new recruit Derek Grieb for their help and enthusiasm during the week.

NORTHIAM STATION

Arising from last year's increase in passenger figures, the takings in the buffet at Northiam in 1996 increased from £8,425 to £12,515. The tubs and hanging baskets at Northiam have been planted out for the summer and have been paid for by the friends of Northiam. Our thanks to all of the staff who helped in arranging the plants.

Some of the old station signs have been renewed thanks to Meg Gooch. Her next task is the repainting of the running in boards in the new railway blue colour. This will form part of Peter Davis' working week. Other tasks planned for the week are the re-painting of the level crossing gates and repairs to the shed.

Early this season the interior of the station was repainted, using money raised by the friends of Northiam station.

Since the opening of Northiam, the station has been manned every operating day. This may not be the case this year, as we are very short of Station masters and Buffet Assistants during the week. If anyone has a few days spare and would like to help, please call in or phone.

VOLUNTEER LIASON

This is our first report in this capacity. What



have we found out? Well, some 350 of you are currently listed as volunteers. Well done! This represents 13% of the membership. The bad news is that we really need double that number to do the job comfortably. So to the other 87% or so, what's stopping you? It does take a certain amount of courage to take that first step. But once taken, we're sure you won't regret it.

Talking to prospective volunteers, there appears to be a couple of misconceptions regarding when volunteers are able to come down to work and the skills required. Whilst the timetable shows

when the railway is operating for the public and we do need more people to cover these operational days, people can be found in a number of departments during the 'closed' periods. If you are a shift worker or work at weekends, it may be that you could help out here.

If you think that you must be a railway worker, or built like man (or lady) mountain, please think again. Whilst some people do work for public railways most do not. Also, there is work to suit most abilities. Training will be given where required.

Lastly, volunteering does not take away someone's job. Without volunteers the railway would simply not survive. We do have a small number of paid people. They are essential to the railway, often working more hours than they are contracted to. These same people can also be seen at weekends as volunteers. There are no shareholders to pay. All money goes back to keeping the railway open.

We would like to have the opportunity of getting you (and your family?) involved. If you would like to discuss how, please give us a call on 01580 766771 between 6pm and 10pm. We can then discuss what you can do and perhaps even meet at Tenterden. We want you to be part of this railway.

(Graham & Karen Bridge)

MUSEUM

Although not quite finished, visitor numbers have been encouraging. To the end of May, 2,566 tickets were issued, including 377 complimentary (T R C members). This raised £2,239 in admission charges for the 35 days on which the Museum was open.

So far this year, nine people have worked as attendants, with usually two at least on duty at any one time.

Building the displays has progressed well with just two of the larger areas to be completed, i.e. the 'Gazelle room' and the 'Stephens military career' display.

As reported in the last issue, 'Gazelle' arrived safely in February and has since been a great attraction to visitors. During the 'Thomas' weekend, 'Gazelle' was given rather cute eyes and many children had their photograph taken with the engine as a backdrop.

Work on restoring the surviving compartment of

ex-LC&DR carriage No 3022 of 1879 has come on well. This will be finished as typical K&ESR third class accommodation as at the early years of this century, mainly for the benefit of children.

During a severe storm on the night of 15 May, the security alarm was struck by lightning, resulting in damage to the control panel which had to be replaced.

In early June, the second hand carpet squares were cleaned by a contractor and now look surprisingly good. These should give good wear for several more years.

Thanks are due to the permanent way department for materials and help in mounting the 'light railway permanent way' display, and to Adrian Landi for carrying out repairs to one of 'Gazelle's' buffers.

BODIAM 2000

The grant funding process is dragging on. The millennium funding decision has been put back because of the general election, and now they have changed the selection process, we hope for a decision around October. We have provisionally been offered £150,000 from English Partnership. Unfortunately this does not mean that we can start work because we need all of the funding in place before the company will commit itself to the project. The bond issue is also on hold till grant funding is known, but we do need to display support to the funding bodies from the membership by applying for these bonds through the yellow flyer.

The design and planning has had to be changed for the different time scale with the unfortunate consequence of the price being pushed up, partially because of the greater use of contract labour, but also the need to bring in serviceable materials rather than as removed. The drainage along the route will have to be totally re-done, with the old clay pipe cross drains being life expired, and the longitudinal drains have totally silted up due to lack of maintenance. Even though the track was cleared six years ago the vegetation has taken off with a vengeance, during the drainage survey we had to cut ourselves in to the trackbed to try and find the cross drains shown on the old track plans. It would take our clearance group around three years to clear the line, this would also mean that no work would be done on the operational section. For this reason the trackbed prep will be done by contractors, and the track laying by the P/W dep. The P/W

dep have been overhauling the Appledore concrete sleepers for use on the extension, this is not a capital investment so it does not put a strain on the company's finances.

We have and will be working closely with the National Trust, and all levels of council to get the best package possible for the Rother Valley at Bodiam. To try and decrease the number of cars using the narrow lanes to the castle, by a park and ride from Northiam/Tenterden and pricing incentives to tempt people to join the train from these stations. We have met with a favourable response from all parties and good headway is being made on all matters.

ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY

Additional items of rolling stock have recently been delivered from Tenterden and these are a Southern Railway 8 plank wagon, LSWR Box van, LBSCR Box van and a 4 plank wagon. Although space is a little tight, further sidings are in the process of being laid to accommodate these valuable vehicles.

Both cars of the EPB unit now reside at Robertsbridge, courtesy of the MATEP group and renovation is under way.

Restoration of Southern Goods Van 48367 is well advanced under the skilful expertise of David Dine. This item of stock was in a very dilapidated condition and has had no major work carried out for over 60 years. It will be an attractive asset on our site when complete.

The line and all pointwork is now complete as far as the first bridge where a buffer stop has been placed to prevent rolling stock from finding its way into the Mill Race stream! The next job will be ballasting and the laying in of new sidings.

NEWS FROM THE CFBS

The latest issue of CFBS members' magazine, *Ch'thot Train* (no. 32 March 1997) includes an illustrated article by Alain Paillard on the visit by the CFBS personnel to the K&ESR in October 1996. A photo of the signal box at Rolvenden features on the cover. The article concludes by thanking 'our friends of the K&ESR for the marvellous welcome'.

Apparently the CFBS has been offered an old light-ship, which once marked the entrance to the port of St Valery, for preservation. Guy Lenne, editor of *Ch'thot Train*, envisages some possible uses for this vessel – ferrying passengers across the bay from Le Crotoy to St Valery to

complete a round trip, or even as a means of travelling between the CFBS and the K&ESR!

When I wrote about the K&ESR for *Ch'thot Train*, Guy asked me to explain 'Santa Specials'. Subsequently, the CFBS experimented with Christmas trains carrying 'le père Noël' on 14th and 15th December. Although they were not overwhelmed with visitors, they are going to try again on 13th and 14th December this year.

A great deal of work was accomplished during the winter, both on the line and in the workshop. Some of the work on the permanent way was sub-contracted, this included replacement of sleepers under the pointwork at Noyelles. Sleepers were also replaced, and irregularities ironed out, at St Valery, where the dual gauge track is set into the road between the swing bridge and the level crossing. The relaying of 1,300 metres of track between Lanchères and Hurt was completed. In the workshop, locomotives and stock have received attention, notably, restoration of ex-Seine et Marne baggage van D803 was completed, while ex-Somme coach 10510 was expected to be ready to enter service in May or June. Another baggage wagon has been adapted to carry wheelchairs.

A number of new initiatives are either under consideration or are being implemented. Telephone contact between trains and stations is being introduced this year. Two mechanical 'sauterelles' (literally, 'grasshoppers') are to be located at Le Crotoy and St Valery to ease the task of coaling up – having helped with this task on a number of hot July days, I particularly welcome this development! However, the 'grasshoppers' may not see many years of service, since the CFBS is seriously considering adapting its locos to oil-firing, possibly beginning with the Haine St Pierre which is likely to re-enter service in April 1998. A new kind of guide book has been put together to provide travellers on the railway with information about the surrounding countryside – I don't know when this is due to be published, presumably during this season (it may be available by the time you read this). And new signs are to be installed in front of the stations, providing information about train times and fares in French, English, German and Dutch.

Finally, a date for your diaries: the next steam festival is scheduled for 25th and 26th April, 1998.

(Philip Pacey)

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SOUTHERN COUNTIES FUELS

Letters to the Editor

More Might have beens

Sir – I am very concerned about the article which appeared in the Spring 1997 issue of the *Tenterden Terrier*.

I would like to make it clear to readers that I wrote this as a pot boiler several years ago and had long since assumed that it had been quite rightly assigned to the editorial dustbin. It is, in any event, thin stuff which I consider to be well past its sell by date. The intention to publish only came to my attention when it was too late to ask for the article to be removed.

London SE9

Nick Pallant

I was sorry that Mr Pallant felt that his article was time expired, especially as the recent discovery of the railcar body of Dom added particular impetus and interest to that part of the text. The objective of the Terrier is to have a balanced coverage of current events, past history and history of the preservation movement. Although this article had been in stock for some time it has attracted much interest. Indeed, one very eminent heritage railway has asked permission to quote from the article in its own journal – ED.

Number 19

Sir – How disappointing that after so much work on No 19 it should run into trouble, though news that variety will be added to the line by the visits of Bellerophon and 47279 is very welcome. These visits prompt me to wonder whether there is a policy or programme for visiting locos, or whether this is an ad hoc affair.

There is no doubt that visits provide extra reasons for those who have already visited the line to come again. Given that No 19 is the only tender engine on the line it might be worth while exploring the possibility of other visits. There are a number of 0-6-0 tender engines of suitable weight on other lines. Has this been considered?

I am not thinking simply of former Southern locos, though it would be attractive to see the Bluebell Railway's C Class on the line, especially as it is the closest there is to the 01's which once ran on our lines.

Beckenham, Kent

Keith Barron

Diesels Again

Sir – I was astonished to read in *RAIL* that a Class 33 is supposedly 'coming home' to the KESR.

Our line is primarily a steam line and that is what our passengers come to see. We bought shunting diesels to cover our own needs and as our line got longer, two of the versatile Class 14s – capable of hauling both works and in an emergency, passenger trains. We then had the folly of a heap of unsightly junk dumped on our line – a derelict Class 25 for which there is no need.

There is no business case for bringing a main line diesel to our line and we must not allow our objectives to be sidetracked to suit the whims of vociferous individuals. Other railways have had to stop groups within their organisations buying up diesels and then expecting their favourite host railway to accept them. We should do the same – a Class 33 has no place on our line.

St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent Donald Wilson

World War Two Railway Study Group

Sir – Would it be possible to beg a few inches of column space to publish two requests for information regarding two items of K&ESR rolling stock which are of interest to World War Two Railway Study Group members?

The first regards the Southern Railway pattern 20 ton goods brake van 103 bearing the initials SR and number 56495. When it arrived bearing its Army number of AD 49022, it also had a registration plate on the solebar. This would have carried a number between 1009 and 1032 inclusive – which one was it?

The second regards bogie side tipper 117. It is generally acknowledged to be of US Army origin but further details would be welcomed.

Information about World War Two Railway Study group can be obtained from the group's Secretary, G J Martin, 17 Balmoral Crescent, West Molesey, Surrey, KT8 1QA or on the internet: tcane@ww2rsg.u-net.com.

The group was founded against the background of the wartime railway scene, not having been extensively studied by serious railway historians, in 1989 and is now enjoying its sixth year of success, its '*Bulletin*' being a source of historical information and vanguard of research.

Faversham, Kent

R J E Bayliff

All replies direct to Mr Bayliff please at 3 Brook Meadow Cottages, Whitehill, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent ME13 0EY.

The Austen Heritage

By Duncan Buchanan and Nick Pallant

The recently opened Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden provides a valuable insight into Holman F Stephens, the man and his work. Is it also time to look afresh at the roots of our Railway's heritage and, in particular, the contribution made by William Henry Austen from the Colonel's death in 1931 to Nationalisation in 1948?

We are told of the Colonel's achievements as an engineer and manager and of the K&ESR's 'Stephens tradition'. But much of the image and atmosphere evoked derives from the classic years of the 1930's (well recorded by Casserley, Kidner, etc. and also by some of our own members). This was the period of management – as receiver – by W H Austen Snr. assisted by his son William Holman Austen.

It is recalled that during the 1960's, the formative period of the preservation scheme, much of the inspiration came from that 1930's image recorded by the venerable railway historians. The early members and volunteers,

generally fairly young by today's standards, were heavily influenced by this.

During the Austen era a comprehensive programme of recovery from the years of gentle decline was put into place. This included replacement bridges, concrete lamp posts, track renewal, new second hand rolling stock, restoration or disposal of unused stock, locomotive loans from the Southern Railway (cf. today's guest locomotives) and a start on encouraging the tourist trade. One's attention is immediately drawn to similarities with the way the railway is run today.

The Austen improvements continued under Southern Region management, only to be abruptly halted in 1954. The line clung on as a goods branch for another eight years without further development. Indeed, matters went backwards with the demolition of the engineering facilities, Rolvenden and Wittersham Road stations, the removal of many other items and, of course, the loss of



Austen's lamp standards still in use at Tenterden, 2nd June 1997.

(Philip Shaw)



Behind the carriage shed. Unsavable stock for disposal?

(Philip Shaw)

the Headcorn extension. After that, the preservation era began and, we will argue, history returned to something nearer its previous course.

To develop our argument, we must consider what the K&ESR would be like today if, somehow, the line had never been Nationalised? The answer may be deduced by looking at, in ascending order of significance, the Derwent Valley Railway, the Tallylyn Railway and our near neighbour the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch. One can envisage the Railway struggling on into the 1960's, with the closure of the Headcorn extension and the loss of passenger services. At that point volunteer assistance would have become imperative. One could also develop an alternative scenario in which the Southern Region continued Robertsbridge to Tenterden passenger services until 1961, latterly using diesel multiple units, with much of the infrastructure retained and perhaps further upgraded. All this suggests the actual events of 1954-61 were a temporary interruption in the natural flow of developments. In this journal, a couple of years ago, John Miller asked the question "What are we?" We ask instead "Are we what,

in other circumstances, we might have become?"

No one is proposing we deny the historic significance of Colonel Stephens' role in the development of light railways, still less that the K&ESR should be allowed to drift into looking like the Southern Region around 1980 (a sometimes heard complaint). What we are doing is offering a belated answer to John's question. We suggest that, as a Railway, we take much more note of our inheritance from the Austens. This offers a way forward which can happily accommodate policy decisions made as a result of the "What are we?" debate. It offers the opportunity to maintain the independent traditions and style of the K&ESR without a divisive and stagnant adherence to the Stephens era on one hand and aimless and inappropriate modernisation on the other.

We know that much of the above is heresy to people from a wide spectrum of opinion. As working volunteers we also suspect that many of our colleagues would quietly sign up to what we have had to say. Fellow members, your views are invited!

Bellerophon

Photographed by Robert Berry

On hire from the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, Bellerophon was built in 1874 for the Haydock Colliery Company and is believed to be the oldest standard gauge locomotive working in the country today. It was undergoing trials at Tenterden Town station on 11th June 1997 before entering revenue service.





TENTERDEN TOWN

Gazelle

By Stephen Garrett

There can probably be no more appropriate locomotive for display in a Colonel Stephens Railway Museum than Gazelle – undoubtedly one of the most bizarre locomotives to have operated on Stephens' lines but equally an excellent demonstration of Stephens' ability to put almost anything to a practical use.

Gazelle's origins were decidedly impractical. Designed and built in 1893 by Alfred Dodman & Company a general engineering firm and builder of traction engines, this locomotive was intended for the private use of William Burkitt, a seed and corn merchant of King's Lynn who also held a director's seat on the King's Lynn Docks & Railways Company. As a result of his railway interests Burkitt obtained running powers for Gazelle over the tracks of the Great Eastern Railway and the Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway. Only one of Gazelle's expeditions appears to have been recorded in detail. This was a trip from King's Lynn to Chesterfield, a distance of 105 miles, on 27th July 1897. The outward journey began at 06.10 with arrival at Chesterfield at 11.20 with an average speed of 24 mph if fifty minutes of delays are allowed. The return journey left at 15.00 and reached King's Lynn at 20.25.

Anyone contemplating a journey of 210 miles with more than ten hours to be spent on board would probably not have chosen to have travelled in Gazelle. It was a 2-2-2WT with a four seater passenger compartment at the back where one would have expected to find the coal bunker. Neither the cab nor the passenger compartment had any form of shelter and its dimensions were truly Lilliputian:

Driving Wheels	3'9" diameter
Leading & Trailing Wheels	2'3" diameter
Total Wheelbase	10'6"
Cylinders	4" x 9"
Boiler centre line above rail	3'11"
Height to top of chimney	7'9"
Length over buffers	17'2"
Weight	5 tons 6 cwt

One of the factors contributing to the delays on the Chesterfield expedition was the extra

time taken changing tablets from the low level of Gazelle's footplate. Given that the journey was undertaken in gale conditions it is small wonder that we cannot find any trace of regular journeys of this type being undertaken. The only concession to Mr Burkitt's comfort would have been the employment of wooden centred Mansell wheels on all three axles which would have served to reduce the noise at least.

There is a possibility that Gazelle was the second of two identical locomotives as there are records of another locomotive being supplied to the West Norfolk Farmers' Manure & Chemical Co-Operative Company and subsequently being shipped to Australia.

Although Dodman is known to have repaired locomotives for the Co-Operative it is unlikely that a locomotive of Gazelle's design would have been of any use to an industrial concern and it is generally assumed that this locomotive was Gazelle itself carrying out some sort of running in trials. However, if there was a second locomotive it makes it rather difficult for us to claim 'smallest locomotive' status!

There is some confusion as to Gazelle's career in the years following 1897 but it is known to have come into the hands of the dealer T W Ward by January 1910 and was bought by Holman Stephens in February 1911 for the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway. Gazelle may seem to have been a strange choice but it should be remembered that Stephens was reconstructing a railway that had been out of use for twenty years but on which the track was substantially intact. Whilst it would have been folly to employ a full-sized locomotive on the line it would have been possible for Gazelle to venture out on tours of inspection along the line in advance of the serious track replacement. It is not clear whether Gazelle actually carried out any such expeditions as Stephens promptly despatched it to W G Bagnall at Stafford for rebuilding as an 0-4-2WT, the driving wheels being replaced by new wheels to the same dimensions as the leading wheels to which they were then coupled. Gazelle returned to the Shropshire &

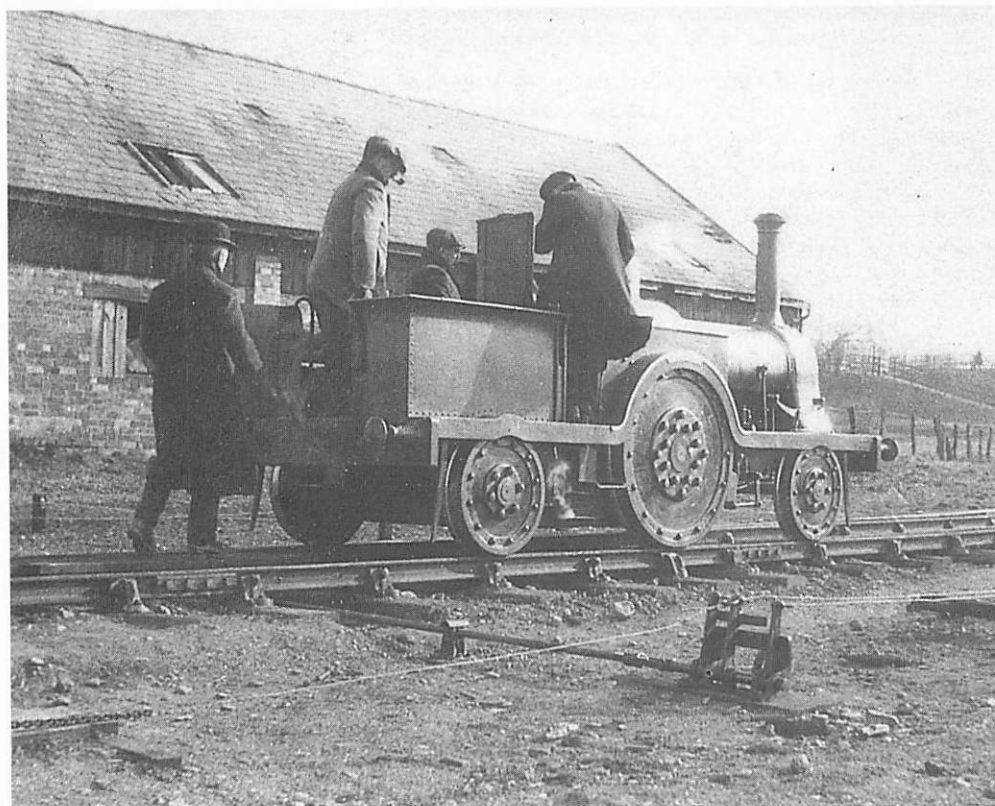
Montgomeryshire in July 1911 by which time the main line from Shrewsbury to Llanymynech had reopened.

The reopening of the branch line from Kinnerley to Criggion to passenger traffic in August 1912 brought an opportunity for *Gazelle* to play a new role. Traffic on the branch was rarely substantial and Stephens felt that *Gazelle* could provide an adequate service when loadings were particularly light. The vicar of Criggion, Reverend R Brock, thought otherwise as his letter of complaint of 23rd November 1912 to the Board of Trade shows: "I booked today my fare by the 3.57 train from Abbey Gate station to Criggion on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Rly. I rode to Kinnerley Junction by a properly equipped train. Proceeding to the branch to Criggion I was put with another man and two women into the back part of an engine with only a screen between us and the fire – no roof and the sparks and smuts falling over us –

one spark nearly got into my eye – with danger of being blinded – my clothes too injured by the same. I wish to know whether passengers can thus be treated and deceived – for the last time I came about a fortnight ago I was conveyed in a carriage as I have hitherto been. I have had occasion to use the Rly for my wife and daughter and friends from London and of course I cannot subject them to such risk and barbarous treatment.

If they cannot or will not serve proper accommodations through the journey, they should not be allowed to advertise it – there were carriages at the station (Kinnerley) and as an engine ran – a carriage could and should have been on the back."

Stephens replied to the Board of Trade explaining the situation; "I reply to your communication of 30th November and find that it is usual, owing to the slight traffic on the branch in question, to utilise the services of the inspection engine for the afternoon train as the occasion arises,



On arrival at Kinnerley for trials in 1911, still with a 2-2-2 wheel configuration. Colonel Stephens, with pipe, can be seen standing in the passenger compartment. (Colonel Stephens Historical Archive)



At Kinnerly in September 1921, with ex LCC tramcar trailer. (Colonel Stephens Historical Archive)

wind screens are provided and in view of the smallness of the traffic it is considered that the action is justifiable." The Board of Trade did not agree and replied that "... it is considered that a proper carriage for the conveyance of passengers should be run on the train in question." Stephens was not to be dissuaded so easily but as a compromise Gazelle returned to W G Bagnall for the fitting of a cab and the enclosing of the passenger 'compartment'. Neither fitting was a thing of beauty. The cab was distinctly utilitarian with a shallow curved roof and bereft of all ornamentation apart from a pair of round spectacle glasses at the front and a spindly whistle protruding from the roof. The passenger cabin had all the welcome appearance of a portable prison cell. It too was fitted with round spectacle glasses at the front and two small square windows at the rear. The original waist high rear doorway (entrance and exit via the trackbed) was retained but the rest of the doorway remained open to the elements – very bracing when running backwards. Baggage could be carried on the roof which was surrounded by an incongruously ornamental set of luggage rails. None of this did anything for Gazelle's appearance since the passenger cabin was a foot or more lower than the driver's cab and

the roof was curved at a much sharper radius.

There appear to have been no more letters of complaint from the Vicar and it may well be that Gazelle was only pressed into passenger service when absolutely necessary. In 1915 or 1916 a more acceptable solution to the problem of lightly loaded passenger services on the Criggion Branch was found in the purchase and adaptation of a horse tram. This is reputed to have come from the LCC and was originally a doubledeck vehicle. The top deck, stairs and end platforms were removed and running gear was provided for operation on railway track. In this form it made an ideal light trailer for Gazelle which is unlikely to have been capable of hauling a conventional carriage. Although the tramcar was fitted with brakes these were operated by means of large handwheels protruding from either end of the tramcar body and it is likely that these were only used to keep the vehicle from running away when parked on its own. Entrance was by means of end doors and steps were provided between the buffers to assist access from the trackbed.

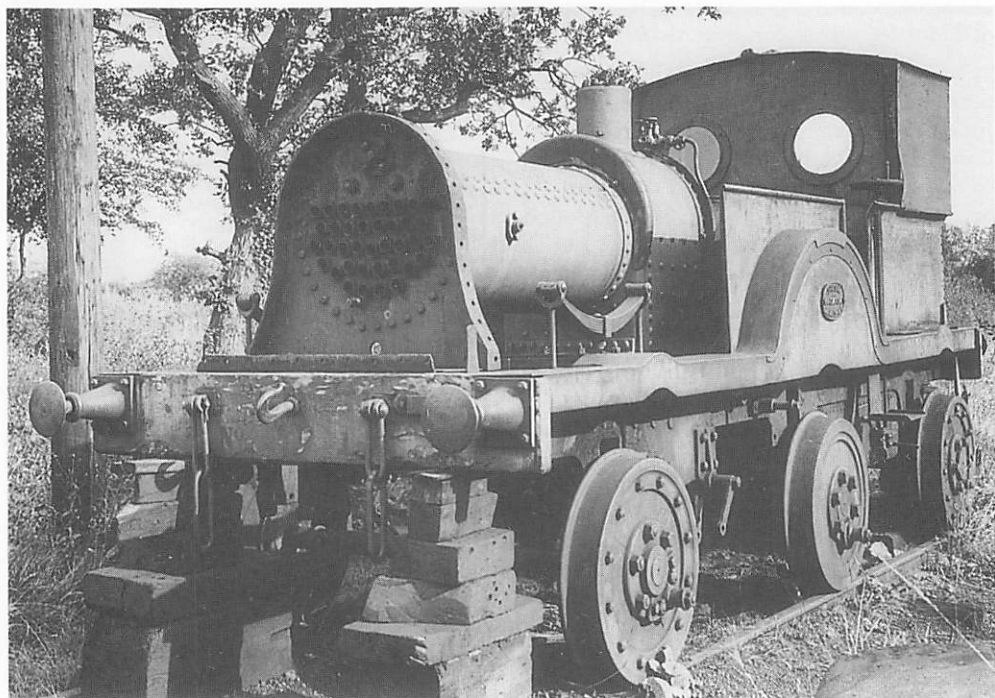
The idea of using a tramcar in this way was almost certainly borrowed from the narrow gauge Torrington & Marland Railway which

had adapted two such cars in 1909. Stephens travelled on this line in August 1909 in connection with his application for the North Devon & Cornwall Junction Light Railway Order in November of that year.

Gazelle and the tramcar continued to operate the Criggon Branch passenger service until the late 1920s. By October 1928 a service was only operated on Saturdays and by October 1932 this was only running as far as Melverley because of subsidence to the piers of Melverley viaduct. By now Gazelle and the tramcar were out of use and it is likely that services were provided by the line's Ford petrol railmotor set between trips on the 'main line'. By May 1932 Gazelle had been partially stripped down in Kinnerley yard but it was unclear to visitors whether it was ever to be put together again. In 1936 W H Austen decided, to reinstate it as an inspection engine. A complete overhaul then took place and in June 1937 it emerged from the Kinnerley repair shop in olive green paintwork complete with polished dome and nameplates. To accompany it the old Selsey

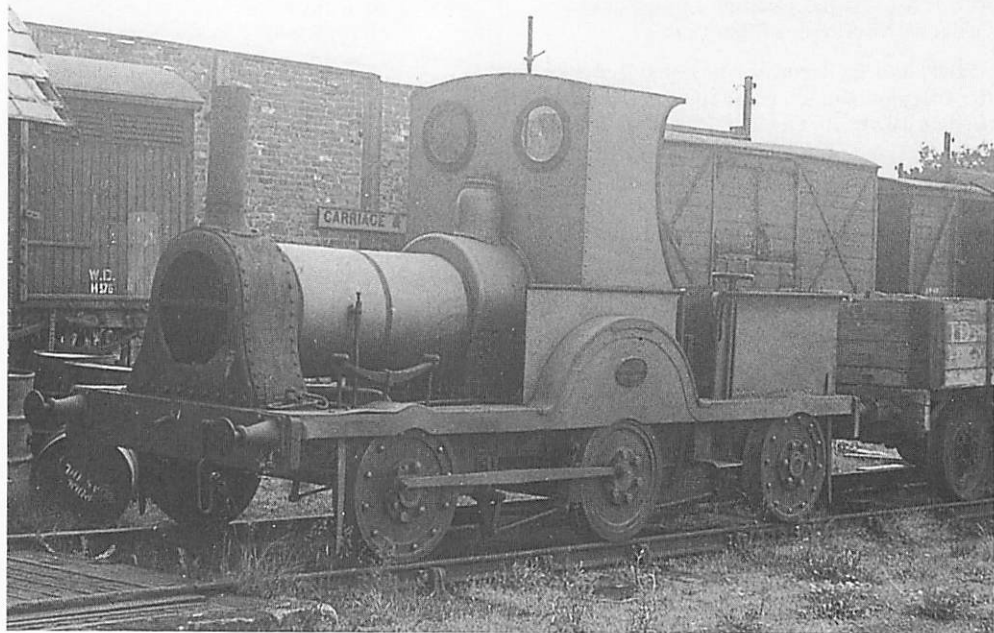
Wolseley Siddeley railmotor body was fitted to the underframe previously used by the tramcar to form a new inspection saloon. Gazelle thus survived to serve the armed forces when they took over the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire in 1941. Painted light green with black framing and red motion Gazelle was particularly useful for running early morning patrols along the line to confirm that points were correctly set and to detect possible acts of sabotage. This role was eventually taken over by one of the Army's Wickham petrol trolleys and Gazelle was taken out of service in 1945.

While Gazelle was stored at Kinnerley one of the Dean Goods locomotives ran into it and damaged the cab but otherwise the Army seemed to have taken care of what had become something of a mascot for their operations here. In May 1950 the remaining Shropshire & Montgomeryshire rolling stock was transferred to the Western Region of British Railways. Nearly everything was immediately condemned but Gazelle was saved from the cutter's torch and placed on



Dismantled at Kinnerley in October 1934, prior to the Austen re-build.

(Colonel Stephens Historical Archive)



*At Kinnerley, now under Army control, June 1947. Note that the rear cab has now been removed.
(Colonel Stephens Historical Archive)*

permanent loan to the War Department. In June 1950 Gazelle was despatched to the Longmoor Military Railway where a thorough cosmetic restoration was carried out before being placed on display by the parade ground. After closure of the Longmoor Military railway in 1970 Gazelle was displayed at the National Railway Museum in York before going on to the Museum of Army Transport at Beverley.

With the closure of the last-named earlier this year, Gazelle was able to snap up the last remaining square feet of display space in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum. Little trace remains of its passenger compartment and the elements have obviously taken their toll over the years but Gazelle is substantially intact and quite obviously a locomotive that has worked for its living despite its miniature size – it really has to be seen to be believed.

The author has drawn on the work of the late Eric Tonks in compiling this article and would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Tom Burnham.



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The Romney Marsh Canal

Peter Barber outlines one of the civil engineering challenges that faced the Permanent Way department gang last November, including a rather curious discovery.

The Kent and East Sussex Railway was engineered by the entrepreneurial Colonel Holman F Stephens. The Colonel's constructions are renowned for being minimalist and under engineered; this is part of their charm. Unfortunately this has left us, almost 100 years later, with a life expired railway where the majority of the original engineering features need a vast amount of reconstruction work, if the required traffic of today is to be carried. This is borne out in the maintenance costs incurred by the civil engineering and permanent way departments today. That this is a fraction of the true commercial cost merely highlights the point. Every year a different part of the railway is upgraded, each with a different set of problems to be overcome. The November 1996 Permanent Way working week set out to upgrade the section of line around Willow Curve and remove the long standing permanent speed restriction.

Most of the railway is built on Ashdown beds and drained alluvium. These are relatively stable. The section at Willow Curve is built in the Newmill flood plain on saturated alluvium. In addition the close proximity of the Benenden Fault means that isolated peat pockets are a possibility. When the fault accrued the water backed up and formed a lake, this in time slowly filled with silt this was eroded from the valley sides, until the level was made up to form a river channel again. During this process small areas were isolated to form ponds, these then attracted lush vegetation in and around the pond. The vegetation debris was deposited in the bottom of the pond forming peat, this process carried on until the pond dried up and became part of the flood plane again. At Willow Curve the ground is between 3 and 4 metres above mean sea level, requiring pumps to drain most of the area. The farm land was drained in the early 1970's, but, on change of ownership, the shallow land drains were



Cross section of track as cut away for a new cross drain at Willow Curve.

(John Liddell)

destroyed during cultivation and this rendered the land unusable for modern farming methods. The land use was changed to crayfish production and the water table has been allowed to rise to fill the beds, thus making gravitational drainage of the railway's borrow pit impossible.

For those unfamiliar with the site, it consists of a field to the east, or Tenterden side; about 1m lower than the trackbed. Inside the fence exists a shallow trench parallel to the line, sometimes known as a borrow pit. This was dug out during the original construction of the line to provide a basic trackbed – hence the term borrow pit. The trackbed comes next with another borrow pit the other side before the west side fence. Beyond this is a drainage channel which connects to the Newmill channel. Water is normally found lying in the east side cess since there is little drainage across the track to the stream, except for a single cross drain at a relatively high point in the trackbed. Washouts have occurred, at the drain, when the amount of water, on the east side, is too great and the east side cess floods across the track taking the ballast and trackbed with it. The track in March 1995, for example, was left completely unsupported for over five sleepers after one of these washouts (see *Tenterden Terrier Summer 1995*). The effort to repair these emergencies only diverts volunteer resources and funding away from providing permanent solutions here and elsewhere.

Since the 1900 opening of the line a lot of work has been carried out on the embankment to prevent settlement. Willow Curve got its name from the willow trees that were planted by Stephens to stabilise the embankment, the theory being that the trees remove the water. Unfortunately this only works in the summer, when the water levels are generally lower and not a great problem. In the winter, when the excess of water does occur, the trees do not absorb water. Their main assistance is the web of roots that form a living network and hold the clay particles together. Later Austen did some earth works to try and overcome the settlement. He increased the size of the embankment by tipping clay down the sides so increasing the embankment footprint. This had the effect of not allowing water to filter off the

embankment as clay is impermeable. During BR's days it was noted that this curve was in very poor condition and some stop gap measures were taken. These took the form of a spun concrete pipe cross drain and surface drains to empty the borrow pits, this is now redundant since the water level has been raised. In 1972, in early preservation days, Gordon Lamming did some improvements to the surface drainage and prior to reopening in 1974 the track level was raised by around 0.4m, to remove the dip. Lately due to the washouts and subsidence along this section the curve has started to resemble the side of a 50p coin with a big dip in the middle. A speed restriction has been in place for many years with no prospect of its removal before remedial work is carried out.

The obvious solution is to drain both borrow pits completely using a sump below the level of the stream. Pumps would therefore be needed. This is costly and has unacceptable running expenses. Partial solutions were therefore looked at. Firstly if the cross drain is lowered this reduces the build up of water in the Tenterden side borrow pit. This would remove some water and greatly reduce the likelihood of washouts. The second improvement was to reduce the ground pressure of the passage of trains by reducing the sleeper spacing. With standard spacing on the sleepers, as the axle passes over there is a leverage effect on the rail that transmits a downwards force through the sleeper. By reducing the sleeper spacing this leverage is reduced, therefore the energy through each individual sleeper is less. The sleeper spacing was reduced to around 55% of the original. Care has to be taken not to increase the static weight of permanent way materials (rail, sleepers and chairs) to such an extent that no advantage is gained. To overcome this wood sleepers, rather than the normal concrete sleepers, are used, which increases the long term maintenance liability.

Reduction of the sleeper spacing was started during the summer of 1995 on the section from Willows Crossing back towards Rolvenden Station. The work was back breaking, slow and intensive. Each sleeper crib had to be dug out to move the existing sleeper and then a new one inserted. In addition this was done while the line was



Close up of cut away section of embankment, showing (from top) stone ballast, permeable layer, ash ballast and impermeable clay. (John Liddell)

under traffic. This means only a single sleeper, or crib, at a time could be worked on. The gang completed the work through the heat of the summer.

For the November 1996 working week the objective was to remove the track from the crossing at Willow Curve, towards Wittersham, for around 150 yds to Lamming's slip. Then replace the concrete cross drain, which was set quite high in the embankment, with a plastic pipe and set this as deep in the embankment as water levels would allow. The sleeper spacing could be reduced as well at the same time. Since the line was closed for traffic the track could be removed and the bed levelled mechanically which considerably reduces the effort required.

The surprise occurred when the structure of the embankment was revealed on digging the trench for the new cross drain. The photograph, shows that the embankment would form a canal trench, if the ballast and ash (free draining materials) were removed. The main cause of the problem was revealed. The impervious clay will not allow the water to drain away, thus leaving a pool of water, in the ballast and ash, this would be over a metre deep. This problem was caused by a combination of Austen reinforcement work,

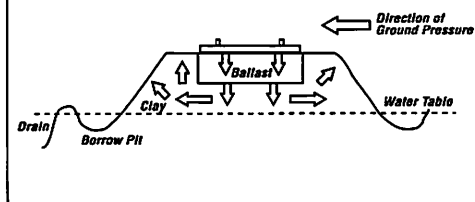
and the removal of spoil from Rolvenden works from the mid 1960's onwards being tipped here.

As mentioned earlier, the embankment was originally made from the soil dug from the borrow pits. This flood plain alluvial is made up of Wadhurst Clay eroded from the valley sides. Clays are porous but impermeable, this means that clay will not let water through but water will slowly filter through, this passage of water normally takes years. When the clay is saturated a film of water is held around each clay particle. This film of water acts as a lubricant breaking the cohesive bond that normally exists between dry clay particles. The water in the ballast/ash cannot drain away, which adds to the static weight bearing on the clay below and keeps the clay saturated. The clay thus becomes an unstable mass. For the clay to drain out sufficiently to regain this cohesive bond will take around 5 years now the head of water is removed. As can be seen from figure 1 the downward energy pushes the particles up the embankment sides and thereby increases the amount of water held and the overall problem.

To release this water, trenches were cut at approximately 20 metre intervals half way

across the formation and deep enough to be below the ballast trench. This released thousands of gallons of water from the formation, which in itself reduced the static weight on the embankment. A 150mm perforated plastic pipe wrapped in Teram (a permeable membrane) was put in the bottom of each trench and back filled with free draining material. This was not planned as part of the relay so it was lucky that the concrete, required for the cross drain, was delayed by a day giving time to assess the problem properly.

Figure 1



The cross drain was then put on a concrete base with both ends of the pipes encased in concrete to provide collars. The pipe used was a double sided plastic perforated this allowed the cross drain to be used for drainage as well as the original objective.

The track was then relayed from Lammings slip to the start of the alluvium using concrete sleepers at standard spacing and the rest of the length using wood at the narrow spacing. The track was then realigned and tamped using the 08 tamper. Putting down a layer of ballast will also have the effect of spreading the foot print of each sleeper, as the energy is dispersed in a 45° cone through the ballast. A final dressing of ballast is needed to get the line up to the correct level and this will be done after a period of traffic has bedded the track in.

The embankment will not stop moving immediately as it will take time for the clay to dry out and form a stable structure, as explained above. There will have to be monitoring of the settlement and possibly further small lifts of the line. When the clay becomes stable the embankment should have a wide enough footprint not to sink into the saturated alluvium (since the saturated alluvium sits under the top of the water table the possibility would exist for the whole dried

out embankment to start to slide into the saturated alluvium, starting the whole process off again on a grander and more expensive scale). Problems could still occur if there is a pocket of peat under the embankment. This will show up during the monitoring. If the above work corrects the problem then the railway will have saved around £100,000. If not then it has cost four lengths of drainage pipe and some second hand ballast.

This is just one of the many problems facing the permanent way and civil engineering departments while we upgrade the line. Next on the agenda are Pope's Cottage for drainage works (spring 1997), Orpins Curve for replacement of life expired sleepers, rail and fishplates (autumn 1997), Rolvenden Crossing for formation replacement, the line below Cranbrook Road for drainage works, etc. The list seems endless until you look at what has been achieved already. Then there is always Bodiam. The plan is still to create a low maintenance railway with safe and sound structures giving a transport route that will outlive us all (as explained in several previous articles in the *Tenterden Terrier*, Summer 1993, Summer 1990, Summer 1987).

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Death at Wittersham Road

In the Churchyard at All Saints, Beckley, tucked away in the south west corner, is a memorial to George Killick, aged 23, who was killed on the Kent & East Sussex Railway, on 29th August 1923.

I made a few enquiries to see whether the Killicks were still hereabouts, but drew a blank. Some time later I heard that a Northiam man's father told the story of a local constable friend who attended the scene and stated that the dead man was not employed by the Railway Company but was apparently trespassing that night and met his death crossing the line. He mentioned a scythe being caught up on the front of the locomotive, discovered when the driver stopped to re-fuel, and it was only then that he suspected that a possible accident had occurred further back along the line towards Wittersham. With nothing more than a tale told all those years ago curiosity got the better of me and I wanted to know more.

This led me on to a report in the Sussex Express of 4th September 1923 and, under the headlines "Stormy Night Fatality", details from the inquest were revealed. A smaller headline read "Workman Killed By Train at Wittersham Scythe Carried Seven Miles".

The inquest was held at Wittersham Road Railway Station on the 30th August 1923 on the body of George Killick. Amos Killick, a brother, a farm labourer, of Great Knelle Farm, identified the body and reported that his brother George had good sight but was "a bit deaf". Another brother, Jack Killick, same address as Amos, told the inquest that he and George had finished cropping thistles on Mr Bates' land, on the Kent side of the railway, and left at 8pm. Deceased first went to Rolvenden, and his brother met him on his return and they got on the railway line and started to walk towards Northiam. Jack was some 12 to 15 yards in front of the deceased on the right hand side of the metals. The witness said, "The train came along behind me and I did not hear it until it passed me. I looked back for my brother but could not see him. I went back and saw his body lying just outside the left hand rail". Jack went to Mr Stewart Bates for help.

It was a rough night, the rain was blowing in their faces and the wind was very strong. It was the first time they had been across the line and had only just got on to it when the train came along.

The driver of the train, Nelson Wood, of Field Cottage, New Town, Tenterden said that he drove the 8.13 train from Tenterden. It was dark, very windy, rough and rain fell heavily. He left Wittersham Road at 8.45 but nothing was seen between there and Northiam. He did not see anything on the line nor felt a bump or shock. It was not until he reached Robertsbridge that he went up to the front of the engine, to fill up with oil, when he noticed the scythe lying on the engine. It was then that the line back towards Tenterden, was searched.

PC Crosby received information at 10pm and went back along the line, by train, and arrived at the scene at 11pm and saw the deceased lying on the ground at the side of the metals about a mile from Wittersham Road, some 50 yards on the Northiam side of Hexden Bridge. The injuries were described. A verdict of "Death from Misadventure" was recorded by the Coroner, Major Eric Neale.

The story, as told, leaves several points unexplained which, to day, would no doubt have been enquired into more deeply. George did not



*Why should our tears in sorrow flow
When God recalls His own
And bids them leave this world of woe
For an immortal crown*

appear to have an address, although his brothers were shown as from Great Knelle Farm. Were they from other parts, temporary hands, or hoppers staying on the farm?

Descendants of the Killick family may wish to have the report of this tragedy, to know more about it and maybe would want to visit the grave. The headstone is in very good condition and reads, "In loving remembrance of George Killick who was killed on the Kent & East Sussex Railway on 29th August 1923, aged 23 years".

Having strimmed the brambles nearby, and on many occasions cut the grass around this unattended grave, I feel that I would like to know more about this unfortunate man who was killed more than 70 years ago and who, in a remote corner of a country churchyard, is recognised only by a headstone and a follow up story within the pages of a newspaper archive. Fortunately the stone is well preserved and the location and description now documented in a 'Friends of Beckley Parish Church Monumental Inscription Booklet', copies of which are with the Record Office at Lewes and the Hastings & Rother F H Society.

Dennis Ward



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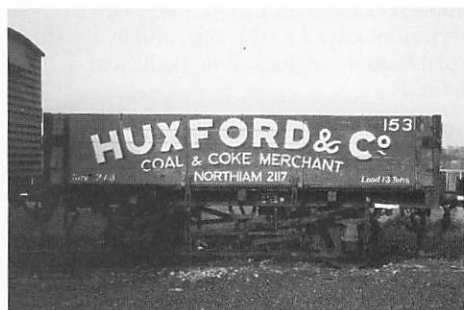
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Memories of a JCP Manager

by Mike James
Part One

The early history of the Job Creation Programme and its use by the KESR has been described in the Summer 1976 issue of the Tenterden Terrier. In brief, the JCP provided paid work for the unemployed on short-term schemes of a socially useful nature. Such a scheme was the extension of the KESR to Wittersham Road and the reconstruction of that station. It commenced in mid-1976, initially for 6 months, but it continued for much longer, as the scheme was renewed and other work was added. Its name was later changed to the Special Temporary Employment Programme (STEP).

My involvement with the KESR and its JCP Scheme started in September 1977. Having given up a lecturing post in my home town of Birmingham, I was 'house-sitting' in Hastings when an advertisement for the KESR caught my eye. As a civil engineer, I thought my voluntary services might be useful. My telephone call was answered by a Jo Dunstone who suggested that, as the JCP manager was leaving and no suitable replacement had been found, I might apply for the post. A call to Rick Edmondson, an appointment at Tenterden (which I had to find on the map!), a tour of the railway to explain the work to be done, and a call from Rick Edmondson confirming my appointment, followed in quick succession. Within a week of my initial enquiry, I walked into Tenterden Station to take up my new post. With virtually no knowledge of preserved railways, I had much to learn, and I had to learn it 'on the hoof' (and quickly).

By the time of my arrival, the track had been laid to Wittersham Road and a start made on the station. My brief was to produce a working station by the Spring of 1978. I paid an early visit to assess the work involved. As I stood at the edge of the site, my eyes took in a sea of mud, dotted with mounds of clay, with a rough, partly-built in-situ concrete wall alongside the track. Three PMV bodies, standing forlornly in the corner of the site, offered the only shelter. Nothing interrupted the rural calm of this desolate place on that damp September morning. The prospect of

producing a working station seemed unlikely, even before I had experienced a Kentish winter. I returned to Tenterden to find out what facilities were available. These seemed to consist of an assortment of antiquated machines, more suited to a museum than a building site, and some 20 employees of varying skills and backgrounds. Materials, as I was to discover later, were available in abundance – if one could find them. Tools were also available – if one could retain possession of them.

The employees were divided into a building gang and a smaller engineering gang, whose duty was to maintain the machines and perform other mechanical tasks. It soon became obvious that there were a few important people who would determine the success of the project. Dave Levett, the building gang foreman and ex-farmer, could provide a solution to almost any practical problem, while Dave Harris, his deputy, used his considerable physical presence to perform superhuman tasks and to keep the rest of the gang working. In the engineering gang, Les Dellow never failed to find the necessary parts to keep the machines running, John Blanchard made the rail-mounted crane perform right up to (and sometimes beyond) its capacity, while the later appearance of Paul Hatcher to fill the vacant foreman's post gave us a highly competent and dedicated mechanical engineer. Finally, there was Jo Dunstone, our secretary, who dealt so competently with the letters, reports and wages, and guided me through the strange paths of preserved railways. As other employees came and went, these key personnel stayed to the end, and Wittersham Road Station might well be dedicated to them.

Our first task was to complete the platform wall. Shuttering appeared from somewhere on the railway, concrete materials from somewhere else. I found that we had a concrete mixer, and that it worked, provided that one viewed the weighing mechanism with suspicion. The wall was finished, and the addition of concrete sleeper pots masked the

deficiencies beneath them.

The formation for the platform was much more difficult, as it involved moving the various mounds of clay into position behind the platform wall. Neither the Whitlock excavator nor the Weatherall loading shovel were machines suited to the task. Both were wheeled machines which did not take kindly to the clay, particularly as the weather got wetter. Each day, one or both had to be driven from and to Rolvenden, usually by Dave Harris who seemed to delight in the challenge of their braking and steering eccentricities. Breakdowns were frequent and a full day's work was a bonus. Eventually, as the weather became wetter and the bank became higher, we were forced into hiring a tracked loading shovel to finish the work.

The source of the platform copings remained unknown until I was informed that the railway had purchased a suitable number of them from BR. They were on the disused station at Heathfield, and all we had to do

was to transport them and lay them. I set off with the two Daves to look at what was involved. We found some 130 4' x 3' concrete slabs, each weighing about 600lb, situated on the most inaccessible platform. Dave Harris assured me that manual lifting was impossible but, back at Rolvenden, Dave Levett devised a lifting device from scaffold tubes, chains and wheels of which Heath-Robinson would have been proud. We hired the necessary crane and wagons and descended on Heathfield en-masse. The slabs were stacked in heaps, craned off the platform and we waited for the wagons. After many frantic 'phone calls I discovered that they had been sent elsewhere. Finally they appeared, and the slabs were duly transported to Wittersham Road. Laying them was another major physical problem, but shear legs and a block-and-tackle appeared as if by magic, and slowly they were placed in position without anyone sustaining serious injury.

I was continually requested by the board to



Wittersham Road site, 25th March 1978

(Brian Stephenson)

move the PMV bodies to the far end of the site, but the muddy state of the ground made this operation an uninviting prospect. Finally I succumbed to the pressure and, choosing a day when frost had hardened the ground, I hired a crane and a low-loader. One body was put on the low-loader which was driven carefully down the site. The crane lifted it off and and sank to its axles in the mud. The low-loader was also firmly stuck and I bitterly regretted my decision. As I dashed off for help in my car, I met a local farmer who offered the services of his agricultural tractor and winch. With a hawser attached to the low-loader, he activated the winch. The front wheels of the tractor rose in the air to an alarming height. I visualised further disasters, but he just grinned as the operation proved successful. I had to hire a tracked machine to extract the crane. The whole episode was costly and personally embarrassing. I vowed to be more careful.

The ground conditions on the site needed considerable improvement, particularly in the area which was to be used as a car park. This would require many, many tons of hardcore which would be expensive. Fortunately, I came to an agreement with a local skip contractor by which he dumped suitable waste material on our site, at no cost to us, an arrangement which was mutually beneficial. With a topping of minestone, and kerbing constructed with concrete sleeper pots, a very acceptable car park was produced. Although the platform wall had been completed, the wall to the ramps still had to be formed. I was advised to visit the disused station at Junction Road where I found that the wall to the platform and its ramps was formed of precast concrete sections in remarkably good condition. A day spent extracting suitable sections and transporting them to Wittersham Road was, for once, an operation which went without a hitch. The ramps were constructed and the spare sections used to lay a path to the station building which was being erected by the volunteers.

As our deadline (albeit provisional) approached, we put the finishing touches to our work. We erected the level-crossing gates and an entrance gate to the station, and the PMV bodies were finally moved away from public gaze. Lengths of wrought iron fencing

were erected between the platform and the station building and, after hours of wire-brushing, were painted. The platform was trimmed to shape and surfaced with minestone. The volunteers erected a fence on the platform, and the track was realigned and repacked.

It was time for the inspection. We had done the work to the best of our abilities, but would it pass the eagle eye of Major Rose? Any fears of mine proved unjustified. As he inspected the track and the station in the company of Steve Bennett and myself, his minor criticisms were more than balanced by constructive suggestions and some praise.

The opening ceremony, performed by The Rt. Hon. Edward Heath MBE, MP on 16 June 1978, has been well documented. Suffice it to say that we all exchanged our mud-stained working gear for best clothes and joined the volunteers in a memorable occasion on a perfect day. The memories of rain and snow, disasters and breakdowns, faded as we stood on the reborn Wittersham Road Station, now suitably fitted out with seats, signs, milk churns and lamp posts.

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AMEX, MASTERCARD and VISA

A Walk to Wittersham

by Keith Barron,
with photographs by the author.

One sunny, summery day in early April, I decided to walk from Northiam Station to Wittersham Road with my family. From there we would catch the train to Tenterden and back again to Northiam. One appeal of the K&ESR has always been its rural seclusion, and this project seemed a perfect way of experiencing the landscape around the line at a slow pace, of watching the trains make their progress across the remote Rother Levels and of experiencing the charm of arriving at the tranquil and much under-used Wittersham Road Station.

The plan worked out perfectly. After eating outdoors at The Rother Valley Inn and having watched 1638 come and go with its four-carriage load, we set off to find the pathway which skirts the River Rother to where the railway crosses the river, and which then crosses fields to Maytham Wharf on the minor road from Wittersham to Rolvenden. For much of the walk the railway line is visible, and at about the halfway point the line itself has to be crossed.

From Northiam to the river you have to walk northwards along the A28, but the bridleway on its north bank is clearly signposted and is situated opposite where the boat-trips to Bodiam begin. On your left are the attractive houses and cottages of the small hamlet of Newenden, while on your right across the river is a stand of conifers. The river on your right is peacefully slow-moving and in summer must be criss-crossed by swallows, swifts and martins. Already numerous butterflies were out; I saw at least one reed bunting and as the sound of the A28 receded, skylarks became clearly audible.

As the river turns in a large arc towards the south-east, the railway comes more clearly into view and the bridge which spans the river. We had seen the two-coach diesel leave Northiam and now it crossed the river about a quarter of a mile in front of us. By the time we reached the rail crossing it had disappeared from sight, and all that remained was the long vista down the track towards Wittersham Road which is formed by a wonderful avenue of trees.



The view of 1638 and train from the fields by Maytham, on its journey to Northiam.

(Author)



New Barn; note the distinctive wind pump.

(Author)

From here the path diverges from the river, but follows the left hand side of much shallower dykes fringed by hawthorns. It was here that we saw a stoat. From here the next landmark is the remote New Barn, a seventeenth century house with its distinctive wind pump; while in the far distance, the tower of Wittersham Church provides the only sign of habitation on the heavily wooded Isle of Oxney. Here the fields are wide and open as on the Romney Marshes and to your left, the railway line is clearly delineated by its avenue of trees as it climbs towards the oast houses at Maytham, while beyond it on your left the land opens and rises towards Great Maytham Hall and Rolvenden with its windmill clearly visible on the skyline. This is sheep farming land, closely cropped grassland and easy walking. From here, the distant view of 1638 returning to Northiam had all the diminutiveness of a children's model railway.

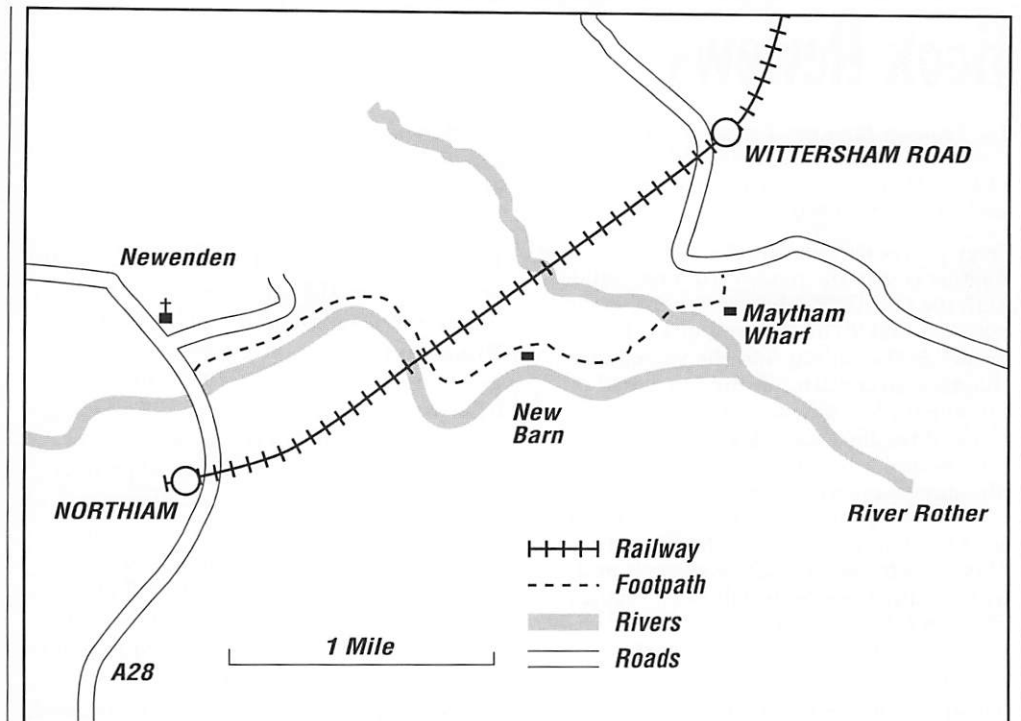
The time was about 2.50 and we knew that we had to be at Wittersham Road by 3.30 if we were to catch 1638's train to Tenterden. However we made it with about 10 minutes to spare. After passing New Barn, the path is not entirely clear, but whichever side of the large dyke running from here to Maytham Wharf you take does not matter.

We should have been on the northern side, but took the levee running across the field on its southern side. Either way, you arrive at this large sheep farm which is just off the Wittersham Road, and which at this time of year is crowded with expectant ewes. You pass to the left of barns and farm buildings to meet an unmade track which joins the road. From here it is a short road walk to Wittersham Road Station.

In all it took us an hour and three quarters, but we had started at a leisurely pace. Two hours would be very comfortable and one and a half manageable. If you take the walk in reverse as the last part of a combined walk and rail journey, then time is no object.

We were the only ones waiting on the platform when 1638 steamed in and knowing that we were dependent on catching the train gave our wait a reality it lacks when you only travel for the ride.

For those who love the undramatic landscape of this part of the Kent-Sussex border; for those who love quiet walks in the countryside; and especially for those who like to view the trains as well as travel in them, a walk to Wittersham is a must.



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Book Reviews

The Festiniog Railway: A view from the past by Peter Johnson, published by Ian Allan, price £14.99. Hard covers, 112 pages of photographs and text. ISBN 0711025126.

Peter Johnson's latest book on the Festiniog Railway covers the period from the 1860's until the late 1940's, before the preservation era. The first 20 or so pages give a brief history of the railway and the succeeding chapters cover a trip up the line based on captioned photographs, a more detailed study of the locomotives, carriages and wagons and a section on the various photographers who, over the years, have contributed pictures, stretching as far back as 1871. There is a preponderance of photographs on locomotive subjects and whilst many have been published before, others have apparently not. There are few references or pictures relating to the Stephens era of the mid to late 1920's and hardly any where members of railway staff are identified in the captions – an omission which has yet to be rectified in historical books generally on the Festiniog Railway. However, there is an obvious on-going demand for books on this most famous of narrow-gauge railways and this book is written clearly and concisely for today's audiences.

The heyday of the Welsh narrow gauge by Peter Johnson, published by Ian Allan, price £12.99. Hard covers, 80 pages of coloured photographs in landscape format. ISBN 0711025118.

This album of colour photographs of Welsh narrow-gauge railways covers mainly the early preservation period of the 1950's and 1960's but also some of the industrial systems which were still operational at that time. Many of the pictures themselves are of interest, particularly as colour photography was not as widespread then as it is today. Comparison with modern pictures show how much emulsions have improved over the last 30 years. The book suffers from the lack of a contents page (an inexcusable omission) and the fact that many of the pictures are not dated. One for the coffee table, or maybe not.

British Railways pre-grouping atlas and gazetteer, published by Ian Allan, price £14.99. Hard covers, 84 pages of coloured maps and gazetteer. ISBN 0711003203.

First published in 1958 and now in seventh re-print of the 1967 (fifth) edition, this atlas is an essential guide to the railways of Britain as they existed prior to the grouping on 1st January 1923. All inaccuracies have been ironed out years ago and the reproduction is a masterpiece of clarity. Each of the individual companies is clearly delineated and the gazetteer indicates the location of stations, major tunnels, water troughs, summits and viaducts. The laminated covers will give years of wear even if, as may well be with a book of this nature, it is submitted to miles of travel and the roughest of handling. A classic, which should be in every enthusiast's bookcase.

abc Signalboxes by Michael A. Vanns published by Ian Allan price £7.99. Card covers, 128 pages of photographs, tables and text. ISBN 0711025185.

This fascinating little book will probably become an essential work of reference for those interested in the 1000 or so signal boxes still left in the national network and the 10,000 or so that existed 50 years ago. The book assesses the architectural styles adopted by each railway company, their internal structure and the advances in their working over the last 100 years. There is a detailed list of all the surviving signal boxes today, giving the date, design, number of levers and originating company. The abc format (18cm by 12cm) is small and makes the book difficult to handle. Arguably, a painstaking and valuable work of this nature, would have justified a larger page size.

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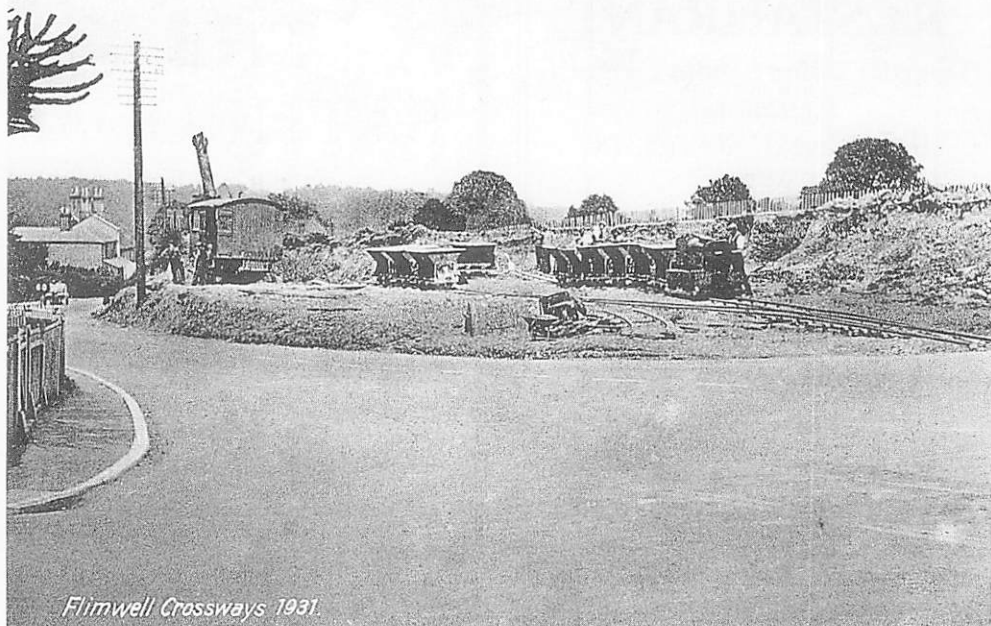
Rails at Flimwell Crossways

Now that the Kent & East Sussex Railway can be reached only by road, Flimwell crossroads, where the A268 to Northiam and Rye leaves the A21 London to Hastings road will be a familiar sight to many of our visitors. But I had never associated it with railways, and so I was very surprised to come across the two postcards reproduced here in a collection of local views. They date from 1931, the heyday of the arterial road, when civil engineering projects progressed at a more leisurely pace, and the railway enthusiast could find something of interest quite literally on any street corner!

Research in the East Sussex Record Office at Lewes and in the newspapers and trade magazines of the period has added a little to the brief captions of the cards, although many details remain obscure.

Concern over the level of unemployment had been an important issue in the 1929 general election, and Ramsay MacDonald's newly elected government started a programme of public works in the hope of alleviating it. As part of this programme, a grant from the Road Fund was made to the East Sussex County

Council in March 1931 towards the widening and reconstruction of the A21 from Coopers Corner to Switsden and between Mount Pumps and Flimwell, at a total cost of £33,000. The County Council's surviving minutes are silent as to who carried out the work, whether a contractor or the Council's direct labour, but the photographs clearly show work in progress to regrade the crossroads at Flimwell later that year. On the left is a mechanical excavator with its crew, while on the right the first postcard shows a gang of workmen shovelling spoil into half a dozen tipper trucks on a temporary railway, probably of 2 foot gauge. In the second postcard, apparently taken a few minutes later and from a slightly different angle, loading is completed and a small petrol locomotive is about to haul the wagons to the site where they are to be tipped as fill, while an AA patrolman in a smart white cap and motorcycling breeches and gloves holds up the traffic – not that any is visible. (Or is he a later addition to the photograph to 'improve' the scene? There seems something not quite right about the perspective.)





Flimwell Crossways 1931.

The petrol loco cannot be made out clearly enough to be identified – at least not by a non-expert like myself. Hundreds of these little machines were sold by companies such as Motor Rail ('Simplex'), F.C. Hibberd & Co., Ruston & Hornsby and Robert Hudson, and the situation was further complicated by dealers who sold the products of British or Continental manufacturers under their own names. Perhaps one of our readers is able to identify the locomotive or to cast light on its eventual fate.

Although the works at Flimwell were envisaged as part of a scheme to improve the whole of the southern part of the A21 for modern motor traffic, it was never completed. A financial crisis led in August 1931 to the formation of a National Government, committed to reducing public expenditure. This included a very substantial cut in the Road Fund, so that although the County Council decided in October 1931 to "provide for the completion during this year and next of the carriageway works in progress between Cooper's Corner, Hurst Green, and the Kent boundary at Flimwell", many other parts of the A21 remain practically untouched to this day, as motorists will be only too well aware.

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