

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 74

Winter 1997



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

The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

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

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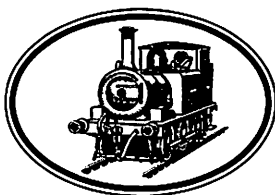


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Number 74

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Contents

- 3 Editorial
- 4 – 16 Lineside News
- 18 – 19 How We Did in 1996
- 21 Book Reviews
- 22 – 23 Cutting Through the Jungle
- 24 – 28 Memories of a JCP Manager
– Part Two
- 30 – 31 Hecate's Double
- 32 – 33 Letters to the Editor
- 34 – 36 Carriage Dilemma
- 37 – 39 Can You Lend a Hand?
- 41 – 44 An Experience
Not to be Forgotten

FRONT COVER

JINTY STORMS THE BANK: 47279 has rounded Orpin's Curve and attacks Tenterden Bank with the 11.20am from Northiam 16/8/97.
(Alan P Barnes)

FRONTISPIECE

FRAMED BY THE BUTTERFLY BUSH: Double headed by DS238 and Bellerophon the vintage train is ready to depart from Willersham Road, 26/7/97, with the Buddleja in full bloom.
(Mike Esau)

Editorial

Almost Ten out of Ten

The remarkable improvement in the Company's finances is both welcome and timely. With the very real prospect of extending the line to Bodiam we have needed to show that we are both able and viable to tackle a project of this magnitude. Our trading activities – notably catering and the gift shop – go from strength to strength, but we need to tackle the problem of the low margins on what is our *raison d'être* – actually running trains. Average passenger loadings are way below the levels we achieved in our early years, indeed some of the off-peak trains hardly have any passengers at all. Bodiam will eventually provide the impetus for growth, but in the meantime we must take a hard look at the timetable and see if we can consolidate around when passengers really want to travel. Empty trains are evocative of the Railway's most nostalgic era in the 1930s, but bankruptcy followed and British Railways failed to find the solution either.

Lineside News

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

FROM THE CHAIRMAN – ROBIN DYCE

It has been a long time since the Railway had to cancel service trains. Unfortunately this happened last September when we could not provide sufficient footplate crews to provide our advertised steam service. In some cases the Class 108 DMMU had to be substituted for the advertised steam service.

I'm not knocking diesel services overall, as I am a supporter of the class 108. This vehicle, with its large windows and forward views, offers unrestrained views across the area of outstanding natural beauty with which our line is blessed. The vehicle also provides our visitors with perhaps their first introduction of how a train is driven supplying tantalising views across the drivers shoulder to the controls and signals ahead.

In 1997 visitors came to our Railway expecting to be carried in a steam train when one is advertised and diesel when that is advertised.

What they do not want is to be faced with an alternative service or none at all. Market Research has shown that well over half our visitors are on repeat visits. Many first time visitors arrive because of personal recommendation which is the best possible recommendation we could have. If visitors go away disappointed then the effect will not be noticed this year but it will certainly have an effect in later years. We cannot afford to ignore this.

Many times this year pleas have been made for more members to come forward to offer their services as volunteers. Without volunteers the Railway cannot exist. The case I mention above is one centred on the most 'glamorous' job on the Railway, that of footplate crew, which in years past was every child's dream. Clearly things have changed.

Every department could do with more volunteers. A warm and friendly welcome awaits



Steam Cavalcade on 27/7/97 at Tenterden Town Station

(Mike Esau)



73126 'Kent & East Sussex Railway' prepares to leave Stewarts Lane on its final journey to Old Oak Common to be scrapped, 4/8/97 (Mike Budd)

you and with proper training plans in place you need not be concerned that you will be out of your depth. All skills are needed. Many of you have skills you use during the week or perhaps before you retired and you wish to have a break from these when you volunteer for your hobby. I can quite understand this but use of many of these skills is essential to the future of the Railway so can I ask you to make an exception in 1998.

If you care for the Kent and East Sussex Railway, one of the premier lines in the country, then please make a resolution for 1998 to volunteer yourself.

COMMERCIAL Visitors

Passenger figures to the end of August totalled 52,584, down by around 5% from 54,872 in 1996. The biggest decrease was a 13% drop in August to 15,166 compared with 17,400 last year. This is somewhat disappointing but is nevertheless still around 11% better than August 1995 when 13,700 passengers were carried.

Despite the drop in numbers, fares income is on target to meet the budgeted income for the year.

The decline in visitors seems to be in common with other attractions in the area, indeed the railway appears to have fared better than many. Many attractions in Kent are reporting a slump of around 10% in visitor numbers while several in East Sussex have suffered falls of 15-20%.

The strength of sterling certainly contributed to the decline, dramatically reducing the number of continental visitors and encouraging many Brits to pop across the Channel for a day trip or short break.

Visiting Engines

Bellerophon left the line on 26th August after its three-month visit. Initially the locomotive required more than its fair share of attention from the locomotive department, but once these problems were resolved the engine generally performed very well.

The engine certainly proved a worthwhile attraction; the number of phone calls asking

when it was running outnumbered those about the rest of the fleet by about 10 to 1. The engine attracted many favourable comments from passengers and was heavily photographed whenever it was running. Even during the Light Railway Gala and Steam Up when there were seven locos in steam, Bellerophon was always the centre of attention.

The second of the visitors, Jinty 47279, also spent a considerable period in the locomotive shed as it failed soon after its arrival from Yorkshire. After repairs to the engine's slide valves 47279 saw much action through the Summer.

Staff Changes

It has been something of a case of 'All change' for the management of the 'uniformed' commercial staff (Station Masters, Ticket Inspectors, Booking Clerks etc.). Ray Collins has decided to reduce his duties and Brad Bradley has also indicated that he wishes to retire as Chief Ticket Inspector at the end of this season. Ray's role of roster clerk for these grades has been taken on by Tony Griggs while Roy Ellis will assume the mantle of Chief Station Master at the end of the season – Ray will continue as Chief Booking Clerk with assistance from Reg Pritchard. Sheila & Douglas Edwards have agreed to take on the role of Chief Ticket Inspectors from Brad.

These changes have spread the workload considerably which should help with the recruitment and training of new volunteers. Where possible, volunteers are being encouraged to train in two or more of the uniformed grades as this eases rostering tremendously. Of the new team, Douglas, Sheila and Tony are Station Masters and Ticket Inspectors while Roy is a Station Master and a Booking Clerk. Ray Collins is qualified in all three roles.

Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

The changed layout of the shop and revised range of stock have certainly paid dividends with the shop performing slightly ahead of budget, despite the drop in passengers.

With Christmas fast approaching, a new greetings card has been produced featuring pannier tank 1638 in the snow and the stock of sweatshirts has also been replenished as these have proved very popular presents in previous years.

Catering

The refurbished Restaurant Car, complete with bar, re-entered service in late July – the interior of the saloon looks very smart indeed. The extra space in the kitchen has made life much easier for chefs and those washing up on Wealden Belle services.

Demand for charter trains has continued to be very high through the Summer and most scheduled services have also run to capacity. With station catering continuing to grow and the demand for group catering on service trains also very high, the catering team was over-stretched for much of the Summer. In order to remedy the situation and safeguard this crucial aspect of the business, Kate Debling joined the railway's staff in September as Catering, Commercial and Marketing Assistant. Kate, 21, lives in Tenterden and earlier this Summer graduated from Bath College of Higher Education with a BSc (Hons) in Human Ecology. Her main responsibilities are the day-to-day running of the Wealden Belle services including the staff rostering.

The Wealden Belle was chartered on Saturday 13th September for two 60th birthday celebrations. The first party boarded the train at 1.00pm and travelled to Northiam, back to Wittersham and then to Northiam again before returning to Tenterden. The unusual working was to provide sufficient time for waiting staff to serve the four-course luncheon with wine, without the Wealden Belle train delaying the day's published service.

Once the train arrived back at Tenterden Town Station at around 3.20pm, the lunch time staff were joined by the evening crew and set about cleaning and relaying the train in time for the second of the day's trains. Diners for the evening charter started arriving at around 6.45pm and were welcomed with champagne, the guest-of-honour arrived at 7.15pm along with his wife who had been planning the special party for over a year. As friends and relations had travelled from as far afield as Bedford, Aberdeen, Houston and North Carolina for the occasion, the reunions on the platform were reminiscent of scenes from 'This Is Your Life'.

Special Events

The Summer's special events have, in the main, been well attended. The Historic Transport Weekend on 21st and 22nd June was the first weekend in which Bellerophon was in service



*Ben Swan, centre, John Waddington, right, our new Rolvenden apprentices with Lawrence Donaldson,
Locomotive Manager* *(Robert Berry)*



Tony Slingsby's Foden steam lorry in Tenterden yard for the Steam Up, 27/7/97 (Graham Hukins)

and featured a small collection of Mini Cooper Cars at Tenterden on Saturday and a bus gathering at Northiam on Sunday.

Saturday also saw former Ashford MP Sir Keith Speed visit the railway to officially re-dedicate locomotive No. 65 following its overhaul. The engine then double-headed a train to Northiam and back with classmate DS238 'Wainwright' – the first time in 30 years the two USA class locomotives have been in action together. Sadly torrential rain on the Sunday deterred many would-be visitors to the Bus Gathering, however those that did brave the elements were treated to a varied display of two-dozen omnibuses and charabancs at Northiam.

Road-faring steam vehicles assembled at Tenterden on 26th and 27th July provided extra atmosphere for the Light Railway Gala and Steam Up. On the tracks, seven locomotives were in steam and each day started with a cavalcade at Tenterden Town Station.

Bellerophon stole the show and the visiting Jinty 47279 was also in action along with USAs 65 and DS238, Austerity No. 23, Pannier tank 1638 and P Class 1556. Locomotives 65 and 1556, both in SR black livery, double-headed throughout the weekend; the P having been granted an extension to its boiler certificate.

Clowns, Punch 'N' Judy shows, troublesome

trucks, Mrs Kyndley, Devious Diesel, really useful steam engines, the Fat Controller and the tremendous efforts of many staff and volunteers all played their part in making the Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine Fun Days on 20th and 21st September a great success. The weekend was the last time 47279 was used before returning to Yorkshire and the engine starred as 'Jack' the Jinty – a tough northern engine. In all, over 3,500 passengers travelled during the two day event – up 25% on the Friends of Thomas event staged in September 1996.

Filming

The line has been used for a number of short filming jobs in recent months. On 27th June Bellerophon and the Victorian set were used for exterior shots for a forthcoming film entitled 'A Woman in White'.

Sequences for the Meridian gameshow 'Relative Knowledge' were filmed at Tenterden Town Station on Tuesday 12th August while on Wednesday 17th September Screenhouse Productions were on site to film a short piece for a forthcoming BBC2 series about inventors and inventions. The inventor covered was Arthur Ashwell – the man who dreamt up the 'Engaged' signs and bolts for toilet doors!

LOCOMOTIVE

The usual summer service peak has required a

concerted effort from everyone to see the service run. The short lull ahead merely presages the coming Santa Special season. Work has also continued on long term restoration projects.

People

As mentioned in the last edition, apprentice recruitment has been completed. We have managed to recruit two apprentices for the works, Ben Swan and John Waddington. They have been enrolled in a day release course funded by the Government, through Kent Tec at the South Kent College in Ashford. They will learn of the skills needed at Rolvenden both from the full-time staff and also the volunteer workers.

Steam Locomotives

No 3 ('Bodiam'): The frames were sent away in June to Ian Riley Engineering, in Lancashire, who have prepared a draft report on the mechanical condition of the locomotive as part of a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant application. Work on the boiler, at Israel Newton, continues apace.

No 8 ('Knowle'): The boiler and tanks are now in place and painting of areas hidden has been

done beforehand. A great deal of fitting remains. The cab is in place but the fixtures and fittings around it remain outstanding. Much further painting is needed. The loco, however, is beginning to look as it should. The final colour will be black.

No 10 ('Sutton'): This remains on static display at Tenterden. Progress continues to be made, as a volunteer led project.

No 11 ('P class'): Though withdrawn in June, it returned to service in July for a temporary 6 months after remedial work on the boiler. There will be no further extension.

No 14 ('Charwelton'): Though serviceable, this engine was the only one not steamed on the Gala weekend due to lack of crews.

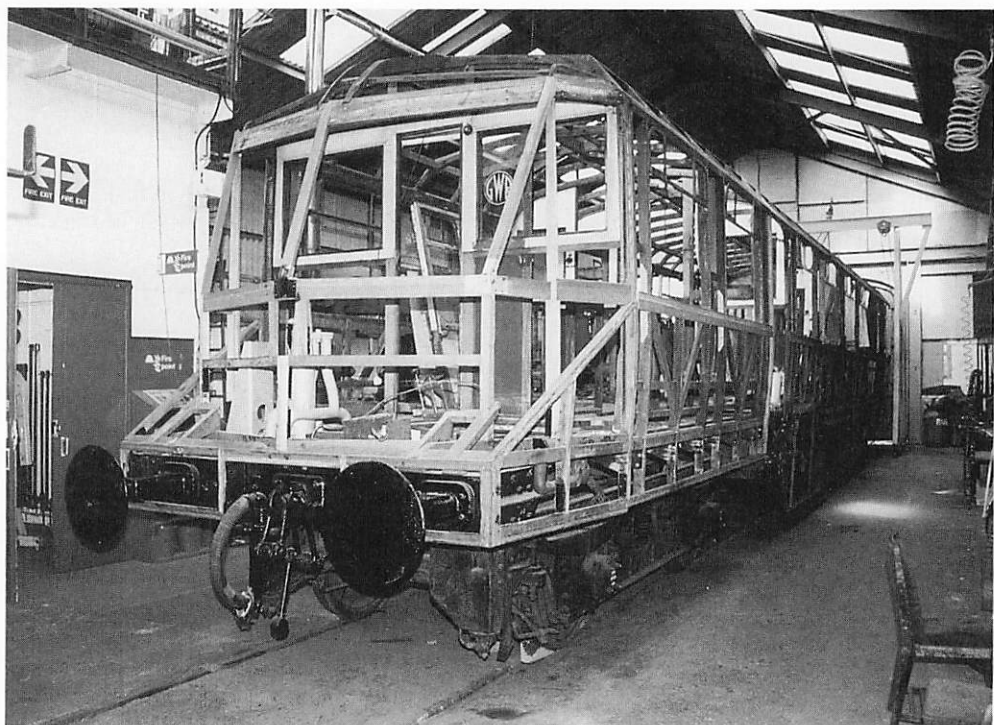
No 19 ('Norwegian'): Following a successful hydraulic test at Chatham Steam's premises means that the boiler should return by the end of September. The hope is to have it ready for the Santa Special season. This will require a concerted effort and other projects will have to take second place.

No 21 ('Wainwright'): In service



Charwelton and the Victorian train approach Cranbrook Road, 16/3/97

(Tom White)



GWR Railcar in C&W shed, 14/8/97

(John Liddell)

No 22 ('Maunsell'): Some 'final' adjustments have been made and the locomotive finally entered unrestricted service in September. A dedication ceremony was held in July where Sir Keith Speed, the former MP for Ashford, performed the honours. The two USA engines then double headed the next train to Northiam. A plaque from the Eastbourne Historic Vehicle Club is expected to follow the cash award given earlier.

No 23 ('Holman F Stephens'): In service. Work is planned for the winter period.

No 24 ('Rolvenden'): Repairs to the Regulator slide valve and Jay pipe have been completed and the locomotive was back into traffic, in late September.

No 25 ('Northiam'): All the foundation ring rivets and crown stays have been fitted and attention is now focused on the bottom 4 rows of stays. New tubes are to follow plus a new bunker. A shortage of shed space could result in a possible delay.

Loco 1638: In service though due to be

withdrawn this Autumn for its 10 year overhaul.

Jinty: This returned to the Keighley and Worth Valley railway after a popular summer with crews. Along with Bellerophon, it has generated a number of good photographs in the railway press and has provoked comment and interest from many customers. An early voracious appetite for coal and water led to examination of the slide valves. One had split and the other was badly worn. This required much work to put right, questioning the viability of loan engines as a panacea for locomotive shortages.

Bellerophon: This locomotive, owned by the Vintage Carriages Trust and not by the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway as mentioned in the last edition of the Tenterden Terrier, proved popular with crews who liked the fully air conditioned cab. As befits an engine of 1874, various bits dropped off and were reattached or replaced. Definitely an elegant old lady.

Diesel Locomotives

Drewry 03: In service as Tenterden Station pilot. Work has been carried out to the Bellis gland and more may be required.

08 Shunter: In service as Rolvenden shunter. An 'A' exam has been carried out.

Class 14, No 48: The summer madness has seen a hiccough in work on this engine. Work recommenced in September. Much remains to be done before a test run can be contemplated to establish the extent of any possible problems.

Class 14, No 49: The turbo charger failure, reported in the last issue was unfortunately replaced with a non-functional unit. By mid-July this had been changed and the class 14 has been operational since. Painting remains to be completed.

Ruston: This continues as the Permanent Way shunter at Wittersham. An 'A' exam has been carried out.

Crompton 33052: Apart from an unreported day out to shunt at Northiam this locomotive has seen little service and remains a stand by diesel, class 14 excepted.

Cranes

10 Ton Grafton: Stored out of service

10 Ton Taylor Hubbard: The bronze helical worm gear wheel has been removed and sent away for repair. The crane is out of service until this returns and is fitted.

36 Ton Ransom Rapier: The crane passed its annual steam test and a start has been made on painting the jib.

Yard

A revised planning application has been submitted for the development of the field next to Rolvenden. Bob Forsyth is now directly responsible for this. The forge has been completed with the electrical work and flue being completed. The tool store roof has been repaired. Not only was the roof not weather tight it was also a safety hazard given the rotten nature of many of the timbers.

Want's list

Rags and old coats are vital
Lockable filing cabinets and cupboards
Scrapers
Drills

Persons interested in building or painting work
Heavy duty tarpaulin
Heavy duty washing machine
Polyurethane foam machine (as used for packaging)
Bench Vice 4" or 6"

Old type asbestos graphited packing

CARRIAGE AND WAGON

The department's working week took place as planned between 26th July and 2nd August. Once again we were fortunate with both the fine weather and the good number of volunteer staff attending. The working week coincided with the now annual visit to the K&ESR by colleagues from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. We were very pleased when one of their C&W volunteers joined us for several days. We must also acknowledge the very professional way in which a Moors Line crew dealt with an in-service failure affecting the Victorian set. They avoided turning a drama into a crisis which in turn helped us to deal with the problem rapidly and without fuss.

Maunsell CK No. 56

After a couple of years marking time, this long running project was revived in no uncertain fashion as the centre piece of the working week. No. 56 has remained high priority ever since ensuring that progress has been rapid and the coach is expected to return to traffic in the near future.

PMV 1808

After running all season in shop grey, No 1808 is due back in the shed for final painting in green as well as for various minor jobs to be attended to.

Mk1 RU No. Sc1955 (K&ESR No 69)

The overhaul was completed in late July and the vehicle tested in a 'Q' path between service trains during the working week. Motive power was Crompton No. 33052. All proved satisfactory and the RU returned to traffic several days later. Complaints have since been received that the brilliance of the 'Wealden Belle' illumination is such that it attracts every moth on the Rother Levels!

Pullmans

Pullman Car 'Barbara' has now been withdrawn from traffic. Full overhaul awaits adequate funding and will probably be undertaken away from the Railway.

SE&CR six wheeled brake van, K&ESR No. 102

Work to this vehicle is now complete including through vacuum piping and very smart lettering to the sides. The brake van has now run in service, particularly on the mixed train, on numerous occasions.



Tenterden Junior P.Way gang, re-sleepering below Cranbrook Road, 20/9/97

(John Liddell)

Wagons etc.

The Shark ballast plough van is at the rear of the shed at the time of writing for overhaul and bodywork repairs. Younger members of the Department are taking an interest in this project as well as in repainting the Barry Railway 'Iron Mink', K&ESR No. 120. A private owner livery is to be applied, examples of these vehicles having been used by industry as well as by the railway companies.

GWR Railcar

July saw the railcar enter into Carriage and Wagon for a short-term period encompassing August and early September thereby making work sessions for the team easier. The team would like to thank C&W for their hospitality and assistance during this time. The restoration continues well with the Robertsbridge end driving cab framework virtually complete, including the final replacement windscreen pillar. This leaves only a couple of minor repairs to carry out along with manufacture of two of the three unique screen pillar reinforcing

brackets. The south side framework of the small saloon has also received attention, replacement waist rails and vestibule doorposts plus a new section of the floor rail are notable aspects. Meanwhile the mechanical aspects have been receiving attention. The second fuel tank and its cradle have been cleaned, repainted and fitted. The two air cylinders have also been refitted and connected while one of the radiators has been repaired, cleaned and repainted.

PERMANENT WAY

During the Spring we lifted out the headshunt siding at Northiam, giving access to the trackbed between Northiam and Bodiam. This had to be undertaken prior to the 10 ton steam crane coming out of service for its worm gear change. The 75lb panels, that made up the headshunt, were loaded onto the bo-rail wagon and transported back to Wittersham Road in readiness for their use in the pre-assembly area there. We then laid out the 95lb concrete sleepers around Orpin's curve in readiness for this November's working week (8th to 16th

November) that had previously been loaded onto wagons. We then returned to Wittersham to undertake further overhaul of 95lb concrete sleepers. This was carried out and the wagons reloaded. The main thrust of the summer work then moved onto the track removal between Northiam and Bodiam (see Bodiam 2000 section). Much effort has been spent, including mid-week, by many people to keep the track clearance moving.

The Tenterden Junior P-Way gang have again been doing sterling work at Tenterden and between Cranbrook Road crossing and Tenterden Home signal. They have removed life expired sleepers in addition to general maintenance work in Tenterden Yard. The department has recently purchased a Sherpa van and this has been kitted out for use by the gang although it was for a time used on the track clearance.

SIGNAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING

The fitting out of the new workshops and stores accommodation has occupied the majority of the department's time over the last few months. The power wiring has been completed and additional outdoor lighting installed on the walkways alongside the grounded bodies. Work has particularly concentrated on the fitting out of the first section of the CCT as a store room for signalling relays, a partition has been erected, the room fully repainted and linoleum laid. Finally the room has been fitted out with Dexion racking ready for occupation.

In the main workshop vehicle (the GUV) two small half-partitions have been erected to exclude dust and draughts from some areas. Peter Watson has continued to expend many hours on making replacement window frames and other repairs to the fixtures and fittings. The final two windows have been fitted and moving in and sorting of our electrical stores is ongoing. The office and electrical workshop has been partly completed, but is now able to move apace following replacement of one of the windows.

Telecomms work has been confined to the alterations in connection with the layout alterations in the admin. offices.

On the overhead line side Chris Lowry, Andre Freeman and Alan Sampson have run out around half of a new insulated pair of wires between Rolvenden and Wittersham Road. The

remaining section will be completed next year, this being to replace the wires used for the Electric Token Block system which were badly corroded and becoming prone to breakage. This is the first time that we have installed this type of insulated wire and early indications are that it will prove more reliable and last longer.

BODIAM 2000

The Millennium Commission has again delayed the decision making process. A decision on all the outstanding projects is scheduled for 12th November. Our last stage in the process has been to answer the Detailed Assessment Review which has resulted in many questions being asked, answers given and site visits where appropriate. We have been informed (11th October) that we have completed all the information required satisfactorily. We can only now await a decision. An application for £100,000 through the European Inter-Reg fund has finally been submitted. This resulted in Norman Brice having another trip to France to get all the various documents signed by the CFBS and the Département Somme on a Sunday. The CFBS have applied for Ffr2,000,000 to relay the St Valery to Cayeux section, restore various items of stock, fit brakes to all passenger vehicles and install automatic barriers on road crossings. We are supported by the Government Office South-East in our application so are hopeful of a favourable decision on 2nd December.

As the project has effectively been pushed back by nearly a year, it was decided to remove the redundant track materials between Northiam and Bodiam. Giving us the chance to quantify the job in hand properly. This has been taken on at the company's expense, but the Millennium Commission have stated that we can claim retrospectively if we are successful.

The track clearance started on Tuesday 28th August after a few hiccups. The method used is to send a 360° digger through to clear the brambles and saplings, the Permanent Way gang then undo and remove the rail fixings. These materials are then carried back to a compound at Northiam. The digger then returns to remove the sleepers and grade the track bed. The reason for using a digger to clear the vegetation is that in the six years that the trackbed has been left the saplings have grown 100 mm butts and stand 12 m high, and the brambles are about 3cm thick and 20 m long, thus making the trackbed totally impenetrable. Where the

wooden sleepers are supposed to be, although there is no wood between the rails, the wood under the chairs is still good, therefore every chair screw has to be screwed out. We are presently (24/9/97) just past Padgham crossing about 2.5 miles from Northiam. The undergrowth here is worse than ever. We have just had a tree stub that had grown up round a fish plate covering the whole joint, when this was finally uncovered the nuts had rusted away to the extent where no spanners would grip. I must thank all those who have worked on the project, whose input has been invaluable. A special thanks must go to Pete Hemsley who has given a lot of days even though the aches and pains have got to him.

Though there is now an access route along the site this does not mean that there is any right of way. The whole site is classed as a construction site therefore, for safety reasons, it is all off limits. It is necessary to remind members that there is equally no access via farmers land. Considerable time has been spent repairing damage to fences and gates by people who should know better. Ensuring that the farmers are on our side is of immense benefit to the whole project.

NORTHIAM

1997 has been a hard year to keep the station manned and for the first time since opening we have had to ask Tenterden to supply Station Masters occasionally. This reflects the general shortage of volunteers. Indeed on some days the Friends of Northiam Station have not been able to cover the buffet duties. All is not lost since the buffet has been doing well with a single day's takings record now at over £400. Thanks Jean – you have survived.

The Friends have kept up their good work and since the formation have funded the installation of the security system and the PA system which has been further enhanced by the addition of a speaker at the Bodiam end of the platform. The yearly chore of providing floral decorations, both spring and summer versions, have been set out by our green fingered friends.

Both the inside of the station and the buffet area have been painted. One of the enamel signs has been repaired by John Liddell. The seats in the picnic area are succumbing to the weather and plans are afoot to replace these by next year.

Thomas is now behind us with the usual

attractions on the platform of the model railway, tin plate toys and steam models. The Santa specials are next on the horizon and the Station will run its lucky dip as usual in addition to providing part of the present wrapping service.

BUILDING

At Northiam the outside maintenance team have completed cosmetic reinstatement of the original Gents loo and manufactured new running-in boards, which will be erected in the Spring to avoid an extra winter's weathering. The team are also progressing the brickwork on the access ramp at Northiam, an exercise that was interrupted by bad weather during the May working week.

At Tenterden, the top running-in board has been replaced and some tidying and landscaping carried out in the same area, including restoration of a further platform seat. In addition to other repairs around the site new fire escape steps for the main office block have been manufactured and installed.

A new running-in board for Wittersham Road also awaits signwriting. When all the boards now under preparation are in place only that at Rolvenden will remain in non standard colours and this is to be repainted during the next year when other work is carried out in the station area. Wilf Watters has already transformed Rolvenden by repainting the canopy and office in standard K&ESR colours. Work continues at the far end of the platform with most benches complete and the viewing gallery underway. The fences have also been attended to and creosoted.

MUSEUM

Late in October, we were delighted to hear that the Museum has received 1997 National Railway Museum award for interpretation made under the National Railways Heritage Awards. The judges felt that the Museum exemplified the improvement to the interpretation of our railway heritage, provided an added dimension for visitors to the railway and provided a focus on the people behind the railway. Apart from the Museum's success as a device for explaining the fascinating story of the Colonel Stevens empire to railway visitors, the judges were impressed by the sheer sense of commitment by the entrants, which had led to the creation of the Museum and which was a joy to visit.

With just the October figures to add before the



*Driver R. Willies leans out from 1556 as it coasts down the bank below Cranbrook Road, 27/4/97
(Tom White)*

Museum closes for the season, there have been 6372 visitors so far this year. Of these 5710 were paying customers and 662 were complimentary (TRC members).

A 14 minute video, specially made for the Museum by Wilf Watters, with commentary by Philip Shaw, has been popular with visitors. The video repeats following a one minute interval and gives historical background to the railway including some rare archive footage.

They say lightning never strikes twice, but the Museum security alarm was again disabled following a severe thunder storm in the summer and yet another control panel had to be fitted.

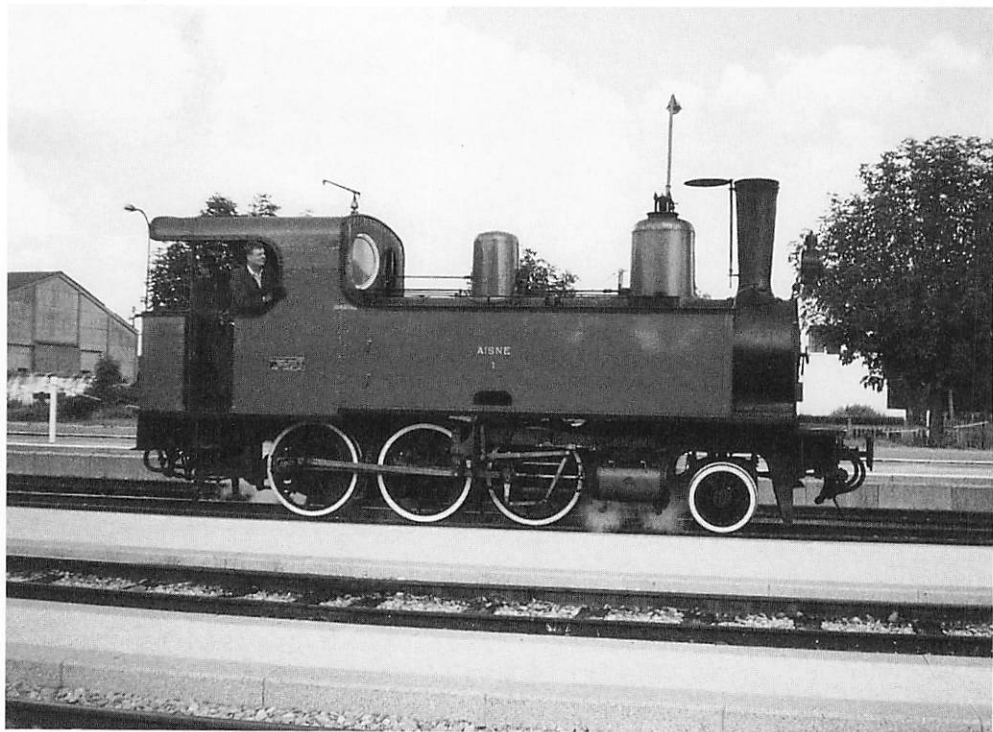
During this season three new attendants have been recruited, one of whom remembers travelling on the Rye and Camber Tram, which closed in 1939! Anyone interested in joining the Museum team for the 1998 season, which begins in March, should contact John Miller on 01580 765350. Apart from manning the front desk and answering visitors questions, there are domestic jobs, such as brass and glass cleaning, dusting and vacuuming, for those who prefer that sort of thing!

NEWS FROM THE CFBS – PHILIP PACEY

The tubes have been removed from Cail 2-6-0T to facilitate scrutiny of the boiler. Work is proceeding on the Haine St Pierre, with the intention of having it ready for action at the steam festival on 25th/26th April. The Michelin Company has replaced the motor in the Michelin railcar, which is still at the CFBS, and other work has been done; it was scheduled to be running again in August. An ex-Trinbleu (Belgium) diesel loco, which SABA have put up for sale, has been at St Valery Canal where prospective buyers could test it. Newly restored ex-Somme 10507 coach was to be available for service if necessary in July/August, though due to return to the workshop for finishing touches in September. Attention will then turn to ex-Somme coach no 10302. Guy Lenne's painstaking restoration of the ex-Somme brakevan (with crow's nest), nicknamed 'The Zebra', continues to progress with completion of the 'guérite' (literally, 'sentry box').

Following a first experiment this last December, Christmas trains will run again on 13th and 14th December this year.

Some 1,500 metres of track have been relaid on



CFBS: No. 1, Aisne, a 130T Corpet-Louvet at Noyelles

the Cayeaux line, and a similar length, from Cayeaux towards Hurt, will have been done during the winter. (Believe me, this isn't sooner than necessary!). A completely new level crossing has been laid across the D940, equipped for later installation of automatic barriers.

An additional shed to shelter stock is to be built at St Valéry canal in 1998. The Département is considering providing funds for restoration of the depot at Le Crotoy, this may go ahead in 1998. It is also possible that the Département will purchase the former buffet in the SNCF station buildings at Noyelles and let it to the CFBS, probably for use as a museum.

The CFBS currently employs nine workers (though not all of these are full-time all-year-round). It calculates that volunteers are contributing in total the equivalent of the work of 3 or 4 full time staff.

It may be of interest to note that the Association des Amis du Petit Anjou, at Angers, have acquired one of the locos from the 'graveyard' beside the CFBS line at St Valéry. The loco, an incomplete wreck, is intended only for static

display in a future museum. Originally thought to be ex-Tramway de l'Indre Pinguely 115/1901, close examination, and notably the presence of an exhaust regulator [?] on the right-hand side at the base of the chimney, indicate that Pinguely 116 is still at St Valéry (in a worse state even than this one), and that the loco which the AAPA has acquired is another Pinguely ordered in 1899 for the Compagnie des Chemins de Fer Beaujolais, one of nos. 70-76, 79 or 80. These locos were sold again in 1935, supposedly to a railway in Africa (on the way to which they were lost in a shipwreck), but this one seems to have found its way into industrial use before being requisitioned by the Germans, along with the other locos acquired by scrapdealer M. Vaillant after the War.

ASHFORD AREA GROUP

The group organised a day out at the 7½ inch gauge Wayside Light Railway on Sunday 27th July by the kind invitation of Lawrence and Sue Martin. Over 100 people formed the party for the train rides over an extended layout. Over £200 was raised for the Terrier Trust and the group made this up to £250.

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SOUTHERN COUNTIES FUELS

The Tenterden Railway Company Ltd and subsidiary company.

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st December 1996

	1996	1995
Income from charitable activities:-		
Fares	£302,716	£255,198
Other income	<u>185,284</u>	<u>171,649</u>
Total income	488,000	426,847
Less expenses	<u>(469,764)</u>	<u>(415,352)</u>
Net income	18,236	11,495
Less exceptional items		<u>(9,748)</u>
Gives a surplus on operations of	18,236	1,747
add profits from trading activities	89,388	45,023
filming income	<u>5,562</u>	<u>37,495</u>
gives total income before interest	113,186	84,265
Deduct interest payable	(50,402)	(54,263)
and taxation	<u>-</u>	<u>(165)</u>
Gives a surplus before exceptional items of	62,784	29,837
Add surplus on Bearer Bond redemption	<u>17,325</u>	<u>-</u>
Gives a surplus for the year of	<u>80,109</u>	<u>29,837</u>

Summarised cash flow statement for 1996

Income earned before interest	£113,186.	£84,265
Interest paid and similar charges	<u>(49,930)</u>	<u>(54,092)</u>
Income after interest	63,256	30,173
Depreciation provided against income but retained in the business	<u>30,233</u>	<u>26,670</u>
Cash flow from operations for the year	93,489	56,843
Capital donations	<u>6,000</u>	<u>4,160</u>
Total cash flow	99,489	61,003
Expenditure on fixed assets	(61,342)	(55,781)
Corporation tax paid	<u>(172)</u>	<u>-</u>
Free cash flow	37,975	5,222
Reduced working capital requirements for debtors, creditors and stock	17,417	(12,452)
Bearer Bonds repaid	(2,675)	-
Bearer Bonds issued	<u>225</u>	<u>2375</u>
Decrease in bank etc. borrowings in 1996	<u>52,942</u>	<u>(4855)</u>

Summary of bank and other indebtedness at 31st December 1996

Bank overdrafts less cash in hand	£93,125	£126,325
Secured bank and other loans	253,155	268,845
Unsecured loans	<u>12,303</u>	<u>16,355</u>
Total indebtedness to banks etc	<u>358,583</u>	<u>411,525</u>
Decrease in indebtedness in 1996	52,942	

How We Did in 1996

Financial Director, Bernard Sealy reviews last year's greatly improved financial performance.

In my report in The Tenterden Terrier last year, I indicated that our top priority was to reduce borrowings in 1996 and to achieve an income surplus over expenditure of at least £50,000. I am pleased to report that on both counts we were successful. The income surplus (before an exceptional credit item) was £62,784 and bank and general loan indebtedness dropped by £52,942 to £358,583.

The main reason for improved performance was a near doubling of profits from our trading activities, which rose from £45,023 to £89,388. A particularly notable achievement was in our catering and buffet services where the net contribution, before overheads, rose from £39,517 to £74,076 resulting from both margin and volume improvement. The contribution from the gift shop was up by a very creditable 18% and this was achieved before the benefits arising from the re-vamp of the premises which will, of course, impact favourably on our 1997 results. Filming receipts were sharply lower, but this source of income is notoriously volatile and very difficult to predict. We obtained some valuable filming contracts in 1997.

The margin that we obtain on running the trains remains unacceptably low. Calculated as a ratio of net income to total income it did improve slightly from 2.7% to 3.7%, but we should aim to achieve at least 5% from this core activity and arguably more. This can best be achieved by improving average train loadings – up from 55 to 66 last year (excluding Santas) but still disappointingly low compared to the figures that we achieved prior to the opening to Northiam, when loadings were routinely in the high 70's. The alternative may be to reduce the service in off peak periods, when trains sometimes depart with hardly any passengers..

Our bank indebtedness dropped by £52,942 during the year, which was an eminently satisfactory situation. This was partly due to

the benefits of higher income, but we also managed to reduce our working capital requirements by £17,417. We continue to keep our assets in good order, reflected by the increase in capital expenditure from £55,781 to £61,342.

1997 is likely to be a satisfactory year, despite a small drop in the number of passengers carried, which were running 5% down at the time of writing. The vagaries of the weather have not particularly favoured us with an extremely wet June, followed by a very hot July which impacted unfavourably on two of our key trading months.. Nevertheless, I expect that the overall surplus for this year will be fairly close to last year's level and that there will be another worthwhile improvement in our indebtedness to the banks. This should mean that finance costs- which last year absorbed nearly one half of our gross net income – will continue to fall. We do have to remember that we are a business as well as a major tourist attraction and good bottom line results are essential to protect our long term viability.

A word on costs generally; our total wages bill last year was £123,226, up from £113,327 in 1995. Now, our 13 employees do a very good job for us and I would not suggest for one moment that they are overpaid for what they do. However, wages are a very significant overhead for us and if volunteers fail to come forward it is likely that they will need to rise in the years to come. This could put a dampener on the expansion of our activities generally, which none of us would wish to happen. Compared with a total membership of 2788 at the end of 1996, we have a working membership of around 10%. Is it too much to ask for a little involvement from more than the faithful few. This would do more than anything to keep our costs under control.



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June 97

Northiam Station

1st	Frank Lambert	(386)	£80.00
2nd	Mrs N J Turner	(383)	£50.00
3rd	Benjamin Chandler	(277)	£40.00
4th	G P Williams	(458)	£30.00
5th	Kes Enright	(420)	£20.00
6th	Mrs A M Flint	(209)	£15.00
7th	Robert Gorham	(045)	£10.00
8th	J A Pearson	(337)	£5.00

August 97

Tenterden Mess Room

1st	P Helmsley	(005)	£60.00
2nd	Norman Johnson	(257)	£40.00
3rd	Alan Dean	(343)	£30.00
4th	Adrian Chapman	(236)	£20.00
5th	T J Powell	(357)	£15.00
6th	E C Moore	(196)	£10.00
7th	Alec B Carter	(371)	£5.00

July 97

Tenterden Buffet

1st	R J Foorde	(431)	£60.00
2nd	Clive Norman	(392)	£40.00
3rd	Vic Grigg	(320)	£30.00
4th	Ken George	(133)	£20.00
5th	A M H Baker	(190)	£15.00
6th	R C Vincent	(175)	£10.00
7th	P Alexander	(430)	£5.00

September 97

Wealden Belle

1st	Sylvia Wendon	(201)	£80.00
2nd	Sue Cambell	(165)	£50.00
3rd	C W Steel	(253)	£40.00
4th	Jane Sinclair	(437)	£30.00
5th	Miss P Stevens	(213)	£20.00
6th	Mrs B M King	(470)	£15.00
7th	Miss P Stevens	(213)	£10.00
8th	Nick Leggett	(189)	£5.00

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Book Reviews

On Southern Lines by Roy Hobbs, published by Ian Allan, price £12.99. Hard covers, 80 pages of captioned photographs, all in colour. ISBN 0711024626

Roy Hobbs has gathered together an excellent selection of photographs dating from the 1950's onwards for his chosen subject of the Southern Region of British Railways before the elimination of steam in June 1967. The quality of the reproduction and the photography is notably high, especially given that colour film of the period does not match the quality of the emulsions that we have and expect today. The variety of the subjects covered includes services from the main line London termini and various branches ranging from Lyme Regis and Wenford Bridge in the West Country to Lymington, Brockenhurst and the Isle of Wight in the South.

This book is a useful addition to the subject of Southern steam and the current penchant for colour albums.

London Underground in colour by John Glover, published by Ian Allan, price £12.99. Hard covers, 80 pages of captioned colour photographs. ISBN 0711025304

Books on the London Underground are not prodigious and this is a worthwhile addition to the subject by a leading authority. It is interesting to hear that the system carries more passengers every year than the whole main line railway system and although in need of investment, the book shows that many of the architectural features of stations and buildings have survived, more intact than on British Railways. Oddities featured include a tunnel cleaning train and some of the steam locomotives that London Transport maintained at Neasden up until the early 1970's.

Until quite recently services extended well into former Great Eastern territory- as far as Ongar. This section is one of the few portions to have been closed and now awaits the possible resumption of services by a private company.

abc European Railway Atlas by M.G.Ball, published by Ian Allan, price £7.99. Card covers, 86 pages of maps plus a gazetteer of major stations.

Mr Ball's continental atlases filled a major gap in railway literature when they first appeared some years ago. Now, he has produced a summary volume in a format of just 18cm x 12cm as a pocket guide and claims to cover (almost) all passenger and freight lines and all major passenger stations. Each country is clearly designated and the UK and Ireland are also included.

The abc is not a substitute for the larger scale Ball atlases and the type is inevitably small. However, used in conjunction with Thomas Cook's European timetable this guide is likely to be of value as a route planner. Alternatively as a quick and handy reference guide for the traveller who travels light!

The Eastern and North Eastern Then and Now by Gavin Morrison, published by Ian Allan, price £29.90. Hard covers, 256 pages of captioned photographs with introductory text. ISBN 0711025290

This is the fourth volume in Ian Allan's 'Then and Now' series and covers the lines of the London & North Eastern Railway in England. The 'then' pictures have been sourced from the Ian Allan library and from the Author's personal collection and Mr Morrison has taken most of the 'now' shots from identical or similar locations over the last twelve months or so. The selection has been chosen to balance the contribution of each of the seven constituent companies of the L&NER and there is a list, at the back, of the 300 or so locations. The photographs, all of which are in black and white, are of a very high standard. Many of the 'now' photographs are a depressing reminder of how station sites have been re-developed with tatty ill-thought out schemes, which are detrimental to the environment generally.

P.D.S.



Cutting Throu

Photographed by John Liddell on 28 August

*Project leader, Peter Barber (centre) supervises p
Northiam and Bodiam in connection with the B*





gh the Jungle

997

*preparatory clearance and track lifting work between
iam 2000 project.*



Memories of a JCP Manager

Part Two

Mike James continues his reminiscences of the Job Creation Programme on the line in the 1970s.

As the Winter of 1977/8 set in, and earthmoving at Wittersham Road became more difficult, we transferred some of our effort to our second major task, that of relaying the track to Northiam. The original 91½ lb/yd rail had been lifted and disposed of, in exchange for an equivalent length of 75 lb/yd rail with concrete sleepers, made up into track panels each 36 feet long. These panels, nearly 250 in number, and each weighing over 3 tons, were stacked in daunting piles alongside the track at Tenterden. With the limited resources at our disposal, I viewed this mammoth task with some trepidation.

In advance of tracklaying, lengths of track bed had to be cleared of undergrowth, overhanging trees and assorted debris. This was an ideal task for a winter's day, involving much physical labour with little potential for disasters. Dave Harris attacked the large branches with the chain saw, while others used a variety of hand tools and created enormous bonfires which warmed chilly hands.

The actual track-laying was a complicated exercise and required the use of a train and, therefore, a driver. Fortunately, the late George Wright gave up many of his spare days to help us, and he seemed to develop a rapport with the JCP gang.

On each track-laying day, a train composed of three pairs of flat wagons, a brake van and the crane, and its match wagon was marshalled at Rolvenden and moved to Tenterden where track panels were loaded in heaps of five, each on a pair of wagons. Much care was needed as the crane was only rated at 5 tons! The train then moved to Wittersham Road where two pairs of wagons were dropped and the remaining one propelled behind the crane to the point to which the track had been extended. All this occupied some time, and it was usually lunch-time before the first panel was craned into position, adjusted, and joined up to the

existing track. The rate of progress varied considerably. Problems with trees, overhead wires, uneven trackbed and distorted panels caused delays while, after one load of panels had been laid, the train had to return to Wittersham Road for the next load. At the end of the day, and often in darkness, the remaining panels were returned to Rolvenden to await another day's track-laying. Minor mishaps occurred but the lack of a major accident was due to George Wright's accurate driving, John Blanchard's skill with the inadequate crane, and good teamwork under Dave Levett's leadership.

The majority of the track panels were stacked out of reach of our rail-mounted crane, and we had to hire a large mobile crane to move them into a more suitable location. This was of course, an expensive and time consuming operation.

A major problem loomed as we approached Hexden Bridge. The banks of Hexden Channel had been raised at some previous time to allow for an increased water level. Stop-boards and sandbags were erected across the railway at Hexden Bridge, pending eventual raising of the bridge deck and adjacent trackbed. Removal of these barriers, if it coincided with high water level in the channel, would result in extensive flooding of the surrounding farmland. When we moved beyond Hexden Bridge, we were permitted to remove the barriers early in the day, but it was incumbent upon us to replace them when we returned later. Although we always carried out this duty, I still fielded many 'phone calls from irate farmers.

Progress was steady if unspectacular, (on some good days we laid, perhaps 10 panels; on one disastrous day we laid one), until we reached Cyster's Curve. Here the mud was reminiscent of Wittersham Road and this had to be stabilised with hardcore. We passed cautiously over the Rother Bridge and Northiam was in sight. It was a day of

achievement when we were able to run (possibly illegally!) over the level crossing and into Northiam Station.

The problem of rebuilding Hexden Bridge often occupied my thoughts. The abutments would have to be raised to the appropriate level, a new deck laid, and the track lifted for some distance each side of the bridge. Access would be a major problem and, of course, costs would have to be minimised. I had no means of determining the condition, or even the shape, of the abutments below water level, and I took the easy way out by assuming that Colonel Stephens had not skimped their construction! A discussion with Southern Water provided the required new deck level, and I established this at the bridge from a bench mark a long way off.

The existing deck and track panels were removed leaving a yawning gap, much too

wide to jump. Dave Levett, in his inimitable way, constructed a temporary wooden bridge and, despite its apparent flimsiness, nobody ever fell into the water.

Conventional shuttering would have been impossible to erect, and we used sleeper pots as front shutters for the concrete in the abutments. The steel members for the deck arrived from a surprising source. One of the volunteers worked on the Thames Barrier in London and I was told that when the cofferdams there were pulled out, I could go and choose what was needed. I did some calculations, went off to London and selected the appropriate beams. They were delivered to Rolvenden and, after some necessary cutting, drilling and welding under the expert eye of Paul Hatcher, they were transported to the bridge and erected.

The raising of the track bed was a tedious



Lifting the Heathfield coping stones into position at Wittersham Road (L-R) ?, Dave Harris, Dave Levett

(Kentish Express)

operation involving the Whitlock excavator which had to be driven to the bridge by a very circuitous route.

We also made use of the D2 'dozer which had been repaired after a long period out of action. The appropriate track panels were lifted and set aside so that suitable material could be laid, graded and compacted. The track panels were then replaced and the road to Northiam was open once more.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I would also like to mention a few other incidents which stay in my memory. Firstly a typical day in the life of a JCP manager.

It is a Spring morning, frosty, but with a promise of sunshine later. I set off from my lodgings in Newenden (I have moved here from Hastings to reduce the length of my journey to work). Rolvenden village is showing signs of life and, as I pass the station, I am pleased to see wisps of smoke rising from 'Sutton'. We shall be track-laying to-day, and George Wright has given up his rest day to drive for us. It is nearly 8 o'clock when I get to Tenterden Station, unlock the door, pick up the post, and sit down to think about our work for the day. By 8.30 I am back at Rolvenden where the gang are booking in. Dave Levett's mud-splattered car is there, John Blanchard comes racing down the hill on his bike and just about negotiates the entrance gates, Les Dellow's van brings the Hawkurst crowd, and the rest come by various means of transport. I chat to Dave Levett and Paul Hatcher about the day's work and about who will be doing what, and where. Dave Harris has started 'Sammy' (the Weatherall loading shovel) with no more than average difficulty and is setting off for the time-consuming journey to Wittersham Road where he will, hopefully, be earthmoving. We have two loads of track panels in the yard, so we shan't need to go up to Tenterden for more, and George Wright is busy marshalling the stock. The building gang climb into the brake van and the train disappears past the sewage works. As I leave the yard, Les Dellow is replacing a hydraulic hose on the Whitlock excavator, work with which he is very familiar.

When I get back to Tenterden, Jo Dunstone is frantically typing. To-day is pay day and she is making up the wage slips. I deal with any matters resulting from the morning post, and Steve Bennett rings me for a progress report. Another 'phone caller wants information about the railway. I am getting quite good at dealing with queries unrelated to the JCP, and I provide a satisfactory answer. A quick cup of coffee and I am off to see how the work is progressing.

I drive to Wittersham Road, taking care on the country lanes which can be lethal in frosty conditions. As I approach the site I can hear the noise of the Weatherall as Dave Harris attacks the clay heaps. With the minimal traction of the wheels on the slippery clay, it is almost impossible to fill the bucket and several of the gang are using shovels to top it up by hand. I wish we had a tracked excavator! When I have satisfied myself that the work is progressing reasonably well, I set off to walk up the track towards Northiam. It's a long way, and I count the panels laid to calculate our progress. I reach the track-laying gang just as John Blanchard has lifted another panel. I watch with interest as he slowly swings it round under the careful directions of Dave Levett. Too near the crane cab and another window will get broken, too far away and the rear wheels will lift off the track! The panel is located and fixed, and we are another 36 feet towards Northiam. I check that nothing is needed and return to Wittersham Road and then to Tenterden.

Jo Dunstone has finished the wage slips and is ready to collect the money from the bank. It is all in cash, so I accompany her as protection. She puts the wage packets in the back of my car and goes off for lunch. I lock the office and go off to Peter's Cafe (on Rolvenden Hill) for an excellent meal.

Back at Tenterden, the 'phone rings again and I deal with another abstruse request. Someone appears on the platform, looking mystified. I offer help, explain when our train services will be starting and sell him something from the shop. I am all things to all people, and I always try to be co-operative.

Then it's back to Wittersham Road. The Weatherall has developed a fault but Les Dellow has come out to fix it. I hand out wage packets in exchange for signatures and discuss with Dave Harris a prospective employee whom I have been asked to take on. Dave knows the background of many people and "he's a good old boy" is as good a reference as I can get. I decide to leave the tracklaying gang in peace and go back to Rolvenden to pay the engineering gang.

By 5.30 Dave Harris has driven the Weatherall back to Rolvenden without further mishap, and Les Dellow has brought the shovellers back. With money in their pockets they want to book off and go home. I know that the tracklaying gang will work as long as possible so I go off to see them. It's getting dark now but there is only one more track panel on the train and George Wright is quite happy to stay until it is laid. I join the gang in the brake van for the journey back to Wittersham Road. It is quite atmospheric in the darkening countryside with the mist rising from the

fields and the peace only slightly disturbed by the gentle noises from the moving train. We stop to replace the flood barrier at Hexden Bridge and, with some deft loose-shunting, rapidly rearrange the train at Wittersham Road. I drive back to Rolvenden to await its return. It's late by now, but the rolling stock still has to be berthed before the fire can be dropped from 'Sutton'. I hand out the remaining wage packets, the gang book off, I thank George Wright for his efforts, and we all go home. It's been a very good day for tracklaying, but Wittersham Road Station seems as far away from completion as ever.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

From time to time we were put on to other tasks. Typical of these was the painting of Tenterden Station. Shortly before the opening of Wittersham Road Station, the board decided that Tenterden Station was rather shabby as a meeting place for the visiting dignitaries. Choosing the correct shade of green occupied several days and



The JCP gang pose for the camera (L-R), Mike James, Dave Harris. Other members have not been identified except Dave Levett (2nd from R), can you help?
(Kentish Express)

we had very little time to apply the paint. At least one of the platform canopy supports was found to have virtually disintegrated, and a rapid replacement was effected. We completed the painting as darkness fell on the evening immediately prior to opening day. I prayed that it would dry in time!

As a civil engineer, the 'Wet Cutting' interested me. Previous attempts to deal with its stability had met with only limited success. A conversation with a friend at the South Bank Polytechnic resulted in a student project to investigate the problem. The first requirement was to establish the water-table level. A preliminary investigation was to be done by excavating a short trench in a field above the cutting. I contacted Mr. Georgiotti, who owned the field, to get his agreement. Despite his reputation as being somewhat volatile, I got this agreement together with an assurance that there would be no animals in the field. We excavated a suitable trench with the Whitlock excavator and went home. Next morning I paid an early visit to the trench to measure the water level in it. As I walked towards it, I was horrified to see two ears and part of a head in the trench. Yes, there was a cow neatly imprisoned in it! Although it wasn't our fault, I had to pacify an irate Mr. Georgiotti. It took the combined efforts of several men pulling on ropes at one end and the excavator bucket gently pushing at the other end to persuade the animal to reverse up the (fortunately) sloping end of the trench.

Another task which we undertook was the extension to the locomotive shed at Rolvenden. A large quantity of steelwork which had been acquired secondhand had lain for some time at Tenterden and was to be used for this purpose. Suitable sections were conveyed to Rolvenden and prepared for use. An array of ladders, ropes and a crane were needed to erect the columns and beams and, despite my pleas for extreme care, men got in precarious positions to bolt beams to columns. With little evidence of hard hats, safety shoes or safety harness, we must have broken all the safety rules, but nobody came to grief. The cladding of the roof and sides involved similar dangerous movements but, again, no mishaps occurred.

Both transport and communication were perpetual problems. Unless we were using a train, the only means of transporting the gang to Wittersham Road was the Wickham trolley, which was difficult to start and even more difficult to stop. As it disappeared from Rolvenden, I prayed that there would be no sheep on the track and that no mechanical failure would occur. Communication via the lineside telephone was possible, but only if the faint ringing at the other end was heard.

It was when we needed to transport some track ballast to Wittersham Road that I was introduced to the 'paddy-killer'. The large hopper of this side-tipping wagon was secured to the wagon frame by four chains. The release of the chains on one side induced it to tip to the other side. However, the hopper was not correctly balanced, and could only be made to tip naturally in one direction. Inevitably we required it to tip in the other direction. When we arrived at Wittersham Road I was curious to see how this would be done. Two large timbers were propped nearly vertically between the edge of the hopper and the track bed, and the chains on that side were released. George Wright was asked to "ease forward six inches", the timbers moved into the vertical position, and the hopper tipped to the other side. This ingenuity amazed me.

Other incidents, too numerous or trivial to mention, cross my mind as I write these articles. Some of the volunteers viewed us as intruders, but I am certain that our efforts made a significant contribution to the railway's expansion. Personally, I discovered that, despite very limited resources, it is possible to achieve worthwhile results with a lot of determination, and some luck.

Were You a Member of the JCP or STEP Schemes?

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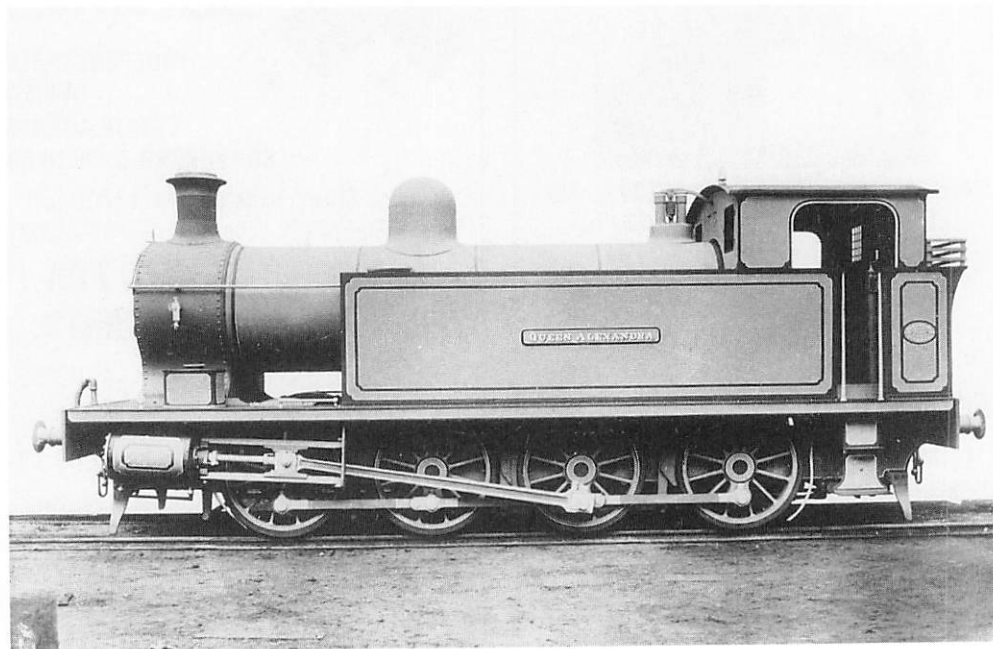
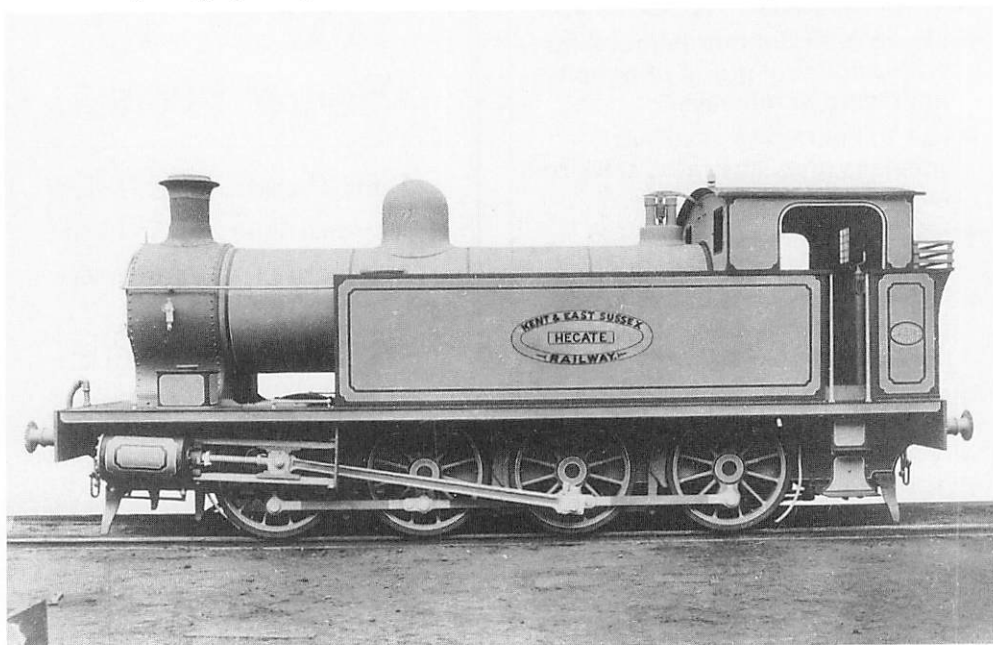
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Hecate's Double

They say that one picture is worth a thousand words, but two pictures like the Hawthorn Leslie works photographs reproduced here seem to call for some interpretation.



As photography became widespread in the later part of the nineteenth century, locomotive builders took advantage of the medium to record their output. The photographs were not simply used to build up a visual archive of the company's products, but were also used in advertisements in the technical press, and could be sent out to prospective customers to show the type of work previously carried out. Framed enlargements of works photographs were also presented to customers, and several of these are to be seen in the replica office in the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden.

Before the invention of panchromatic photographic emulsions in the early years of the present century, photographers faced the problem that the orthochromatic plates then available differed considerably from the human eye in their sensitivity to different colour values, so that lining and other details could be rendered almost invisible. In an era when skilled labour was cheap, it was therefore the custom to paint the locomotive specially for photography using flat paint in shades of grey which were selected to give the impression of the eventual livery in a black and white photograph. It was also possible to pick out details in poorly lit areas which might otherwise disappear in shadow.

Even large companies of the period rarely had their own photographer on the staff, relying instead on outside photographers. The Tyneside locomotive builders and marine engineers, R. & W. Hawthorn Leslie & Co., who built engines for the K&ESR as well as for other Colonel Stephens railways, used two photographers, one of whom was a Mr Parry of South Shields, many of whose photographs are now in the care of the local history section of South Shields Central Library. Looking through this collection recently, I was not surprised to find the view reproduced here of the well-known eight-coupled tank engine 'Hecate', No. 4 of the K&ESR. No doubt this was taken in the yard at Hawthorn Leslie's Forth Bank works before delivery to Rolvenden, although as the background has been painted out, this cannot be verified. An unexpected find, however, was a print of an apparently identical loco without K&ESR lettering and named 'Queen Alexandra'. The Hawthorn

Leslie order book (preserved in the Tyne & Wear Record Office) confirmed that 'Hecate' was ordered on 29 February 1904 under works number 2587, and that it was the only 0-8-OT supplied by Hawthorn Leslie to a British customer. So what are we to make of 'Queen Alexandra'?

Given that 'Hecate' was unique, the two photographs must be of the same engine, and from the details in the foreground and the position of the wheels, they were evidently taken on the same occasion. Presumably, after the photograph of 'Hecate' had been taken, the lettering on the tank sides was painted out (including the name, which seems to be painted on, rather than a cast metal plate) and a 'Queen Alexandra' nameplate fixed on for the second exposure.

If how the substitution was made is fairly clear, why is less so. According to D.L. Bradley, 'Queen Alexandra' nameplates were used by Hawthorn Leslie for photographing several newly completed locomotives at around this period – the name would have been topical as Queen Alexandra (1844-1925) was the wife of Edward VII, who was crowned in August 1902. The photograph of 'Hecate' with the 'Queen Alexandra' nameplate was used by Hawthorn Leslie for publicity purposes, for example in a supplement to the *Locomotive Magazine* in 1911. But why was it necessary to create a new identity for 'Hecate'? Perhaps H.F. Stephens had refused permission for the K&ESR to be associated with a Hawthorn Leslie advertisement, although this seems unlikely as he went on to order several more engines from them for other railways, and at that period he positively encouraged publicity for his activities in the technical press. Or perhaps the Hawthorn Leslie directors felt that identifying the engine with a railway company (even a very small one like the K&ESR) might discourage their industrial customers from ordering the type for shunting duties. Whatever the explanation, the 'Queen Alexandra' photograph adds another twist to the complicated history of the K&ESR.

Tom Burnham

Letters to the Editor

The Austen Heritage

Sir – I have two comments regarding the thoughts expressed in the article by Duncan Buchanan and Nick Pallant.

Firstly I have never wished to criticise other departments unless I knew the full facts, so now that the subject has come up, I have the following comments.

The scenes in the carriage sidings and at Wittersham Road fill me with horror and also the odd bits opposite Rolvenden platform. Is there no way that there can be a tidy up or disposal? Maybe it is the 'no time' factor or 'lets keep it in case'.

Secondly, I do not see how we are drifting into looking like Southern Region around 1980.

Those of us on platform duty know that passengers will go to great lengths to ride behind a steam loco, the vast majority (including our Dutch friends) come to see the steam. (If it is the vintage train, the excitement is greater.) Boys and girls from five to grandparents queue to stand on the footplate.

Modernise where we have to, but keep the station buildings and the trains looking as if they are in a bygone era. Our railway is such that we do not have to be too authentic except on special days. (What about our Pannier Tank in SR territory?)

Ticehurst, East Sussex

Douglas Edwards

Sir – Carriage horrors may well be exposed to public gaze at Tenterden sidings when everything useful is out, but one very dilapidated coach stares the public full in the face all the time. I refer to the carriage body supported on sleepers at the far end of Tenterden platform.

While this has served a useful purpose for many years, surely the time has come for an Austen type clearout here? This would create the opportunity to landscape the area with shrubs and flowers to match the attractive garden further down the platform.

St Leonards On Sea, East Sussex H Atkinson

Sir – I am glad you have published (summer issue) a tribute to Austen's work. In later years Stephens seems to have had a negative attitude.

I have a copy of a letter he wrote to the railway author L T Catchpole in which he says "I cannot advise you to interest yourself in light railways... had I devoted as much time to the establishment of a business for the sale of legs of mutton, the result would have been more satisfactory to me". He was equally tart I think with employees. By contrast, Austen seems to have had good relations; I have a letter he sent to Fitter Davies at Selsey regarding getting some mud plugs made up in which he uses the word 'please'.

The authors of the article seek to draw some lesson from the Derwent Valley Railway. The signals here are rather mixed; in spite of the keen support of the late Derek Barrie, a commanding figure in the north east, the re-instated passenger service of 1977 lasted only two years. There are probably some lines which just cannot succeed, and I think that the Headcorn extension, had it not been closed down by BR, would have been one of these.

Bow Street, Dyfed

R W Kidner

Diesels Again

Sir – I was sorry to see the adverse comment on the arrival of a Class 33, since these locos were once a familiar sight at both Robertsbridge and Headcorn, and would therefore seem to be more appropriate to our own area than the Class 14s which have been with us for a little while.

In any event, the use of ex-main line locos and rolling stock keeps alive the tradition of the Colonel – it is just unfortunate that times have moved on, so that the main line railways do not now have any steam locos, whether for sale or otherwise.

Also, let us not forget that the Colonel used a number of railcars powered by internal combustion engines – surely it is only logical that, as circumstances dictated, this practice should be extended to the locomotives as well as to the railway?

Barnehurst, Kent

B J Leach

Sir – There were strong feelings expressed at the AGM regarding the presence of the Class 33 diesel electric locomotive on our rails. While accepting the need for reliable, quick off the mark, standby motive power, this locomotive is certainly more powerful than needs demand, I, amongst many others would be very

unhappy to see a main line diesel locomotive in scheduled passenger service on the K&ESR. I was therefore pleased by the statement I received from Bernard Sealy that there was no intention to do so. I have requested that this be recorded in the minutes of the AGM.

I was disappointed to learn that the undertaking to remove the Class 25 locomotive had not been honoured. This failure certainly didn't help to allay concerns regarding Board policy on large diesels.

Tenterden, Kent

Richard Wall

Gazelle

Sir - Regarding the excellent article on Gazelle, I have read of the incident with Rev R Brock before, but am still intrigued with the train departing at 3.57pm.

On a line with such an infrequent service, what was wrong in making the departure 4.00pm? Also, in view of the traditional interest by clerics in railways, there would have been many who would have longed for the opportunity for a footplate ride on Gazelle. The same gentleman also complained to Stephens about a flooded level crossing at Criggon, to which the

Colonel's reply was even more evasive than usual.

Bristol

Jack Burrell.

Santa Specials

Sir - At the recent AGM, the Board did me a great honour in the presentation of gold card life membership and a free pass for my 20 years of service on the Santa Specials. I should, however, like to pay tribute to the work of Donald Wilson without whom none of this would have been possible. Although I took over the basic concept and refined it, Donald actually invented both the Santa trains and the Wine & Dine trains when he was Commercial Director in 1974. This established a major attraction and source of revenue which has since been copied by every other private railway in the country. Despite his other commitments away from the railway, Donald continues to arrange the purchase and wrapping of the children's presents as he has done for some 23 years. Without his contribution, we should not be able to run these trains in the style that we do today.

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Carriage Dilemma

by Peter Davis

Members joining the Company in recent years may have wondered why there are so many derelict carriages on the line. In fact most of these were part of a carefully thought out strategy established during our formative years. This strategy and its abandonment by default is now worth examining, if only to explain the dilemma facing the directors of the day and perhaps excuse them for what may now seem a flawed policy.

It should be pointed out that in the 60s and early 70s it was prohibitively expensive to transport carriages by road. It would have required two cranes in attendance at each end of the journeys, self steering road bogies and a heavy haulage tractor unit, a low loader for the rail bogies, special route planning and police escorts. Bogie carriages then cost a couple of hundred pounds and it would probably have trebled their cost to deliver them by road. There were no specialists in this field as there are today, though Winns, Pickfords and one or two other firms could oblige at a price and after lengthy negotiations.

Delivery by rail was hampered by the restricted tunnels of the Hastings Line and it was generally accepted that rolling stock purchases had to be within BR restriction '0' and fit enough to be delivered by goods train to Robertsbridge.

The four restriction "1" Maunsell bogies, Nos 53-56 were purchased outright by the K&ESRA and delivered by special arrangement as an out of gauge load in November 1965. They were then a little over 30 years old and regarded as solid modern vehicles providing a reliable basic fleet for the foreseeable future.

In 1964 and at the inspiration of Alan Dixon the two Pullman cars 'Barbara' and 'Theodora' were saved at the last minute, having been dumped in sidings at Walton-on-Thames pending transfer to a South Wales scrapyard. I believe the cost was £300 apiece delivered to Robertsbridge.

Secretary of the Association, Robin Doust had already concluded that light, high capacity trains, well within the hauling power of our small locomotives, could be provided by vintage four and six wheel carriages. The idea was to acquire such carriages from the service

fleet of BR where many ancient specimens survived as mess and tool vans. Although most were bereft of seating the idea was to equip them with interiors from first generation SR electric stock, by then being withdrawn.

The Woolwich coach, ex North London Railway and the first passenger vehicle delivered to the line in preservation, was the first to be so equipped and encouraged by the ease of conversion the backwaters of BR were trawled for further suitable examples.

By the Spring of 1968 two six wheel carriages of MSLR and GER origin were secured and assembled at Stratford Works pending delivery to Robertsbridge. In the event they did not survive, being irreparably damaged in a shunting accident before leaving Stratford. Replacement vehicles were offered but by then the very future of the Railway was in serious doubt so the matter was quietly dropped and a refund accepted. Surviving correspondence indicates that coaches DE320256 and DE970198 cost £130 each including delivery to Robertsbridge.

Although this early attempt to create a vintage train came to nought the concept stayed alive and more than twenty years later has culminated in our market leading Victorian Train.

In 1970 the two SE&CR "birdcage" brakes were purchased from the MOD at Longmoor and following replacement of a faulty wheel set free of charge by army personnel were moved to Tonbridge MPD for storage, as by then BR had forbidden delivery of further rolling stock.

It is incredible but true that after a particularly disagreeable meeting at Waterloo BR declared that they were going to clear all the Association's rolling stock from the line and requested a destination. Peter Manisty, Chairman of the ARPS hurriedly organised temporary storage at Longmoor and Southern Region operators inspected the stock, passing it fit to travel by goods train. This included the Sentinels, small industrial engines, including No 12, the Woolwich coach and semi derelict wooden framed wagons.

By 1971 our differences with the Ministry of Transport and BR had been resolved and there was real hope that the line would reopen in the

next year or so. However as the price for this relaxation was abandonment of the Bodiam-Robertsbridge section it became urgent to acquire sufficient carriages for future needs before the line was lifted. It was generally accepted that a total of eight bogie carriages, run in two four car sets would cover all future requirements. With the unrestored L&SWR tricomposite, acquired by the K&ESR Locomotive Trust and stabled at Robertsbridge for many years only one more carriage was required.

There was talk of a more modern vehicle, perhaps a Bulleid corridor or BR standard suburban type but the cost would be £500 plus a further £500 for delivery by road, in those days a not insignificant sum. There was a feeling among the membership that any cash raised should be devoted to purchasing the line and the matter of increasing the carriage fleet should be a consideration for the future, reasonable enough if the vehicle was to be delivered by road anyway.

Alan Dixon, by this time a director of the newly formed Tenterden Railway Company and editor of the *Farmer's Line* campaigned to

acquire former service coaches for rapid refurbishment, as Robin Doust had done previously. By this time Maunsell coaches had been relegated to these duties and three were identified as suitable.

Alan argued that eight coaches would ultimately be insufficient and two Maunsells could be purchased and delivered for £721.50 including sufficient seating and other components for their rapid restoration. In two weeks Alan organised the private purchase of DS70109 now No 58, a Folkestone line unclassified saloon and DS081621 now No 57, a Hastings line side corridor vehicle. Both coaches lay in Micheldever scrap sidings and Alan and others made several expeditions to literally fill them with interior components from withdrawn Maunsell electric stock. The Loco Trust acquired the third coach DS70134 now No 59, another Hastings line side corridor vehicle. Therefore when the K&ESR reopened it had a usable fleet of four Maunsells and two "birdcages" with potential for quickly restoring a further three Maunsells and the longer term prospect of the L&SWR composite and the Woolwich coach. In addition there were



Maunsell CK No. 55 and other derelict rolling stock in Northiam Headshunt, note the removed siding on the left, 29/8/97

(John Liddell)

opportunities for on train catering with the two Pullmans, soon to be realised by Donald Wilson's pioneering ~Wine and Dine" trains.

Today only one of the Maunsell brakes remains in service and the Pullman "Barbara" is in its last few weeks before withdrawal, having seen years of valuable service and very little investment.

So what went wrong? Why was the promise of all those years ago never realised? Quite simply, the culprit is the Mk1 coach, available from the mid seventies at an initial price of £800-£1000 and by then more easily transported by road. Four, Nos 63-66, were delivered in late 1977 and after refurbishing and repainting in the then standard brown and cream livery were systematically introduced over the next couple of years. It was then thought that the Mk1s would be a useful stopgap while the Maunsells and other vintage carriages were rebuilt, but such was the pace of dilapidation of the wooden bodied stock that the only way to maintain services on the expanding railway was to acquire more Mk1s.

By the 1980s the majority of K&ESR trains were made up of Mk1 stock and the corporate livery had given way to BR maroon or carmine and cream. So in spite of its enviable history of independence the line had succumbed to the uniformity seen at the East Lancs, Nene Valley, North York Moors et al. We had become the Mk1 and austerity line as far as the enthusiast world was concerned.

Happily this is now being addressed and more rolling stock variety is evident, including the Victorian Train. This is no criticism of Mk1s and austerities without which the line could not have survived let alone expanded, but they too need maintaining and experience has shown that rebuilds are no less onerous or complicated than with older stock.

So in 1997 the Company is still in a dilemma over carriages with a core fleet of ageing Mk1s requiring more and more care and maintenance and a fleet of vintage vehicles quietly rotting in sidings up and down the line. Since reopening many other coaches have come and gone but they were never part of the Company's strategy, being purchased at the whim of individuals or groups.

In reality the carriage strategy of the K&ESR lies in tatters and the present situation is the result of expedience rather than planning.

In their article entitled The Austen Heritage

Duncan Buchanan and Nick Pallant discuss the improvements made by the Austens from the early thirties until Nationalisation. There is a hint that we should maintain that tradition and clear out unwanted or derelict rolling stock. To put this into perspective we should remember that the Austens were able to continually replace worn out coaches with cascaded main line stock. In those days the supply was endless and no doubt very cheap and it would have been hardly worthwhile carrying out much more than running maintenance. Today we do not have that luxury, the supply of replacement carriages has dried up, what we have, usable or derelict is all we are going to get.

Of the original strategic fleet there is talk of breaking up two of the ex departmental Maunsells and putting the remains of the Woolwich and L&SWR coaches into long term storage off the rails which probably means they will never be restored. This should not be done lightly, both the Festiniog and Isle of Man railways broke up irreplaceable rolling stock in the 1960s, both wish they had not done so, both are now going to the trouble of recreating items lost during that era.

The hopelessness of badly decayed standard gauge coaches is fully appreciated but railway preservation has always thrived on the impossible and it is a certainty that history will not be kind to those who broke up historic rolling stock in the 1990s. Besides, the Company and its supporting groups have a moral and in some cases legal obligation to cherish and preserve historic artifacts not destroy them as a matter of convenience.

Perhaps the answer is to stabilise decaying stock by boarding up windows and felting or sheeting roofs and if anything is to be stored off the rails it should be spare PMV underframes and surplus freight stock. Also, the prospect of restoring stripped Maunsell stock in all its intricate detail could be avoided by rebuilding the bodies in plain open form with low backed DMU type seating. The resulting high capacity tourist coaches would provide excellent all round visibility and could be ideal for a Northiam-Bodiam shuttle service. Faced with today's situation the Austens might well have made such a compromise.

Can You Lend a Hand?

The Message is Simple – We Need to Double Our Workforce!

By now, you will be familiar with the call for new volunteers – perhaps even a little tired of it. I make no apologies for taking every opportunity to push the fact that we are very short of people prepared to come and help the railway on a volunteer basis.

Volunteers are essential to the continued survival of the railway in it's present form.

In the following article I hope to demonstrate why we need more people.

Upon taking on this challenge in March, we started off by working out where we were and where we needed to get to. The number of volunteers is constantly changing but generally hovers around 350 people.

On the face of it this looks good, especially as it represents some 19% of our full members or 12% of our total membership. Conversely it unfortunately means that some 80% of our membership is unable (or unwilling) to give up some time for the railway.

I make the distinction between full and total membership because associate members could be generally identified as partners or children of the full member. It therefore follows that not all of these associates would wish or are able to be involved. By example, our children are associates but at nine and six are unable to do very much.

Whilst there are many valid reasons, it is somewhat sobering to think that if half of the non volunteer membership gave up one day per month you will see later that I could have a completely different and much more pleasant set of problems.

But how many people are needed to run the railway? If you visit the railway, you will see that trains run and in the main things look tidy. However, rather like the graceful swan on the water, look below the surface and you will see everything going 'like the clappers' and demonstrates a dedication that you will have difficulty finding elsewhere. So, how many volunteers do we need?

In order to answer this question, I divided

the railway into two halves. I called one half the 'operating team' and represented the people needed to run the service. The other half I called the 'preservation team' and represent the people who make the track, trains, signalling etc available to the operating team. The next stage was to build a resource plan. For this I assumed that a 'typical' weekend comprised a two train service plus Wealden Belle on Saturdays and a three train service on Sundays. Special events, Bank Holidays, Santa Specials and mid week running were ignored. The resulting operating team resource plan looks like this;

Activity	Saturday	Wealden Belle	Sunday
Tenterden Buffet	3		5
Northiam Buffet	2		3
On-Train Catering	2		8
Wealden Belle Catering		8	
Guards	2	1	3
Loco Crews	4	2	6
Museum	2		2
Shop	2		2
Signalmen	3	2	3
Cranbrook Crossing Keeper	1		1
Tenterden Station Staff	3		3
Northiam Station Staff	2		2
Wittersham Station Staff	1		1
Rolvenden Station Staff	1		1
Travelling Ticket Inspectors	4		6
Totals	32	13	46

This means that to operate our standard weekend service, we need a minimum of 91

people each weekend – and that's without anyone doing any repair or maintenance! The 'preservation' resource plan (not shown) estimates that a further 102 people are needed each weekend in repair and maintenance duties. This takes our compliment of people needed on the railway to 193 each weekend. Additionally, I do not believe it is reasonable to expect everyone to come down every weekend (although I am grateful to the many that do). Therefore, the total number of volunteers required depends on how often people can attend. Using the resource plan, the following chart shows how many are

needed given a certain level of attendance; I've given you a lot of numbers to think about but the message is simple – we need to double our volunteer workforce.

Since taking on this role I, with Karen, have been trying a number of ideas to get people working. These have included;

- Calling new members to welcome them to the railway and invite them to volunteer. After some 100 calls we had met with 100% failure. It appears that people have already decided when they join if they were going to volunteer.

No of Volunteers Required	Frequency	% of Existing Volunteers	% of Membership	
			Total	Full
386	One day every second weekend	110%	14%	21%
579	One day every third weekend	165%	21%	32%
772	One day every fourth weekend	220%	28%	43%



Karen and Graham Bridge

(Philip Shaw)

● Appeal in the *Rooter* and local press. This received a couple of supportive calls from people who had been active in the 60's but are now unable to assist due to age.

● Take part in the *Steam Railway* magazine appeal. This was part of a general appeal for volunteers and gave nation-wide focus to the problem experienced by many railways. So far it has attracted two volunteers – better than nothing and very welcome you are.

● Operate a new members train. The first train ran on 13th September and appeared to be well received. I hope to run some more in 1998. Watch this space!

● Provide central notification in the Terrier of working weeks and special projects. Here is the first;

Working Weeks & Special Projects

● **Pixies for Santa Specials. Contact Paul Curran. 01424 716724**

● **Northiam – Bodiam clearance. Contact Peter Barber 01580 765155.**

Ideas in the pipeline include;

● Set up a junior group for 9 – 14 year olds. Using Meridian TV's Three Minutes programme. A telephone information line. This will cost money. Would you use it? If so, please leave a message on 01580 766779 (not our normal number). Please only do this between 18:00 and 22:00 Monday – Friday or anytime at weekends and before 19th December. There will be a normal answerphone type recorded message, please simply say "K&ESR phone line" and I will take it as a vote for the line. Approach the Probation Service to register us on the Community Service Programme.

● Restart the members days.

What can you do to help?

● If you don't already volunteer, consider what you could do to help. Perhaps you could make it a new years resolution? Try to get someone you know to join and volunteer.

● Publicise the K&ESR at every

opportunity.

● When you are at the railway take some time to talk to the visitors. It appears that most of our volunteers only became involved following a visit to the line.

● Is there anyone in your family that would like to get involved? Perhaps you may like to think about taking on a responsibility as a family group? Can't get down at weekends? There is plenty to do mid week all through the year to make sure we have a railway to run.

● Mid week operating. This year our summer mid week operating has relied on a handful of people. Without them (and they're not getting any younger!) there would be no mid week running. While it seems a long way off, summer will be here all too quickly. Why not talk about mid week dates with your roster clerk now?

Finally, please have an excellent Christmas and an even better New Year. I look forward to meeting you at work on the railway in 1998.

Graham Bridge

**Would YOU like to help with the
Award Winning**

Colonel Stephens Railway Museum

The Museum is in need of attendants to issue admission tickets and generally liaise with visitors. The work is not too demanding and would suit both young and older members.

The Museum opening hours generally coincide with those of the railway and applicants would be asked to join a rota system which could be tailored to suit their own time availability.

Please contact John Miller on 01580 765350 or write to him at 121 High Street, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6JS. Messages can be left with Philip Shaw on 01580 763468.

The Museum is now closed to visitors for the winter period and re-opens next March.

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An Experience Not to Be Forgotten

Vic Mitchell's memories of the Kent & East Sussex Railway as related to Norman Langridge

The early morning sun streaming through the bedroom window woke me from my slumbers, not that I had been in a deep sleep for today I needed to be up early. It was 28th July 1949 and I was on holiday with my parents at Greatstone-on-Sea. The guest house was quiet, for my day was to start when my family were still awaiting a typically English breakfast, a delight which I had agreed to forgo on this bright sunny day in order to catch the 7.24am train from the station.

I had heard about it, even read about it and when the chance came to visit it I could not resist the opportunity, for what I had heard and read seemed impossible, only to be met in fiction. The IT was the Kent and East Sussex Railway. For years it had plied its way between Robertsbridge and Headcorn Junction leaving an indelible impression upon all who had travelled on it and now its

new owners, British Railways, might close it. Some opportunities come but once in a lifetime and this was to be my moment of sampling a piece of history. I had informed my parents some days before of my intentions and they no doubt reflected on the fact that all of their other friends had had quite normal children. Certainly Darwin had made no reference to such developments in his treatise on evolution, but there was no harm in it and they considered that I was old enough to travel to some of the more obscure parts of Kent without too much misfortune coming to me. So armed with sandwiches, Smith's Crisps, apple and Voigtlander camera I set off to the single concrete platform at Greatstone. An H class tank and two coaches ambled along from New Romney precisely to time. I had allowed from 8.21 to 9.30 to observe proceedings at Ashford where I was to change trains.



01 class 31048 heads the 10.53am mixed at Headcorn Junction, 28/7/49

(Vic Mitchell)

Table 24

Table 24

ROBERTSBRIDGE, TENTERDEN TOWN, and HEADCORN

Third class only

Miles from Robertsbridge.	Down		Week Days only															
			a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.					p.m.	p.m.
22	London—																3 25	4 20
22	Charing Cross.....dep.										9 25							
22	Cannon Street....." "																	
22	London Bridge....." "				5 45						9 35						5 10	5 10
22	Hastings....." "				7 40						10 40							
1	Robertsbridge.....dep.				5 15						11 25						5 50	5 50
11	Salisbury Halt....." "				5 24						11 35						6 00	6 00
21	Junction Road Halt....." "				5 24						11 35						6 00	6 00
21	Bodiam, for Staplecross....." "				5 24						11 35						6 00	6 00
7	Northiam W....." "				5 35						11 35						6 10	6 10
9	Wittersham Road....." "				5 42												6 17	6 17
12	Rolenden....." "	6 43	7 53	8 49	9 53						9 15						6 24	6 24
13	Tenterden Town....." "	6 45	8 0	8 55	10 0	11 30	11 30				3 25	6 0					6 30	6 30
14	Tenterden St. Michaels....." "																	
15	High Halden Road....." "																	
18	Biddenden....." "																	
19	Frittenden Road....." "																	
21	Headcorn.....arr.																	
57	20 London (London Bdg.) arr.		10 9							1 22	1 14							
58	20 " (Cannon St.) " "		10 14															
59	20 " (Charing Crs.) " "									1 35	1 24							
Miles from Headcorn.	Up		Week Days only															
			a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
20	London—					9 15	11 15											
20	Charing Cross.....dep.																	
20	Cannon Street....." "		6 32														5 40	
20	London Bridge....." "		6 30														5 45	
1	Headcorn.....dep.		8 50		10 53	12 30											7 15	
9	Frittenden Road....." "																	
18	Biddenden....." "																	
15	High Halden Road....." "																	
7	Tenterden St. Michaels....." "																	
13	Tenterden Town....." "		6 53	9 38	11 23	1 10				4 15		4 35		5 24		7 27	7 47	
12	Rolenden....." "		7 0	9 45		1 15				4 22		4 42				7 32	7 52	
9	Wittersham Road....." "		7 7	9 52						4 30		4 50						
14	Northiam W....." "		7 17	10 2						4 45		5 3						
21	Bodiam, for Staplecross....." "		7 27	10 12						4 56		5 16						
19	Junction Road Halt....." "																	
20	Salisbury Halt....." "																	
21	Robertsbridge.....arr.		7 40	10 31						5 10		5 30						
56	22 Hastings.....arr.		8 25	11 25						5 51		6 10						
71	22 London (London Bdg.) " "											7 19						
72	22 " (Cannon St.) " "		9 45															
73	22 " (Charing Crs.) " "		12 5							6 33		7 32						

NI Stops by signal to get down or pick up passengers.

SI Saturdays excepted.

WV Station for Beckley and Sandhurst.

Z Arr. 3 30 p.m.



31048 in the shed road at Rolvenden, 28/7/49

(Vic Mitchell)

Arrival at Headcorn was at 9.50am where I alighted and walked across to the K&ESR platform. Waiting there was my train, the 10.53am to Tenterden. I stared at it and quickly turned round to see the green main line train disappearing into the distance towards London and then took another look at what was before me. There were no adequate words in the prolific English language which could really do justification to the image before me. One loco of indeterminable age coupled to a single coach of possibly equal antiquity, but behind that a rake of various loose coupled goods trucks. I was now beginning to accept that what I had heard about this line was not fiction after all. After a while the engine coughed and wheezed its way out of the station towing its Hornby railway train make up behind it. Yes, today was going to be a day to remember and it had only just begun. Slowly we made our way along the track in the general direction of Tenterden. I settled down in what was, surprisingly

quite comfortable seats and glanced around to take stock of my fellow travellers. What fellow travellers? I was alone, alone, that is apart from one engine driver, one fireman, one guard and a motley collection of goods trucks. I could only assume that what ever was in the goods trucks was a profitable cargo for my contribution wasn't going to make much difference to BR's accounts.

Before departure the guard came along, no doubt surprised that they were actually carrying a passenger for events yet to come suggested that this was some kind of novelty. He inspected my ticket and exchanged the usual civilities that officials tend to do when they have nothing else to occupy their time. Coming to a halt further down the line I glanced out of the window expecting to see a station platform, but no. It was sidings and the goods trucks were coming off and needed to be shunted into their respective positions. Naturally, having been brought up to accept that some rules at least have to be adhered to, I assumed

that the engine would be detached, run around its train and just take the goods trucks into their new home. Not so, after all, why make work. So it was, then, that I and the coach did a tour of the sidings whilst odd trucks were unhooked and shunted into their allotted places. This manoeuvre was either allowed for in the timetable or the timetable was so stretchable that these extra excursions didn't show. Back to the 'main' line and we were again on our way to Tenterden. Just outside the station we slowly ground to a halt. Curiosity was somewhat aroused when I heard the distinct sound of a coupling being undone, only to be followed by the diminishing sound of a loco disappearing into the distance. Obviously the guard must have gone with them for I was left quite alone with thoughts of tomorrow's newspaper's headlines reporting on "Lost Schoolboy Found in Abandoned Train by Biggles". However, my immediate concern was what was left in the lunchbox was still sufficient to occupy the time. Somewhat later my thoughts were interrupted by the sound of another coupling being disconnected and the guard climbed back into his compartment in the coach. He unwound the brake and we gravitated into the platform, the engine having been passed by simmering in the goods yard. The guard then walked back up the line and ran the goods wagons and brake van into the sidings in a similar manner.

There was time to visit the town before leaving at 1.10pm for Rolvenden. Here I had two hours in which to take some photographs. The 3.15pm departure back to Headcorn started there and again I was the sole passenger. On arrival back at Tenterden I was confronted by a short man in a trilby hat demanding to inspect my ticket. As it was a Headcorn to Northiam Single I was asked to purchase an additional Tenterden to Rolvenden Return to cover my extraneous mileage. Obviously, having captured a passenger, they weren't going to let him get away with anything. I decided to keep 'mum' over my additional trips around the sidings just in case this might be charged as an excursion.

There was a further hour to be spent at this delightful and unique country station in the peace of a beautiful summer day.

By comparison the remainder of the journey was less eventful. I departed from Tenterden at 4.35pm for a trip to Robertsbridge where there was only 20 minutes to wait for the return. Time allowed for me only to travel back as far as Northiam where I had to alight and catch a Maidstone & District Omnibus to Hastings and the real world.

I am glad that the K&ESR was saved by a few dedicated enthusiasts and when I see the smart stations and well loaded, sometimes even crowded trains today, I can only reflect that Col. Stephens would have been happy if it had been like that in his day. However, if it had been, would I have been able to look back today at an event that is certainly unique in my lifetime. The ticket collector in the trilby? Almost certainly Mr Austen.

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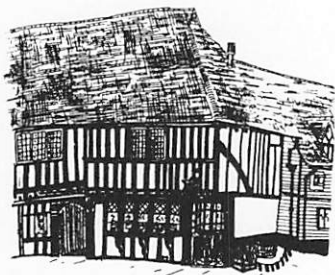
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