

# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 75

Spring 1998



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

# The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

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

Registered Charity 262481

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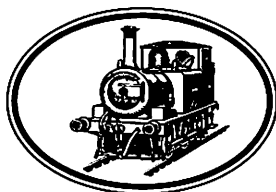
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# The Tenterden Terrier



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## FRONT COVER

*USA No 65 heads a light freight at Haystacks crossing, above Rolvenden, 25th October 1997*  
(Brian Stephenson)

## FRONTISPIECE

*P class in profile: with Adrian Landi on the footplate (upper) in Tenterden yard, on 25th February 1990 and drifting down the bank below Cranbrook Road with the 12:15pm to Northiam, on 17th August 1997*  
(Alan P. Barnes)

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# Editorial

## Another record

The Railway earned a net profit of £82,000 last year – just topping the previous year's record of £80,000. A full review of the results will appear in the next issue, but this is a considerable achievement in the wake of marginally lower passenger numbers. Of course, it would be easy to produce handsome figures if we were simply to cut down on maintenance, but this is not the case and the Railway is in good fettle as we

tackle the extension plans to Bodiam.

Bodiam 2000 will cost around £2M, of which one half is being funded by the Millennium Commission. However, in order to complete the funding we need to raise £350,000 from the membership through a bond issue. This works out at about £120 per member if everyone subscribes – not a lot if we have the prize of reaching the Railway's natural terminus within two years.

## From the Chairman – Robin Dyce

A review of 1997 and a look forward to 1998

At this time last year the Railway was celebrating a record year. Passenger numbers had risen by 20% resulting in record profitability that enabled a significant repayment to be made to the bank.

Fearing that the bubble might burst in 1997 we braced ourselves for a downturn in business but in February 1998 we are again celebrating the end of another excellent year. Income has handsomely exceeded expenditure with the result that a net profit of £82,000 has been achieved – surpassing last year's record.

However, this has not been achieved by reducing the level of investment in our Railway. In addition to routine maintenance approximately £135,000 has been invested during the past year on a great many capital projects including; the car park at Tenterden which has been surfaced, and the permanent way renewed at Gazedown Wood and Orpin's curve. Catering vehicles RU69 and the PMV have been overhauled and Maunsell CK56 restored to a very high standard. The restoration of USA No 65, the repairs to the Norwegian firebox and, with the Terrier Trust, the purchase of Terrier No 3 'Bodiam' have also been completed in 1997. A second payment has been made on No 3's boiler, which will speed her return to revenue making service. Whilst other leisure and tourist attractions have experienced a reduction in visitor numbers, our visitor numbers have remained consistent. This is a glowing testament to the quality and variety of

the product we now offer.

Most importantly of all is that the financial position of the Railway has been stabilised. Without this achievement we could not be considering the extension to Bodiam with such confidence. This represents a remarkable turn round in our fortunes, a position made possible by the strict financial control adopted by the Board and the financial department.

One of the high points for 1997 must be the award of the £975,000 grant from the Millennium Commission for the Bodiam extension.

So what's to come for 1998?

Engine crews will welcome replacement of the four-trips-a-day timetable with one that has three trips. 'Ploughman's Lunch on the Line' has been added to the successful range of on-train catering packages and the Wealden Belle, School visits and other services will continue. Our charter business will be further developed and Clive Groome will bring a new edge to the railway experience courses.

In addition there will be the excitement of launching the Bodiam 2000 Bond Issue and starting work in earnest on the extension in order to meet the completion date of 2nd April 2000 – exactly one hundred years to the day after the line first opened.

On behalf of the board I would like to thank all the Company's volunteers and employees who worked so hard to achieve the fantastic results in 1997. We look forward to your continued support in meeting the challenges of 1998 and beyond.

# Lineside News

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

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## Commercial

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### Passengers & Timetables

Total passenger figures for the 1997 season were 79,775 – within 1% of the 1996 figure of 80,528. This is an extremely good result for a season in which most other tourist attractions in the area are reporting a decline in patronage of between 5% and 20%. The numbers are analysed in more detail in Tickets Please!

Improvements in the range of departures, certainly helped us hold on to our market share in a difficult year but working four trips in a day proved rather an arduous task for operating crews, ticket inspectors and catering staff. For 1998 the four trip turns have been eliminated but the range of departure times maintained, by extending the service interval from an hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. This means that on a number of the mid-week days during shoulder periods, last year's one engine in steam service will be replaced by a timetable of alternating steam and diesel departures. Use of the diesel observation unit is now limited to days such as these, where it is used to augment a one engine in steam service. Experience has shown that this is the optimum use of the unit, as when it is operated within half an hour or so of a steam train almost all passengers choose to wait for steam. Accordingly, the off-peak Sunday service has been scaled down and the diesel trains removed.

### Santa Special Steam Trains

The number of passengers again topped 10,000 – the number carried being governed by the rolling stock available rather than demand. For the first time ever revenue topped the £100,000 mark to round off an excellent year in style.

Donald Wilson again did a magnificent job in buying and arranging for the wrapping of the presents, while the Chief Pixie team of Nicci Salmon, Paul Curran and Kevin Goodsell undertook the rostering and day-to-day supervision of the Santa Special operation.

### Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

Takings for 1997 were up around 10% on 1996 and totalled £91,250. The new layout, improved display, better lighting and several new lines introduced last year all contributed to this success.

### Catering

On-train catering continued to grow last year and new products for this season include Ploughman's Lunch on the Line to complement the popular steam train & morning coffee and cream tea packages.

Saturday dinners and Sunday lunches aboard the Wealden Belle were as popular as ever last year and charter and special catering business increased by 60%.

Improvements were also made to the income and profitability of the station catering where income rose by over 12% from £57,000 to more than £64,000.

### Marketing

November saw the publication of the first of the promotional leaflets for the 1998 season when the timetable rolled off the presses, closely followed in December by the Wealden Belle and group visit leaflets. The schools and special events publicity are due for publication in February.

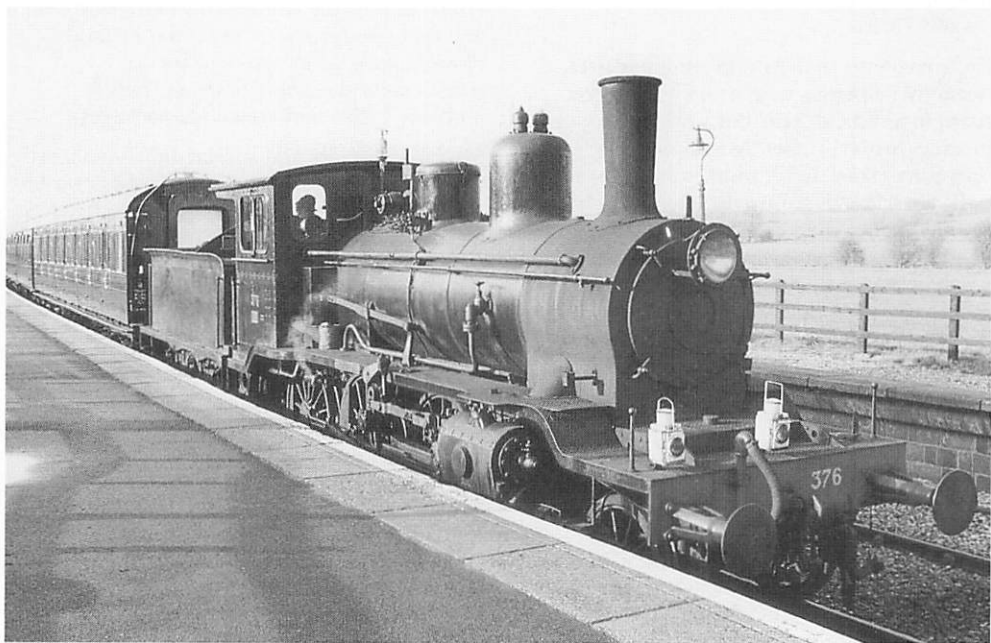
The new timetable was mailed to all members with the November edition of The Tenterden Terrier. The publication has been given a fresh look with a redesigned front cover that conveys the traditional steam message but with enough "shelf-shout" that the leaflet will stand out in a rack that may display up to 80 leaflets on competing attractions. Again, short sections in French, German and Dutch are included and the leaflet will be distributed throughout Northern France and in parts of Belgium and Holland in addition to South East England.

Space has been booked at a number of trade fairs during January and February. Most of these shows are aimed at the group visits

market and the stand is often shared with other local attractions, notably Biddenden Vineyards, The South of England Rare Breeds Centre and Tenterden Vineyard Park. The ability to offer full day itineraries in the area certainly helps and has played an important part in increasing group business over the past two years.

As a result of one such arrangement the Railway and Biddenden Vineyards are featured in the domestic holiday brochure of travel giant Shearings. Early indications are that this may bring up to three coach loads of visitors a week throughout the Summer.

Another joint innovation for 1998 has been agreed in principal with Connex South Eastern and the National Trust. As a result inclusive tickets for rail travel from London, admission to Bodiam Castle and a trip on the K&ESR will be available. A bus will convey passengers between Robertsbridge Station, the Castle and Northiam Station and the through ticketing arrangements will mean that for the first time in 44 years it will be possible to buy a ticket from Charing Cross to Tenterden. The service will operate on Sundays in July and on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays in August.



*Norwegian Locomotive No 19 pauses at Northiam on its test run, 5th December 1997 (John Liddell)*

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## Motive Power

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Last autumn continued to be as busy as high summer for the department due to routine work associated with the increased operations. For example the Christmas train period saw all our serviceable locomotives in service. The larger locomotives operating Santas and the smaller ones running trains after Christmas.

With an intense winter maintenance schedule predicted a plan was drawn up to organise activities during the short non-operating period.

Wants list, items include rags and old coats/sheets etc.; lockable cupboards; scrapers; drill bits up to ½" diameter; heavy duty tarpaulins; brooms and shovels; graphite asbestos gland packing; hand tools generally – hammers, spanners, etc.

### Steam locomotives

No 3 'Bodiam': The new boiler's firebox, being constructed by Israel Newton, is nearly ready for fitting into the outer shell. Before



further work can be carried out on the rest of the locomotive we must await the presentation to be submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. The Terrier Trust is currently compiling the presentation.

No 8 'Knowle': Much work has concentrated on the procurement and fitting up of the brake system, sanding pipe work and other steam pipes etc. The new pipes and valves are now able to be fitted having completed the majority of the boiler cladding. It is predicted the loco should be completed by late summer dependant on staff resources.

No 10 'Sutton': Remains as static exhibit at Tenterden Station.

No 11 'P class': This locomotive has finally been withdrawn for its 10 yearly boiler and loco overhaul on 18th December 1997 after the extension period granted from June. The boiler will be removed for examination and the cylinder castings inspected as staff resources allow.

No 14 'Charwelton': In service. It is hoped that the loco will attend the annual celebrations at the CFBS in April.

No 19 'Norwegian': Our thanks go to the team of volunteers who led the locomotive's re-assembly during this autumn. The boiler returned from Chatham Steam Restoration Co. during September (coinciding with the end of the high summer service) and the loco was serviceable for the latter half of the Santa trains covering the place of the withdrawn P class.

No 21 'Wainwright': Serviceable.

No 22 'Maunsell': Serviceable

No 23 'Holman F. Stephens': The piston heads and rings are being renewed as a winter project. Opportunity is being taken to carry out other work at the same time.

No 24 'Rolvenden': Serviceable

No 25 'Northiam': The boiler repairs were completed before Christmas and preparations made for a successful hydraulic test early January. The new ashpan has been delivered and work at present is concentrated on mounting the boiler fittings in readiness for trial steam testing.

No 1638 Pannier Tank: This loco was

withdrawn in October after an extension to its 10 yearly period of service. Since then the boiler has been removed for examination. The bunker has also been removed and the rear section of the cab floor cut out.

The cylinder castings have been exposed and the accumulated scale has been removed by needle gun to allow a close examination of the cylinder walls. A protective coating of metal based filler will be applied to seal this area from corrosion.

The boiler has been sent to the Chatham Steam Restoration Company for overhaul.

### **Diesel locomotives**

Drewry 03: This loco has recently received an 'A' exam and anti freeze check.

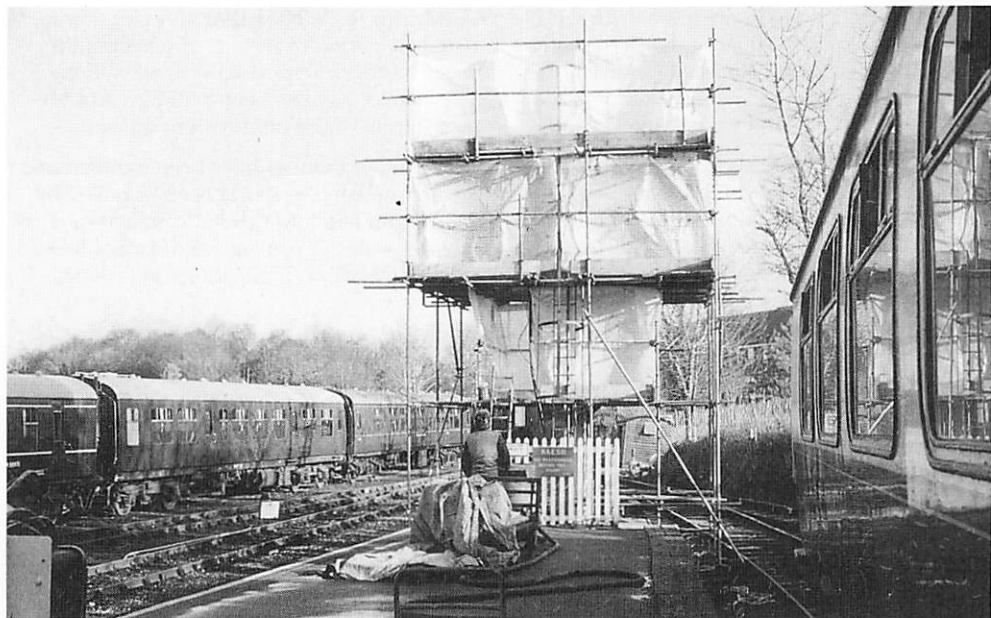
08 shunter: In service at Tenterden whilst the Drewry has been based at Rolvenden. This loco has received an 'A' exam and attention to the charging circuit in an effort to avoid flat batteries.

No 48 Class 14: This loco has been run up again over the autumn following extensive work on installation of the cooling system plant items. Now we are fairly confident that it is a worthwhile overhaul proposition. The rest of the overhaul will be carried out by a contractor off site.

No 49 Class 14: This is serviceable following rectification of the faulty turbocharger that replaced the one that failed earlier last year. The loco received an 'A' exam this autumn and further adjustment on the reverser mechanism.

Ruston: In service following an 'A' exam.

Crompton D6570 'Ashford': This is serviceable following its first 'A' exam in January. During the autumn the loco was given a three week space in the Carriage and Wagon shed where it was painted in the original BR green livery. Many favourable comments have been heard about its condition and it has featured in several magazines. Many thanks must be extended to Meg Gooch and the staff of the C&W who assisted throughout. Very popular with crews, the locomotive has been regularly used on engineers trains. The number of ex BR staff passed to drive it has meant a nice rest for those full time staff who would otherwise have



*Tenterden Water Column shrouded as shot blasting takes place, 13th January 1998 (John Liddell)*

been rostered to drive. If anyone is interested in working on the Crompton or purchasing spares they should contact Simon Long via Tenterden Station.

#### **Cranes**

10 ton Grafton: Stored out of service. The crane is protected with grease and tarpaulins.

10 ton Taylor-Hubbard: In service following repairs and replacement of a worm and pinion gear wheels. These had to be specially manufactured. The resultant repair has proven to be very satisfactory with a load test carried out in Mid-December by Lifting Technology Ltd. Our contract lifting tackle inspection company was satisfied with the repairs noting that the previous slackness (characteristic with the crane's time in service with BR) has been fully taken up where practicable.

36 ton Ransom Rapier Breakdown crane: This crane has been serviceable lifting boilers

and containers etc. at Rolvenden in the autumn. It had a load test in December to validate the lifting element for a further period of service. The opportunity will be taken this spring to continue the painting of the jib.

#### **GWR Railcar Project**

Substantial headway has been made with restoration of the railcar since the last update. A most gratifying situation for the team. The repairs to the timber framework of both the Robertsbridge end driving cab and small saloon have now been completed. On the mechanical side the control gear for this cab has been overhauled and awaits fitting. In order to ensure completion of the remaining framework repairs, timber stocks are now being built up, and the manufacture of a number of standard frame sections will be undertaken to enable faster progress to be made.

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## **Rolling Stock**

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Maunsell CK No 56; Maunsell CK No. 5618 (K&ESR No. 56) re-entered service on 6 December 1997 following an overhaul which

first started in 1987. A few jobs remain to be done – such as fitting gangway bellows at one end due to late delivery of parts – but the

coach has attracted many favourable comments. No. 5618 operated without a hitch right through the Santa Special Season and is proving a comfortable vehicle. It is also proving most nostalgic for those who can remember Maunsell coaches in main line service.

PMV 1808; No. 1808 had several weeks in the shed towards the end of the year, but has returned for further attention at the time of writing. It is due back in service in time for the main running season.

SE&CR Family saloon; After being in regular service since 1994, SE&CR No. 177 has more than repaid the money and effort which went into its restoration. The coach has also begun to look rather time-worn, particularly on the weather-prone south side. No 177 accordingly entered the carriage shed late in 1997. The opportunity is being taken to completely repanel the south side and the 'Robertsbridge' end, the work including removal of the metal sheeting applied by the Army at Longmoor. Shortly before this report was compiled (Mid-January) a start had been made on fitting the new plywood panelling.

Wagons etc.; Work is in hand to repaint the Esso tanker (K&ESR No. 132). Younger members of the department are again taking an interest in brightening up our goods vehicles. The Shell tanker (K&ESR No 118) has been recovered from Bodiam, where it was in the way of civil engineering work, and brought to Tenterden for restoration.

Electrical section; Construction is underway in the carriage shed to replace 'Abdul's tent' with a more permanent electrical shop.

A start was made on 2 January when new concrete flooring was laid next to the bolt store.

Working Week 1998; This year the Carriage and Wagon working week will be held from Saturday 25th July to Sunday 2nd August. Featured vehicles will be announced in due course. Make a note in your diary and please try to come along. It's fun and, if you have not heard about C&W before, a great way of finding out what the department is all about.

Wanted, Wagon Restorers and Fitters! With Bodiam 2000 underway attention is being given to the Railway's wagon fleet. The 'modern' vehicles will be required for the line construction and P.Way work on the operating section. We also need to keep up maintenance on the 'historic' wagons used for demonstration freights and mixed trains.

More volunteers are needed if we are to meet our work schedule for 1998. Previous experience is not necessary although a knowledge of joinery and/or mechanical maintenance would be useful. Training will be given if required. Remember, wagons are different. If you have ever been put off C&W because coach restoration looks too 'fine arts' then maybe this is the opportunity you have been waiting for. If you are interested please contact either Clive Young (manager) or Chris Cheney (senior foreman) at Carriage and Wagon Department, Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6HE. Tel. 01580 765511.

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## Permanent Way

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The Permanent Way department has once again been hard at work undertaking the clearance works in association with the extension to Bodiam. The site at Bodiam has now been totally cleared despite the theft of our contractor's JCB on the Saturday night of one of our working weekends there. The tank wagon that has been there from the days of the Steam at Bodiam has also, at last, been transferred to Tenterden. This movement

unfortunately resulted in some damage to the site and we had to spend a further weekend clearing it up. The site has also seen the delivery of its first new track panel in the form of six 75lb track panels, brought in from Wittersham Road by Hiab lorry. The same lorry also delivered a large selection of point parts, which are currently being assembled into the first three points for the site. In addition two further lorry loads of point parts

have arrived from our suppliers and been laid out as well. During January we also took delivery of the first batch of 510 concrete sleepers for the line between Northiam and Bodiam. These are currently being stored in the engineering works next to the station at Bodiam. Many thanks to our friends at Vinall & White for their help with this.

The winter's work also took us to Northiam where we removed the remaining head shunt towards Bodiam, along with the trap points. The line was then truncated one and a half lengths from the Bodiam end points and we installed a set of buffer stops. This allows us to totally ring fence the Northiam-Bodiam trackbed and give it over to the civil engineering contractors to enable them to start work to that part of the extension works. At the other end of Northiam station we have removed the trap point in the loop line in readiness for the signalling work that will allow us to run trains to Bodiam.

The winter break has also allowed us time to replace the way-beams on Hexden Bridge. The original ones were made from 4 soft wood point timbers and were life expired. The new ones, which were a little bit longer at

32 feet, will hopefully give us many years of service.

The remaining work left over from the working week in November, namely the removal of the large amount of spoil from the excavation of Orpins siding some years ago was removed to our infill site at Newmill bridge. This in turn allowed us to dig a new track drain and lay in a new S&T duct. The duct is to allow the signal cable that is currently clipped to the fence to be removed, which will then allow us to restring the fence.

The sleepers that we removed from the headshunt at Northiam have been laid out on the operating section so that the Junior P.Way gang can carry out spot resleepering. They have finished the wooden section of Orpin's curve with the sleepers removed from the November relay section and are now moving on to the areas between Cranbrook Road Crossing and the top of the Wet Cutting and between Rolvenden and Willow Curve. As from the middle of February this gang will also become responsible for all the day to day maintenance on the full operating section allowing the main gang to concentrate on the extension works.

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## Infrastructure

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### Forestry and Conservation

In January, 1997, we started clearance work at Newmill bridge and have been gradually working back towards Wittersham Station. There were various breaks during the year, e.g. bramble bashing just below Cranbrook Crossing due to serious rabbit problems. During this working day an interesting incident occurred, one of the many we seem to have encountered during our working parties, especially with animals and wild life. A sheep in an adjoining field seemed very reluctant to move away from the fence as we approached – most unusual. We then realised that it was caught by a bramble. It eventually pulled itself away with the bramble still wrapped around its body, running off to join the other sheep. We thought no more about this until later in the day when the same sheep returned with the bramble still around its body. It came straight to where we were

working and stood next to the fence and allowed Miriam, one of our group, to actually remove the bramble from its body. (Isn't nature wonderful?)

In June we carried out the annual grass cutting and controlled burning at Wittersham Bank, plus the grass banks just down from Tenterden crossing and also Cranbrook Road next to the bungalow. Much of our work seems to be very slow going but this is partly due to the amount of vegetation that has to be cut back or removed. We are also trying to clear each site more thoroughly in order to reduce the amount of dead timber which can add to the intensity of any lineside fire which may occur.

The gang is currently working along Oxney straight where we have pollarded some willows. Tree stumps or saplings which are causing continual problems due to their



closeness to the line or growth directly under telegraph wires, are now being treated with chemical stump remover.

During 1998 we intend to carry out work between Northiam and Rother Bridge, plus any other small jobs which may occur during the year.

If you have a Sunday to spare and would like to join our merry band of people please ring Peter Thorogood on 0181 859 5082.

### **Building**

The outside maintenance programme has been disrupted by this winter's wet weather, so recent activities have been confined to the Tenterden site. Nevertheless useful progress has been made, including building a set of heavy duty steps for access to the commercial department coach, repainting one level crossing gate and the flanking fences; the front fence and C&W yard gates have also been repaired and painted. The signalman's crossing, for long a dangerous eyesore, has now been properly reconstructed.

Inside Stan Harrison has constructed shelves for the Commercial Manager's files and Derek Grieb has completed decorating the main office reception – both jobs having been started a couple of years ago by the Community Action gang!

Platform seat restoration continues and the Wittersham and Northiam running-in boards are now complete. They should be in place before the main season commences.

The team will play an active role in Bodiam 2000 taking on minor and finishing works and is expected to be occupied on the project throughout 1999. With this in mind the 1998 programme is quite comprehensive and aims for completion of outstanding repairs and repainting at all existing stations and level crossings.

Voluntary work on the Bodiam project is an allowable contribution to the required matching funding and will be notionally charged at quite a generous hourly rate. The team will begin its contribution during the Spring Working Week from the 10th to 15th May. This will again be based at Northiam where apart from further cosmetic improvements the copings and face of the second platform will be completed and the

fence raised to finished platform level.

You can contribute by joining the outside maintenance team on any Tuesday and by supporting the Working Week, for details contact Peter Davis on 01885 482404 or Graham Hopker on 01303 862811.

### **Rolvenden**

The yard extension into the adjacent field continues to be pursued with more details being worked up. It seems that the locomotive department will have to manage in the current cramped conditions until the Bodiam extension is complete.

In the shed the drilling machine, which was installed about a year ago, has finally been wired up, inspected and tested.

Three new storage containers, delivered to the railway, have been moved from the field and installed adjacent to the Rolvenden station platform. It is intended to get them painted in dark green when the weather improves.

A gate and security barrier has been installed to gain access to the field from the yard.

The office accommodation has been moved to clear the site for a new replacement office. The old one had served us well for many years had started to leak badly and records were getting damaged.

We are grateful to E.P.S. Logistics of Sittingbourne for remembering us during their recent workshop reorganisation. We have procured a number of bending and folding machines, steel benches and vices.

### **Operating**

Last year was an extremely busy one for the department. The man power was stretched to breaking point on several occasions and in fact we had to replace scheduled steam services with the DMMU as no volunteer staff were available and all the full time staff were already busy. With this in mind we are looking at increasing our manpower resources for the extension to Bodiam. Much time has been expended looking at the signalling system for Northiam and the projected timetable for running services to Bodiam. It is obvious that we must extend our resources to operate the present level of services so if anyone has an interest in becoming a Driver, Fireman, Guard, Signalman, or Shunter



*Trackbed clearance at Padghams, one mile east of Bodiam*

*(Humphrey Atkinson)*

please contact Simon Long at Rolvenden.

Over the winter we have been busy working on the Operating Infrastructure. The Pit lights at Rolvenden have been overhauled and water softening systems installed at Tenterden and Northiam columns. Tenterden water column was also shotblasted and repainted during this period.

### **Museum**

In the last Museum notes, mention was made of the National Railway Museum award for 'best interpretation' to our Museum. The award of a certificate and £500 was collected on 8th December, when a party of eight of those involved made their way to the N.R.M. The money has been put towards completing the displays.

Thanks go the N.R.M. for donating a velocipede which was surplus to their requirements. It had been damaged and needs some restoration (volunteer required!), but it is identical to a vehicle used on the K&ESR. Its origins are unknown – but was it taken into British Transport Commission ownership with the K&ESR horse-bus in 1948? – we shall never know.

The year ended with 6816 visitors to the museum, (716 complimentary and 6100

paying), on the 120 days that it was open.

This gives an average of about 58 visitors per day. Entrance charges raised £6,155 and a little over £1,500 was taken on behalf of the shop for book sales.

All the display cases have now been constructed and by early February most of the painting had been completed. There is now a splendid new entrance counter which provides a much more comfortable work-station for attendants.

Improvements to displays have continued, notably the platform area alongside 'Gazelle', and with more dramatic lighting for the engine. The carriage compartment has been grained internally and just needs a few finishing touches. The display recording Colonel Stephens' military career is nearing completion and this is set within a 'tent'.

In October, to celebrate our first full year of opening, there was a small 'get-together' in the Museum for all those involved; an occasion we hope to repeat this year. The team of attendants for 1998 has grown, with six new volunteers coming forward, but still more are needed. Please phone John Miller on 01580 765350 if you can spare an occasional day to help.

# People

## Volunteer Liaison

By now, everyone should be aware that we are going to Bodiam. Our target is to run a passenger service on 2nd April 2000. People are needed to work directly on the extension, please contact our project manager, Peter Barber directly.

Whilst the focus is on Bodiam, please do not forget that we still have a railway to run. All departments continue to be in need of help. The following appeal has been received from Carriage & Wagon;

"With Bodiam 2000 underway, attention is being given to the Railway's wagon fleet. The "modern" vehicles will be required for line construction and P Way work on the operating section. We also need to keep up maintenance on the historic wagons used for demonstration freights and mixed trains."

This appeal raises an important point. We have a number of skilled people around the railway. The problem is that they are also doing less skillful work because there is a shortage of those prepared to "learn the ropes". If more people came forward to learn the basics then our skilled volunteers could get on with the tricky bits and have a bit of time to coach others. So please give it some consideration. This also applies to the Locomotive, Permanent Way and Signalling & Telegraph departments.

Before we know it, we will be into the summer and mid week running. Can we please ask all volunteers to consider giving up a day or two's leave to help in this busy time? This will ease our reliance on our volunteers who have retired from full time employment and would probably enjoy a day or two off!

Finally, Graham Bridge, our Volunteer Recruitment Officer, is now contactable via the Internet. His address is G.Bridge@BTInternet.com

## Working Weeks & Special Projects.

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

● Carriage & Wagon – Bodiam & historic wagon fleet. Contact Clive Young or Chris Cheney on 01580 765511.

● Carriage & Wagon working week  
25th July – 2nd August. Contact Clive Young 01580 765511.

## Locomotive department

We are pleased to welcome Bob Forsythe back into the fold after his recent angina attack.

Our two apprentices, Ben Swan and John Wallington, have completed their probationary period satisfactorily. This has been recognised by a formal review interview in conjunction with Kent Tec, the college training providing organisation. It is pleasing to note that a number of new young volunteers have joined in the work of the department, Daniel Mclean, Simon Mace, Matthew Philpot, forming a regular Saturday gang.

## Operating department

The increase in the number of footplate turns over the years is amply demonstrated by the following:

1994 – 815;	1995 – 824;
1996 – 1004;	1997 – 1163

Even this does not tell the whole story as there has been a big increase in the amount of shunting due to overcrowding of stock on the railway and shunting sets for special and changed workings.

Congratulations to Dereck Drage and David Slack who successfully passed their driving tests last year.

## Personal

Ray Bowden sadly passed away on 31st January. For many years Ray almost single handedly operated the printing works at Northiam when the Railway terminated at points west of Rolvenden. When the Railway did finally extend to Northiam he suddenly found that he, and his presses, were needed at Tenterden. The Railway had discovered him again! Ray continued on a great letterpress tradition and the variety of machines and range of output are a tribute to Ray and his colleagues.

The first week in January 1998 saw Dave and Sheila O'Callaghan retire from the Vine Inn in Station Road, Tenterden. In 1971 they took over the Vine, at the same time as a

fledgling Tenterden Railway Company was formed. In the early days the Vine was the regular meeting place for all volunteers. Indeed many still call the area to the right of the front door, the railway room. An inscribed silver salver was subscribed to by many

members and presented to the couple on 3rd January. Dave had let slip that he would like another trip on the Wealden Pullman, of course nowadays called the Wealden Belle, and this was also paid for out of the money raised.

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## Other Groups

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### **News from the Rother Valley Railway**

*by Mark Yonge*

Motive power at Robertsbridge has now increased by 100%. The group has been fortunate in acquiring, from a private owner, an ex-BR Ford Dagenham Works class 03 Diesel Locomotive. In full running order, this engine will considerably enhance progress on site as the works progress back towards Bodiam.

A telephone cable company has respected the course of the planned line at Junction road by laying the wire sufficiently deep so as not to interfere with future track laying. This cable depth allows for the return of the line either on the original route or the planned deviation.

### **The French Connection – news from the CFBS**

*by Philip Pacey*

After all I managed to snatch a few days at St Valery during the first week of September. For the first time, I took a friend with me, and we found ourselves removing dust from the chassis of coach No 10302. A new body for this coach is to be built, virtually from scratch, at a factory at Abbeville; fortunately the CFBS has a set of drawings. On one day we walked from Cayeux back to St Valery, and I was mightily impressed by the upgrading which had taken place on the section of track the alarming state of which I had drawn attention to the previous year.

The CFBS newsletter Ch'tchot Train, No 34 (September 1997) remarks on 'un explosion de benevoles' – an increase in volunteers. This was partly accounted for by Marcelin, an almost full time volunteer, and by Sylvian, a lad who spent most of his summer holiday on the railway. He was still in residence when we arrived but he had to leave for home, and go back to school, a couple of days later. The CFBS has begun to keep record of the hours worked by volunteers, we felt proud to enter

our very modest efforts in the book. This practice will of course enable volunteer labour to be costed and to be counted as part of the CFBS's contribution to co-funded projects.

One of the little Corpet locos, 0-4-0T No 15 is being restored and should be in service at next April's steam festival. As I understand it, all three of these locos are owned by FACS but ownership is to be passed to the CFBS on condition that they are kept in working order. It is also expected that the Haine St. Pierre will be ready to re-enter service at the steam festival. The Billard railcar trailer was due to go into the depot for restoration during the winter. The Michelin has received a new engine and gearbox, as well as a good deal of additional attention. The rebuilding of M42 railcar is progressing off site. A standard gauge hopper wagon has been bought from SNCF to help with ballasting on the mixed gauge section of track.

Temporarily stored at St Valery Canal in September (and still there as far as I know) was a Ruhsthaler diesel loco, acquired by the SABA preservation group from a railway in Belgium and available for sale.

The 'lightship' mentioned in my previous notes is actually a boat used for putting out and recovering buoys. (Worse things can happen in translation, especially if I'm involved). Not surprisingly, the CFBS has declined to take it over but has offered to assist in some way with its restoration.

Winter work included relaying track at and outside Cayeux and at St Valery, and repairing the engine shed at Le Crottoy. A hangar type shed, covering three roads, is to be erected at the depot at St Valery Canal.

The final (excepting Christmas trains) total of passengers carried in 1997 again broke all records. 65,500 represents an increase of 3,500 in spite of a drop in the number of





*Waiting for the next train, with Bodiam Castle silhouetted in the background (Robert Berry)*

groups (especially school parties). 'Father Christmas' trains were scheduled to run again one weekend in December.

The 1998 steam festival is to take place on 25th and 26th April. A video of the 1996 steam festival, in which of course the K&ESR participated, is available from the CFBS @165 French Francs. It appears that the same video (with English commentary) is being distributed by MITV (15 Trent Way, West End, Southampton SO30 3FW) @ £23.95 plus £1.00 p&p.

There will be further additions to the timetable in 1998. Notably, last year's innovation, the introduction of morning trains, will be retained, but now the trains will be steam hauled, and will depart a little later from St Valery (10.45). Trains will run on more Wednesdays early and late in the season, on September weekends, and on the first two weekends in October.

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# Tickets Please!

Passenger numbers remain similar to last year – too many trains run again. Ray Collins presents the facts with other analysis and historical data provided by Duncan Buchanan.

1997 has shown a small overall decrease in passengers carried. A closer look determines that normal passenger carryings increased by 0.8% while Santa Special carryings reduced by 9.1%. It was noted last year that ordinary passenger numbers were being swelled by the number of foreign visitors. The strong pound has had an adverse effect this year, even though total numbers are in fact up marginally. Contrasting with this has been the experiment of running a service during the October half term. This proved successful in that we ran 20 trains and carried 1400 passengers – loadings of around 70 per train. We also had a very good 'Thomas' weekend in May when for the first time we ran on all three days. Our numbers for the two 'Thomas' weekends were 8897 compared with 6255 in 1996. If we reflect these figures in our analysis we find that the number of passengers carried on scheduled services during the rest of the year dropped from 67110 to 62546 a drop of 6.8%.

	1996	1997
Thomas weekends	6255	8897
Half term week	–	1400
Rest of the year	67110	62546
	73365	72843

Whilst the numbers are a bit of a curate's egg the number of passengers carried per train has slumped from 72 to 56. In fact the numbers carried per train, excluding Santa Specials, were 52 compared to 1996's total of 66. Since 1983 this is only matched by 55 per train in 1995, the year of the great slump in total passenger carryings, unlike this year where totals have been very comparable to last year. The cause is simply that we ran almost 300 more trains in 1997 than in 1996. Given the pleas for more volunteers to run the current services maybe the solution is now obvious. It is

noted that for 1998 we intend to run 200 fewer trains – a step in the right direction with hopefully more (less) to come. An average of 80 or more per train should be a sensible target without affecting the journey quality, especially when previous years are compared. It is easy to be enthusiastic about running more trains. It is good business sense, and good volunteer morale, to run only those trains really needed. Readers will realise that these observations are with the benefit of hindsight engineering, the only exact form of engineering! However it is suggested that the total number of trains should not be increased until the number of passengers already justifies it, which 1996 did not do so for 1997.

One good piece of news that can be deduced is that running the same service with 25,000 extra passengers, that is the total extra expected from the Bodiam extension will result in 75 passengers per train with this years service – a far cry from the 90 carried per train in 1990, the year of Northiam opening. Perhaps the Bodiam service will not impose that many extra turns on volunteers to run the future service, compared to 1997.

Santa Specials saw a 9.1% reduction in numbers this year. This is the lowest total carried since 1986. Santa Special totals were affected not by lack of passengers but rather by lack of rolling stock. There has been a definite increase in service quality, and price so the total income to the railway was up on 1996.

Wealden Pullmans and charters have shown another very substantial increase from 2566 to 2906 – a healthy 13.3% increase. This takes us back to the Pullman peak of the late 1980's when 3000 to 3500 passengers per year were routine carryings. This is our most profitable area of operation on the railway and our plans for 1998 suggest that

there will be a further improvement in this area.

Platform tickets and First Class supplements have shown a decrease this year. In both cases the downturn reflects a shortage of volunteer Station Assistants and Ticket Inspectors. The former dropped from 10012 to 9214 and the latter from 16509 to

14940. The lack of staff in this area is something that is being addressed. Many preserved railways have this problem and many use guards more effectively in revenue protection, particularly in the collection of first class supplements. Certainly on many weekends the guards can have little to do when most or all gates are manned.

1996					1997				
	Op. Days	Trains	Paying Passengers	Ayge. per Train	Op. days	Trains	Paying Passengers	Ayge. per train	
March	5	30	1241	41	8	84	4687	56	
April	14	92	6445	70	17	128	4603	36	
May	14	100	7340	73	15	133	10163	76	
June	25	160	9915	62	21	161	6607	41	
July	31	172	10089	59	31	209	9321	45	
August	31	204	16262	80	31	245	14320	58	
September	21	122	7943	65	23	151	8292	55	
October	8	52	2470	47	13	88	3545	47	
Nov/Dec	14	87	11660	134	15	100	11305	113	
	163	1019	73365	72	174	1299	72843	56	
Pullmans and Charters			2566				2906		
Privileges			4597				4026		
			80528				79775		
Bookings from:									
Tenterden			61177				61123		
Rolvenden			-				-		
Wittersham			-				-		
Northiam			11278				10963		
On train			910				757		
			73365				72843		



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# Green Light to Go

Project Manager, Peter Barber, outlines the work involved in the initial stages of our exciting millennium project.

With the funding package conditionally approved the project has almost got the green light to go. Without the Millennium Commission and other grants the extension to Bodiam would be a far off dream. Against all the odds we have got the funding that we set out for and probably have the only project ever started on the railway that has the funding secured before the start date.

As seen in the last *Terrier* the track bed has been cleared, levelled and compacted. This has allowed a proper assessment of the condition of the route. I was surprised by the way the formation had held up to the long period of neglect. Most of the cross drains are working but looking at the condition of them, I would love to know how. All of the longitudinal drains are silted up and it is a job to find any evidence of their existence. We have one washout near Mill Ditch that has been caused by a collapsed drain, but going on the amount of rain we have had this winter the track has held up well.

The new drainage system will follow the proven old one with the pipe size being increased where possible. The longitudinal drains will be of French drain type to provide a low maintenance system. The local farmers and the Environment Agency have been consulted to provide a system that works for the railway and the surrounding area.

Clearance of the rest of the vegetation is a very emotive subject. We have the two extremes to contend with, one from the engineering side that the whole site should be cleared, and second that every possible bit of vegetation should be left. I have to find a policy that is some where in between. The major consideration is safety, as a statutory undertaker (authorised by any enactment to carry on a railway) we have to provide the safe passage of trains and safety during construction/maintenance. We then

have to consider our neighbours and the local habitat, not only what is being removed but what it will be replaced by. The Northiam extension has shown that the removal of wooded overgrowth has allowed the marsh environment to return, this has encouraged the return of some of the rare type of birds, mammals, and reptiles, therefore properly managed clearance can benefit the local environment. Some of the trees that have to be removed are large enough to be used and I am looking into these being extracted commercially before the clearance/drainage contract starts.

A simplified breakdown into the way that the work is to be done: drainage, fencing, formation levelling, Bodiam ground work, and tamping will be done after open tendering by contractors; Bodiam station, Northiam platform and signalling done by a mixture of volunteer/contractors, and all track work done by volunteers. The programme has been written to allow the maximum of volunteer labour to be used in the tight time scale that we have. The Permanent Way works start the ball rolling with the construction of points at Bodiam in February.

The contract documents for the main civil work are being put together by Ashford Borough Council. The cost of using a professional body to formulate the contracts should be offset by the savings in claims and potential anomalies in the conditions. We are applying for a 50% funding grant from Ashford Borough Council to do this work. The smaller contracts are being put together in house, these being for individual buildings etc.

As with all projects on the railway the volunteer input is vital and is in the budget as part of the railway's input. The main focus of work will be the trackwork. It is my intention to mechanise the track laying operation as much as possible to remove a lot of the heavy graft. The track work at



Bodiam has already started and this will be followed by the overhauling of certain track items at Wittersham Road. After this we will be getting the track materials on site and this will to be done after the drainage has been completed and the final levelling of the formation. Once the trackbed has been levelled the contractors hand the site to the Permanent Way Department and track laying can start. As this operation is reliant on plant machinery that has to be hired in, most of this will have to be done in working weeks. After this there is thermic welding, ballasting, occupation crossings, fish plate shimming, etc. to contend with. I am hoping that some of the people from the Museum side of the Railway will work on the renovation of Bodiam Station. This group started on this some time ago and it would be nice to see them carry on with the work and to ensure, as far as is possible, historic authenticity. Peter Davis' Tuesday group will be doing some work on the second platform at Northiam, this will include completing the oversail laying and levelling the platform area with type one stone ready for asphalt.

I have been in contact with the University of East London land survey department, and they have agreed to let us use two of their students to survey the trackbed. They will put in control points, survey the trackbed, and work out the alignment of the line. This will be done as part of their final year HND, counting towards their qualifications. The old alignment was lost due to the vast amount of vegetation making it totally impractical to peg it out. This work can be claimed back as notional contribution, the only draw back is that I will have to write a report on their work going towards their final result.

Brian Muston and myself are presently scouring the countryside for the best possible deals for track materials, so far we have enquired as far as Poland. Concrete sleepers do not seem to be a great problem, in fact we have just purchased 500 E4 (bullhead) from Wales and they are presently in store in Vinall & White's yard, next to Bodiam Station. The rail is a bit

harder to find although the response we are getting, now that we have provisionally been offered the funding, is getting better. Other fixtures and fittings do not seem to be in short supply. Track materials have increased in value since E.W.S. have taken over the rail freight operations because very few yards are being lifted, and the old story of supply and demand dictates the price. This apart we are starting to put together some good deals.

A lot of time is being spent on the aesthetics of the station areas. Bodiam Station will be kept as close to the same original design as possible. The platform will have to be rebuilt and extended, this will be done with in-situ cast concrete platform retaining walls, allowing a brick edging to be used, then the concrete can be cement washed to mellow this into the surroundings. As the platform is to be extended the point for the siding will have to be moved further towards Robertsbridge, this will entail a certain amount of embankment expansion but the station yard will keep its layout basically the same. The station building will be renovated in the same style, the only change being that the lean-to will become a staff toilet cum rest-room, what would the Colonel say to these luxuries? There will be no new buildings on the Bodiam site. Northiam Station will have the second platform completed and the platform retaining walls cement washed.

Although not a lot seems to be happening on the ground since we provisionally received the funding there has been a lot of work taking place behind the scenes. By mid May the area under construction will be turned over to the civil engineering contractor and the fruits of a lot of people's labour will start to unfold. The design has allowed for a low maintenance long life railway with the mistakes of past projects taken into consideration. I look forward to the day when, after all the pomp and ceremony of the opening date is over, we shall be seeing this section of line earn its keep for the first time in decades.

# Back in Service

## A Southern Railway Maunsell coach returns to service.

In the *Tenterden Terrier*, winter 1997, Peter Davis commented that only one of our original four Maunsell coaches, BNO No 4443 (K&ESR) No 54, was still in service. With the return to traffic of corridor composite (CK) No 56 (Southern Railway 5618) this situation is now happily remedied. This journal has regularly reported on the vehicle's restoration, but this seems an appropriate time to look back at 5618's long association with the K&ESR.

The coach was built in April 1931. It seats 16 first and 24 third class passengers, is 61ft. 7in. in length, has Pullman-type gangways, steel underframes and buckeye couplings. The steel clad, wooden framed, Restriction 1 body is 8ft. 6ins wide. No 5618 was included in set 189, originally built for the Eastbourne services via the width-restricted Lewes tunnel. Following the 1935 Eastbourne electrification the vehicles were transferred to the Eastern Section. It was withdrawn from the Tonbridge – Reading service in January 1965.

As Peter Davis outlined, by February 1965 the K&ESR preservation project was negotiating to purchase four Maunsell designed corridor coaches – two open brakes and two CK's at £215-£250 per vehicle. Small items, such as roof board clips, were temporarily removed to allow delivery from Paddock Wood, through the Hastings line tunnels, to Robertsbridge. The coaches arrived on Sunday 28 November 1965, behind a 'Slim Jim' Class 33. They were then just over 30 years old and regarded as relatively modern vehicles.

Once moved up to Rolvenden, they were initially given numbers in the 20's series but eventually became Nos. 53 – 56. They were also repainted the K&ESR version of chocolate and cream – which never really suited them. In the case of No 56 and one BNO this was done professionally and arranged by former Chairman Peter Bengt-Abbott, a significant figure in the early preservation years. After the Tenterden – Rolvenden section reopened in February 1974 No 56 saw much use. Regular service tends however to take it out of coaches. At the end of the 1985 season the CK was

withdrawn from traffic, due to poor mechanical and bodywork condition, and laid aside awaiting heavy overhaul.

Also in the Winter 1997 *Terrier*, Mike James related the story of the Job Creation Project which enabled the Railway to reopen to Wittersham Road. Following this, the K&ESR was granted a Manpower Services Commission Community Programme Project – one of the last examples of this sort of help in pre-lottery days. For 12 months beginning in September 1987, four full time staff worked on various projects, including No 56. Quite apart from its general tatty state, the coach proved to have extensive dry rot at both ends and a leaking roof. Extensive dismantling followed. By the end of the Community Programme Project three third class and two first class compartments were fully varnished but needed seating. The two remaining first class compartments awaited the rebuilding of the adjacent roof and framing.

C&W staff continued work to the body framing, roof and interior through 1989 -1990, but the Mark 1's and the Pullman set, as always, ate into the department's time. Resources also went into the early development of the Victorian train – the L&NWR saloon and the GER six wheeler in particular although this was to prove time well spent. As a result, work to No 56 stopped for three years but it stayed under cover in the shed. Following a change of management in 1993, the opportunity was taken to maintain momentum built up during the restoration of SE&CR family saloon No 177. No 56 was accordingly made the centre piece for the annual C&W working week at the beginning of August.

A review of completed tasks established what remained to be done and, as a result, some completed sections of framing were again reworked. Once the working week was over, this phase of the project continued for another 12 months. During that year the majority of framework repairs were completed, along with those to the roof, whilst, externally, new galvanised steel panels were prepared and fitted. Internally work to the first class compartments and the corridor, including

painting and varnishing, progressed well. Little attention had previously been given to underframe and running gear. Buffers, couplings and corridor connections were now removed, and a start was made on dismantling the brake gear, including vacuum cylinders and piping. The body was then jacked off the underframe and placed on stands to allow the underframe to be needle gunned and repainted. After this the bogies were run out, dismantled, needle gunned, painted, greased up and reassembled. Eight new door lock stiles were made and extensive renewals undertaken to the door frames – mainly by a volunteer now generally known as 'John the Doors'! Areas of damaged flooring were replaced using corrugated iron – the authentic method – but covered with modern flooring compound instead of the SR cement and sawdust recipe. Steam heating was overhauled and attention was given to the wiring of the electrical system (a job which had been started during the first phase of restoration). For the first time on the K&ESR – the dynamo was sent away for overhaul.

During 1994-5 progress slowed whilst urgent structural repairs were made to the L&NWR inspection saloon and the restoration of SE&CR four-wheeler No 2947 was completed. Despite this No 56 was back on its bogies by October. By mid summer 1995 work to the toilets was largely finished and the doorskins, guttering and battery boxes re-fitted. Time was also found to fit the cover strips at the joints between the external sheets.

Then, after some undercoating had been done, work stopped for a further two years. Major reasons were a shortage of funds and the need to alleviate dry rot in the roof of 'Birdcage' No 61. This led to extensive stripping down of the 'Birdcage' and was followed by another round of work to Mark 1's and catering vehicles. No 56 spent the next 24 months in the yard which, if anything, proved the quality of the work already carried out. When it re-entered the shed in late July 1997, again as the centrepiece for Working Week, it showed few signs of deterioration. We just carried on where we had left off! Once the Working Week was over No 56 remained top priority. Progress was eased by the presence of the Department's paid staff, it seemed a good use of their time as it would give the Railway an additional vehicle quickly.

There were numerous jobs, large and small, to complete. A section of the Headcorn end buffer beam, probably damaged during a shunting mishap at Robertsbridge in the 1960s, had already been cut out and straightened and this was now welded back in. Special washers for the bolts securing body to underframe were made by a volunteer, and the build rail was finally fastened to the sole bars. All fourteen, somewhat tired droplights were replaced. These are safety-critical components and trying to prop up questionable originals is not cost effective. New items were produced in-house using a recently acquired jig. Previously new drop lights had gone out to contract – an expensive option. The droplights themselves are now activated by 'lazy tongs' in place of the original, roller-blind principle Rawlings gear. Painting was moving into its final stages, the old paint applied in 1994-5 being removed first. The ends were painted, the opportunity was taken to try out a very smart, two pack epoxy-based black paint whilst priming, undercoating and rubbing down commenced on the sides. The terrazzo toilet flooring was repaired and the window frame exteriors grain painted.

During the autumn volunteer labour was switched to No 177, now much in need of attention after three and half years in service. Work to No 56 was continued by paid staff with further volunteer input right at the end. Floor coverings and first class upholstery were handled by contractors. The addition of lining and lettering to olive green livery produced most evocative and, for older members, memory provoking results.

The Maunsell CK was successfully test run on Friday 5 December 1997. It re-entered traffic on Saturday 6th and was immediately needed for the Santa Specials. No 56 (or rather 5618) is scheduled to run in the Railway's main set of corridor coaches throughout the 1998 season. This is in line with the policy of giving as many passengers as possible the opportunity to travel in a vintage vehicle. Perhaps No 5618 can represent the carriages of similar design which ran through from London in the early 1930's. In the longer term, work is planned to both BNO's and it is hoped we have a rake of Maunsell coaches in service for the re-opening to Bodiam.



*In the carriage shed*

# Back i

*Photographed by John Lia*



*First class*





*Third class*

# n Service

*ell on its test run, 5 December 1997*



*In Tenterden platform*

# Bodiam 2000 - The Millenium Extension

## The Directors answer your questions on this exciting project

A meeting for Directors and working volunteers was called at Tenterden on 31st January to discuss the Railway to Bodiam. The questions and answers are reproduced here for the benefit of all members, but I would also like to emphasise a few key points.

Firstly, all of the grants require that the full funding package be in place, so each grant is dependent upon all the others as well as the Bond Issue having been successful; very simple in concept but a bit of a nightmare when it comes to "who signs first". Everybody will want to be last to sign and to claim that their own grant was the last crucial piece of the funding jigsaw. Naturally all the grants require that we finish the project and act in a proper and lawful manner throughout, with clear audit trails and regular progress and monitoring reports. But with the exception of the Millennium Commission, none has any "clawback" clauses or other penalties for delay. (The English Partnerships grant does have a condition that we repay the grant in the event of a Default but these are related to insolvency of TRC and similar).

The Millennium Commission has set two additional conditions, over which some members have expressed reservations: the provision of a footpath from the Station to the Castle; and a legal charge over TRC's assets. The footpath is required because the Millennium Commission, when carrying out a site inspection, said that the present lack of any footpath placed pedestrians in danger from traffic and they would not contribute to anything which might create risks of injury. However, the condition is not that TRC provides or funds the footpath, just that TRC satisfies the Commission that adequate progress towards its provision is being made. We have to fulfil that obligation, after which the Agreement can be signed. To meet the Commission's requirements, we are having discussions with East Sussex County Council (the Highways Authority), Rother District

Council (the Planning Authority) and the National Trust (the riparian land owners). Any prophecy is dangerous but we have a strong commitment by all parties for Bodiam 2000 to succeed and we are confident of meeting that condition.

Possibly the main issue of concern at the Volunteers' Meeting on 31st January revolved around the understandable requirement of the Millennium Commission to take some form of security over TRC's assets. The Commission has a legal duty placed upon it by Parliament to safeguard the public monies it is disbursing and few would argue with the proposition that anybody donating nearly £1 million needs to take reasonable steps to ensure the money is properly used. However, it cannot be emphasised strongly enough that the first duty of the TRC board is to safeguard the existing company.

At the time of writing (7 February), detailed negotiations are continuing but the most likely outcome is that the Millennium Commission will want to take a third charge (effectively a mortgage just as in house purchase) over all TRC's land, though not its moveable assets (rolling stock, museum contents etc.). This third charge would be after the first charge to the National Westminster Bank to safeguard all its loans and the second charge to the Environment Agency (successor to the National Rivers Authority) to recompense them if any of our activities caused flood damage. Both these charges have been in place for the last 20 years and have never caused any difficulties.

Although this may initially sound alarming, the reality is that the Millennium Commission definitely wants us to succeed - and is confident we will. The appraisal process, which reduced 1,900 applications to just 71 winners, was a most exhaustive investigation of every aspect of Bodiam 2000, its engineering, finance and marketing. In making the award, the Commission has given us a strong vote of

confidence and they now want to work constructively with us to complete our project. As mentioned earlier, negotiations over the exact terms of the Agreement and securities are continuing but already the Commission has accepted our request to introduce the concept of "force majeure" into performance targets. That is to say, if unforeseen problems arise, such as soil conditions, the Millennium Commission will undertake to renegotiate the timing or even scope of the project with us to seek a mutually beneficial solution. Nothing will be done which will create a real risk to TRC and the existing line.

Moving finally on to the Bond Issue, its success is VITAL to our goal of reaching Bodiam. Again as mentioned earlier, all the donors want to see that all the funding, including the receipts from the Bond, is in place before finally signing their Agreements. Of course, the more Bonds we sell, the less we have to find from TRC. So we have set a target of £350,000. This is not as daunting as a first glance might

suggest. The Northiam Bond Issue 10 years ago raised more than £170,000 but allowing for inflation, that is the same real value as today's £350,000. And the objective is the completion of our dream of Steam from Tenterden to Bodiam.

The Bonds will carry a competitive rate of interest as well as valuable travel concessions and tickets on our prestigious Wealden Belle services for the higher values. Bond values will range from £50 up to £5,000 with a limited number (not bearing interest) at £25. Bonds valued at £500 or more can be purchased over 10 months by standing order.

We are aiming to launch these Bonds to members before the end of February with a public launch in late March. Even if you cannot do anything else for Bodiam, this is your chance to make a real contribution to the successful completion of that dream just a few imaginative people had 25 years ago!

**Norman Brice**

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## **1 Why Extend to Bodiam?**

There are two main reasons, one largely emotional, the other very practical and supported by sound financial arguments:-

- i) The Aims of the Railway as set out in the Memorandum of Association under which the Tenterden Railway Co. was created are, *"to preserve, restore and operate any part or parts of the Kent & East Sussex Railway extending from Tenterden to Robertsbridge as a permanent public exhibition and museum for the advancement of technical, historical and general education and for the permanent preservation, display and demonstration of steam locomotives, rolling stock, equipment and relics of historical, operational and general interest and educational value"*.

Thus it can be seen that returning steam trains to Bodiam is part of the Company's *raison d'être* and to do so will be the fulfilment of a dream we have been working towards since 1961.

- ii) At present, the Company is steadily repaying loans to our Bank. With our present operation, we cannot afford to increase repayments without detriment to the maintenance and renewals programmes of the permanent way, locomotive and carriage & wagon departments, so it will be several years before the loans are wiped out. In the meantime, we must pay interest on the outstanding amount.

Conservative estimates, supported by the Railway's 1995 passenger survey and market research conducted by the National Trust at Bodiam Castle, show that

extending to Bodiam is likely to generate an additional £50,000 surplus per annum. This will enable us to speed up loan repayments and use the savings on interest repayments to invest in improved facilities for the restoration and care of our historic locomotives and rolling stock.

## **2 Why extend now and not at some time in the future?**

- i) Without substantial grant assistance it would not be possible for us even to contemplate extending services for several years, probably a decade or more.
- ii) The advent of the National Lottery provided us with the chance to attract a grant of the scale required. A team, ably led by Norman Brice, spent almost two years preparing our bid and subsequent submissions to the Millenium Commission. Their patience was rewarded on 13 November 1997 when it was announced that Bodiam 2000 had been awarded a grant of £975,000.

The availability of this money has enabled other grants to be levered into place and there is now a very real possibility of reopening Bodiam Station on 2 April 2000 – one hundred years to the day after the first train arrived from Tenterden.

## **3 How much will the project cost and how is it to be funded?**

It is expected that the total project costs will be £1,950,000. The anticipated funding package is shown as follows:-

### **PROJECT FUNDING**

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>£000</b>
Millenium Commission (Lottery)	975
English Partnerships	150
European Regional Development Fund (InterReg)	90
Rother District Council	30
Ashford Borough Council	12
Other Grants and Donations (already received)	27
K&ESR Notional Contributions (volunteer labour etc)	266
K&ESR Revenue Contributions	50
Bond Issue	350
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,950</b>

The K&ESR notional contribution is the value of the volunteer labour and other input from the railway.

**4 Are there any conditions attached to the grant?**

- i) Yes, most of them are what you would expect from any organisation involved in looking after public money (which is after all what the grants are). For example the money has to be spent on the project, we have to keep proper accounts etc, etc. The Millenium Commission also require that the extended line opens in the year 2000.
- ii) The Millenium Commission grant also requires that we ensure that a pedestrian link is provided between Bodiam Station and the Castle. The grant does not include money for this. Negotiations are ongoing with East Sussex County Council (the highway authority) and they are preparing detailed proposals for the link. Discussions have also been held with the National Trust and Rother District Council, the planning authority. None of these organisations has raised any objections to the principle of the link and detailed negotiations will follow in due course. A range of funding options are being pursued, but it is not anticipated that the Railway will have to contribute substantially to the construction and we will certainly not have any maintenance responsibilities vis a vis the link.
- iii) Finally, the Commission have a duty to seek the best available security for their grant. In our case this means a charge over the railway – this is the legal power to seize and sell assets should we default on our side of the agreement. This sounds alarming, but two similar charges already exist – the first in favour of NatWest Bank and the second for the Environment Agency (formerly the National Rivers Authority).

The new (third) charge could only be invoked with the agreement of the holders of the first two and the Millenium Commission would only receive that money which remained after any debts to the Bank and Environment Agency had been met. The two original charges have been in place since before the line re-opened so adding a third will not jeopardise the existing operation.

Lottery rules require that grants are awarded to projects which once completed will last in perpetuity. Our project costings, funding package, accounts and business plan as well as the team planning and implementing the scheme have all been scrutinised by the Millenium Commission and their independent consultants. They were satisfied that we can raise the matching funding, build the extension to the required standard, restore Bodiam Station, complete the project on time and make enough money to maintain the line once the full 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles are open. If there had been any doubt about our ability to perform in any one of these areas, then we would not have been awarded the grant.

Remember, having given us the money, the Millenium Commission are as keen as we are for this project to succeed and what is more they would not have offered the grant if they considered there to be a real risk of financial failure.

**5 Why doesn't the Railway sell shares to raise the money?**

As a charity, the Railway cannot raise share capital so we shall revive a method used by Victorian railway entrepreneurs and issue Bearer Bonds to raise funds. The Bonds will be in varying denominations from £25 to £5,000, will yield a rate of interest to be announced and will be redeemable at the Company's discretion according to an announced time period.

**6 When can I buy a Bond?**

The Bonds will be launched to members shortly and to the general public in late March/early April.

**7 Do I have to buy a Bond or can I make a donation?**

Donations of any size will, of course, be warmly received. If you wish to give £250 or more, then you can do so via the Gift Aid Scheme. This enables the Railway to reclaim tax on the donation and means that your £250 is worth £342.47 to the Company. This does not affect the tax position of the donor.

**8 Will the Railway need to take out any loans to finance the project?**

No.

As you will see from the funding package, there is no need to.

**9 What if the project costs more than expected – would you take out a bank loan then?**

No.

The costings include an allowance for inflation and a realistic contingency to allow for unforeseen problems or price fluctuations.

**10 What if the Bond issue fails to live up to expectations?**

STILL NO!

Pledges worth almost £150,000 have already been received and that's before we market the Issue to the general public. Furthermore the £350,000 we are seeking to raise is equivalent, in today's money, to the amount raised by the Northiam Bond Issue 11 years ago. Therefore, the Directors are confident that the target will be met.

You, as a member can play your part in making the Issue a success by buying bonds and encouraging your friends and colleagues to do likewise.



Additionally, of the £50,000 committed from revenue, approximately £30,000 will be taken from the surplus earned in 1997. A contingency sum has been set aside in the 1998, 1999 and 2000 budgets in case it is required for the extension. All being well, this will not be spent but will be kept in reserve until Bodiam re-opens – it is then intended to use this cash as the initial instalment in the accelerated loan repayment programme.

## **11 How is the scheme to be developed and managed?**

A new company – Bodiam 2000 Ltd – a wholly owned subsidiary of the Tenterden Railway Co. has been formed specifically to plan and implement this project. Once the extension opens trains will be operated by TRC and Bodiam 2000 will either become dormant or be dissolved.

## **12 How is the extension to be constructed?**

The work will be carried out by a combination of volunteer labour, Bodiam 2000 paid staff and contractors. The plans have been designed to maximise the volunteer input without creating a shortage of staff on the Tenterden – Northiam section. Contractors will have to be used in certain key areas in order to meet the Millenium Commission's target opening date.

- i) The old track between Northiam and Bodiam has already been recovered and at the same time a degree of undergrowth clearance was undertaken.
- ii) The next job will be to complete the clearance, re-lay drains along and under the trackbed and erect fences. This work will be advertised and undertaken by a contractor.
- iii) Track laying will be undertaken by volunteers. As this section is of a curving nature, sleepers and rail will be transported and assembled in situ.
- iv) Competitive quotes will be obtained for the supply of ballast and the tamping contract will be tendered to ensure we obtain good quality and value for money.

## **13 How will we cope with staffing the extension – after all we struggle to run seven miles let alone 10½?**

Initially, the train service to Bodiam will be an extension of the existing operation to Northiam. The standard timetable is likely to see trains running every 1 hour 10 minutes – exactly the same as at present. This frequency can be increased to provide a service interval of 45 minutes on busy days and 35/40 minutes at Bank Holidays and Special Events. On most days, the only additional staff required will be one or two at Bodiam and a signalman at either Wittersham Road or Northiam.

**14 How many extra locomotives will be needed to run the service to Bodiam?**

None, the services outlined above can be operated with out current fleet of operational locomotives plus No 2678 'Knowle' and No 25 'Northiam' both of which are scheduled to re-enter service by 2000.

**15 Will any more carriages be needed?**

All the revenue calculations have been made assuming the existing carriage fleet will not be increased. In reality however, the C&W programme should see Maunsell NBO 53 and a Birdcage outshopped in time for the Bodiam opening. This will provide extra seats for busy days and, equally important, give us a larger day-to-day carriage pool so that routine maintenance can be more easily diagrammed into the service pattern.

**16 What happens if the Bodiam extension is too successful – will we need more staff, locos or carriages then?**

Perhaps.

Only when we are in a position to evaluate the success of the extension will a decision be made to increase services throughout the line, add a Northiam – Bodiam shuttle, or whatever. Of course, if we do decide to run extra trains to meet demand, then the income will be significantly higher than the current projections making extra resources affordable. An alternative to running more trains may be to increase the fares. Until the extension is open, we will not have the facts needed to make these choices. At that time, the Directors will carefully consider the matter should the need arise.

**17 What safeguards are in place to preserve the unique character of Bodiam Station and the tranquillity of the village?**

- i) Bodiam Station will be restored as near as possible to its original condition. No new buildings will be erected on the site. The platform must be extended in order to meet current statutory regulation – this will be done using traditional methods and materials. The only other change will be the conversion of the long siding opposite the platform into a run-round loop. Work at Bodiam Station is scheduled for the early part of the project to give time for the restored station to 'age' a little and the important finishing touches such as gardens and hedges to mature prior to the re-opening. Heritage Director, Peter Davis, will be monitoring progress at Bodiam Station and will ensure the finished product looks as authentic as possible.
- ii) To reduce the impact of our proposals on the village of Bodiam, it has been agreed with Bodiam and Ewhurst Parish Councils that our sales and marketing efforts will be concentrated on promoting travel from Tenterden and Northiam. Agreement in principle has been reached with the National Trust for joint ticketing and it is likely that a combined train and castle package from Tenterden or Northiam will be considerably cheaper than a similar outing commencing at Bodiam. Ticket sales at

Bodiam will be restricted to customers with tickets for the National Trust car park at the castle, locals and those arriving by bus, cycle or boat.

- 18 **Why didn't the Millenium Bid include an extension to the locomotive shed, a paint shop for the carriage & wagon department or a new gift shop at Tenterden Town Station?**

The rules governing Millenium Commission grants are very strict and we had to demonstrate that the application was for a discrete project. This meant that schemes elsewhere on the Railway, no matter how desirable, could not be included in this bid. Had any one of the projects mentioned above been tacked on to the Bodiam 2000 scheme, then our application would have failed at the first hurdle.

It is possible that the provision of additional workshop space in which to restore and maintain our historic locomotives and rolling stock may be the subject of a future application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The additional revenue generated from the Bodiam extension is likely to be a key source matching funding for any such application.

## THE K&ESR 300 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

### HAVE YOU JOINED THE 300 CLUB YET?

To join, phone Brian Heyes on 01622 744509 or Chris Garman on 01580 880378 for an application form.

#### October 97

##### C&W

1st	R M Flanagan	(225)	£60.00
2nd	Dave Felton	(312)	£40.00
3rd	Bill Duff	(316)	£30.00
4th	Doris Garman	(160)	£20.00
5th	Vic Grigg	(320)	£15.00
6th	Mr & Mrs R Williams	(273)	£10.00
7th	R F Collins	(243)	£5.00

#### December 97

##### Board Meeting

1st	Helena Wither	(417)	£200.00
2nd	Tony Pearson	(001)	£150.00
3rd	Ian Hunt	(505)	£100.00
4th	A J York	(187)	£90.00
5th	ATR & GM Allen	(173)	£80.00
6th	Angela Clark Monks	(110)	£70.00
7th	Kay Dickson	(101)	£55.00
8th	Doris Garman	(160)	£45.00
9th	Dick Dickson	(102)	£35.00
10th	D A Chalk	(350)	£25.00
11th	T J F Atkins	(550)	£20.00
12th	Keith Howell	(535)	£15.00
13th	Mrs A J Turner	(383)	£10.00
14th	B R Stonestreet	(111)	£5.00

#### November 97

##### Rolvenden

1st	R F Lunn	(506)	£60.00
2nd	T P Howell	(530)	£40.00
3rd	Chris Lewis	(524)	£30.00
4th	R F Lunn	(506)	£20.00
5th	A F Moore	(513)	£15.00
6th	Alan Dean	(343)	£10.00
7th	S A Bullman	(493)	£5.00

#### January 98

##### Tenterden Mess Room

1st	Clive Norman	(390)	£60.00
2nd	Keith Brown	(178)	£40.00
3rd	Keith Brown	(178)	£30.00
4th	T C Hull	(591)	£25.00
5th	R J Foord	(431)	£20.00
6th	G Tollerfield	(297)	£15.00
7th	Clare Stutchbury	(026)	£10.00
8th	Jane Sinclair	(437)	£5.00

Registered with Ashford Borough Council,  
under Section 5, Schedule 1 of the Lotteries &  
Amusements Act, 1976

# The Snailbeach District Railways

Each of the railways engineered or operated by Colonel Stephens had its own character and its own eccentricities. The Snailbeach District Railways Company was no exception to this general rule though in three respects it had quite a lot in common with Stephens' much more ambitious client, the East Kent Light Railways. Both lines were primarily mineral railways, the official titles of both included 'Railways' in the plural rather than the more conventional 'Railway', and neither was ever placed in receivership. This last may, of course, be regarded as the ultimate eccentricity in a 'Colonel Stephens Railway'.

The Snailbeach was a 2'4" gauge railway opened in 1877 to serve the lead mining district along the western flank of the Stiperstones range of hills in Shropshire. Authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1873 it was intended to consist of two railways. Railway No 1 ran some three miles from sidings near Pontesbury on the GWR & LNWR joint Minsterley branchline to a terminus at Crowsnest. From Crowsnest a branch ran, initially on a gradient of 1 in 25, to the lead mine of the Snailbeach Mine Company. The railway's locomotive shed was built at the top of the 1 in 25 incline. Railway No 2 would have been a continuation of Railway No 1 just under two miles long to lead mines at Pennerley but was never built.

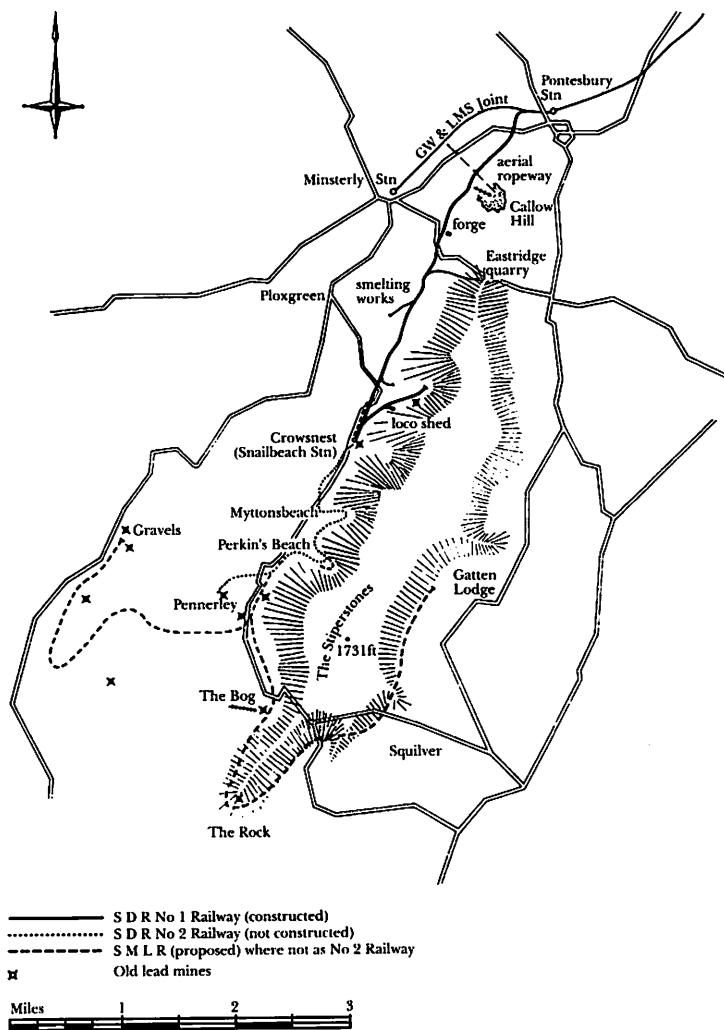
The significant feature in the construction of the Snailbeach was that it had an uninterrupted downward gradient from Crowsnest to Pontesbury, even the roads it encountered crossed its course by bridges rather than level crossings. It was therefore ideally suited to gravity working. Although there do not appear to be any accounts of the working of the line in its early years, it is clear that the main function of the line's locomotives in later years, was to haul trains of empty wagons back up the line that had previously come down loaded, driven by the inexpensive power of gravity.

The Snailbeach prospered at first, regularly paying dividends of 3%, but the closure of one of the largest lead mining companies in 1884

more than halved the line's traffic. Further mine closures followed and from 1898 operating costs exceeded receipts. Rescue came with the opening of a granite quarry at Eastridge to which a branch from the Snailbeach was opened in 1905. This quarry belonged to the Ceiriog Granite Company which was the major customer of the Glyn Valley Tramway. The Snailbeach Chairman, Henry Dennis, was also a very active director of the Glyn Valley and it is thought that it was due to his influence that the Ceiriog Granite Company opened its Eastridge Quarry. The 'Dennis Connection' went even further. By 1905 one of the Snailbeach's two locomotives was worn out and Dennis arranged for the loan of one of the Glyn Valley Beyer Peacock 0-4-2T locomotives, 'Sir Theodore', to help out on the Snailbeach. Unfortunately the Glyn Valley gauge was half an inch wider than that of the Snailbeach and 'Sir Theodore' is alleged to have spent more time off the rails than on. The acquisition by the Snailbeach of a new Bagnall 0-6-0T in 1906 enabled 'Sir Theodore' to be returned to the Glyn Valley and for the worn out Henry Hughes 0-4-2ST 'Belmont' to be broken up. The Snailbeach's other locomotive at this time, an 0-6-0ST named 'Fernhill', is something of a mystery. All that seems to be known of it, apart from rumours of a photograph existing in the National Railway Museum collection, is that it was purchased from the dealers Lennox Lange in 1881 and was disposed of in 1912.

The opening of the Eastridge branch restored traffic to a healthy level with a record 38,000 tons being carried in 1909. However, by 1912 traffic had fallen to 8,800 tons. The coming of war in 1914 led traffic to revive and until 1919 respectable quantities of stone and increasing quantities of merchandise were carried. Both stone and merchandise traffic almost halved again in 1920. In 1921 only 4,800 tons were carried and in 1922 the line's sole surviving locomotive 'Dennis' had to be taken out of traffic for major reconstruction. All traffic was now reliant on gravity and horse power. Only 3,177 tons were carried in 1922.

It was at this stage that Colonel Stephens and



a group including H M Bates, J C White and Sir R F Bowmaker took an interest in the Snailbeach. The new Board of Directors took over in January 1923 and Stephens promptly set about reviving the line. Worn out sleepers were replaced with second hand standard gauge sleepers cut in half and much of the 'main' line was relaid with 45lb rail. The Eastridge branch was also taken up about this time, the Ceiriog Granite Company having ceased business here.

Three second hand locomotives were acquired and converted to 2'4" gauge. The first of these was a Kerr Stuart 'Skylark' Class 0-4-2T

No.802 built in 1902 to 2'6" gauge for Lovatt & Co. of Hartington, Derbyshire. It had served a succession of owners until purchased by Stephens from the Ministry of Munitions Disposals Board at Neasden in London. It became Snailbeach No.2 and the dismantled 'Dennis' was given No.1. The other locomotives purchased were two of the familiar War Department surplus 60cm gauge Baldwin 4-6-0Ts also used by Stephens on the Ashover and Welsh Highland lines. The Snailbeach examples were Baldwin 44383 built in 1916 and delivered to the Snailbeach still carrying W.D. No 538 and Baldwin 44572

built in 1917 and carrying W.D. No 722. On the Snailbeach these locomotives were numbered 3 and 4 and could be told apart by No.4's retention of its water lifting equipment and protective hoods over its cab front spectacle plates.

It was not just the locomotives of the Snailbeach that had been worn out but also its wagon fleet. The line had started out in 1877 with 29 coal wagons, 12 hoppers, 6 timber wagons and 6 goods wagons. An article in *Locomotive Magazine* in 1912 credited the Snailbeach with 50 wagons and one 'passenger vehicle' though the line's official return for the same year claimed 8 open wagons, 1 covered wagon, 41 mineral wagons and 7 timber trucks. There must have been a dramatic clearance of stock in 1913 as the figures for that year had dropped to 4 open wagons, 1 covered wagon, 17 mineral wagons and 4 timber trucks. Casualties continued so that by 1922 the stock had fallen to 8 mineral wagons and 4 timber trucks. Stephens augmented the wagon fleet by the purchase of surplus War Department vehicles. The return for 1924 gave 3 open wagons, 33 mineral wagons, 4 timber trucks and 1 'miscellaneous' vehicle.

The latter was probably No 58, a steel bodied van apparently used for conveying explosives. One of the timber trucks was later adapted for carrying oil by the fitting of a 'Royal Daylight' tank to its superstructure. Apart from the addition of a further open wagon in 1926 and the loss of one of the mineral wagons in 1936 these returns continued unchanged until 1947. In practice there was a steady reduction in railworthy vehicles as might be expected on any line making extensive use of gravity working. By 1949 it was observed that only 11 vehicles appeared to be in regular use.

For all the investment that had taken place there was no immediate transformation of the Snailbeach's fortunes. Instead there was a gentle increase in felspar traffic which was mined near Crowsnest and, together with fluctuating quantities of barytes, accounted for the bulk of the line's carrying until 1928. In that year stone traffic, only 199 tons in 1924 and 2589 tons in 1927, leapt to 4821 tons. The source of this new traffic was a quarry at Callow Hill about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from Pontesbury. A loop siding was put in on the Snailbeach over which a crushing plant was erected. Crushed

stone could therefore be loaded directly into Snailbeach wagons which would run in rakes of three or four down to Pontesbury by gravity. At Pontesbury the Shropshire County Council erected a tarring plant thus creating a most efficient unit for the supply and delivery of road making materials.

Apart from the continuing felspar traffic and small quantities of merchandise and coal, the roadstone operation became the mainstay of the Snailbeach's activities. Gravity trains ran from Callow Hill as required and two or three times a week a locomotive would be steamed at the far end of the line to run light to Pontesbury. It would haul the empty wagons gathered there the  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile back to Callow Hill and then run light back to the locomotive shed at Crowsnest. According to the Snailbeach returns for 1930 this resulted in 1560 train miles being run of which only 780 were loaded. These figures smack of being a 'guesstimate' (1560 is twice 780) to save working out the real figures. Figures issued under the authority of W H Austen who took over after Stephens' death in 1931 indicate an effort to be more accurate: in 1935 2,144 train miles were run of which only 837 were loaded.

It has often been claimed that services on the Snailbeach at this time were entirely in the hands of one man, Driver Gatford, a veteran of the Bishops Castle Railway. It seems unlikely that just one man could have worked as brakesman on the gravity trains, driven and repaired the locomotives, kept the track in order and carried out the myriad other tasks necessary on even a small line such as the Snailbeach. Austen is quoted as giving the Snailbeach staff as four; one driver-fitter, one platelayer, one junctionman and one brakesman. It may be that in later years Gatford was the only full-time Snailbeach employee with labour being loaned as required by the Callow Hill Quarry and the nearby Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway which is known to have carried out engineering work for the Snailbeach.

In one respect Gatford seems to have been extremely influential. Despite repeated exhortations from Stephens to get the 0-6-0T 'Dennis' repaired, Gatford continued to find new delaying tactics to postpone this task. 'Dennis' remained dismantled until officially



withdrawn in 1936 and its components had all gone by 1938.

Stephens had devised a rota for the operation of the locomotives which was intended to extend their working life and reduce maintenance costs. Each locomotive would run for a spell of 2-3 weeks and then enjoy a period of rest and recuperation until its next turn came. The system worked well and was continued under Austen. Unfortunately when major overhaul did eventually become necessary it became necessary for all three locomotives at the same time! All three locomotives were failed by the boiler inspector in 1946. Once again the Snailbeach was without motive power.

The solution this time was to hire a Fordson tractor, registration BUX174, to haul the empties back to Callow Hill. Fortunately the original Snailbeach District Railways Act had required sufficient land to be acquired and formation laid out for conversion of the line to standard gauge if so required in the future. This meant that there was sufficient level ground on either side of the Snailbeach track for a 'five foot gauge' tractor to run with one pair of wheels between the tracks and the other outside. The only significant differences in operation were that the tractor would run daily as it could manage fewer empties than

the locomotives and that the tractor could be stabled at Pontesbury or Callow Hill so the practice of running light to Crowsnest was abandoned.

On 14th April 1947 the Pontesbury to Callow Hill section of the Snailbeach was leased by Shropshire County Council who effectively became the sole operators of the line. In the following years the County Council acquired additional wagons to supplement the stock surviving at the time of their take over. The locomotives sat idle in the shed until cut up in 1950. The line between Callow Hill and Crowsnest was lifted shortly afterwards. By 1959 road access had been provided to Callow Hill Quarry and the remaining section of line fell out of use. The final lengths of rail were lifted in 1962, some being sold to the Tallylyn Railway, and the last wagons disposed of. The Snailbeach District Railways Company, however remains in existence to this day.

**Stephen Garrett**

*I happily acknowledge the wealth of information gathered by the late Eric S Tonks and published as 'The Snailbeach District Railways' in 1974 by the Industrial Railway Society. Supplementary and amending information from records held at Companies House.*



*Snailbeach Locomotive shed in the late 1920's, Kerr-Stuart No 2 on the left, Baldwin No 4 on the right; the remains of Dennis can be seen on the far right. (Col. Stephens Historical Archive)*

# Do We Have a District Line Coach?

During my occasional visits to the Kent and East Sussex Railway as Station Assistant or Travelling Ticket Inspector I am asked, as I am sure we all are, for information regarding the age, size, weight, etc. of the various items of rolling stock as well as the more important things like, "where are the toilets?" Some of the answers are shown in the Commercial Department Handbook; the current one being the 1994 edition. However, when asked about the District Railway coach number 100, I was somewhat confused by the date given in the handbook: "Dating from early 1860s, it is believed to be the oldest standard gauge coach still working in the country". Now, not wishing to knock the great work carried out to restore the coach from its chicken coop condition, or the writer of the handbook, I knew from my own reading of books on the London Underground system that the date given in the handbook was suspect.

I have lived in London for most of my life, and indeed, as I write this article I can hear trains running on the Victoria line under the nearby houses, and having travelled on the Underground for many years I have tried to find out about the system; but now I needed to know more details regarding the early years of operations of the District Line, and in particular its rolling stock. I went to the archives held at the London Transport Museum at Covent Garden and what follows are my findings.

The first part of the Metropolitan District Railway, to give it its full title, was opened between High Street Kensington and Gloucester Road on 1 October 1868. This was later extended to Westminster on 24 December 1868. The next extension, on 12 April 1869, was between Gloucester Road and Brompton Road, where it was the intention to physically join the West London Extension Railway. This never happened, but the tracks do run parallel to one another for some distance before the District line, which was extended to Putney Bridge on 1st March 1880, dives under the WLER.

For the first two and half years the trains were provided by the Metropolitan Railway company under an agreement where the District, as it had become known, paid 55% of receipts to the Metropolitan for providing the trains. However, if the District wanted to have more trains running over their tracks, which of course they

did, they would have to pay out even more to the Metropolitan. Therefore the last Metropolitan Railway rolling stock operated for the District Railway on 3 July 1871.

The District came to the conclusion that they would have to order their own rolling stock. Looking for a low cost reliable coach design, they picked the Ashbury Railway Carriage design, similar to those operating on the SER and LCDR. The original coaches were built on composite underframes to a style called 'Early Perpendicular', with teak frames. Later batches had wrought iron frames, and even later batches had frames of steel. There were three types of coach, all four wheeled: with 2 first class, 2 second class and 4 third class coaches in the trains. The first class coaches had 4 compartments, and the second and third had 5 compartments. All compartments were designed to have 5 seats each side, the vehicles being 26 feet 6 inches long over the body frames and 29 feet 2 inches over the buffers. The first class seating is described as "roomy, spring stuffed, very well upholstered and equal to any suburban 1st class accommodation".

With the various extensions taking place more rolling stock was ordered. The extension to Putney Bridge also saw the introduction of 9 coach trains. All the additional coaches being second class. At some time brake/second class and brake/third class coaches were introduced. Passengers were initially allowed to share the brake accommodation with the guard, later the passengers were moved out, and double doors provided to ease the movement of luggage. In the 1890s 'Next station' indicators were provided in a slot in the upper part of the partitions between the compartments. The station names were interposed with advertisements. These indicators were operated either by the guard, who pulled a cord which brought the name of the next station into the slot, or automatically by a treadle on the track which tripped a lever on the locomotive. The system was unreliable, especially if the guard forgot! and so was soon abandoned.

Many third class carriages and a few first class were transferred to second class operations. One solitary first/second composite was adapted from a second class coach. The contract cost of the coaches were, first class £455, second class £373,

and third class £332.

Now we come to the crunch, coach numbers:-

In 1881 third class numbers were 93-116

In 1884 when a fifth batch of stock arrived they carried the following numbers;

First class 71-82

Second class 92-109

Third class 141-164

In 1901 first class numbers 87-92.

There had been some re-numbering of coaches during the period that steam trains were running between July 1871 and the last day on Sunday 5 November 1905. It is obvious from the above that there was not a first class coach numbered 100.

The *Oakwood Press* No 12 states that "The K&ESR is at present running a restored 4 compartment 4 wheeled first class coach as District Railway number 100. This body was recovered from Dymchurch. However, the Metropolitan District Railway never had a first class coach numbered 100. The Metropolitan sold their 8 wheeled first class coach numbered 100 to a man in Dymchurch in 1907. It seems almost certain this is really two thirds of the Metropolitan coach".

So, either the coach numbered 100 running on the K&ESR is an ex District Railway coach with a wrong number and the date shown in the Commercial Handbook is wrong; OR, that the date shown in the handbook of early 1860s refers to a coach from the Metropolitan Railway which had rigid 8 wheeled coaches also built by Ashbury. The first coaches of this type of rolling stock were delivered on 1 October 1863. If the latter is correct, then the work carried out to cut down the length of the coach was very exact, as the coach on the K&ESR measures 26 feet 6 inches!

Whatever the number or it's original ownership, the coach we have on the K&ESR is real treasure, and a tribute both to the original craftsmen and to those of more recent times here on the railway.

It's quite possible that whatever railway our '100' came from, it might well have met with one of the K&ESR terriers at Whitechapel in the nineteenth century (as the District, Metropolitan and the East London lines all joined here) as well as at Tenterden in the twentieth century.

David Isbiston

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# Letters to the Editor

## Diesels again

Sir – There is scarcely an edition of *The Tenterden Terrier* that is lacking a condemnation of the Dreaded Diesel among the letters to the Editor, here is yet another.

Last Summer my wife and I visited the Strathspey Railway. After carefully perusing their timetable, and noticing that trains were hauled by Diesel on Thursday only, we went on a Wednesday. We purchased our tickets and boarded the train which was at the platform. Cameras were prepared ready for the loco to appear, but a Diesel arrived.

What a disappointment! Then listening to the very rude remarks, and the anger of two coach loads of tourists saying they wished they had never come, brought memories flooding back of the days long ago in the 1930's when we loco staff were subject to the same abuse from the passengers coming off the Main Line at Headcorn, or Robertsbridge, to board the Ford, or Shefflex Railcars for the remainder of their journey.

This led to a swift decline in passengers then, and it hurt to hear it happening yet again, sixty years later, on a Railway hoping for more revenue to extend their running track. The only sociable member of staff we met, was the lady in the refreshment car who originally came from Gillingham in Kent, who volunteered the information that the steam engines all had leaky boilers.

The Guard, who spoke not a word, and whose only uniform was a Guards hat, the rest of him looked like Claude Greengrass in the TV series, 'Heartbeat', with a dog to match, who followed him through the train twice clipped our tickets. Not a smile, nor a driver, a massive man, who had difficulty getting in the cab. His mate who, when asked if I could look in the cab, curtly said, "Ye ken, it's more than our wee jobs worth". I suppose they too were upset at not having a Steamer!

Having time to spare at Aviemore I ventured to the slope of the platform to take a photograph of the loco shed in the distance, when a youngish female in a boiler suit emerged from a loco by the shed and

screamed at me not to venture further, as it was not allowed.

The Strathspey is not a patch on the K&ESR, admittedly the scenery is good, but then so is the Rother Valley. Be proud of your achievements, forget about diesels, and railcars.

Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex

Monty Baker

## J C P Memories

Sir – A few points came to mind after reading the last *Tenterden Terrier* especially regarding the J.C.P. One man who may remember more than any other is Adrian Landi. The picture of the lads on the Wickham was of those who left just after I started. I remember D.Levett and D.Harris well and the man in the cap looks like an adult member called John, whose surname I cannot recall – but I knew him well.

I felt it rather unfair of Mike James not to mention Adrian in connection with the track laying. He drove most of the engineers trains in the first part of the project with me as his guard/shunter. I also helped Dave Levett in the laying of the panels as I had P.Way experience. Dave Harris certainly did a sterling job of clearing the willows, some of which must have approached 80 feet. Adrian used some of the logs to keep the loco fire going during laying periods to save coal. Dave Harris' eccentric nature earned him the nickname 'Mad Harris' with the lads. Despite his rough appearance he had a heart of gold and would not have hurt anyone – he was an excellent worker. Incidentally, the lads (and men) referred to Mike James as 'The Pixie'. Another supervisor on the scheme in later days was Andy Burn – an ex-Black Watch man who had been wounded in Ulster. I sent in a report of the relaying about a year from its completion which I do not recall seeing in print. Perhaps a few interesting things could be gleaned from it if still on file.

The scheme had, of course, been going for some time before Mike James took over. I recall the preparation of the Callendar-Hamilton bridge for the replacement Newmill Bridge. Most of the plates had to be drilled, which took a long time with the basic engineering facilities then available, and then painted. When assembled, the

two sections were slowly pushed from Rolvenden on wagons to the site when work had to be abandoned due to high winds. The following day the wind had dropped but the river hadn't. As crane hire was expensive, the girders were laid with the water barely a foot from the top of the flood bank and I believe the ledge on which they sat was an inch under water. The hired crane had to travel along the river bank from Maytham Wharf and just as it was returning it slipped a foot down the bank (which was just under water) having gone only a hundred yards from Newmill Bridge. It remained perched there for a few days before being recovered.

Another remarkable day was during the following winter when the Newmill Channel burst its bank near Wittersham Road. We could claim to have had the first commercial goods train on a preserved line when sandbags, etc. were taken on site for Southern Water.

The early days of the scheme were marred with some members resorting to vandalism and wrecking plant and rolling stock. A general feeling of hostility to volunteers prevailed – they obviously didn't appreciate who had set the line up in the first place. Fortunately this situation was quickly corrected by Mike James soon after he took over and we went on to do great things.

Referring to the article in *The Tenterden Terrier* concerning a fatal accident to a Mr Killick, this was near the spot where the former Station Agent of Northiam was found after committing suicide in 1961 a few days before total closure – I wonder if there is a spooky connection?

Vic Mitchell's article about a trip from Headcorn in the early 1950s was also interesting. Petrol rationing had kept down use of the motor car but by then Maidstone and District buses had recovered from the war and could offer a good modern service to outpace the train. The London passenger could use the train to connect at Headcorn – if it arrived on time after all the shunting. For Ashford, the train provided a longer route and for Maidstone an even longer one involving two changes and all on stopping trains. By contrast buses ran direct every hour to Ashford and Maidstone and every two hours to Rye and Hastings. The open top buses had gone from normal

service ten years before and in 1950 a batch of new Leyland buses were introduced on Wealden services which not only rode much better but had moquette seats, platform doors and heaters. These were in use at Tenterden for twenty years. On the bus service to London new vehicles were introduced – cheap lightweight bodies using old bus engines, etc. built by Beadles of Dartford, but to the travelling public they were modern coaches. When it is also remembered that the war utility bodies were being replaced by new, it is not surprising that the K&ESR could not complete.

Despite the lifting of the Headcorn extension I found a short section still in situ in 1974. I was revising the site plans of stations in the area ready to plan the channel high speed rail link and decided to explore the spur a little. Two bridges had had their girders removed but where a farmer's accommodation crossing ran the whole thing had been left. About ten yards of 85lb reversible rail with 1897 vintage chairs were still there under the wooden planks of the crossing which the farmer still drove over, all in a small wood that had once been the railway line. The row of trees is still there – could the rail be?

Reading, Berks.

A.M.Pritchett

### **The Mess Coach**

Sir – Following a letter from Mr H Atkinson in the Winter 1997 issue of the *The Tenterden Terrier* on the subject of the green mess coach at the end of Tenterden Town Station platform I have to agree that the mess coach does look very untidy and decrepit at present. It has experienced mixed fortunes over the years, at times being repaired and repainted, at other times being allowed to fall into decay. After all this time it is true to say that the Mess Coach is about the only part of the Tenterden Town Station site (except, of course, the original station building and railway tracks themselves) that would be immediately recognised by one of the early preservationists returning for the first time since, say, 1967. Almost everything else on site has been built, developed or altered since that time so it seems to me that in amongst all this change and progress, which has mostly been for the better, we also have

a unique opportunity to recreate and preserve a lesser-known aspect of our more recent history, which is not generally referred to in more academic histories and records.

I should like to propose that the Mess Coach be preserved as an example of how the early volunteer lived in the mid 1960's, a subject which is a closed book to just about all our visitors and a good many of our present day volunteers. It has been pointed out before that at least one-third of

the K&ESR history has been in preservation so it makes sense to record what we can whilst the structure still exists and we have access to much of the equipment and fittings needed, plus the memories of some of those who were there at the time! I should be interested to hear the views of other members on this and would be willing to assist in getting such a project started.

Tunbridge Wells, Kent Clive Norman

*Unfortunately several letters have had to be held over to a later edition of the magazine.*



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# What happened to 'Gabrielle'?

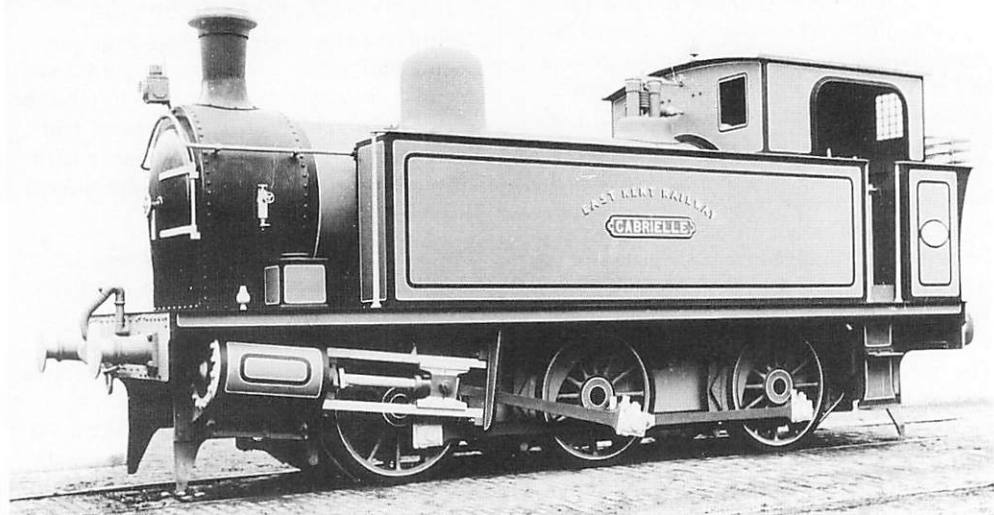
Some years ago (Winter 1979), the editor of the *Tenterden Terrier* posed the mystery of 'Gabrielle', a six-coupled side tank locomotive which was photographed in the livery of the East Kent Railway, in spite of the fact that no such engine ever ran on that railway. With the aid of the engine order book of R. & W. Hawthorn Leslie & Co. Ltd. of Newcastle, now preserved in the Tyne & Wear Record Office, some light can at last be thrown on this photograph, and on the fate of 'Gabrielle'.

Among railway enthusiasts, the Colonel Stephens railways have long been notorious for their eclectic assortment of second-hand motive power, but Stephens adopted this policy out of necessity rather than by preference. Where funds permitted, he ordered workmanlike side tank locomotives from Hawthorn Leslie, differing in wheel arrangement and dimensions to suit the characteristics of the line for which they were intended, but with a marked family resemblance in general styling.

Engines delivered to the Colonel Stephens railways by Hawthorn Leslie were two 2-4-0 tanks (No 1 'Tenterden' and No 2 'Northiam')

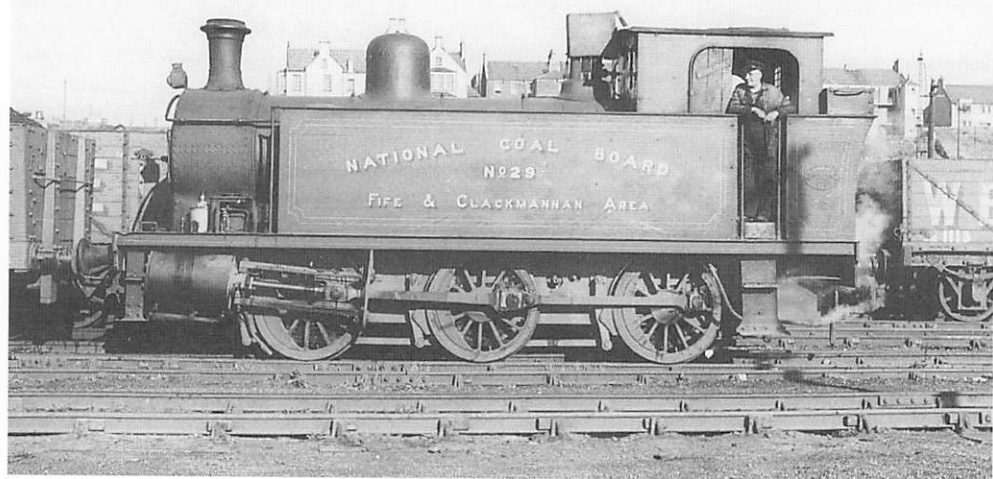
in 1899 and an 0-8-0T (No 4 'Hecate') in 1904 for the Rother Valley Railway (later the Kent & East Sussex), an 0-6-0T (No 3 'A.S. Harris') and two 0-6-2 tanks (No 4 'Earl of Mount Edgumbe' and No 5 'Lord St Leven') in 1907 for the Plymouth Devonport & South Western Junction Railway, and two 0-6-2 tanks (No 5 'Pyramus' and No 6 'Thisbe') in 1911 for the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire.

The East Kent Light Railway was planned to serve the Kent coalfield, whose future was looked on in the most optimistic terms (at least by its promoters), so it does not come as a great surprise that on 17 February 1913, the railway ordered a pair of six-coupled tanks from Hawthorn Leslie, who allocated works numbers 3026 and 3027. As befits the heavy mineral traffic which was expected (and indeed already being hauled from Tilmanstone Colliery), they were a rather more powerful version of 'A.S. Harris', with 16 by 24 inch cylinders (as used on 'Hecate') instead of 14 by 22 inch, and a larger boiler (3027 was in fact originally ordered with 15 inch diameter cylinders, but both engines were turned out with the same dimensions).



*Hawthorne Leslie official photograph of 'Gabrielle'*

*(South Tyneside Libraries)*



*Hawthorne Leslie 3026 at Wellesley Colliery, Fife, in 1952*

*(Frank Jones collection)*

Several generally similar locomotives were ordered from Hawthorne Leslie by colliery companies during this period – particularly those in the north east whose engines often needed to be capable of relatively long hauls, as well as shunting.

Construction of 3026 and 3027 at Hawthorne Leslie's historic Forth Bank works proceeded fast enough for at least one of the pair (almost certainly 3026) to be completed, painted in photographic grey and recorded for posterity by Parry of South Shields, one of the two photographers employed by Hawthorne Leslie for official photographs. As can be seen, the name 'Gabrielle' (after a grand-daughter of Arthur Burr, presiding genius of Kent Coal Concessions, of which group the East Kent formed part) appeared on nameplates on the side tanks, with the title 'EAST KENT RAILWAY' in an arc above the plates, in a style unlike that of any other East Kent loco. The running number, if one had been allocated, is not visible in the photograph, and the works plate is blank. The photograph was later used in Hawthorne Leslie's advertisements, first appearing in the *Locomotive* magazine of April 1914, causing some surprise among the railway enthusiasts

of the day, who knew that the East Kent possessed no such locomotive.

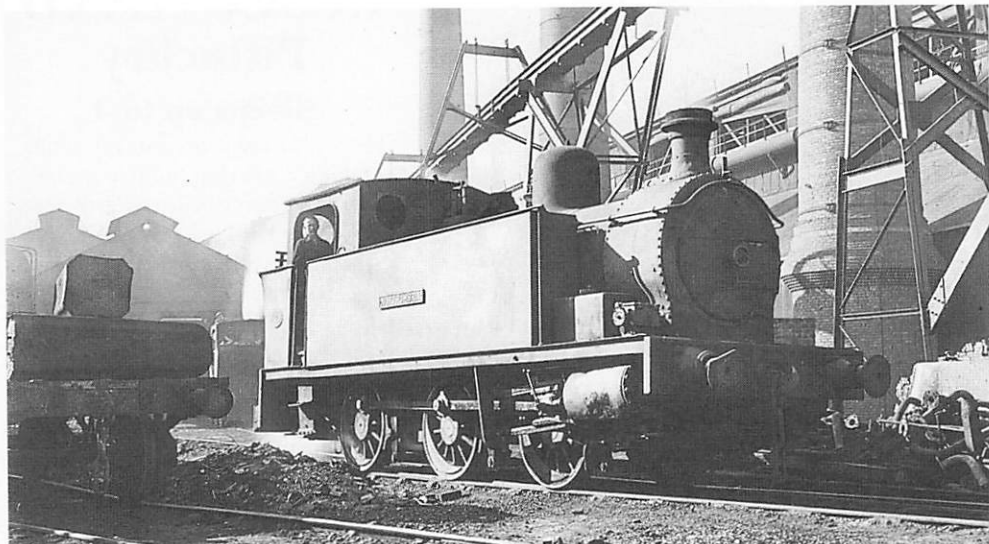
No doubt because of one of the recurrent financial crises that beset the Burr empire and delayed completion of the railway, the East Kent was unable to accept delivery of 3026 and 3027, so that Hawthorne Leslie were left with the locomotives on their hands. Curiously enough, the East Kent used Hawthorne Leslie engines on loan from the Kent & East Sussex to fill the gap until it was able to acquire motive power of its own on the second-hand market. No 2 'Northiam' had arrived on the East Kent in September 1912, and the 0-8-0T No 4 'Hecate' was there from 1916 to 1921.

Hawthorne Leslie may have found the cancellation of 3026 and 3027 less of an embarrassment than might be expected, for the order book shows that they made a practice of building batches of locomotives 'for stock', to keep the works occupied when demand was slack. These were usually 0-4-0 saddle tanks, and found a market principally among the industries of north east England, and in smaller numbers throughout the country.

As far as the engines ordered by the East Kent are concerned, 3026 was the first to be sold. It was delivered later in 1913 to the Wemyss Coal Co., in Fife, where it became No 15 in the fleet and was allocated to work at the group's Wellesley colliery at Methil. It would have found conditions in Scotland surprisingly similar to those for which the East Kent's promoters must have hoped. A number of collieries, mainly owned by the Wemyss Coal Co., and brickworks were linked to the docks at Methil and to interchange sidings with the North British Railway, by the Wemyss Private Railway, which at that time was worked by the Wemyss Coal Co. on behalf of the Wemyss Estate. The Wemyss Private Railway had a main line some four miles in length, equipped with full semaphore signalling and goods brake vans, but differed from the East Kent in making no provision for public passenger services (although colliers' trains were run). No 15 served as a colliery shunter (certainly after the delivery of five 0-6-0 tanks from Andrew Barclay, Sons & Co. in the late 1930s specifically for use on the Private Railway) and it was not fitted with the vacuum brake equipment visible in photographs of 'Gabrielle', but it would be interesting to know whether any traces of the apparatus remained.

In 1947, the collieries of the Wemyss Coal Co. became part of Area 1 of the National Coal Board. The Wemyss Private Railway escaped nationalisation of both the coal and railway industries (although it continued to handle the NCB's coal traffic by agreement) and so it was necessary to divide the locomotive stock between the two activities. No 15 was used as a colliery rather than a Private Railway locomotive, and so passed to the NCB. It was at first renumbered 29 in the fleet of the Fife & Clackmannan Area, but reverted to its old number a few years later. Apart from a brief stay at the Board's Dysart Central Workshops, it continued to work at Wellesley colliery under its new owners. The colliery closed in July 1967, but the central coal preparation plant on the site, with its associated railway facilities, remained in use until June 1970, and No 15 was not cut up for scrap until July 1972. Several of its companions from Wellesley colliery and the Wemyss Private Railway survived this fate, and at the time of writing are still rusting away at a scrapyard in Fife.

No 3027, the other locomotive of the pair ordered by the East Kent, was perhaps less advanced when the order was cancelled, and it was certainly longer before it left the builder's hands. Although the date of 1913 appeared



*Hawthorne Leslie 3027 'Northumbria' at the Redbourn iron and steel works of Richard Thomas & Co. Ltd. in about 1950*

*(Frank Jones collection)*

on the works plates, it was eventually delivered on 25 November 1914, probably in a livery of black with red lining, to the civil engineering contractors Sir John Jackson Ltd., who named it 'Northumbria' and employed it on the construction of military camps and railways on Salisbury Plain. It then entered War Department service and in 1916 or 1917 was transferred to the Kimmel Park Military Camp Railway, near Rhyl in North Wales, where it served with several other Hawthorn Leslie engines, including 'Pyramus' and 'Thisbe' from the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire.

A year or two after the end of the Great War, 'Northumbria' was sold to the Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron & Coal. Co. Ltd., for use at the Victoria steel works in Ebbw Vale, where it was given the number 36. In 1936, it was transferred to the Redbourn iron and steel works of Richard Thomas & Co. Ltd. at Scunthorpe, where it was numbered at first 6 and later 2, and latterly lost its nameplates. The photograph reproduced here shows it in a rather battered state in about 1950, with a

home-made replacement chimney and non-matching front buffers. It was later refurbished, losing its lamp irons and the characteristic handwheel to open the smokebox door, but was eventually scrapped in April 1965.

It is a curious twist of fate that both 'Gabrielle' and 'Northumbria' were still hard at work long after all the East Kent's other engines had been scrapped (or, in the case of the Adams radial tank No 5, preserved). Regrettably, none of the Hawthorn Leslie locomotives from the Colonel Stephens railways, nor any of the similar side tanks built for industrial customers has survived into preservation.

**Tom Burnham**

*Facilities provided by South Shields Central Library and the Tyne & Wear Record Office are gratefully acknowledged. The Wemyss Private Railway was described in Railway World, June 1970, and the Kimmel Camp Railway in Industrial Railway Record, No 102, September 1985. Other details of the later history of the locomotives are mainly taken from the series of Handbooks published by the Industrial Railway Society.*



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