

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 76

Summer 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.)

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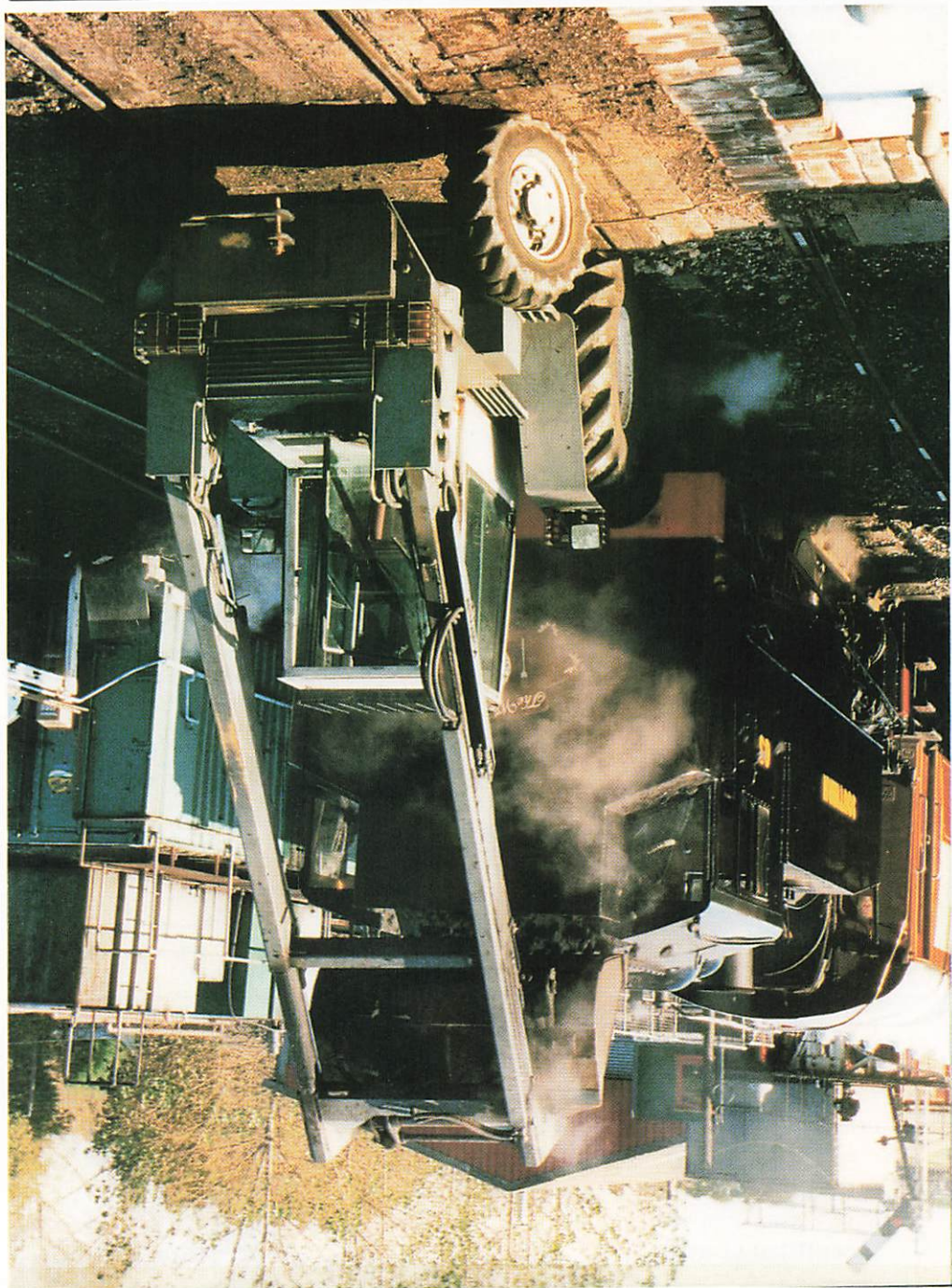
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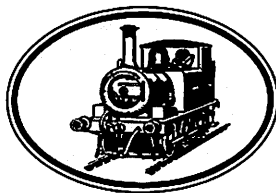
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FRONT COVER

Sir Neil Cossons OBE inspects the contents of Colonel Stephens' desk following the official opening of the Museum on 22nd May 1998.

(Robert Berry)

FRONTISPIECE

Lawrence Donaldson tops up the bunker on No 65 while on the 3.45 Wealden Belle afternoon tea train.

(Tom White)

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Editorial

Twinning links us

The twinning agreement with the Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme is just two years old. Set up initially to foster a joint application for grant funding from the European Union's Inter-Reg fund, the links have grown greater than this. Two of our locomotives have now visited the bi-annual Fête de la Vapeur on separate occasions and our French counterparts

have made reciprocal visits to Tenterden. In recent years a significant number of our visitors have come from destinations in continental Europe and with the development of Eurostar and Le Shuttle traffic should increase further. Our geography certainly helps in this respect with Calais a mere one hour's drive away.

From the Chairman – Robin Dyce

The Kent and East Sussex Railway has long been proud of the fact that it is a volunteer led railway. However, gradually this is changing as full time salaried staff are employed in critical posts. In a number of cases it has been necessary to employ further staff to meet increased trading expectations.

In embarking upon this policy of employing more paid staff it has been, and will continue to be, essential to ensure that the Railway is not being run just to pay for more salaried staff. It is the salaried staff who are increasingly contributing to the financial well being of the Railway.

Put simply, the Railway cannot sustain the level of business now being attracted using volunteer input alone. If we are to offer a high level of business and reap the benefits, it is essential that delivery promises are met and quality maintained. By employing salaried staff in critical positions we can ensure that our promises can be consistently met.

Despite these opening comments the involvement of volunteers will continue to be vital to the future success of the Railway. The need for volunteers in every department of the Railway will continue to increase as business increases.

More and more work has to be tendered out because internal staff, whether volunteer or salaried, cannot accomplish the workload. Relying on volunteer labour has meant that important projects have not been completed in time to meet our commercially led deadlines. Targets that have been set are

not always met not because of a lack of professionalism or dedication but because of the sheer volume of work that the business is generating.

After Bodiam has been reached the financial position of the Railway will change for the better. Increased income will permit any remaining bank loans to be paid off and the overdraft substantially reduced. We will then be able to get on with the other jobs such as the extension to the locomotive shed, provision of covered facilities for coaching stock, proper facilities for volunteer accommodation and many other development proposals.

Year by year our business continues to grow. Another good one, with receipts ahead of budget, is following a very good year last year. Even before the public launch the Bodiam bond issue has been hugely supported by members of the Railway which is a tremendous endorsement of the decision to extend to Bodiam. We must, however not take our eye off our underlying business and economic trends because, when the Bodiam fund is spent, we will only have our day to day revenues to fall back on. The Bodiam "package" must provide the Railway with a sustainable business for the future.

All these issues indicate that the nature of the Railway is changing to meet the challenges of today and of the future. We must ensure that change is controlled and directed towards stated objectives. Piecemeal change without proper consideration could have disastrous consequences.

Lineside News

From the Managing Director – Bernard Sealy

1998 has started favourably with the Railway increasingly able to meet business requirements at short notice.

The shortage of resources, both human and tangible, remain a problem but one which is being fully addressed.

New methods of attracting volunteers, training programmes and the necessary facilities to retain volunteers are a high priority. The need and ability of our staff to be multifunctional also remains a key policy, whilst appraisal of the railway's various departments will keep the occupier of this seat fully occupied for the next few years.

The visitor attraction/leisure industry is very competitive. That we have retained (and in

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

certain areas) expanded our share of the leisure market in Kent is of considerable merit especially as a number of attractions in this area are reporting a down turn in numbers. To state the obvious, we must not stand still but must continue to investigate new markets and products.

Two visitors over the last two months are worthy of note. Our annual HSE visit was passed with flying colours and a visit from Ian Allan was rewarded with an extremely complimentary letter (yes – the toilets were clean).

We have made many phone calls and travelled many miles in search of visiting locomotives for this year. Though this has been largely unsuccessful for this year we have placed ourselves in a favourable position for 1999 and we hope to have further news later in the year.

Commercial

Passengers

The season got off to an excellent start with the experiment of running during the February half-term paying dividends. Blessed with unseasonably good weather the trains were very well loaded indeed providing a real boost to cash flow at a time when income is limited.

Face painters, Jungle Jim's puppet show and Easter eggs for children, were amongst the attractions over the four-day Easter weekend. Over 3,000 passengers travelled during the event, slightly down on last year mainly due to the cold and damp conditions – and the even worse weather that was forecast.

The rest of April was also somewhat damp and passenger numbers were steady if not spectacular – nevertheless, the budgeted income was achieved.

May started with the ever-popular Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine Fun Days on 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Heavy advance bookings meant that the weekend was always going to be busy. Saturday and Sunday were just that despite being rather gloomy, and in the case of Sunday, perishing cold. On Monday, the sun shone and

passengers came out in their hordes. By mid afternoon all the seats on the scheduled trains were sold and an extra service was arranged for 5.00pm. Originally organised as a two-coach train, to be hauled by "Charley Charwelton" which had been station pilot for much of the day, it quickly became clear that a longer train and one of the larger locomotives would be needed. In the end over 150 passengers were conveyed on the hastily arranged relief! This swelled the numbers carried for the day to in excess of 2,000 – one of the busiest days in the line's history. Overall, the three-day event attracted 4,868 passengers, compared to 5,365 last year.

Loadings for the remainder of May were good, helped by some large party bookings and at the end of the month, the passenger numbers for the year to date were 21,500 over 5% up on the 20,450 at the same stage last year.

These figures demonstrate that sometimes, for individual events or weeks, the weather may affect passenger numbers. However, in most years, the positive and negative influences will balance one another out as far as general trading is concerned. Of course, events are more susceptible and it is for this reason that those

which require major expenditure are pre-booked as this limits the Company's exposure, to the weather, to acceptable levels.

The importance of group bookings must not be underestimated either. Much effort has been put into this area of the business in recent years and there are now many days on which running costs are covered in advance by group bookings, meaning that every 'casual' passenger is a bonus.

As has been mentioned previously, many groups also choose one of the line's packages including on-train catering. This increases their enjoyment as well as providing additional revenue for the railway. To highlight the level of these advance bookings, during the first week of June, there were reservations for approximately 950 passengers of which over 600 were taking refreshments.

Charter train business has also been very healthy and the range of purposes for which customers hire trains is very varied. On Tuesday 7th April, the Wealden Belle was chartered for afternoon tea for just nine persons. By way of contrast a tour operator working with clients from a cruise liner calling at Dover booked a special train for 200 passengers on Tuesday 9th June – with afternoon tea served to them all during the 90 minute trip to Northiam and back.

Two specials were arranged for holiday-makers with Shearings, the coach operators, on 13th and 20th May – the Company has also booked groups on scheduled trains on Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the Summer. On the first of these dates, a mix-up by the coach operators resulted in only 25 of the 60 passengers arriving at Northiam – the remainder having gone on a day-trip to Brighton! After a series of telephone calls between Commercial Manager, Graham Hukins, and the client a second charter was arranged for Thursday 14th May at less than 24 hours notice with three members of paid staff coming in specially on their day off in order to run this hastily-arranged service.

Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

The busy start to the year has ensured that gift shop takings are ahead of budget to the end of May. Recent new lines include the addition of models of 'Knowle', 'Bodiam', 'Rolvenden' and 'Northiam' to the range of coal ornaments. Thomas merchandise continues to form a significant portion of sales with the newly-launched die cast characters in the ERTL range selling particularly well.

Catering

Business in the Station Refreshment Rooms at Tenterden and Tea Rooms at Northiam has been brisk throughout the early part of the season. A



Cliff Groome introducing his Footplate Days and Ways course to the Tenterden office staff on Norwegian, 25th January 1998.
(Tom White)

marquee has been erected to cover the picnic tables in front of the Station Refreshment Rooms, thus increasing the all-weather seating available for customers. A barbecue is now used at most special events to provide a second outlet at Tenterden and reduce queuing times – this worked particularly well at the Friends of Thomas event in May.

Revised arrangements for the Wealden Belle Sunday Lunch operation have worked well. The ticket price now includes a glass of sherry as diners board and a glass of Tenterden white or house red wine with the meal. This has speeded up the service of drinks and enabled an improved service to be offered to passengers in the hour and three-quarters the timetable allows for lunch.

Operating arrangements for the evening Wealden Belle have also been changed slightly to allow passengers to enjoy the scenery and to avoid the main course being served at Northiam – which is rather spartan once the daytime staff have locked away all the platform furniture. The train runs from Tenterden to Northiam and then back as far as Rolvenden before returning to Northiam and finally back to Tenterden. Initial indications are that most passengers like the revised product but the reaction from staff has been mixed as the higher running speeds and continual movement have presented some problems. The situation is currently under review.

Santa Specials

Although many readers will currently be looking forward to a holiday spent basking on a sun-drenched beach or to long Summer evenings with barbecues and drinks on the lawn, the Commercial Department's thoughts have already turned to Christmas and, therefore, the ever-popular Santa Special Steam Trains.

The input required to ensure the eleven days on which these seasonal favourites operate is probably the biggest sustained effort for any of the railway's special activities. Before the first of the Santa Specials can run there is a great deal of "behind the scenes" work that has to be done. Donald Wilson does an excellent job of buying around 4,500 presents in all shapes and sizes to ensure there is a variety of gifts suitable for each age group.

Donald then distributes presents in bulk to a small team for wrapping. The paper is colour-

coded to make identification of the correct type of present as easy as possible for Father Christmas and his helpers. More wrappers are always needed so if you are able to help, please contact Donald Wilson c/o Tenterden Town Station.

While all this is going on, the task of rostering Santas, pixies, sack carriers and co-ordinators is also undertaken. For each train a Santa and 4 or 5 pixies /sack carriers are needed. In addition, a co-ordinator is required at Tenterden Town Station to ensure the whole operation runs smoothly by checking that staff are fully briefed and trains stocked with sufficient presents.

On-board the trains, Santa talks to every child and gleanes their name and age so that the pixies can pick a suitable present, this is then handed to Santa who gives it to the child. The pixies and sack carriers have to check the supplies of presents, load them into sacks and then carry the sacks through the train behind Santa.

The delight on the children's faces and the enjoyment of their parents and grandparents is very rewarding indeed and makes all the hard work really worthwhile. As ever, more help is needed and Nicci Salmon would be delighted to hear from anyone wishing to join the team.

Of course, there is much more to the Santa Specials than Father Christmas! The catering crew provide all the adults with sherry and mince pies while the children receive a Kit-kat and soft drink. Extra station staff are also needed to escort passengers to their reserved seats. To offer your services in these areas please contact Dave Tibbatts or Tony Griggs respectively.

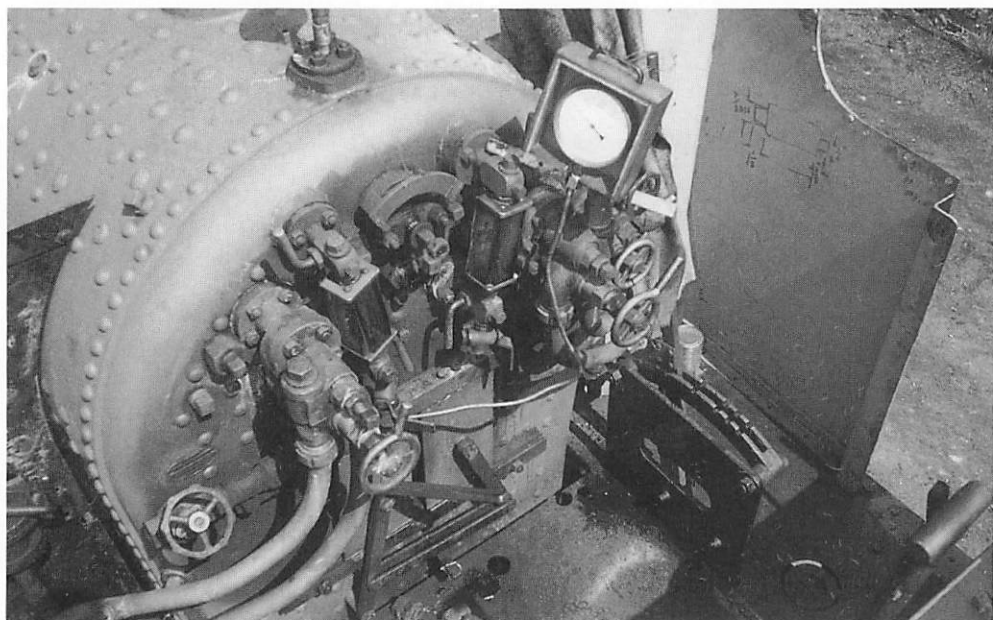
Trade Associations

As a major tourist attraction, the railway is a member of a number of trade associations and marketing groups, including the South East England Tourist Board, the 1066 Country Campaign, Sussex Top Attractions, Ashford and Tenterden Tourism Association, Tenterden Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Tourist Attractions in Kent. The groups generally provide some form of collective promotion enabling the K&ESR to be publicised to a wider audience than would be practicable and affordable alone.

In April, Commercial Manager, Graham Hukins, was elected Chairman of the Ashford and Tenterden Tourism Association which works

closely with the Borough Council to promote the area as a destination for day-trips, short-breaks and main-holidays. The association includes

other local tourist attractions as well as hotels, guest houses, self-catering establishments and camp and caravan parks.



No 25 on steam test, 20th May 1998.

(Richard Crumpling)

Motive Power

The main running season has started already and with it the routine running maintenance. The winter has seen a large amount of work completed and more to come. Whilst the loco maintenance is the main focus the background tasks remain equally necessary. Alan Wilcox is reorganising and classifying all the department's drawings. A crane slinger's course has been held and John Liddell has built a display cabinet for various items in store including the plaque for No 65's overhaul. As usual various useful items have been acquired from the usual sources such as a washing machine, twist drills, nuts and bolts, re-railing gear, springs etc. Indeed it is reported that at least one scrap merchant is trying to work out where some items are!

The usual want's list is presented with the note that it does produce results: rags, old coats, timber, packing wood, drills (straight shank up to ½" diameter), hand tools for the apprentices, lead sheet, waterproof coats etc for washouts, Allan keys (hexagon), radio for the workshop,

industry professionals to carry out an Independent Management System Review for the Loco Dept.

Steam locomotives

No 3 'Bodiam': Advised by Norman Brice, our funding director, the Terrier Trust has now submitted a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application for £80,000. Together with £25,000 that the trust hopes to raise this should be sufficient to see the locomotive return to Rolvenden ready to enter service in first class order. The cost of the new tanks and cab required is being met by the 300 club. The HLF application is based on the premise that the engine will take part in the re-opening of the Railway to Bodiam on the Line's centenary on 2nd April 2000. The Trust hopes for an early decision from the Heritage Fund. If you would like information or to contribute to the Trust then please ring Gerald Siviour on 01580 764990.

The new boiler is now almost complete at Israel Newton's works in Bradford. The chassis is at the East Lancashire Locomotive Works at Bury awaiting the outcome of the HLF application.

No 8 'Knowle': Much progress has been reported in the last 4 months. Pipe work for the air pump along with steel pipework with gunmetal fittings have all been done and now virtually covered by the false tank sides, the cab and cladding sheets on the boiler. Of interest is the blast pipe which has been awaited for several months. When delivered it was discovered that No 8 has a Marsh Chimney rather than the Stroudley one like our other two Terriers. This means that the chimney had to be shortened by 2 inches. It had been hoped to borrow the whistle from No 3. Unfortunately this has gone missing. Anybody got a spare Terrier whistle?

No 10 'Sutton': still providing a static exhibit in Tenterden yard.

No 11 'P Class': Lots of progress to report during the early part of the year. The loco has been stripped down and the cylinders examined after the top of the cylinder block was descaled. A thickness check will have to be done when time permits. The bunker has had the back cut out and matters are in hand to roll a new plate to replace the old one and rivet it, and other smaller plates, in place. Work here continues when resources are available from other more pressing priorities.

No 14 'Charwelton': This visited the Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme on 25/26 April. It has been serviceable during the winter despite the pressure gauge suffering frost damage.

No 19 'Norwegian': Operational. A replacement blowdown valve has been fitted, whilst the tender drawhook has been repaired. Additionally a superheater flue has failed and will have to be repaired.

No 21 'Wainwright': Operational with minor attention for a replacement blowdown valve and adjustment to the outer injector valve.

No 22 'Maunsell': Operational. A blowing piston gland on the fireman's side has resulted in replacement of the Southern pattern gland packing with one of LMS type. If this is successful then other Southern style ones will be changed as well.

No 23 'Holman F. Stephens': The piston heads

have been completed and are ready for installation. The slide bars have been re-ground before re-assembly of the pistons. Some running in will be required before it can haul passenger trains.

No 24 'Rolvenden': Operational.

No 25 'Northiam': Much work has been expended on this Loco. A new smokebox has been fitted and riveted to the front tubeplate angle. Once the blast pipe, blower pipe and chimney have been fitted a steam test will take place. Other work around the loco has included cutting out a coal hole door in the bunker – embarrassing if forgotten!

No 1638 Pannier Tank: as reported in the last edition the boiler has gone to Chatham Steam Restoration. The boiler is currently missing the front tubeplate and foundation ring and an insurance inspection is required to determine exactly the repair plan before work commences. The rest has gone to Swindon Works. Work has started on the frames and wheelsets with the Non Destructive testing of the wheelsets and removal of the front buffer beam to examine the cylinders. The hope remains that this loco can be restored in time for the opening to Bodiam.

Diesel locomotives

Drewry 03: This has suffered from flat batteries and a fault on the air control system. However it has largely been operational and is now outposted to Wittersham to cover for the Ruston.

No 48 Class 14: This loco has moved under its own power whilst under repair/restoration at the Nene Valley Railway.

No 49 Class 14: Operational though again flat batteries have been a problem due to lack of use. Some attention has been given to the ring tooth gear.

Ruston: Whilst at Wittersham this loco suffered from a traction motor flashover. A repair will be effected although it is likely to be expensive both in monetary terms and on shed staff labour.

Crompton D6570 'Ashford': Operational.

08 'Dover Castle': Operational.

Loco 73126 – ERRATA: the photograph on page 5 of the Spring edition of The Tenterden Terrier is captioned that 73126 was moved to Old Oak Common to be scrapped.

This in fact is not correct. The locomotive was

moved from Stewart's Lane to Old Oak Common as a result of the EWS (English Welsh & Scottish) activity at Stewarts Lane depot closing and being transferred to Old Oak Common and Hither Green depots. The locomotive had previously been used to provide a float of components, to enable the overhaul of other class 73's over the last few years. It is understood that the loco is not for disposal at this present time.

The nameplates have been removed from the locomotive by EWS and one of them was presented to the Colonel Stephens Museum on 22nd May 1998.

Cranes

10 ton Grafton: In store, out of service.

10 ton Taylor-Hubbard: Operational, with the P.Way department.

36 ton Ransom Rapier Breakdown crane: Has been used for boiler lifts and a slingers course. The tedious and lengthy job of repainting the jib is all but complete.

GWR Railcar Project

A number of frames on the North side of the luggage compartment, such as the waist-rails, base-rails and door posts have now been refitted. Work has now commenced to manufacture a number of minor frame sections, such as those surrounding the header tank filler neck. On the electrical side the jumper connections from the 'Robertsbridge' end have received attention with the remains of the old wiring removed, the brass pins cleaned of old solder and the connector bodies cleaned and painted. Delivery has been taken of replacement gutter sections. 35 galvanised steel sections should last much better than the previous mild steel sections.

Rolling Stock

People

Clive Young stepped down as Carriage and Wagon Manager during March. We would like to thank him for the help he was able to give to C&W during the 1997 season. No sooner had Clive left than Senior Foreman Chris Cheney moved to a job outside the Railway! Chris, who had been a TRC employee for some years, also served as manager during 1993-96. His skilled contribution to numerous work areas and projects was considerable and we wish him well. Chris and family live in Tenterden and have been keeping in touch.

To fill the vacancies, Chief examiner Nick Pallant has been appointed Acting Manager and fitter Alan Brice Acting Senior Foreman. The manager's post has been advertised and the staffing situation should resolve itself shortly.

Carriages

Maunsell BNO No.54: This carriage entered the carriage shed early in the year for a full external repaint and 18 month overhaul. Both bogies were found to have badly worn bushes and outside assistance had to be brought in. The contractor was engineer Mike Whittingstall who is well known in the world of Bullied Pacifics. The coach made a temporary return to traffic for the May 'Thomas' weekend without either lettering or lining but this was subsequently completed. Thanks are due to Meg Gooch for

her help with this work.

L&NWR Balcony saloon: This venerable vehicle, on which every design feature appears to be unique, has twice been out of traffic. On the first occasion a two monthly exam identified a badly disrupted buffer assembly. The cause? A fractured buffer shank. Repairs were swiftly effected thanks to colleagues at Rolvenden. No sooner was work completed than a buffer packing at the opposite end of the coach threatened to collapse. Replacement packing was rapidly produced but what should have been a 'quick job' then became complicated again. Both Headcorn end buffer shanks had suspicious looking marks which were probably cracks. Repair work is under way at the time of writing and, yes, we have checked the fourth buffer!

PMV 1808: The PMV now looks extremely smart in Maunsell green Southern Railway livery.

SE&CR Family saloon: Steady work has continued on this vehicle and all new panelling has now been fitted to the south side and 'Robertsbridge' end. Once No 54 is complete it is intended to concentrate both volunteer and paid staff effort on returning the family saloon to service.

Mk1 TSO No.64: In a change of policy, No.64 was moved to St Leonards Engineering during July for overhaul and repainting. The problems

of Mark 1 maintenance are well known and it was felt to be more cost effective to have this well-worn vehicle attended to away from the railway. Indeed the cost of the overhaul should be repaid 3 or 4 times over during a single Santa Special season for this coach alone. This course of action should also help to take some of the pressure off C&W, allowing the shed to specialise in the running maintenance and wooden bodied coaches and contract out other coaches for which local commercially available skills still exist. No.64 is due back in time for the Santa Specials.

Wagons

LMS Box Van M501384: This moved into the shed for a week during May. The owner came down from Lancashire to help with the re-roofing and painting.

Further service wagons for engineering departments use arrived at the end of January, by road from Peterborough:

KDB730242 is a 20 tonne Tube wagon with full wooden dropside doors, built in 1950 by Faverdale C&W Co. to BR drawing 445 under lot 2049. Latterly it had been used by the Western Region S&T Dept. for the conveyance of materials, notably concrete troughing. It will be used on the K&ESR for the conveyance of PW & S&T materials.

KDB741895 is a 12 tonne Pipe wagon again with full wooden dropside, built in 1961 by BR at Wolverton works to BR drawing 463 under lot 3335. Like the Tube, it had been in S&T use, but on the London Midland region. It is particularly suited for the conveyance of sleepers.

Late March saw the arrival of former Breakdown tool van ADB975162, from Old Oak Common. Originally built as Mk1 SK (compartment, second) M24157 the vehicle had been converted in 1973 (to replace older wooden bodied breakdown coaches) and was allocated to Cricklewood in North London. Basically, these vans were gutted, had a heavy duty floor installed along with strip-lighting and racking to contain all the necessary tools; the windows were all plated over and two large sliding doors per side installed. The vehicle is to further replace life expired wooden containers in use by the S&TE Dept.

Early April saw two further arrivals, this time from Chesterton Junction, near Cambridge.

DB989104 and DB989284 were built in 1959/60 under lots 3170 and 3256 respectively to BR drawing 1/575 as 'Mermaid' side tipping wagons by Metropolitan Cammell Ltd. (The same company that also built all three Pullman cars, including car 349). With a tare weight of only 11 tons and a capacity of 14 tons they were normally used for tipping sand to form the bottom layer of track renewals, or the 'base stone' layer that sits above it. However, their purpose on the K&ESR will normally be for conveying spoil away from relaying sites, where it can be tipped down the embankment, a task which currently is achieved using the more time consuming method of unloading with a 360° excavator. The Mermaids are first chained down to the rails, in the same way as a crane, then the body safety locks are released, and the body is wound over to one side using a crank handle or power wrench, the side door lifting up allowing the load to slide out sideways. These vehicles are in excellent mechanical condition having been overhauled and refloored only a few years before withdrawal.

Two other wagons which arrived from Old Oak Common in the autumn of last year but were not described at that time:-

KDB932502 is a 22tonne Plate wagon with metal dropside doors built in 1954 by BR at Swindon to BR drawing 431 under lot 2604. Following displacement from carrying steel plate in the 1980's, it had been used for delivery of signalling materials from Chippenham, (possibly from the Westinghouse factory).

This vehicle is long enough to be able to convey point rodding and other S&T items, but when not in use for this purpose will be used for general PW materials, including both wooden and concrete sleepers.

KDB733694 was built in 1954 as a 14tonne container flat wagon (CONFLAT 'L'), by BR at Ashford works to BR drawing 066 under lot 2764. Used for carrying wooden bodied containers which were then roaded to customers premises.

Following transfer into departmental service, the vehicle was converted into a cable drum carrier for lineside laying of S&T cables. It will be used on the railway for this purpose, and also possibly hired out to other railways.

All the above vehicles are vacuum braked, and

have received reasonably recent General Overhauls. The purchase and transport costs of these vehicles have been funded privately. They will greatly assist the engineering departments in

their task of maintaining the railway's infrastructure, and have been selected on this basis; however, they are also interesting vehicles in their own right.



John Clark attacks the P class bunker in Rolvenden shed, 17th May 1998.

(John Liddell)

Bodiam 2000 - The Millennium Extension

Fund raising

Wednesday 27 May 1998 was a historic day for the Kent and East Sussex Railway when Director Norman Brice and Company Secretary Cathy Roberts signed the formal Agreement with the Millennium Commission for our £975,000 grant towards the restoration of steam services to Bodiam on 2 April 2000 – exactly 100 years after the station's first opening.

This Millennium grant completes the public sector fund-raising for the project. We have now signed agreements for grants totalling £1,268,500 including English Partnerships (£150,000) and the European Regional Development Fund, through the Government's InterReg programme (£100,000) and Rother District Council (£30,000) as well as other minor donations from local parishes and members.

With overall project costs frozen at £1,950,000, where is the balance of £681,000 to come from?

Firstly, we can count the market value of the work undertaken by volunteers, now estimated at £275,000. But the most important remaining link in the fund-raising chain is the Bond Issue. At the time of writing (end May), members alone had pledged no less than £181,000 towards our target of £350,000 – and with the public launch yet to come!

Even though the Bodiam funding is very largely complete, Norman Brice has assured our Editor that there are still many more projects to investigate, including the restoration of Pullman cars Barbara and Diana; the extension to the Carriage & Wagon shop and down at Rolvenden the loco shed extension and covered sidings for stabling the running fleet of coaches, the latter two projects suspended pending the outcome of a planning enquiry.

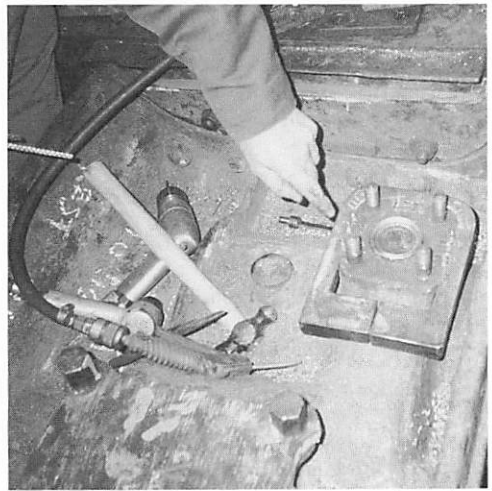
Engineering

Now that the basic funding is in place work has

started to reschedule the work programme to compensate for the later start date.

Clearance of the vegetation between the fence lines was brought forward to avoid the song bird nesting time. This work was removed from the main ground work contract. An advantage of this was that the contractors tendering for the work could see the cleared site. More confidence can therefore be taken in their price estimates.

The main ground work contract has been let to Roe Roads, their tender being the most competitive of the bids received. They started work on 1st June and the transformation of the site has been dramatic. The works in the main contract include the replacement of all cross/longitudinal drains, cleaning out of all the ditches, renewing all the gates/fencing, levelling the formation, and Bodiam platform works. The contractors are in control of the area and permission is needed to visit the site. It remains closed to virtually everybody but the P/way department have permission to work there, so, if you want to see what is going on, volunteer to work for the department!



*Detail of the top of the cylinder casting on the P class.
(Lawrence Donaldson)*

Peter Barber is presently talking with the contractors to release some of the ground at Bodiam station site at an early date to allow the siding release and Robertsbridge end loop point to be installed.

Permanent Way

The relaying gang is currently based at Bodiam where they have been hard at work in the station area. They have finished constructing the first three, of four, points required for the site. The main point, which is to be built into the road by the station building and is the largest of the three, has now been lifted into the grassy area opposite the station building in readiness for its installation during a road closure in September. This point has been built from brand new rails (a new concept for the K&ESR), and this will hopefully ensure that we do not need to replace it for a long time to come. It turned out to be the most complicated one that we have built and included 4 long check rails for the road section. All of the points have been constructed from a large number of component parts most of which arrived in large piles loaded on the back of various lorries. Unfortunately for us, Mr Hornby does not make points of that size. To date we have also drilled and chaired up 200 hard wood sleepers, with a further 200 to go. These will be used in the main line and loop in Bodiam station. In addition, a further 340

concrete bullhead sleepers had been delivered and with the co-operation of our contractors have already been laid out on the lineside in readiness for their installation. The buffer stops are currently being built ready for their installation at the Robertsbridge end of the site during a window in the contractor's programme.

The Junior P.Way gang (Tenterden based) have taken up the challenge of maintaining the operational section with their usual enthusiasm. They have split themselves into several groups to ensure that the whole line is patrolled regularly. A key task has been to replace a number of rotten sleepers since the passage of the tamper earlier this year. This is additional to the continuing battle with the maintenance of Tenterden Yard.

Brain Muston would like to thank those who have already expressed an interest in joining the department and would welcome more support during the excitement of extending the line. Please contact Brian via Tenterden Station and join in for a day to see what it's like.

Work has concentrated on items that require to be carried out on 'no service' days, during the now shortened closed season.

At Tenterden, a further 3 sets of handpoints have had their sprung lever mechanisms and drive rods overhauled, including the renewal of springs, and re-bushing of worn components, making the operation both more positive and reliable. Cable insulation testing has been carried out, and a faulty cable identified for replacement.

At Rolvenden, the drives to the Loco depot points have been completely reworked, again removing badly worn components; this has made the points considerably easier to operate by the Signaller. Likewise, the other two sets of points have been thoroughly checked and areas of resistance to movement rectified.

Development work continues on Northiam signalling, which is part of the Bodiam 2000 project works, however a considerable amount of outstanding work on both the operating section of the railway, and the departmental accommodation remains to be done before commencing the Northiam scheme.

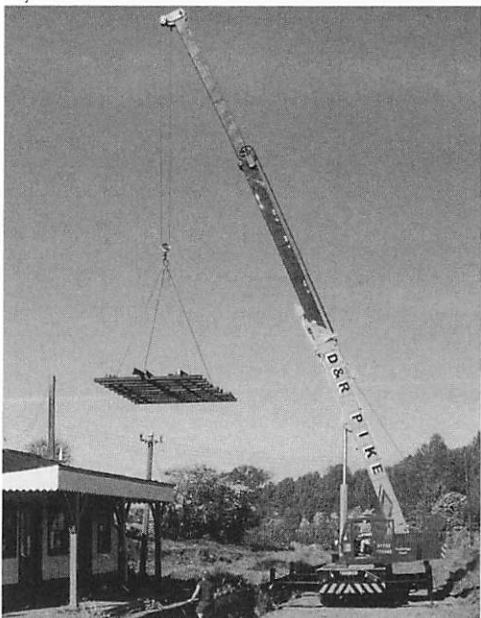
Two further break-ins occurred to S&T stores accommodation in early February, giving rise not only to damage to the buildings concerned, but the need to strengthen them against further intrusion.

As a result, security improvements and intruder alarms have been installed in the signalboxes, where the risk of theft is believed to be high.

During these winter works, the workshop has necessarily taken a back place; however a pedestal grinder has been rewound, renovated and installed, and a pillar drill installed and renovated. We would be particularly pleased to have donated nos 1 & 2 morse taper drill bits, also ordinary twist drills etc.

The two vehicle bodies are also in need of a small amount of bodywork repairs; the assistance of someone skilled in either Mig or low current welding techniques would be gratefully received. Contact Nick Wellington on 01622 844306 if you can assist.

Work has progressed rapidly on the breakdown coach (975162), with the disposal of the materials left inside by EWS, and the removal of the brake gear for re-use under other Mk.1 rolling stock. The electrics have been modified for its future use, and a full interior repaint carried out. The painting of this vehicle's exterior requires urgent attention, and we would be grateful of any offers of help in this respect. Contact Nick Wellington if you can assist.



Part of the pointwork for Bodiam being placed out of the way in the forecourt. (Humphrey Atkinson)

Infrastructure

Forestry and Conservation

Clearance work has been completed along Oxney straight back to Wittersham Road station. Tenterden station area has also been cleaned up by cutting down a few dead trees and cutting back the boundary hedge behind the print room.

While this was in progress it was noticed that a gap had appeared in a group of poplar trees. This created a weakness which had to be addressed urgently. Unfortunately the site was difficult with huts nearby on adjacent land. Therefore the felling of the remaining trees was

conducted in stages with all the branches removed first followed by the top of the tree and lastly the main body. This is a time consuming but necessary way to safely fell the trees.

On the 5th April 10 members of the group walked the whole line to conduct the annual inspection of potential problem spots and pruning of small saplings close to the lineside. Work is now in hand to clear back from Rother Bridge to Northiam which has become very overgrown in the last few years.

The group's meeting dates for the next few months are: 26 July, 9/23 August, 6/20 September, 4/18 October, 1/15/29 November and 13/27 December. If you would like to spare a Sunday to help then please ring Peter Thorogood on 0181-859-5082.

Building

The team has continued to restore platform seats and manufacture new running-in boards. The seats seem to be an endless task but the completion of running-in board replacements is now in sight and the last example, the second one at Rolvenden, should be in place before the AGM. For the first time we will then have a complete set of authentic K&ESR name boards, they look very smart and it is intended to keep them that way.

In spite of the very limited budget some improvement to the platform and yard surfaces is carried out every Spring. This year the top end of Tenterden platform, the Pullman bay and the badly pitted area between the buffet and

platform have all been re-surfaced. The pot holes in the back entrance road have been made good, as has the area immediately outside the shop, including repositioning the gully which it is hoped will now be more effective. Our neighbour, Henry Edwards, joint user and part owner of the car park approach road, has regraded and stoned the road on a shared cost basis.

The team now has storage space in the commercial Department Mk.1 coach and has taken the precaution of securing all doors by providing hasps and padlocks where necessary.

The ditches at Cranbrook Road have been cleaned and the wooden fences and level crossing gates washed down.

The working week at Northiam was disrupted by the delayed delivery of some equipment and removal of the works train on Wednesday to accommodate a charter train from Shearings coaches. However useful progress was made, including further fence painting, making good paintwork on the buildings and level crossing gates and laying a few more bricks on the station access ramp. What a painful exercise this has been – not yet finished seven years after opening!

The main thrust was intended to complete No 2 platform and copings as a contribution to Bodiam 2000, but progress was slow and in the event it was only possible to complete the Wittersham end ramp and some of the face work. Some of the badly eroded copings on



The building group at work on No 2 platform, Northiam, 12th May 1998.

(John Liddell)

No 1 platform were also refaced as they had become an unacceptable trip hazard. The lesson to be learnt here is that very high quality frost resistant concrete is required if surfaces are to be salted in freezing weather. The copings on No 2 platform are made of the same material but remain in perfect condition, they have never been salted.

As well as the regular gang many thanks to Tony Cooke, John Liddell and Dick Coombs for lending a hand during the week.

A reminder that the Outside Maintenance Gang works every Tuesday and new members are always welcome – contact Graham Hopker on 01303 862811.

Rolvenden

The three ISO containers put down on the ground opposite the platform, to replace the previous life expired wooden examples, have now been painted in dark green, which has toned down their previously garish appearance. New poster frames are being made for the back wall of the station and interesting examples of old travel posters will be displayed. The next task is to paint the public observation platform and provide a new photo display showing Rolvenden 30 years ago.

Northiam

Life goes on at its usual sedate pace at Northiam,

as befits a country station. The Friends of Northiam carry on their good work in assisting with the upkeep of the station. All the platform tubs have had their first planting of the season and the hanging baskets are coming along nicely – thanks to our green fingered friends.

It seems strange not to have the coalman around and no stock in the yard at the far end. This has left the station a little empty at the moment. Unfortunately the railway could not afford the price to buy the yard.

Thanks are due, as reported elsewhere, to Peter Davis' gang for their work around the station especially to the brickwork of the station ramp. It would be nice to see the unsightly blue pipe removed from the back of the platform wall. It currently seems like a large blue varicose vein.

The Santa period saw the usual lucky dip being run which had to be restocked after running out of presents. The more recent Thomas event saw a model railway and steam model on exhibit. We are looking forward to the Historic Transport weekend when the station will be host to buses in the car Park. The staffing of the station is left in the hands of the regulars and it is likely that unless more volunteers appear this year that some of the mid-week running will have no platform staff in attendance. If you can help then please call in at any time and talk to the staff.

People

Volunteer Liaison

The good news is that volunteer numbers are up. There are now some 450 volunteers. Our thanks go out to each and every one of you regardless of the amount of time that you can give. The bad news is that we need still more.

In particular we need to increase our numbers in the following fields; Station Masters, Booking Clerks, Travelling Ticket Inspectors and Station Assistants. As always, training will be given and can be completed quite quickly. Somewhat unusually, most of the shortages appear to occur at weekends and Bank Holidays. So if you don't fancy the more 'heavy' work and like meeting people why not give it a go?

We also need to swell the ranks of those unseen but important people who help to

keep the station areas and carriages clean and tidy. This is essential to the continued success of the railway. Perhaps you are unable to come for a complete day but could give some time during the morning or evening? Your help would be invaluable.

Although it seems a long way off, preparations are being made for the Santa specials. Could you see yourself as a Santa, do you have an elder child who would like to be a Pixie or could you help with the trolley service? Regardless of your age, this is a magical time to be on the train and the sight of all those happy faces really does make it all worthwhile.

Lastly could I draw your attention to two social functions. The first is the Thomas barbecue in September. This is open to all members – no booking necessary. The

second is the Christmas Social. Again this will be at Tenterden Leisure Centre but this time it will be in the Rainbow Room.

Improvements include a separate bar area for those who wish to chat, a better range of drinks and, hopefully, coffee for those who want it. It is also hoped that we will get an extension to midnight. Music will again be supplied by our own driver Pete Salmon so get your requests in now. Tickets will be on sale from mid September and numbers will be limited. Further details will be found in the Rooter and on notice boards.

Working Weeks, Special Projects and Events.

● Northiam – Bodiam extension. Working month (provisional) 19th October to 13th November. Contact Peter Barber 01580 765155.

● Thomas barbecue – Saturday 19th September from 7:30pm. Just turn up!

● Christmas Party – Tenterden Leisure Centre. 28th November. Contact Graham & Karen Bridge 01580 766771.

● Santa Specials 29th November until 24th December. Contact 'The Santa Team' 01580 765155.

Footplate Experience Courses

Clive Groome, of Footplate Days and Ways and a regular contributor to Steam Railway Magazine, visited the K&ESR on Sunday 25th January to explain how he operates his footplate experience courses. In the afternoon, he demonstrated the approach to members of the Locomotive department so they can run similar courses on the K&ESR. Graham Hukins and the staff of the Tenterden Office volunteered to be guinea pigs and find out what the course would be

like at first hand. This will enable them to give insiders advice of the course and be able to handle questions better.

Operating department

Operating Manager Simon Long organised a very successful training week over the February half term. There were opportunities for staff to have one to one instruction for firing, steam loco driving and DMU driving. In order to provide plenty of space on the footplate for two instructors and two trainees, the Norwegian was rostered and hauled a 3 bogie coach set plus the PMV. The advantage of this training week over the regular on the job training was that the person being trained did all the duties demanded of the fireman or driver and was able to get on with it themselves, obviously with advice and supervision from the instructor. Discussions about operating practice and lessons learned were swapped in the mess room over the usual cup of tea. Perhaps one of the major benefits to come from this initiative was that people got to know each other better and achievements made by individuals encouraged them to develop their skills and strive to attain the next grade.

Thanks are due to the instructors, Simon Long, Brian Remnant, Adrian Chapman, Mike Harman, Peter Salmon, Peter Wensley and David Slack. They gave their time willingly to help develop the railway's staff and their friendly and encouraging approach ensured that this week was both successful and enjoyable. This is an initiative that will be worth repeating next year.

Personal

Ron Cann died in a nursing home at Littlestone on 2nd January this year. He was



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87 years of age and had been in poor health for some time. Many of the early members of the railway will remember Ron as a director of the erstwhile Rother Valley Railway Company and trustee of the Rother Valley Trust. A tall, gaunt, figure he was instantly recognisable

and spent many hours at Rolvenden, where, amongst other activities, he built the railway's first weed killing machine, used on track maintenance. Our sympathy goes to his wife Pauline, who will shortly leave her home in Sandhurst to live nearby in Hawkhurst.

Other Groups

The French Connection – news from the CFBS *by Philip Pacey*

In my last instalment I reported that the final (excepting Christmas trains) total of passengers carried in 1997 again broke all records. 65,500 represents an increase of 3,500. Well the final, definitive figure for 1997 was 66,219, an increase of 7.5%. This will take some beating in 1998, though no doubt attendance at the April steam festival will have got the season off to a good start.

In writing these notes I am very aware that they will be read by people who visited St Valery for the steam festival in late April. I wasn't there myself – I am planning to spend a week or so on site in mid-July – but reports (accompanied by photographs) have reached me, so I know that the Haine St Pierre loco was in steam and looked splendid, fresh from the paint shop. Having witnessed various stages of the restoration of this loco over a period of time, I can't wait to see it in action in July.

Those who visited in April may have noticed two ex-Madagascar Decauville bogie coaches, which arrived in January. I understand that they are in fairly poor condition but it is intended to restore them.

Autorail M42 left St Valery in December. The body is being rebuilt at Gamaches, and the bogies are at Noyon in the workshops of CFD-Desbrugères. A 'recent' 6 cylinder Cummins engine is to be fitted.

The latest reports of winter works mention relaying of track at Cayeux, between Lanchères and Hurt (this section must have been virtually entirely relaid by now) and at St Valery. The level crossings on each side of the canal bridge at St Valery were to be, and probably are, fitted with automatic barriers and the line to the quay was scheduled to be entirely relaid with 30kg/m (instead of 20 kg/m) and more 'landscaping' to separate the track from other zones.

May I be permitted to mention that I am working

on a history of the Baie de Somme railways, which, if all goes well, will be published as a book by the Semaphore Press. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who may have information, documents, photographs or stories to tell from recent or less recent visits. I can be contacted c/o The Library, University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE
(email: p.pacey@uclan.ac.uk)

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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Un Weekend Exceptionnel!

Graham Hukins describes just what it took to get 'Charwelton' to France for the Noyelles Festival of Steam organised by our twin railway – Le Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme

After the formal twinning agreement signed by the K&ESR and CFBS in April 1996, when the P Class visited Noyelles for the biannual steam festival work began on building stronger links between the two railways, particularly with a view to a joint application for grant funding from the European Union's InterReg Fund.

In December, it was confirmed that our bid had been successful and that we would receive up to £100,000 in support of the Bodiam 2000 project and joint marketing activities with CFBS.

The joint marketing programme included attending the 1998 'Fête de la Vapeur' with a locomotive. As the P Class has been withdrawn for a 10 year overhaul another one of the fleet had to be chosen. Initially thoughts turned to one of the two USA Class 0-6-0 tanks – after all they had been built with a view of shipping them to France if required so one could complete that journey after a pause of more than half-a-century!

Discussions with our French colleagues quickly revealed that a 43 ton locomotive would be too heavy for their little used standard gauge track, so it was determined that 'Charwelton' would go.

The date of the 1998 event had been set for 25th and 26th April and arrangements for 'Charwelton's' trip began in earnest in February. Several specialist hauliers were contacted to provide quotes for the move. At about this time, I met Ron Miles from SeaFrance at a trade show in Southend, mentioned the forthcoming trip and asked whether SeaFrance would like to get involved.

Two weeks later Ron confirmed that SeaFrance would provide free passage for the low-loader carrying the engine and support vehicles. Allelys were selected as the haulier as they have a license to run exceptional loads in France and would not need the one-off permit and police escorts that had proved so difficult in 1996. It was agreed that the 3.30pm sailing from Dover on Thursday 23rd April would be ideal for the outward crossing. The necessary axle loadings were sent to SeaFrance and the engine was measured to

ensure that once it was on the low-loader it would not be too high for the lorry deck of SeaFrance's freight-only ferry the 'Nord Pas de Calais.'

Norman Brice, Robin Dyce, Graham Bridge and I visited the CFBS in March to finalise details for the visit. As a result copies of the locomotive's boiler certificate were sent to the CFBS for forwarding to the regulatory body – the French Ministry of Mines!

On the weekend before the trip, 'Charwelton' was given a thorough clean by a team led by Dave Brailsford who, being fluent in French, had been rostered to drive the engine in France. Arrangements were in hand for the engine to be steamed to the back siding at Wittersham Road ready for Allelys to collect on Thursday morning.

Everything was going exactly to plan until Tuesday 21st April when the evening news reported that a seamen's and dockers' strike had closed the port of Calais.

By Wednesday morning, Stena P&O were sailing to Zeebrugge but with crossings taking twice the time taken on the Calais route, and with all SeaFrance ships tied up at Calais – the backlog of lorries at Dover was growing and Kent Police instigated 'Operation Stack'. This is now a well-rehearsed scheme to close large sections of the M20 and use it as a lorry-park for vehicles waiting to cross the channel.

On Wednesday afternoon, I made a series of telephone calls to SeaFrance, Allelys and a contact at Ashford Borough Council who had been involved in previous lorry stacking operations. The backlog of lorries had reached Junction 8 near Maidstone and the information from every source was that Kent Police would (understandably) not make special arrangements for any vehicle – even the Royal Mail have to wait their turn.

The one glimmer of light was that a meeting had been scheduled between the strikers and managers in Calais on Thursday morning – so the prospects of the engine getting on a sailing on Thursday seemed slim. The decision was taken to delay the despatch of the low-loader from the

Midlands until Thursday morning and to review the situation then.

Thursday morning's radio brought mixed news – the dockers had returned to work, Calais port had reopened to Stena P&O but the SeaFrance seamen were still on strike. A call to SeaFrance in Dover confirmed this, but held out some hope for a meeting that morning, however if the dispute was not resolved the blockade would be reimposed!

As Stena P&O had already made inroads into the backlog of lorries, I decided to call for the low loader and if necessary have 'Charwelton' join the queue bound for Dover, gambling that we would get across somehow – even if this meant changing carriers.

At 11 o'clock SeaFrance rang with the news I'd been hoping for – the dispute had been settled and their ships were about to start sailing again. However, with all the ships in Calais and still a small backlog to clear, it would be 7.30pm before the engine could sail.

Terry and Andy from Allelys arrived at Wittersham Road at around 3.00pm, just as a torrential downpour started. Despite the weather, they loaded the engine in a little over an hour and set off for Dover. I made my own way there and met up with photographer, Robert Berry, in order to get some publicity shots.

I checked in at the SeaFrance departures desk and was allowed to travel on the 'Nord Pas de Calais' as a 'support vehicle' – otherwise I would have had to wait until 8.15 for a tourist boat. Everyone at SeaFrance seemed to know we were coming and banners were produced in readiness for the arrival of the engine. At around 6.30pm the low-loader arrived, and we took the pictures required. The ferry docked shortly before 7.00pm and embarkation began around 15 minutes later.

Terry, Andy and I enjoyed a very smooth crossing and drove off the ferry at around 10.00 (French time). As it was dark, Terry and Andy had no option but to wait just outside the docks until morning – HGVs cannot move after dark in France. I continued my journey to Noyelles, arriving shortly before midnight to find the whole village asleep. I found the hotel, but despite the barking of what sounded like a very ferocious dog, no-one stirred!

I quickly drove to St. Valery, but the hotels there

were equally locked and my pigeon French does not extend to "excuse me for disturbing you so late, but I have been delayed by seamen's strike, my hotel is closed for the night and I have nowhere to sleep."

Instead, I found a lay-by and settled down as best I could for the rest of the night. As the boot and back seats were full of exhibition materials, "settling down" consisted of reclining the driver's seat as far as possible! This was one of the most uncomfortable nights of my life and needless to say, I didn't get a great deal of sleep.

Shortly after 7.00am I drove back to the hotel to check-in for a shower and some breakfast. The owners spoke even less English than I speak French but I understood that they were expecting me the day before and explained that "Le bateau était en retard!"

After a shower, and the most welcome continental breakfast I have ever sampled, I made my way to St. Valery depot. Shortly after 11 o'clock, the CFBS staff asked me when the engine would arrive as the boiler examiner was due to look at the visiting locomotives. On telephoning Terry, I discovered he had made it only as far as Boulogne where a low bridge on a diversion had temporarily halted progress. Jean-Marc Page, CFBS Chairman, resolved to take the inspector to lunch before the examination!

By 2.00pm the low-loader and 'Charwelton' had arrived and Terry and Andy set to work to build the unloading ramp. Just as the engine was eased off the lorry onto CFBS metals, Jean-Marc and the boiler examiner arrived. I remembered from two years ago that the examination was really a formality, nevertheless I was a little nervous as the inspector climbed onto the footplate.

Having had a look around, he asked me where the "numero de la chaudière" was and "la médaille de plomb". I understood he was after the boiler number but didn't know where it was likely to be, it certainly was not anywhere obvious – so I said I would telephone our Locomotive Manager. "Médaille de plomb", I guessed must be the fusible plug so I pointed into the firehole and then upwards – the inspector was satisfied so I presumed I had guessed right but he was still keen to see a number. Seeing that his paperwork included the number 14, I pointed to the ornately signwritten number on the cabside. He agreed that was the number of the engine but wanted to be sure we hadn't swapped boilers.



*Embarking at Dover.
(Robert Berry)*

Charlwellton at the



*Alongside newly restored metre gauge
locomotive No 15 at Noyelles,
26th April 1998. (Robert Berry)*



On dual gauge track at Noyelles, 26th April 1998. The mainline station is on the left. (John Liddell)

Baie de Somme



Chris Lewis (second from right) and David Brailsford (fourth from right) with members of Le Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme. (Robert Berry)

At this point, the CFBS diesel shunter arrived to tow us the short distance to the depot. On arrival, I telephoned Lawrence Donaldson who advised me that the boiler didn't have a number marked on it! I had visions that despite all the efforts so far, the engine might not be allowed to be steamed for the festival. "Tell him it's under the cladding" said Lawrence helpfully. I returned to the engine, confidently climbed onto the footplate, followed by the boiler inspector – I selected a piece of cladding, pointed and declared "sous ici". He asked whether it could be removed to which I replied in my best schoolboy French "ce n'est pas possible".

After a certain amount of discussion between the inspector and Jean-Marc, they turned to me with grave faces and explained very slowly that the engine would not be allowed to run – they then burst out laughing and said it would but just for the fête!

Mightily relieved, I awaited the arrival of the rest of K&ESR delegation for the weekend. The first to arrive were Robin Dyce and his wife Carol. "Bonjour" they cried and then added "what have you been up to – you look awful"

"It's a long story..." I replied!

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THE SOUTH EASTERN AND CHATHAM RAILWAY SOCIETY

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Society, and the decision to form the society was taken in a railway buffet, not at Victoria or Charing Cross as you might reasonably expect, but at Kings Cross (which does at least have a direct link to the London Chatham & Dover Railway at Farringdon!).

The aim of the Society, as set out in the Constitution, is the "promotion of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway, its constituents and successors by co-operative effort in the acquiring and interchange of knowledge, and by the encouragement and presentation of of accurate modelling of all facets of the railway".

Although the SE&CR was not a very large railway it incorporated much of interest. The animosity between the lines of Kent, the South Eastern and the London, Chatham and Dover Railways, is well known, and during the 19th century they seemed more interested in scoring off each other than in serving their passengers. However, in 1899 the harchet was buried and they combined into the SE&CR to become a very good railway so that by the time the First World War started in 1914 it was ready to bear the brunt of the traffic to and from the continent.

Most society members are interested in the SE&CR period, although there is a distinct increase in those who are interested in both the SER and LC&DR eras and the early BR period.

The Society's journal, *Invicta*, is published twice a year and is the main means by which information about the railway is disseminated. It includes information on a wide range of topics, and a recently published index to the first 45 issues has made us realise just how much information has been published, and how our knowledge of the railway has grown over the past 25 years. At least one real photographic print is included with each issue of *Invicta*, as well as other illustrations, and a recent decision by the committee will ensure more illustrations in future issues.

A newsletter, *Onward*, is published five or six times a year. This not only includes information of interest to the membership, such as advising of articles of interest in the railway press, preservation news or notifying the introduction of relevant model kits, but also gives them the opportunity to appeal for information.

We meet twice a year in London at The Model Railway Club near Kings Cross. One meeting incorporates the Annual General Meeting, but the primary activity is to give the members a chance to informally view and discuss each others models, photographs and research material.

Membership costs £12 per annum. If you are interested in joining the Society please send a SAE to the Membership Secretary, P Coutanche, 21 Clark Street, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 3UF.

Taking the Test

David Slack recalls the day he was passed out as a locomotive driver in 1997

I first became aware of the Kent & East Sussex Railway at the early age of 4 years as I clearly remember looking out of the back window of my father's car at the rows of rusting and stationary engines lined up in what is now Rolvenden Yard long before the engine shed appeared. Over a number of years my interest in these engines grew as we would always pass Rolvenden from visiting my grandparents in Sandhurst, where my grandfather was the Baptist Minister, on our way home to Chislehurst. This early interest in steam was also fuelled by my other grandfather being a model engineer. From a very early age I would visit their house in



David Slack, on the left, being congratulated by fireman Iain Pringle in front of No. 23. (Author)

Manchester and spend hours in his railway room playing with a 3½" gauge Princess Marina locomotive. From here on I was hooked! I joined the Tenterden Railway Company in the spring of 1979 and although only 9 years old at the time, began volunteering as a locomotive cleaner in the locomotive department at Rolvenden. This was very much starting at the bottom of the pile. The daily duties involved arriving at Rolvenden to book on duty with the firelighter at some awful time at crack of dawn or before, externally clean the loco with oil and paraffin and assist the firelighter with steam raising followed by clearing the inspection pits of ash and picking up the spilt coal. Then, at the drivers discretion, enjoying a trip out on the locomotive to learn about the art of firing and using the various controls. After about seven years as a cleaner and having built up my firing experience, I sat a railway rules test, medical exam and practical day's firing exam and then became what is known as a 'Passed Cleaner'. This enabled me to carry out the duties of a fireman when vacancies became available until after a short period of time, I was placed on to the official fireman's roster. I then continued as a fireman for some nine years effecting the skills of firing and at the same time, learning how to drive the engine always under the direction of a qualified driver, whilst increasing my knowledge of the operation and maintenance of the locomotive. This practical training was supplemented by regular attendance at mutual improvement classes where, with a group of twenty or so members of the locomotive department, we were taught the theory of steam locomotive operation from experienced drivers in 'the classroom'. After a time I felt ready to apply for a driving test. In the summer of 1997 I made my formal application. I sat the Drivers Rules Test, a fresh medical and then found myself one evening in August sitting outside the home of Peter Wensley, our experienced locomotive examiner with a pile of memo cards in a mild state of panic and confusion that everything that I had tried to learn in the previous few years had completely gone out of my head

and I was about to fail dismally with what to me, would be the most important exam of my life. Two hours and twenty minutes later I emerged from Peter Wensley's house feeling completely exhausted and drained but exceptionally happy that I had made a reasonable attempt at correctly answering all the in depth questions put to me on the theory and operation of the steam locomotive. This for me was always going to be the hardest part. The next part of the exam was the practical two day driving test which was to be performed over the 27th/28th October. The first day involving the shunting and handling of a heavy freight train, the next driving a scheduled passenger train – with fare paying passengers inside!

With a desperate need to collect some brownie points, I offered to pick Peter Wensley up from his home in Slade Green and chauffeur him down, hoping that he would drop some hints as to how to successfully pass the practical test. This of course was not to be and I spent the whole journey worrying that he was about to ask me some deeply meaningful question on valves and pistons and throw me completely into confusion and panic. What I had not allowed for in my planning was the fact that an inexperienced driver takes a lot longer than an experienced driver in preparing his locomotive so by the time we arrived at Rolvenden there was the minimum hour and a half preparation time which put my well thought out plans into a spin. As I hastily oiled up the engine I made what I thought was a clever and rather calculated time saving exercise by only half filling the axle boxes as we were only doing what in effect was one round trip and the locomotive rostered for the afternoon was No. 23 Holman F Stephens, a loco which I knew well. What I didn't bank on was Peter Wensley's professional eye, and when he asked me at the end of my preparation "Had I completely finished?" to which I replied "Yes." He then asked me why I had only half filled the axle boxes! A question which I was not expecting as he had spent my preparation time talking to our loco inspector in the mess room unaware, or so I thought, of what I was doing. At the appointed time Peter Wensley and my fireman for the day, Iain Pringle (who is a friend of many years standing and also someone who used to take me down to the

railway long before I was old enough to drive) clambered onto the engine and headed off for Wittersham Road. Once at Wittersham Road we had to shunt a freight train as this part of the test is to prove that you have the ability to shunt and control a 250 ton unfitted freight train both up and down Tenterden Bank. After much shunting, and once the train was assembled we took a leisurely trundle through the countryside up to Tenterden Town. When at Tenterden we rearranged the train in the correct order and then with the helpful advice from my experienced freight shunter, I began what was for me the most challenging part of the test, to control an unfitted 250 ton freight train pushing our diminutive 45 ton engine downhill using only the stream brake and not touching the vacuum fitted head which is provided as a safety measure! Some twenty minutes later we safely arrived at Rolvenden, train and nerves still intact and then gently plodded back out to Wittersham Road. However, all was not to run so smoothly as the ground frame decided to fail. This problem was compounded by the darkness quickly descending and a new aspect presented itself for my shunting test as I had never carried out this operation in darkness before. After some one hour and twenty minutes we managed to get a ground frame release, put the train away and arrive back at Rolvenden a lot later than anticipated. After disposal of my engine with my fireman we then retired for a well earned meal and beverage. The next day dawned bright and sunny and again I went through the preparation procedure with Iain Pringle again acting as my fireman (he had kindly agreed to assist me through the whole two day test). This time I made doubly sure that I had allowed myself enough time to thoroughly oil the engine and not get caught out again, the engine rostered for the day being one of our yanks No. 21 Wainwright. At departure time the three of us climbed up on the footplate and trundled up to Tenterden. We shunted our stock, collected our passengers and made a correct time departure for a round trip to Northiam and back. Thankfully this trip went very well, managing to run exactly to time and get back to Tenterden in fine style. Having run the engine round and coupled on to the leading end of the train again, expecting to take out the next service, Peter Wensley asked me the

heartstopping question, "How do you think you did?" to which I replied "Apart from skimping on the oiling yesterday and leaving the shed ten minutes late, I think I might have passed." To which a big smile crept upon his face, he leant across the cab and warmly shook my hand and said "Well done, Driver Slack". I cannot express in words the feeling of total elation, happiness and relief that I felt in those few seconds as his words were settling in. I certainly was the happiest person on the railway that day. We then departed Tenterden for Rolvenden. The only disappointment being that at Rolvenden, the relief crew were ready to take the engine over and as a newly passed driver, I was reluctant to hand it over to them. We then went up to the mess room for a de-brief and the filling in of the paperwork. This is a short account of my progress through the ranks from cleaner to driver and the training system that is in place on The Kent & East Sussex Railway to

provide locomotive crews of the highest standard and competency. I cannot commend to you highly enough the enjoyment that I have received from being a member of the locomotive department and the many friends that I have made over the years both on and off the footplate. If you are prepared to commit some time to learning the skills and are prepared for hard work both manually and in learning the mechanics and theory side of locomotive operation then I can promise you a most fulfilling, satisfying and immensely enjoyable pastime. Thank you to everyone who assisted me on my two day test and to those who have encouraged and helped me achieve my ambition of becoming a Steam Driver. There is no legal substitute for the wonderful high a driver gets from pounding up the bank to Tenterden with a heavy train working hard. There is obviously something of the showman in all of us!

THE K&ESR 300 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

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3rd	Lorna Johnson	(258)	£30.00
4th	Bill Perry	(403)	£25.00
5th	G F Tollerfield	(297)	£20.00
6th	Clare Stuchbury	(025)	£15.00
7th	Alan J Bone	(480)	£10.00
8th	B A Rees	(142)	£5.00

April 98

Tenterden Buffet

1st	Paul Mercer	(078)	£60.00
2nd	B Cordingley	(340)	£40.00
3rd	D A Chalk	(350)	£30.00
4th	Lynn Thorogood	(226)	£25.00
5th	M B Knott	(422)	£20.00
6th	Peter Watson	(463)	£15.00
7th	J Laslet	(215)	£10.00
8th	Mrs M E Hersey	(344)	£5.00

March 98

Rolvenden

1st	Kes Enwright	(420)	£80.00
2nd	W E Cobbett	(263)	£70.00
3rd	P S Rand	(509)	£60.00
4th	J Featherstone	(036)	£40.00
5th	D J Mann	(325)	£30.00
6th	G David Neame	(571)	£20.00
7th	J R Crawford	(170)	£15.00
8th	Ian Legg	(208)	£10.00
9th	Richard Worts	(131)	£5.00

May 98

Buffet

1st	Margaret Howard	(091)	£60.00
2nd	Frim Halliwell	(030)	£40.00
3rd	G Coombs	(219)	£30.00
4th	Norman Johnson	(257)	£25.00
5th	D A Chalk	(350)	£20.00
6th	Wilf Watters	(603)	£15.00
7th	A C Piggins	(455)	£10.00
8th	Mrs J Norris	(268)	£5.00

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Book Reviews

The Hawkhurst Branch by Peter A.Harding published by the Author, price £2.75. Card covers, 32 pages of text, liberally illustrated with photographs and diagrams. ISBN 0 9523458 3 8

The author has included a number of Colonel Stephens' lines in his series on rural branch lines and light railways and his latest title fills a useful gap. The contents include a short history of the line, a description of the route, motive power and rolling stock, diagrams of the station sites and gradient profiles as well as nearly forty photographs, many of which have never been published before. This was H.F.Stephens' first project and at the early age of 22 he was appointed Resident Engineer under the overall supervision of Edward Seaton. A number of photographs were taken of the line during the construction period in the eighteen eighties and several are reproduced here. The book is a very useful summary history of the line and at £2.75 it is a bargain.

Clapham Junction 50 years of change; Isle of Wight lines 50 years of change. Both published by Middleton Press as number 4 and number 5 in their series commemorating 50 years of the railway network since nationalisation in 1948. Price £11.95 each. ISBN 1 901706 06 0 and ISBN 1 901706 12 5

Clapham Junction is the 100th volume from Vic Mitchell's remarkably successful publishing house and in both these volumes the distinctive and practical format of hard laminated covers (increasingly copied by other publishers!) gives a pictorial history of the subject in hand through the use of detailed and authoritative captions and comprehensive introductory text. Although prices are around double what they were in the early years, the books still represent very good value for money.

There cannot be an enthusiast in the country who has not passed through Clapham Junction at some stage and the book includes shots taken around the station itself and at Stewarts Lane, Nine Elms, the low level lines

and Latchmere Junction. Kensington Olympia is also featured – indeed, the West London extension railway as it is known, together with the better known Lymington branch, were probably the last lines in the country to have a regular steam hauled passenger service. Excluded from Bradshaw for some reason, the WLER passenger service nevertheless featured as an isolated table in the back of the 'all stations' Southern Region timetable for many years although it was always primarily a goods line.

In their book on the Isle of Wight lines, the authors Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith have deliberately excluded any photographs from the Southern Railway era and before. They have, however, managed to find an illustration for all 35 stations that were open in 1948, along with many examples of trains from that period. The first of the Island closures came in 1952 and by 1966 only part of the Ventnor line (to Shanklin) remained in the commercial network , electrified and now operated by Stagecoach. A preservation scheme, incorporating part of the Cowes line, was set up in the 1970s and is given plenty of coverage. The book gives a good all round coverage of the Island system and, as is usual in Middleton Press books, some anecdotal information – such as the need to lock train toilets when going through Wroxall tunnel, for fear of contaminating Ventnor's water supply, for which the supply did (and presumably still does) originate mainly in the tunnel.

Isle of Man Steam Railway in colour by Peter Johnson, published by Ian Allan at £9.99. 64 pages of colour photographs in hard cover. ISBN 0 71102570 3

This book is primarily a photographic album and a very good one too. The 66 photographs, all in colour, date from the present day back to the 1950's and include a number from the closed sections of the system from Douglas to Peel and Ramsey. It is fascinating to see how the liveries of locomotives and rolling stock have changed over the years and although the system is a

shadow of its former self, the authentic atmosphere is preserved on the Port Erin line to this day, except for the mutilation of Douglas station. 1998 sees the 125th Anniversary of the first steam railway on the Island and any visitors to the present tourist line will regard this as a fitting memento.

The two foot gauge enigma by Anthony Baxter published by Plateway Press, price £8.95. 64 pages of liberally illustrated text. ISBN 1 871980 34 8

Tony Baxter's history of the Beira Railway 1890-1900 is the story of one of the most ambitious 2ft gauge railways in Africa, which stretched from Beira on the Mozambique coast to Umtali in Rhodesia. 222 miles long and British built, the railway was driven through unexplored bush and swamps in six years and extracted a terrible toll in human life, from a hostile environment, where the pioneers had to deal with the depredations of lions, elephants and crocodiles. Researched largely from primary sources, this is a fascinating story which will appeal to those

who are seeking a railway book which is a little bit different.

The Bexleyheath Railway at Eltham, 1895-1995 by Gus White, published by the Eltham Society at £6 (plus 55p p&pp) and obtainable from them at 26, Strongbow Road, Eltham, London SE9 1DT.

To mark the centenary of the Bexleyheath Railway in 1995, the Eltham Society has published a book which chronicles the changes made to a small private venture which soon became absorbed into a larger network and today transports thousands of London commuters on Networker trains. Not only is the railway history annotated but also the impact of the railway on the local environment. Reference is made to the Royal visit of King Edward VII to Well Hall station, E.Nesbit who wrote 'The Railway Children' when living at Eltham, the double decker train, 1972 Well Hall rail crash, and the construction of the new station at Eltham. Over fifty illustrations supplement the story.

P.D.S.



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Letters to the Editor

The American connection

Sir – I had to write to tell you how much pleasure I get from reading *The Tenterden Terrier*. It's a great picture of demonstration railroad operations in England!

In March of 1997 I was in England for a few days and, being in the area, stopped by to visit. The railway wasn't open for the year but everyone made me welcome and I was fortunate enough to spend some time talking with Lawrence Donaldson, your Locomotive Manager, about the differences between American and English practice.

My start in rail restoration and operation came with The Illinois Railway Museum (IRM) in Union, Illinois and I can assure your members that they'll get as good a welcome at Union as I got at Tenterden. I don't live close to Union (about 300 miles away) but if anyone let's me know about their schedule I'll put them in contact with someone who will greet them when they get there if that isn't a weekend when I'll be there.

IRM runs a Decapod (2-10-0), a 1918 Baldwin built locomotive on summer

weekends from early May to the end of September. At 250,000 pounds and hand fired it can be busy – but the reward is the wonderment on the faces of the children when they see the cab and the fire.

My phone numbers are day 1-219-827-5434 and evenings and weekends 1-765-662-0505. Both numbers have voice mail if I'm not close.

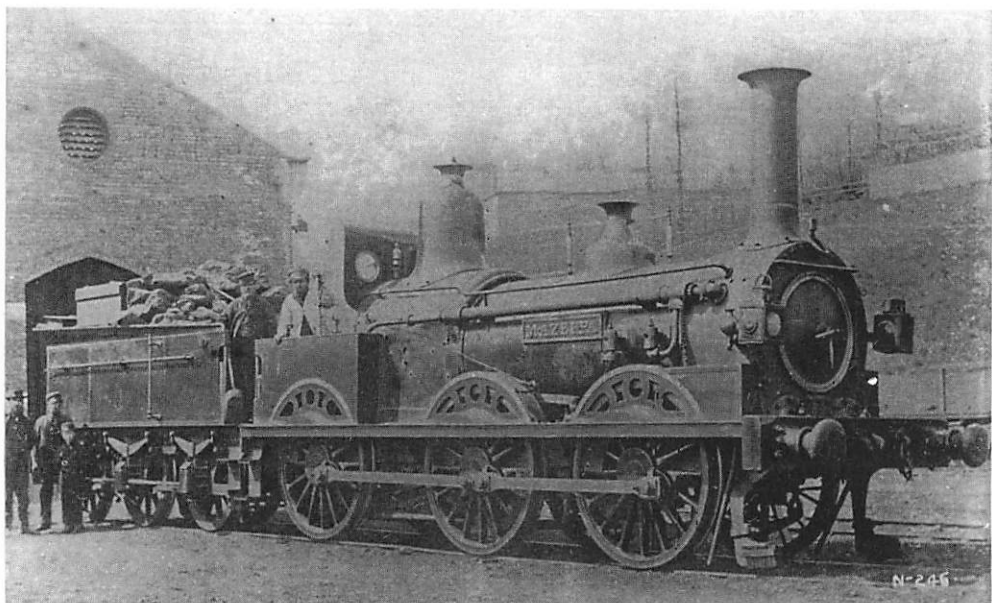
Marion, Indiana

Hugh Harris

The livery question

Sir – I am a relatively new member of the K&ESR, and I cannot remember the early days of preservation, and I tend to find the 'Lineside News' section of *The Tenterden Terrier* of most interest. It is marvellous to see the great progress that has been made on the restoration of No. 8 'Knowle' recently.

While it is of course not my decision, I have slight reservations about the choice of livery. I have presumed that 'black' means British Railways black. There are those who choose to say that liveries are only a coat of paint to stop the loco from going rusty, but this is not true, as the livery is one of the few things a member of the general public is going to notice. BR liveries must be the most uninspiring of all time, not to mention



'Lion' class 0-6-0 No 53 at Exeter, March 1867. Note the wire brushes on the guard irons.

their associations with the downfall of the great days of steam, and I fail to see any desire to reproduce them.

I believe that at least up to World War One, the RVR, then the K&ESR painted engines blue. I think that this would be the most suitable livery for No 3 Bodiam when it finally returns, as it would reflect back to the line's opening, the centenary of which will be celebrated in the year 2000. This livery would also prove popular with the young children who visit the line due to similarity of the engine to (dare I say it) 'Thomas the Tank Engine'. A wide range of the early liveries must be applied to the engines to reflect the increasing use of the magnificent vintage carriages seen on the line. I hope those in charge give it some thought.

Fawkham, Kent

William Proudfoot

The Sheffield set

Sir – Issue 68, winter 1995: In the above issue of *The Tenterden Terrier* I explained what the objects were on the buffer beam on the Sheffield Railcar Set in 1932. They had been made, and installed by the K&ESR fitter Charlie Turner.

I have now made an interesting discovery. Looking through some old photographs of early London & South Western locomotives I saw that as early as 1867, and perhaps before, the idea of wire brushes to clear leaves from the rails had been used. As on the Sheffield they were adjustable for height, being slipped over the existing guard irons and held by a clamp bolt.

Examples can be seen in D L Bradley's *London & South Western Railway Album* published by Ian Allan Ltd in 1979. Also shown are seven loco types used by Col. Stephens on his railways.

As Joseph Beattie was the engineer at this time perhaps we can attribute the initial idea to him or one of his staff, unless anyone knows differently?

When one thinks we have been to the Moon, and back, we have yet to find a present day engineer to fit brushes like these to present day trains, with electronically adjustable height control to clear the rail when the odd patch of leaves are encountered.

If only we had some present day Joseph Beatties and Charlie Turners to make

Railway travel more bearable.

Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex

Monty Baker

A Jewel in the Crown

Sir – Based on my personal experience, I am writing to encourage everyone to promote a Jewel in the K&ESR crown, The Wealden Belle Sunday lunch service.

Back in April 1996 I arranged for a party of 24 members of the Chislehurst 41 Club to have Sunday lunch on the Wealden Belle. Everyone really enjoyed the experience and the visit made an indelible impression. Subsequently every time I met people who had been on the trip they said how much they had liked the combination of good food, friendly service and the K&ESR steam railway experience. Those club members who had not been on the trip heard such glowing tributes that they asked if I could arrange another one.

I was a little hesitant as a repeat attempt at something that was a great success can easily fall flat the second time around. However the popularity did not dim and I was continually asked to make a repeat booking. Given the overwhelming interest I decided to make a second booking, but this time with the target of filling all 42 seats in the Pullman Car. Sunday October 12th was the chosen date and the 41 club members reacted rapidly and within 3 weeks all 42 seats were booked and paid for.

The day itself was dry, bright and sunny. Christine and her staff gave us a friendly welcome when we boarded. The inside of the Pullman Car was a picture of starched white tablecloths and neat set cutlery. After aperitifs the crew served lunch in the traditional Pullman silver service manner. This comprised a tangy cheese and broccoli soup, lashings of roast beef with all the trimmings, then apple pie with custard. The meal was rounded off by fresh filter coffee.

One advantage of the current ticketing arrangements on the K&ESR is that the passenger can have unlimited travel on the same day. After lunch many of the Chislehurst 41 Club members decided to take a trip on the Victorian train before heading back home. As a special attraction I included an escorted visit to Rolvenden Signalbox and the loco yard for those interested in seeing the inner workings of

an operational steam railway.

The pleasure that my friends had from the trip on the Wealden Belle means that I have no reservation about recommending it to others. So if you have a group of friends, workmates or belong to a club that would enjoy a great day out, suggest that they come for Sunday lunch on the Wealden Belle at the K&ESR. It's an unforgettable experience and one that they'll want to enjoy again.

Bromley, Kent

Tom White

The Austen Heritage and Carriage Dilemma

Sir – Duncan Buchanan and I were pleased at the response provoked by The Austen Heritage, *The Tenterden Terrier* No 74. It was particularly pleasing to see our efforts appreciated by R.W.Kidner – one of the authorities from whose work we developed our argument.

That said, various of the comments homed-in on the Carriage and Wagon department. This may have been inevitable because of my close association with C&W. This was, I suggest, exacerbated by the editorial question "Is this perhaps the time for an Austen style clear out" and the illustration captioned by the editor "Behind the Carriage shed. Unserviceable stock for disposal." Whilst I am not unsympathetic to this point of view let me make clear, The Austen Heritage was about the Railway in general not any one area of activity.

In his letter Douglas Edwards seems to have been particularly misled by the editorial 'spin'. Apart from a passing mention of Rolvenden his second paragraph seems to assume we are talking about C&W. He also seems to have taken the rhetorical flourish (mine) about drifting into looking like the Southern Region around 1980 a little literally. His final two paragraphs, the latter in particular, could almost be a précis of some of my known views (see *Terriers* passim) on the future direction of the Railway. Perhaps I need to remind Mr. Edwards and others that much of the derelict stock at Wittersham road is, or has been, awaiting removal to Robertsbridge. Of the stock at the rear of the carriage shed, one vehicle is the old S&T mess coach (No.57 mentioned by Peter Davis) which was replaced at the back of the platform by a much tidier Mark 1. The two Pullmans

may be unserviceable but are at least presentable – from a distance. CK No.5618 was also on No 3 road until August 1997 but has, of course, subsequently re-entered traffic.

With regard to the old mess coach on Tenterden Platform, the friends of Vintage Carriages (C&W support group) agree with Mr. Atkinson that this is an eyesore. They have recently reached an agreement with the company, which will allow them to tidy it up and conserve the structure against our long-term aim of restoring this unique SE&CR survivor as a working vehicle. Regrettably, pressure in C&W has prevented an early start to this project.

Turning to Peter Davis' comments, Maunsell No. 59 has now been broken up. This was the property of the Loco Trust, and disposal had to be agreed by them at their AGM. Apart from other considerations, we are severely short of siding space. Peter Davis implies we might in the future want to recreate such a lost item. Well in the case of No. 59 it would indeed be recreation – the coach was far past any sort of practical restoration. Much the same can be said for No. 57. It has been suggested that any further disposals should be by way of transfer/sales elsewhere.

Peter Davis is right that the present carriage strategy is a result of expediency rather than planning, but we have had to manage the situation as we found it, not as we might wish it to be. Also is the original carriage strategy, worked out a quarter of a century ago, beyond reappraisal? We should obviously have some guiding principles but a willingness to be flexible is essential.

The plan – or policy – for carriages is now to retain the present core of Mark 1's, although as Peter, again quite rightly, says they are complex to maintain and require more and more care and attention.

A Pullman set will of course be necessary. I will leave aside the matter of its future make-up, although perhaps I should, mention that vehicles for evening catering services, although very profitable, can take up disproportionate amount of C&W time. Company policy is to enable as many passengers as possible to travel in vintage stock – as Mr. Edwards confirms, the product is popular with the public.

C&W Department, Tenterden, Kent

Nick Pallant

Snailbeach Article

Sir – For some years I have been compiling records of Colonel Stephens Railway Personnel. I have notes of two Gatfords. One without initials is described as a driver-cum-fitter from the mid 1920's until his retirement c1947.

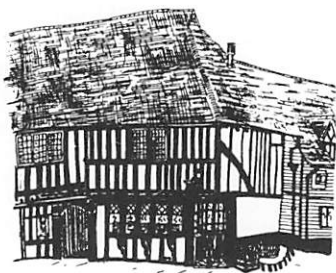
There is also Thomas Gatford who was a driver on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire until 1936 and was then on the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead until its closure. It is open as to whether he made the right decision in moving as he may not have been retained on the S&M with the military occupation. The office of Junctionman, mentioned on page 34 of the

article, was held for a long time by a man named Jones. He is often mentioned in correspondence from Tonbridge and Austen gave him rather a hard time of it. It evidently had an adverse effect on his health and he retired in January 1946.

After his retirement correspondence was to be addressed to Rubber Boots Rawson or Fitter/Driver Edwards. The title of the former came from his constant appealing to Austen for rubber boots, essential to his PW duties. He eventually received a pair but had to pay 9/- for them.

Bristol

Jack Burrell



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How We Did in 1997

Financial Director, Bernard Sealy reviews last year's financial performance and looks into the future

1997 was another successful year for the Tenterden Railway Company and we achieved a surplus of £68,062 compared with £62,784 in 1996, excluding exceptional items. Last year, I referred to the unacceptably low margin that we were achieving on running trains, calculated as a ratio of net income to total income. I am pleased to say that this has improved from 3.7% to 7.6% and as a result our sources of net income are now more evenly balanced with 36% arising from our operating (charitable) activities and 64% from trading/filming, compared with 16% and 85% respectively in 1996. I am hopeful that we can achieve a further increase in the operating ratio in 1998.

The amended two engine service now operates six trains at intervals of one hour ten minutes, rather than seven trains at hourly intervals. Early results indicate that this has had no detrimental effect on passenger numbers and has increased revenue for our other site attractions at Tenterden, notably the museum.

Profits from our trading activities fell from £89,388 to £68,746 despite a 12% higher gross profit contribution from both the buffet and gift shop. The major factor is that our wage costs have risen from £122,226 to £164,000 for the whole organisation, with the average number of employees now 19 as opposed to 13 in the previous year. This is due to the following reasons:-

1. Investment for the future – i.e. apprentices and trainees.
2. The need for full time management and administration of the Bodiam 2000 project in which your Board has invested in order to secure the grants available.
3. Utilising our own resources and labour rather than outside contractors where the tasks can be achieved more favourably as regards quality, time and cost.
4. Where direct costs can be saved – i.e. a crossing keeper at Cranbrook Road.
5. Unfortunately, the lack of volunteers.

However, I would not wish to underestimate the very considerable degree of support that we

receive from our members, which we believe compares favourably with that received by other heritage railways.

We were extremely fortunate to be assisted by the Norwegian Locomotive Trust during the year in the funding of repairs to their locomotive (included in donations and covenants), donations upon receiving the Millennium Grants and also by the sale of surplus assets, notably unusable rail from the Northiam to Bodiam section. This is included in sundry income in the accounts and has been used primarily to fund permanent way costs on the running section. Our policy has been for the last few years (and will continue) that we will not commit capital expenditure until we are confident of the income needed to pay for it.

Finance costs increased compared with the previous year, but thankfully not due to increased borrowing. An increasing proportion of our business is by way of credit card, for which the handling cost is high compared with cheque or cash banking. We are hoping to mitigate this cost in the future by issuing our own affinity card through a major credit card company. Negotiations on this are proceeding.

On the capital front, expenditure on fixed assets amounting to £197,127 in total, included £45,559 in respect of the Bodiam 2000 project. Despite this we managed to reduce our bank indebtedness by £6,235, primarily as a result of reduced working capital requirements. A very satisfactory result.

1998 has started with a flourish and is ahead of budget on income, boosted by considerable charter business and a strong performance from the catering activities and gift shop. The early receipt of grant monies from English Partnerships, the bond issue, combined with the February half term business have seen the unusual phenomenon of a decreasing overdraft. The investment made in certain areas (both in human as well as general financial resources) are beginning to pay early dividends, notably on the Wealden Belle and on-train catering activities.

Our funding package for Bodiam 2000, which includes £185,000 raised through the bond issue, is now complete, other than the need to make contributions to the project from revenue

over the next two and a half years. We were able to allocate £30,000 last year and anticipate sums of £45,000 in 1998, £45,000 in 1999 and £30,000 in the millennium year itself.

The Tenterden Railway Company Ltd and subsidiary companies.

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st December 1997

	1997	1996
Income from charitable activities:-		
Fares (excludes Santas & Thomas days)	£329,363	£302,716
Other income	<u>268,844</u>	<u>185,284</u>
Total income	598,207	488,000
Less expenses	<u>(552,449)</u>	<u>(469,764)</u>
Net income	45,758	18,236
Add profits from trading activities	68,746	89,388
Filming income	<u>9,274</u>	<u>5,562</u>
gives total income before interest	123,778	113,186
Deduct interest payable	(55,421)	(50,402)
and taxation	<u>(295)</u>	<u>-</u>
Gives a surplus before exceptional items of	68,062	62,784
Add surplus on Bearer Bond redemption	<u>-</u>	<u>17,325</u>
Gives a surplus for the year of	68,062	80,109

Summarised cash flow statement for 1997

Total income before interest	123,778	113,186
Interest paid and similar charges	<u>(54,708)</u>	<u>(49,930)</u>
Income after interest	69,070	63,256
Depreciation provided against income but retained in the business	<u>46,312</u>	<u>30,233</u>
Cash flow from operations for the year	115,382	93,489
Capital donations	<u>-</u>	<u>6,000</u>
Total cash flow	115,382	99,489
Expenditure on fixed assets	(197,127)	(61,342)
Corporation tax paid	<u>-</u>	<u>(172)</u>
Free cash flow	(81,745)	37,975
Reduced working capital requirements for debtors, creditors and stock	87,980	17,417
Bearer Bonds repaid	-	(2,675)
Bearer Bonds issued	<u>-</u>	<u>225</u>
Decrease in bank etc. borrowings in 1997	6,235	52,942

Summary of bank and other indebtedness at 31st December 1997

Bank overdrafts less cash in hand	103,523	93,125
Secured bank and other loans	236,522	253,155
Unsecured loans	<u>12,303</u>	<u>12,303</u>
Total indebtedness to banks etc.	352,348	358,583
Decrease in indebtedness in 1997	6,235	

Note: Indebtedness does not include bearer bonds £153,840 (1996 – £153,840).

Colonel Stephens Comes to Life

At last! – the Museum has been officially declared OPEN! Preparations in the weeks leading up to the opening ceremony were beginning to get a little frantic, but all went smoothly on the day.

With all the display cases now built, painted and lit, a final effort went into arranging an acceptable display with which to open. Philip Shaw was kept busy producing captions on his word processor.

Doug Lindsay finished laying carpet tiles throughout and 'Gazelle' was given a thorough clean and wipe down by Ken Lee. John Liddell pulled out all the stops to get the new parts assembled on the velocipede and the vehicle painted in an attractive livery of red, claret and black.

Allan Tebboth revarnished the door thresholds and repainted some display cases which had become scuffed. Dave Strivens and Henry Cooper wired in the recently acquired tape players for sound effects in the Victorian

room and K&ESR corridor. Eileen McClelland finished making and arranging the figures sitting in the carriage compartment, and John Miller got on everyone's nerves by asking when they would be finished.

Meanwhile, preparations outside the Museum were in hand. The rather unkempt grass area opposite the Museum was taken in hand by Pam and Sheila Stevens. After several cuts in April and May it began to take on a lawn-like appearance. This was to be the site for a marquee in which to serve tea to the guests. Back in February, it had been decided that the commemorative plaque to be unveiled at the opening, would be in the form of a worksplate. Brian Heyes introduced us to Bernard Hill of Coxheath, who agreed to make a pattern from MDF board. As we did not need a copy, the pattern, rather than a casting, would be the actual plaque. The 300 Club kindly paid for the pattern to be made and painted.



The assembled gathering outside the Museum.

(Robert Berry)



Unveiling the commemorative plaque by Sir Neil Cossons (Right) accompanied by Museum Curator, John Miller.

(Robert Berry)

While we were making arrangements for the opening day, Doug Lindsay contacted us with news that E.W.S. Railways would like to make a presentation to the Museum of a set of nameplate and crests from withdrawn class 73 locomotive No 73126. Readers may remember that this engine was brought to the line by road and named 'Kent & East Sussex Railway' at Northiam on 23 May 1991 – seven years, less one day, before the Museum official opening. The nameplate and crests arrived with a week to spare. After those years on the engine they were looking rather worn and required a quick repaint before mounting ready for the presentation.

The formal proceedings were to be conducted from a small platform erected on the gravel between Museum and grass. The weather was watched anxiously – if necessary the platform could be placed in the marquee and everyone could be accommodated under cover with a squeeze. When the 22 May arrived, it was a fine day – warm with a brisk breeze – and the ceremony could be outdoors.

Our principle guest, who would perform the

opening ceremony was Sir Neil Cossons OBE, Director of the Science Museum, London. He arrived at midday for a preliminary look around the Museum, then a private lunch organised by Pam and Sheila Stevens. The opening 'workplate' had been mounted on a board at the rear of the platform and covered by curtains in 'company maroon'. The nameplate and crests were mounted at the front and covered by a drape, also in maroon. Graham Hukins had organised a public address system as well as the marquee.

Behind the scenes, tea was being organised by Peter Broyd, assisted by Joly Vickers and Eileen and John McClelland. Power had been laid on so that fresh tea and coffee could be made in the marquee. The Victorian train was marshalled in the platform with No 14 'Charwelton' at its head, and the Union Flag fluttered from a pole erected by John Liddell.

From 2 pm, guests started to assemble. Numbers had to be limited by invitation because of the catering arrangements. Some 83 people were invited, plus press – and in the event 75 attended with just a few from the

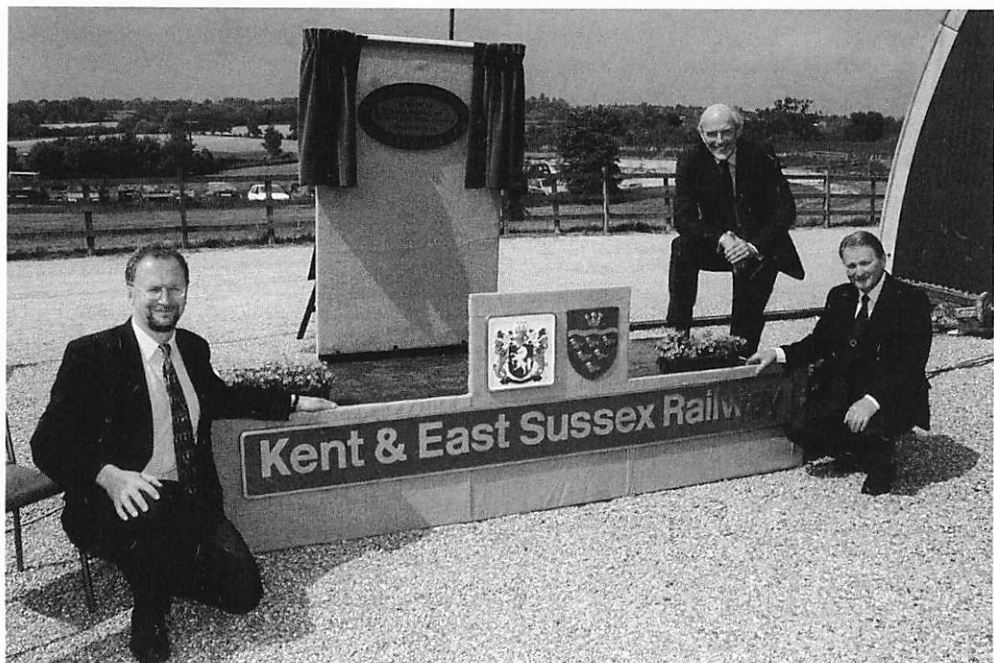
media.

We were pleased to welcome the new Town Mayor of Tenterden, Councillor Mrs Jill Kirk, and Yvonne Painter, President of the Tenterden Chamber of Commerce. Other guests included: Guy Purdy, Museums Officer, South Eastern Museums Service; John Snell, Vice-Chairman, Heritage Railways; Fred Cabbage Chief Executive, South East England Tourist Board; Sarah Barber from Ashford Borough Council and Alan Garner, Colonel Stephens Society.

Helen Ashby, Registrar, represented the National Railway Museum, York, and we were particularly pleased that representatives from our twinned railway, the Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme, were able to attend, namely, Jean Marc Page, President and Arnaud Girode, familiar to some of us as the driver of the Michelin railcar. Robin Dyce and Bernard Sealy represented the TRC Board, otherwise the remaining guests either worked for, or had assisted in some way with, the setting up of the Museum.

At 2.30 pm, the proceedings were opened by John Miller, hon. curator. He reminded those present that it was just over 37 years ago that the first meeting was called to consider how the K&ESR was to be preserved from obliteration. "At that time", he said, "no one involved had any idea as to what Colonel Stephens looked like – he was just a name. Now, we have a whole room full of photos showing him from a baby to an old man". He went on to outline the aims of the Museum and paid tribute to Philip Shaw for starting the collection more than 25 years earlier. After thanking the volunteers for their efforts, he estimated that "we have had about 260 working parties – which represent about 1820 man/woman days – which means I as teaboy have made over 3,500 cups of tea or coffee".

John Miller then introduced Sir Neil Cossons and invited him to declare the Museum open. Sir Neil, in his opening remarks, congratulated the volunteers on their work in putting together "this extraordinary collection of materials, vividly telling the story of Colonel Stephens".



Simon Ball, Area Engineer London and South East, EWS Railways presents the nameplate Kent & East Sussex Railway to the Museum.

(Robert Berry)

"Stephens had until now remained an anonymous figure", he said, "but his story deserved to be better known. This exotic collection of bizarre railways established by Colonel Stephens have been illustrated very effectively in this fascinating compilation of artefacts", he said. Sir Neil said he could think of no better place to home a museum detailing the historical importance of The Colonel and his work, than the Kent & East Sussex Railway, the rural railway with beautiful landscapes, where he had practised many of his unconventional business ideas. Sir Neil then drew aside the curtains to reveal the 'workplate', painted in black, red and green, while the crew on 'Charwelton' sounded the whistle in support of the applause.

John Miller then introduced Simon Ball, Area Engineer, London & South East, EWS Railways. He was supported by Barry Stephens, Contract Support Manager, EWS. Simon Ball, who at the last moment deputised for Jim Fisk, Director of Engineering, then made the presentation of the nameplate 'Kent & East Sussex Railway' to the Museum.

Philip Shaw, in his capacity as company historian, thanked Sir Neil and Simon Ball for their respective roles in the day's proceedings. He also paid tribute to the Museum's landlords, Henry and Felicity Edwards, for all their help and co-operation in bringing the Museum to a successful opening.

By 3 pm, the formal proceedings were over, and Philip Shaw invited the guests to take tea in the marquee. The catering team had done a marvellous job of presentation, with a long table groaning under platters of little sandwiches, scones, cakes and pastries, and all decorated with garlands in the company colours of maroon and cream.

At 3.45 pm, the Victorian train departed for a trip down the line for those guests who wished to travel, while the Museum team cleared everything away. Thanks are due to the Company for providing the marquee, otherwise the entire cost of the day was met from funds raised by the Museum team. And the general verdict on the day – a very enjoyable, relaxed, low-key event with a village fête atmosphere.

'Onlooker'



Sir Neil Cossons and John Miller inspect plans in Colonel Stephens' office.

(Robert Berry)

Off the rails

Saturday 26th March 1949

It is reported that No 8 'Knowle' will soon enter traffic on the K&ESR after her long overhaul at Rolvenden. (It is curious how we still refer to locomotives by their original names long after they have been removed from the engine – 'Knowle' lost her name some 90 years ago!). Some readers may remember a less happy episode in the engine's history, so perhaps this should be recorded before we celebrate her new lease of life.

Apart from the K&ESR owned 'Terrier' class engines, (No. 3 'Bodiam' and No. 5 'Rolvenden'), 'Knowle' has the longest association with the railway of any of her class. She was allocated to the line in February 1940 and remained for 18 years. Following nationalisation, she was the first of the class to appear with a British Railways number, 32678 in August 1948, but remained in plain Southern Railway black.

On Saturday, 26 March 1949, 'Knowle' left Robertsbridge with a single carriage, No. S 5317, forming the 5.50 pm train to Tenterden Town. The train reached Northiam without incident.

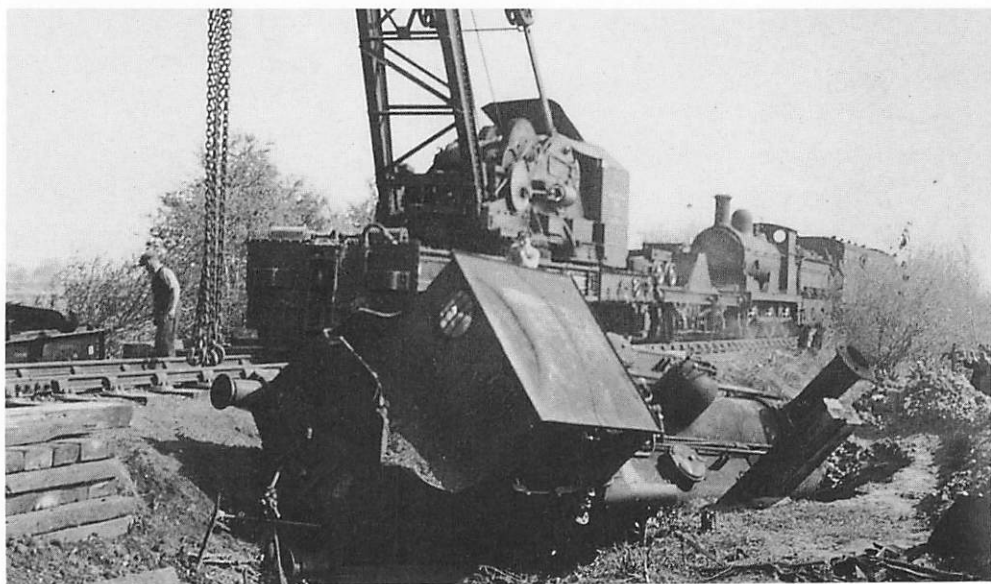
John Miller and Peter Davis have researched two separate incidents in our not so recent history.

The weather had been wet and it was now dark.

Ahead, work had been in progress on the track leading up to the Rother bridge, and there was a 15 mph speed restriction in force until the work was completed. However, the driver was in a hurry to reach Tenterden and set off from Northiam at a brisk pace. At the curve to the left before the bridge, the track gave way, and 'Knowle' left the rails and ploughed into the soft ground of the right hand ditch.

The engine came to rest tilted onto her right hand side, pulling the carriage with her, which also tilted to the right. Most of the obvious damage was to the end of the carriage resulting from the impact on the back of the engine.

Jack Hoad, who was the fireman on that occasion, recalled the incident when interviewed in 1974. He and the driver were shaken but not injured, and the only casualty was the guard, Cyril Packham, who was very badly shaken and bruised. There appear to have been no passengers on board. The driver was suspended for three days following the incident.



32678 lies on its side in the ditch, 24th April 1949. The Brighton crane waits with No 1434. (A.F.Dunk)

The track was quickly repaired and services resumed without undue interruption. The damaged end of the carriage was covered with tarpaulin sheet, and there both engine and carriage lay while consideration was given to the method of recovery. The obvious problem, due to the line's light engineering, was one of axle loading of the recovery vehicles. Meanwhile, with 'Knowle' out of action, another Terrier, No 32644⁽¹⁾ was drafted in from the Hayling Island branch to cover the services.

The date of recovery of the carriage has not been recorded. It certainly stayed put for at least two weeks, and it may indeed have remained in position until 'Knowle' was recovered a month after the accident. All we know is that the carriage was removed before the engine.

On the 24 April, a small crowd of onlookers walked across the fields to watch, as two 36 ton Rapiet cranes were brought onto the line to lift the engine. The Brighton crane was on the Tenterden side of the accident, propelled there by '01' class locomotive No 1434⁽²⁾ and with an ex-SE&CR 'birdcage' coach in support. An unidentified Terrier class engine assisted the Bricklayers Arms crane at the Robertsbridge end, which was accompanied by two support

coaches, one ex-L&SWR and another ex-SE&CR 'birdcage'. It is assumed that the Ashford crane, although the nearest to the line, was too heavy.

The track had been underpinned with layers of sleepers under the lifting point. The engine appears to have been lifted with chains and hooks under the buffers at the rear, and with a sling under the boiler barrel behind the smokebox, at the front. She was gently lifted back onto the rails and towed to Rolvenden depot for examination.

The only serious damage was to the coal bunker, resulting from the impact damage from the carriage. By the middle of June, 'Knowle' had arrived at Brighton Works for repair. In September, she reappeared looking none the worse for her undignified experience, this time painted in fully lined out BR black but with blank tank sides as the BR crests were not then available. 'Knowle' resumed her duties, working nearly nine more years on the K&ESR.

Tuesday 7th November 1953

On Tuesday 7th November 1953 Mr A Waterhouse and his wife, of Hollow Wall Farm, Staplecross set off for Ashford Market with four ewes in a small wooden trailer behind their 1934



*Bricklayers Arms crane on the left and Brighton crane on the right as 'Knowle' is lifted clear, in front of the assembled crowd.
(Col. Stephens Historical Archive)*

Standard Nine.

As they ran downhill on the A28 towards Northiam level crossing the 8.20am from Headcorn, the only through train of the day, was hurrying across the misty levels on time for its 10.02am departure from Northiam to Robertsbridge. Following normal practice on ungated crossings the driver shut off steam, whistled continuously and coasted over the crossing at less than 10mph. Neither driver nor locomotive can be identified, though at that time the latter would most likely have been Terrier 32655 or 32678.

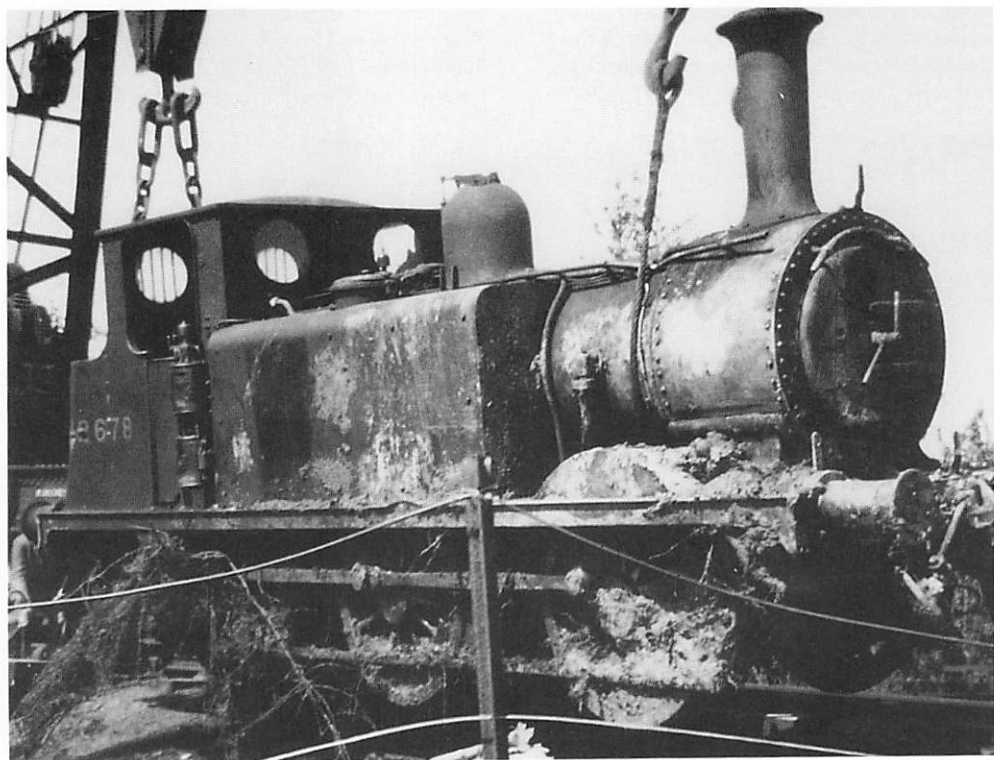
Mr Waterhouse was unable to pull up and ran into the train between the ex LSWR bogie brake and an SR 20 ton goods brake being moved from Rolvenden to Robertsbridge for attaching to the 12.20 pm down mixed.

The alert locomotive driver made an emergency stop but not before the car, caught between the two vehicles, had been dragged off the road onto the cattle grid. The Waterhouses were shaken

but uninjured and although the car at first appears to be badly damaged the only irreparable component seems to be the radiator. Such was the shortage of cars in those days, with long waiting lists for new models, that the little Standard would have soon been repaired. There was no damage to Railway property.

The train came to rest with the goods brake entangled with the car and obstructing the highway, so it was uncoupled and hand shunted to the Wittersham side of the crossing. The Northiam policeman was summoned and took control of the incident. It is not known whether charges were brought by either party but it is quite likely they were not, in those far off and leisurely days people were more prepared to accept responsibility for their own actions. The locomotive driver could not have been to blame and the police are unlikely to have taken action against Mr Waterhouse as nobody was hurt.

Contemporary press reports are conflicting, the Express-Herald quoting Mrs Waterhouse as



Largely undamaged but covered in mud, 'Knowle' is about to be re-railed.

(John Cyster)

saying "The railway line was obscured by a house and high hedges and by the time they heard the train whistle the car was within three lengths of the crossing". She went on to say "We were partly on the crossing. My husband pulled up sharply and put the car into reverse, but had no time to get back, so we sat and waited for it!"

The Kent & Sussex Courier's report was perhaps more accurate, stating that Mr Waterhouse was about to drive across when he heard the train's whistle. He braked but the train took off the car bumpers and badly damaged the bonnet. Significantly, neither report mentions the sheep trailer.

The level crossing was protected in accordance with procedures agreed between HF Stephens and the MOT in the 1920s when the gates were removed. Counting down, there was first the MOT "ungated crossing" sign, followed by a very large board stating "LEVEL CROSSING AHEAD – NO GATES – BEWARE OF TRAINS" and immediately before the crossing a large cast "TRAINS CROSS HERE" sign on a black and white post surmounted by a red triangle. As already mentioned it was mandatory for trains to whistle continuously on the approach and while crossing the road and not to exceed 10 mph.

Sometimes, but not on this occasion, station agent Bill Rann controlled the road traffic with a red flag or lamp, it was never clear whether this was a requirement or perhaps only carried out at Bill's discretion in certain conditions or in poor visibility.

Of course, Mr Waterhouse would have been aware of the level crossing, he must have used the road regularly. He would surely have approached with some caution and would not have been surprised by the locomotive's whistle. It is most likely that his attempt to pull up was thwarted by the notably weak cable operated brakes fitted to the Standard and the momentum applied by the unbraked trailer with a gross weight of perhaps 15 cwt.

This was just an unfortunate accident from which the Waterhouses were lucky to escape with little more than a shaking and maybe a handful of people missed their main line connection. As is often the case, another couple of seconds, or a few inches, could have resulted in a less happy ending. The incident took place just two months before closure to passenger traffic but new concrete fence posts can be seen lying in the cess opposite the station. Most of the line was refenced at this time and no doubt the cost



The wrecked Standard Nine at Northiam, looking towards Newenden, 7th November 1953.

(Graham H. Odd)

contributed to the case for closure, even though the line continued to carry quite heavy goods traffic for several more years.

Notes:

(1) No 32644, originally named 'Fulham', remained on the K&ESR following the return of 'Knowle' but

was withdrawn in April 1951 and scrapped.

(2) Apart from occasions during World War II, when a number of movements took place of '01' class and War Department ex-GWR Dean Goods engines, even as far as Robertsbridge, this is the only recorded authorised movement of an '01' class engine below Rolvenden.



*The goods brake on the other side of Northiam crossing with the wrecked Standard Nine in the foreground.
(Graham H. Odd)*



Having detached the goods brake the train pulled into the platform.

(Graham H. Odd)

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