

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 77

Winter 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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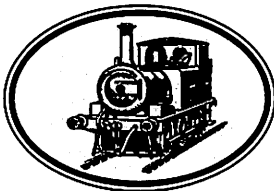
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The Tenterden Terrier



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FRONT COVER

The Norwegian approaches the Wet Cutting with the 3:20pm train from Tenterden on 17th February 1998.

(Tom White)

FRONTISPIECE

The crane off loads new flat-bottom Austrian rail near the site of Dixter Halt, 18th August 1998.
(Brian Stephenson)

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Editorial

Forty-seven for twenty-one

It is 50 years since the railway was nationalised – one of a select number of minor lines which escaped grouping with the big four companies in 1923, because of the fiercely independent stance adopted by its managing director. Now, events have turned full circle and we have a thriving line, albeit somewhat shorter, carrying more passengers than ever before. It was curious,

therefore, to read in Stephen Garrett's article, in this issue, that in 1948 the 21½ mile long railway was run by 47 people including 2 clerks, 1 fitter, 3 engine drivers and 1 carpenter.

Given a seemingly insatiable demand for volunteers to run our railway today, is there something about productivity that we have to learn, or did everybody just work that much harder in 1947?

From the Chairman – Robin Dyce

Following the Annual General Meeting I was pleased to welcome Peter Davis back and Graham Bridge, Kim Richardson and James Veitch, for the first time, to the Board of the Tenterden Railway Company.

Peter has the privilege of owning membership card number one and comes with a wealth of knowledge of the history of the Railway. Once again he takes up the position of Heritage Director, a job that is becoming increasingly difficult when trying to blend the needs of a modern tourist business with the operation of a historic light railway with an important heritage. Inevitably compromises have to be made but our heritage must not be ignored. Our past is our future.

Last year Graham Bridge was on the Board of Colonel Stephens Railway Enterprises. Graham used to be actively involved with the Honda Goldwing Club where he developed an interest in the social and administrative activities so important to a successful venture. With this background Graham now has special responsibilities for volunteer and paid staff matters and has been to the forefront of the difficult job of attracting more volunteers to the Railway. Graham has also been co-ordinating social activities and is undertaking the thankless task of collating some of the Board's outstanding administration jobs.

Kim Richardson has come to us with a professional business background and a hobby of constructing and operating narrow gauge railway engines. In a previous life he worked on the footplate on the Mid Hants Railway. Kim's business acumen has already been appreciated by the Board and has resulted in him taking on the role of Development Director. In this role

Kim will be producing a Business Plan which will enable us to prioritise and plan for the short and long-term needs of the Railway.

James Veitch is the youngest member of the Board but has been active as a volunteer for many years notably as a member of the Forestry and Conservation Group and as a waiter on the Wealden Pullman and Belle. James brings with him some fresh ideas but for the moment has no specific responsibilities.

For the first time in many years the Board is now up to strength which couldn't have happened at a more suitable time as this is a very important period in the development of the Kent and East Sussex Railway.

At the time of writing this article, at the end of our main running season, our visitor numbers have held up very well at about 2% above last year. This can be compared to some other railways that have suffered drops of 20% to 25% and our local competitor attractions failing to improve on last year's figures.

The bond issue has reached £350,000 which is a massive indication of the support for the project and in the future of the Kent and East Sussex Railway. However, the heading "awash with dosh" which accompanied an article in a railway magazine on the Bodiam extension could not be wider of the mark as, after the extension is completed, we will again be reliant on the income generated by the day to day operation of the Railway.

With the Bodiam extension halfway through the construction stage we must beware of becoming complacent. The efficient operation of the existing railway must be ensured, locomotives, coaches and 7 miles of track to be maintained to the highest standards and operating staff to be rostered.

Lineside News

**From the Managing Director –
Bernard Sealy**

The summer has flown past once more and the Santa Special bookings are beginning to come in at an ever increasing pace.

As you will read elsewhere, business has been good for us this year especially in comparison with other Railways and visitor attractions. Our ability to provide charters and catering for relatively large numbers at short notice is proving its worth and the quality provided, judging by the compliments that I receive, is a credit to all concerned.

Similarly the service provided throughout the year, accomplished at least from an outside perception, with generally only "minor local difficulties" sets a high standard. Those of us who work at the coal face know that frantic achievements are often required to keep the show on the road but by and large the wheels have continued to turn, the visitors fed and entertained, the coffers filled, overdrafts become credit balances (YES – REALLY!) and the long term future of the railway stable.

Now that's enough of the mutual appreciation and back slapping. To progress the railway needs new life blood and especially youngsters who will be and are the K&ESR's future. We are very fortunate in that in comparison with many other railways we have an excellent and growing crop of enthusiastic, able and young volunteers (a recent mid-week Pullman was crewed by staff of an average age of under 21 excluding one lady who assures me that she is – still? – celebrating her 29th birthday this year AND the service was absolutely excellent).

We do continually need to encourage more to join and to this end Graham Bridge and his

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

team are developing a youngsters club and some of our membership are producing volunteers for the future.

If you have a son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandchildren etc. then please encourage them to come along. Now if you were wondering about what to get them for Christmas – how about membership?

I do not underestimate those who are of "a certain age". The railway could not run without you and your energy and commitment is appreciated and admired by all.

Finance news

The major outside funding for Bodiam 2000 has come on stream over the last few months. The Millennium Commission pay monthly in arrears, InterReg II quarterly and English Partnerships have now completed their funding.

Expenditure is generally within budget and little use has yet been made of our contingency position. The strength of the pound has obviously assisted in the purchase of new rail from the Czech Republic although it is regretted that British steel mills could not compete on price. As may be mentioned elsewhere, the purchase of second hand rail has not proved to be either practical or possible.

The Railway's overall finances continue to move steadily forward and the reasonably buoyant summer revenue has assisted in the TRC contributions to the project being in excess of expectations.

1999 will see the purchase of large quantities of ballast. This being the last major financial hurdle. With continued support for the Bond issue, this can be achieved to leave the Railway in good financial shape by 2nd April 2000.

Commercial

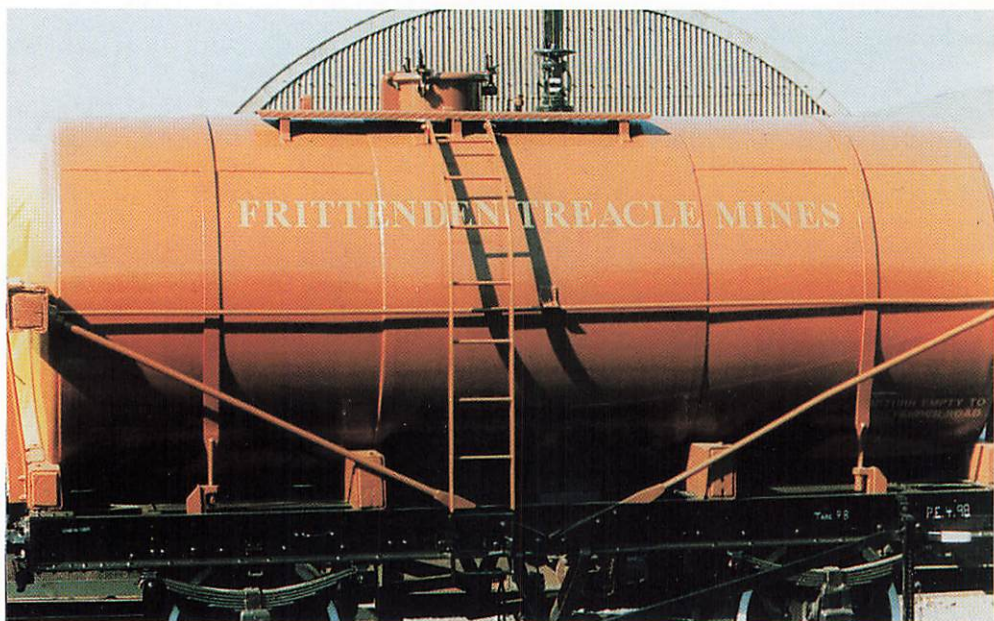
Passengers

The railway has continued to enjoy a healthy level of passenger numbers throughout the Summer and at the end of September, the total for the year-to-date was 62,542, up 1,200 on the same period last year. With many Brits taking advantage of the strong pound to holiday

abroad, the numbers of families and individuals has declined slightly and the volume of European visitors continues to be depressed. Nevertheless, this has more than been made up for by an increase in coach parties and group visits.



*No 14 Charwelton drifts towards Rolvenden with a mixed train during a photographic charter for the Battle of Britain Locomotive Society, 16th March 1998
(Ian Bowskill)*



*The former ESSO tank wagon in the livery of the Frittenden Treacle Mines at Tenterden, 20th September 1998
(Duncan Buchanan)*

Six locomotives were in steam for the Light Railway Gala and Steam Up on 25th and 26th July, including the visiting locomotive 'Wilbert'. Goods trains and mixed trains were operated in addition to a frequent passenger service and the event also featured a number of traction engines and steam rollers.

A film crew from Meridian Television were in attendance on Sunday 26th July to record sequences for "Southern Steam" – a series of three documentaries about steam railways in their region. Footage was also taken on Wednesday 22nd July and resulted in an excellent 15 minutes of coverage when the programme was screened on Thursday 1st October.

Earlier in July, a crew from BBC's 'Holiday' programme visited the line to film a short piece on the Wealden Belle. The filming took place on the evening of 4th July and is due to be screened this Autumn.

August Bank holiday saw the line's historic steam trains joined by road vehicles from the 1960's plus the "6 T's" – a live pop group playing sixties music. The band performed on a welltrot wagon which was stabled in No 1 siding at Tenterden for the event. With a few members of staff, and some visitors attending in 60's dress – the event was very successful.

On 19th and 20th September, the Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine again took centre-stage. The weekend was as busy as ever with over 3,000 passengers travelling. On Saturday 19th, the class 14 diesel D9525 helped out (alias "Teddy" the diesel), replacing No 376 "Norwegian" which had developed a steam leak the previous day. Slick work by the shed staff at Rolvenden ensured that 376 was back in action for Sunday.

Bearer Bonds

In addition to all the usual activities, the commercial department has spearheaded the launch of the Bodiam 2000 Bearer Bond Issue and has undertaken all of the administration work involved in the processing of applications.

The launch took place on Friday 24th July with the Railway's Patron, Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson officiating. Four locomotives were in steam for the occasion which was widely reported on radio, television, local newspapers and the Evening Standard. The Bonds certainly seem to have captured the Public's imagination

and by early October over £360,000 had been raised. The appeal may lie in the British love of nostalgia, the romance of steam, the innovative park and ride concept, the 8% interest rate or a combination of all of these. Whatever it is it has certainly worked and the office staff were inundated with applications throughout the summer and it was not until the midweek running subsided in September that the backlog of applications could be overcome.

The second aim of the Bond Issue was to provide funds to finance the restoration of the line's two historic Pullman Cars, 'Barbara' and 'Theodora', and following the excellent response to the launch the Board has decided to despatch 'Barbara' to Rye for secure storage and an initial assessment of the work required to return her to her former glory.

Colonel Stephens' Railway Shop

Takings in the shop continue to run just ahead of budget. More specialist books are now displayed in the museum foyer and sales from this outlet have also increased this season.

Catering

On-train catering trolley sales have grown considerably this season, mainly because the PMV has been available throughout the year. The PMV has also been invaluable in dealing with the increased numbers of groups taking inclusive packages. By the end of August the on-train catering team had served no fewer than 325 Morning Coffees with Danish Pastries, 488 Ploughman's lunches and a staggering 2,520 afternoon cream teas!

Wealden Belle

Commercial, Marketing and Catering Assistant, Kate Debling, is now responsible for the day-to-day arrangements for our prestige dining services. The number of diners carried to end of August exceeded the totals for the whole of 1997 on the Saturday evening, Sunday Lunch and Sunday Tea services.

Santa Special Steam Trains

Bookings for our Christmas services opened in September and are coming in quickly. Additional help to run these trains is always needed – please contact Tim Appleton to offer your services as Santa or a Pixie, Dave Tibbatts if you can assist with the catering, Tony Griggs to help with seat reservations and bookings.

Motive Power

The Locomotive department has played host to 4 work experience pupils during the Summer. Two were from local schools and two from further afield. All have been fully involved in the department for two weeks each.

A new security system is being installed at Rolvenden by Dave Douglas whilst Alan Wilcox has worked wonders with the administrative side with a new suppliers list well under way.

The want's list grows apace with a few items removed: rags, old coats, timber/packing wood, drills – straight shank up to ½", hand tools for the apprentices, lead sheet, waterproofs – coats/macs, Allen keys – hexagon, radio for the workshop, industry professionals to carry out independent management review of Loco department.

Steam locomotives

No 3 'Bodiam': The new boiler firebox is being stayed at Israel Newton. The stay heads need nobbling over and then a full hydraulic test can take place sometime this autumn.

No 8 'Knowle': Nick Young has machined the blast pipe and Ben Swan has installed it. Brian West has worked on the axle box oiler pipe work whilst painting has continued on the engine as assembly progresses. However, despite the best of intentions, work on this engine has had to take second place to other priorities during the main running season.

No 10 'Sutton': A cosmetic repaint has been undertaken during the year.

No 11 'P Class': The pictures and words in the last Terrier hid what lurked below the bunker once removed. Considerable corrosion was discovered and this has been cut out and new plates welded into place. The apprentices have been busy working on the crossheads to the piston rods after the cone ends were built up with nickel. Many other tasks have been completed including replacing all the pistons and valves, front buffer beam and counter weight replaced and the frames cleaned down. Boiler work has started at Israel Newton. Work on this engine has now lower priority due to other commitments within the department.

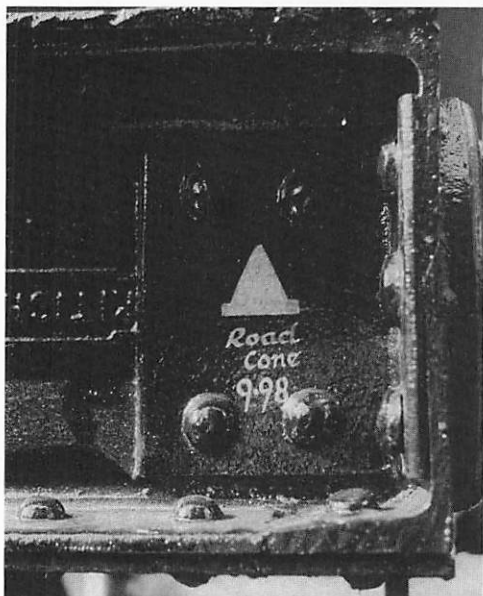
No 14 'Charwelton': Operational. A stainless steel protector plate has been fitted in the

firehole door area to cut down wear and corrosion. The annual boiler inspection was completed successfully and various minor running repairs completed.

No 19 'Norwegian': The blown superheater flue referred to in the last edition turned out to be one blown flue plus several others leaking. Adrian Landi has fettled the holes in the tube plate. Continental practice was to weld the tubes in place unlike British steam practice. The cost of repairs was of the order of £1800. The Norwegian Locomotive Trust has contributed £500 towards the cost of the repairs and the locomotive returned to service on 8th August.

On Saturday 12th September His Excellency Kjell Colding, the Norwegian Ambassador, visited the railway as guest of the Trustees. He enjoyed a buffet lunch in the SE&CR family saloon on the 14:00hrs service to Northiam before returning to Tenterden on the footplate of No 376. The Ambassador, after seeing round the rest of the railway, wrote "You are instrumental in giving young and old a joyful experience".

No 21 'Wainwright': Operational.



*Painters logo from the Frittenden Treacle Mines wagon
(Duncan Buchanan)*

No 22 'Maunsell': Operational. The LMS piston packing gland has been installed and is working successfully. There have been problems with the hopper ashpan. Ash accumulates in the corners of the pan and has required the manufacture of a special nozzle attachment for the hose used to wash out ashpan. Failure to clear out all the ash will result in accelerated corrosion to the ashpan, which is difficult to replace with the boiler in place.

No 23 'Holman F. Stephens': Operational. The work referred to in the last edition was completed. One boiler tube has been replaced as it was found to have local pitting. The blow by on the regulator valve will have to be suffered a little longer until the main running season is over.

No 24 'Rolvenden': After many weeks of use this locomotive has been stopped after discovery of cracked crown stays. The 10 yearly overhaul has therefore been brought forward. Mechanically the loco is in good order and is a high priority task. The locomotive department would like to have had a "spare" boiler to fit and be able to return this loco to service quickly.

No 25 'Northiam': The boiler test has been completed and work has therefore started on assembling the whole loco. Specific tasks include improving the smokebox door seal and putting extra notches in the reverser quadrant. The tank and cab roof have been reassembled and the various fittings are being put on as painting is completed. This loco is needed urgently with the premature withdrawal of No 24.

No 27 formerly 'Rolvenden': this loco had never been restored for use on the line and was sold, over 2 years ago, by its owners, Rolvenden Steam Enterprises to Mr. Norman Taylor for use at the Midland Railway Centre. The MRC subsequently did not want it and it is now with Southern Locomotives Ltd. at Sellinge.

No 1638 Pannier Tank: The aim of restoring this loco in time for the reopening to Bodiam remains, though everyone acknowledges this is a tight target. The boiler work continues apace with the wheels now sent away for re-tying. The motion repairs have commenced at Swindon.

'Wilbert': This J94 Austerity locomotive was hired from the Dean Forest Railway, at very short notice to help out during the main

running season. It arrived in early June and left on the 1st September after completing 21 days steaming during August alone. Unfortunately there were initial problems. Our first boiler washout took abnormally long in order to remove the large amount of scale in the boiler and to unblock several boiler tubes. An inspection of the motion discovered many loose taper pins. Most worrying of all was the simultaneous failure of both mud hole doors while the loco was on the Wealden Pullman nearing Newmill Bridge. Despite the lateness of the hour prompt action by the crew saved the firebox. They then dragged out a Pullman Attendant (sometime fireman) to act as diesel second man and walked back to Rolvenden and fired up the class 14 to rescue the stranded train. In all, less than 45 minutes were taken to perform this rescue – a remarkable feat for an unaided rescue.

Diesel locomotives

Drewry 03: After a spell at Wittersham Road covering for the Ruston's failure, the Drewry has returned to more normal duties at Tenterden.

No 48 Class 14: Restoration work continues at the Nene Valley Railway.

No 49 Class 14: Operational

Ruston: The traction motor flashover has been repaired and the motor and associated equipment reinstalled. The fuel pump has been overhauled such that the main engine now runs much better. The loco will be the Rolvenden Yard pilot.

Crompton D6570 'Ashford': Operational.

08 'Dover Castle': Operational. Now outstationed at Wittersham Road as the shunt engine.

Titan: This loco left the railway on hire to a rolling stock maintenance company on 10th July. As usual the final preparations were completed at the last minute once negotiations were completed, thanks to John Houselander and Clive Lowe.

Cranes

10 ton Grafton: Remains in store.

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

36 ton Ransom Rapier Breakdown crane: Operational

Rolling Stock

People

Clive Lowe was appointed as full-time Carriage & Wagon Manager in July. Clive, who has been associated with the K&ESR since 1971, enjoyed a notable career at Strawberry Hill depot on the 'big' railway. He is also qualified to drive steam and diesel locomotives.

Carriages

Maunsell BNO No 4443 (K&ESR No 54); following its return to traffic, the BNO has taken a full part in the main season in company with Maunsell CK No 5618, this handsome pair having attracted many favourable comments from visitors. No 4443 has now been fitted with new all-varnished droplights, the job being spread over a couple of weeks-worth of early mornings whilst the vehicle was in service. It is intended to start a general overhaul of out-of-service BNO No 53 in the near future.

L&NWR Balcony Saloon; this coach has now received a minor modification to its break rodding to improve efficiency and smooth out brake applications,

SE&CR Family Saloon; work on this vehicle continued steadily through the spring and summer, the south side and 'Robertsbridge' end being fitted with both new panels and new mouldings. As with Maunsell No 4443, a complete set of new drop lights were fitted. The final weeks saw a sign-writing and lining marathon by the relevant staff as well as a full service of the bogies, led by the new Guv'nor,

Clive Lowe. The Family Saloon re-entered service on Sunday 23 August. For the first time for a couple of years we have the splendid sight of a five coach Victorian train hauled by the Norwegian mogul.

Pullman Car 'Barbara': 'Barbara' left the line, from Wittersham Road, on the morning of Tuesday 20th October, by road, for restoration work at Rye.

General maintenance

In the way of all 'new brooms', Clive Lowe is working his way through all vehicles in the passenger fleet, assessing their general condition and conducting general maintenance below sole bar level, including bogie lifts. Once this programme is complete we will have a clearer idea of future work schedules both for maintenance and for restoration projects.

Wagons & PMV's

PMV No 1145 (K&ESR No 79) has now been transferred from P Way - where it served as a mess van - to Carriage & Wagon where it will act as a store. The vehicle is being tidied up and repainted to fit it for residence in Tenterden yard.

Repainting of Esso Tanker, K&ESR No 132, is nearing completion at the time of writing. A temporary 'industrial' livery is being applied although the oil company's colours may return in due course. In accordance with current policy, the tanker will be through piped before returning to traffic.

Permanent Way

The gang produce regular newsletters and the news has been wholly concerned with Bodiam which is a very healthy sign of the progress here. However it must be tinged with the news of two break-ins. Certain equipment was stolen in the first and in the second much of the replacement equipment. Quite apart from the money lost and the dealings with the insurance company this wastes a lot of time for the managers. In total around £13,000 of equipment has been lost and to prevent further occurrences, replacement equipment now has to be stored off-site. This delays the start to any day's work and means that

volunteers do not get as much productive work as expected.

In the interests of safety it has been decided to employ persons to patrol the line one day per week.

The department has spent much time at Bodiam recently and has produced Bodiam 2000 T-shirts. These are available exclusively to those members who have worked on the extension, so this is the place to turn up to get a one-off fashion offer!

The gang in the meantime have had the



Hunslet Austerity 'Wilbert' leaves Wittersham Road on 25th July 1998

(D. Trevor Rowe)

'interesting' task of awaiting the sleepers. Almost 9000 are needed in total and each one has to be unloaded by hand. As usual a days unloading can result in as many as seven lorries or as few as two. Still the job goes on despite the boring tea drinking, while putting the railway to rights!

There will be one last opportunity to help with the track laying next year before it is all finished. Anyone who would like to help, and all help is really needed, should contact Brian Muston on 01797 321897.



Newly restored SE&CR family saloon in the vintage train at Northiam, 25th August 1998

(John Liddell)



His Excellency The Norwegian Ambassador (centre) on the footplate of No 19 with the Norwegian Counsellor at the Norwegian Embassy (left) accompanied by Tom Featherstone and Brian Remnant, 12th September 1998
(Neil Rose)

Infrastructure

Building

Although the holidays have from time to time depleted the team, good progress has been made since the last report. The principal task has been repainting Wittersham Road signalbox, which had been neglected to the point of dereliction until given a quick face lift by the Community Action gang in 1995. This time it has been properly rubbed down and filled and so should last much longer. The level crossing gates have been spot painted and attention is now being given to the yard gates, which are also showing signs of wear and tear.

At last the brickwork to the access ramp at Northiam has been completed, it has only taken seven years – whew! Of course, the endless task of platform seat restoration continues together with attention to minor repairs on the buildings and fences and spot repainting as required. A start has also been made on repainting the lavatories at Tenterden.

The outside Maintenance team was formed to replace the Community Action Gang, which during 1994-1995 made good progress towards lifting the image of our then shabby and neglected stations. The good work continues and with the help of Wilf Watters, who has taken responsibility for maintaining Rolvenden, the stations are looking better than ever before.

The Team works every Tuesday and has a reputation for getting on with the job. Extra hands are always needed and job satisfaction is guaranteed. Volunteers should contact Graham Hopker on 01303 862811.

Museum

This has been quite a good year for visitors to the museum. May and July were very good, August was excellent but June was a disappointment – no doubt due to the weather.

For the Museum, the best days are on 'steam weekends', closely followed by 'Thomas' events,

then public holidays. With still a few more days to go until the end of the season, the total number of visitors recorded is 7,084, which is 268 more than the whole of last year, and admission charges have raised over £500 above last year's total.

The best improvement of all is in the money paid into the main shop for the sale of books and videos; £2417 so far this year, as against £1538 for the whole of last year. No doubt this is due to the better range of books available.

However, it should be remembered that only about 10% of railway passengers visit the Museum. Probably as many come to the door of the Museum and turn away, as pay to come in – the usual comment heard is, “we have paid enough already”. Some people think the Museum should have free entry, but do not realise we have to cover rent, insurance, electricity etc. from charges.

New acquisitions this year, (by way of loans, gifts or purchases) include:

- a 1964 membership card for the K&ESR Preservation Society
- a 1902 Rother Valley pocket timetable
- a mint pair of Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway letter stamps
- 1961 closure notices for the K&ESR and the Hawkhurst branch
- various photographs of early K&ESR preservation days
- a slate Festiniog Railway mile post
- a headboard “The Last Train” carried on the 01 class engine on 2 January 1954
- a K&ESR hoop with leather pouch for carrying a section tablet

Restoration of the velocipede is virtually complete thanks to Ron Nuttman who has manufactured bushes, enabling the coupling rods to be fitted, though most of the restoration work was carried out by John Liddell.

The picnic site, outside the Museum, has been maintained by Museum staff this year and there are plans to install the old station weighbridge on part of the site as a millennium project. Further information will be given in the next edition of the *Tenterden Terrier*.

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Visitors to the museum since the official opening last May have included Ian Allan, the publisher; Sir Lindsay Bryson Patron of the K&ESR and Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex; The Hon Sir William McAlpine, who has his own private railway museum on his estate at Henley; His Excellency Kjell Colding, the Norwegian Ambassador and Arthur Knutson, Counsellor at the Norwegian Embassy; and Adrian Chuter, managing director of Chiltern Railways.

From donations and funds raised by selling second hand books and magazines, the Museum has spent £316 this year on new items for display and £2,290 on materials for finishing displays, sound effects equipment, replacement lighting, framing and mounting and a dustbin for the picnic site!

Richard Wall has done a splendid job rostering attendants though more people are still wanted. Anyone interested may write to him at the station or telephone 01580 766997 or contact John Miller on 01580 765350.

Northiam

Since the last report there have been many lorries arriving with materials for the Bodiam

project. Indeed the station staff report that the new rail, from the Czech Republic, had bar codes on it. This lead to thoughts of putting it through the tills at Waitrose!

The Friends of Northiam Station continue their good work of supporting the station with new fire bricks for the stove in the booking hall and repairs to the roof over the buffet entrance. Indeed things had got so bad that a free shower was available to those that wished, in addition to the delights of the buffet. Even so the buffet has been turning in good results this year though

with more staff it could have been even better.

The now regular Thomas weekends have provided the usual attractions for visitors to help replenish the coffers of the Friends.

On a more mundane matter the internal telephone system has been improved to the stage where carrier pigeons do not have to be considered for communication with the other end of the line. Despite the other end being able to hear the conversation the troops at Northiam now also have a chance!

People

Volunteer Liaison

Volunteer numbers hit a major milestone in October with the total number of volunteers 'on the books' exceeding 500. On paper, this is excellent news. But is it an accurate figure? If you have not been down to the railway for a while or not been contacted by your manager or roster clerk could you either contact them or us. We do need your help. If you are no longer able or willing to help could you please let us know and, if you are able, the reason why. This will enable me to remove your name from the list and maintain an accurate record.

We have two areas where the railway needs your help. Firstly, No 24 has been withdrawn early due to mechanical problems. This means that we need No 25 to be completed as early as possible. In turn, this means that work on Terrier Knowle will slow (Knowle not having the power of No 25). The loco department operates all week. Do not underestimate your skills. You can help. Please contact us if you think you could help. Ladies! Just because it looks heavy or messy it's not a 'men only' environment. How about it?

This year we have suffered from the lack of Travelling Ticket Inspectors (TTI's), Booking Clerks and Station Master. TTI's start from Tenterden, booking clerks and Station Masters are needed at Tenterden and Northiam. These people are essential to the Railway's financial success and in contributing to the atmosphere. The work is pleasant and in the main we do not suffer the fare evasion problems of the 'big' railway. Could you help either at weekends or during mid week? If so, please give us a call and discuss it.

Hopefully we will see many of you at the

Christmas party, but to everyone, may we wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you around the railway in 1999.

Working Weeks, Special Projects and Events

- Santa Specials 29th November until 24th December. Contact 'The Santa Team' 01580 765155.
- Bodiam extension. Ongoing through 1999. Contact Graham & Karen Bridge on 01580 766771 (6-10pm).

Operating department

This has been an unusually busy summer period and one when volunteers have been especially short. However we managed to run the basic train service by the skin of our teeth yet again. As the volunteer shortage has become so acute it was agreed to advertise for the full time post of Operating Assistant. Peter Salmon was successful in applying for this post and he has now joined the ranks of the full time staff. His primary role will be footplate work but he will assist the Operating manager as required and help train our volunteers.

Congratulations to Peter Hubbard for passing his firing test and to Kent Evenden for passing out as a Guard. Ian Legg, who has produced the working timetable and all special events timetables for many years has to step down due to a work related move to East Anglia. Thanks go to Ian for all his work and best wishes for the future.

Personnel

Several people have written to express their thanks to Jan Benn, the bookings and

Administration Secretary, who until the end of August was one of the ever cheerful voices who answered the calls to the railway. First impressions are important and anybody calling the railway was inevitably most impressed by Jan's professionalism and friendly manner. Her ability to get customers to part with their money is legendary. Having left she has agreed to come back, part-time, to provide cover for holidays and busy periods.

We are very fortunate to welcome 'back' the equally cheerful and capable Sandra Marsh to fill Jan's earphones. Sandra comes complete with husband Simon, who is already hard at work as a signaller, and her children, who are also hard at work on the volunteer workforce. Sandra and Simon were heavily involved in the line during the late 1970's and early 1980's. They have returned from Northern Ireland recently and now live in Cranbrook.

Other Groups

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

K&ESR members who attended the steam festival in April were, I have no doubt, thrilled by the sight of newly restored Haine St Pierre 2-6-0T No 1316 in action. I wasn't so lucky. I had been looking forward eagerly to seeing, and hopefully, photographing this splendid locomotive, but unfortunately for the duration of my annual visit, from 9th to 19th July, it was in the depot, with its wheel sets removed, awaiting attention to rectify hot axle boxes.

During my stay trains were hauled by old favourites Corpet No 1 and the Buffaud & Rotabel, with a diesel working the St Valery-Cayeux line. The morning train, introduced last year is now retimed for a 10.45 steam-hauled departure at Le Crotoy for the 11.45 return trip. On the one continuously sunny day during my holiday I took advantage of the morning train to travel the entire length of the network in one day for the first time. For volunteers on site, preparing a steam loco to leave the depot soon after 10.00am means that it is likely that at least one person in the dormitory has to get up in good time, so early nights were the order of the day. On the night when France won the World Cup we must have been the only people in the country asleep in bed when the third goal was scored, and the two of us had to creep in as quietly as we could after staying out to see the 14th July fireworks.

The Buffaud & Rotabel 0-6-2T is expected to require a new boiler in the next few years. Sadly, Corpet Louvet 0-4-0T No 15 ('le marron') has been withdrawn from service because the boiler is unfit for use.

The ex-SNCF standard gauge John Deere diesel locomotive, which of course does not see a lot of action, has this year hosted no less than four blue tits' nests, of which three were located in three of the four buffers. Well, counting nests makes a change from counting rivets, doesn't it? I missed the swallows which in previous years have nested inside the depot, but several pairs of house martins were again in evidence on Noyelles station.

Guy Lenne's painstakingly restored ex-SE covered wagon with an external elevated brakeman's platform, which was on show at the steam festival, was in July very close to being finished. Sadly, the ex-Madagascar coaches are in a worse state than had originally been thought and their restoration has been postponed.

A new agreement with the Département was signed at the steam festival, conceding the operation of the railway to the CFBS for the next 10 years.

A young volunteer, an engineering student, who has been spending his third summer helping on the CFBS has asked me if there might be an opportunity for him to spend some weeks during next summer working on a British railway in exchange for accommodation. He speaks some English and is a delightful lad and very hard-working. His name is Martin Codefroy and he can be contacted at 44 Ave. Roger Salengo, F-59450 Sin Le Noble (tel. 03 27 97 66 69) Please can someone on the K&ESR help?

Book Review

The Kent & East Sussex Railway by Terry Gough, published by Past and Present Publishing Ltd, price £11.99. Paperback, 96 pages of captioned photographs, all monochrome plus an introduction and colour front cover. ISBN 1-85895-149-6.

Some ideas just have to become books, and Terry Gough's 'then-and-now' style collection of K&ESR photographs is a case in point. This eagerly awaited volume is well presented and the quality of photographic reproduction (other than the front cover, unfortunately) seems more than adequate. A few factual errors have crept in but, being well aware of the pitfalls of railway authorship, this reviewer reports them more in sympathy than in anger. For the record, the following should be noted:

- 03 class shunter No D2023 carries its BR number, and not its K&ESR number 46.
- Mark 1 restaurant car No 69 no longer carries the name Diana and was not so called whilst the book was in preparation.
- SE&CR Family Saloon No 177 entered service on the K&ESR during 1994 not 1993.
- The railway has two restriction '0' Pullman cars, Barbara and Theodora. Mr. Gough implies only the former.
- BTH diesel No 40 and 0-4-0WT King (formerly on the Railway) were not delivered by rail to Robertsbridge. Both arrived by road, the 'Ford' BTH being delivered to Tenterden. The diesel was at Robertsbridge to work the flour mill siding and had travelled there over the then still closed K&ESR.
- GWR railcar No 20 is not stored but has been undergoing restoration for several years.
- Terrier Knowle is the property of a private owner, not TRC.

A more serious error is to be found in the introduction where it states both TRC and an "associated preservation society" existed during 1971-74. The Tenterden Railway Company in

fact had the same unitary structure as exists today. Indeed, such a statement does a disservice to the founders of TRC who purposely sought a framework which avoided unnecessary division. The resulting Company Limited by Guarantee, with charitable status, was of historic significance for the steam railway movement and has since been widely copied. In addition, the groundwork done in the 1960s by the organisations from which TRC evolved seems somewhat understated. The Company's publicity material formerly used a similar 'spin' but this has changed in recent years. Having personally gone to some lengths to disprove the resulting myths it is irritating to now find them perpetuated.

A note mentioning Shoreham tunnel is better known as St Michael's tunnel would be useful.

Having dealt with the quibbles, it is high time to look at the book's undoubted strengths. The already mentioned production quality is further reflected in the selection of photographs past and present. The 'past' selection is well balanced and features a few old favourites as well as a pleasingly large number of unfamiliar shots. The focus of attention is sensibly kept well within living memory there being little earlier than the 1930's. The 'present' selection (predominantly 1995-96) is comprehensive although the absence of the Norwegian, SE&CR four wheeler No 2947, the replacement Newmill Bridge and a 1990s view of P class No 1556 is disappointing. Headcorn - Tenterden and Bodiam - Robertsbridge receive equal treatment with the preserved section whilst the inclusion of tickets and other railway paperwork is welcome. Perhaps the book is most effective in emphasising the present Railway's vibrancy compared with the rural sleepiness of the ancient regimes both private and nationalised. This is achieved both in photos and text and is testimony to the success of the preserved K&ESR. Overall, and despite the foregoing comments, a fascinating and worthwhile book which puts the Railway in its historical context.

Nick Pallant



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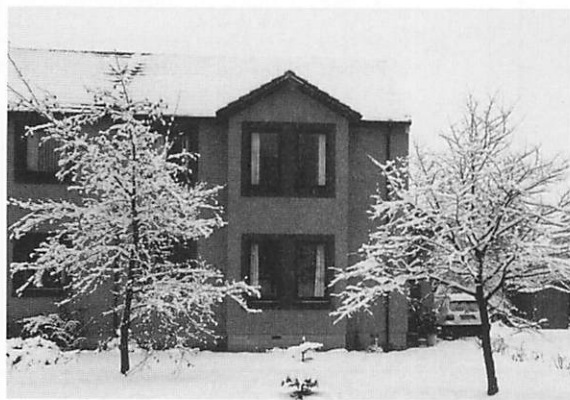


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Letters to the Editor

Do we have a District Line Coach?

Sir – Perchance I can offer a few notes to complement David Isbiston's article in the Spring 1998 edition. I do not profess to be an expert on Metropolitan stock, but the definitive work on early eight-wheelers would seem to be James Snowdon's article in the Summer 1988 issue of *British Railway Journal*, from which the following data was gleaned.

If coach No 100 was an original District vehicle it cannot be dated prior to 1871, when the District assumed operation of their line, unless it was in reality a Metropolitan vehicle operated over District tracks. The Metropolitan 8-wheelers had bodies 39ft 6in long, from which it can be seen that the suggestion of two-thirds of a body would result in a length of 26ft 4in – near enough to coach No 100 to make this a very real possibility – but the only way it would result in a four-compartment vehicle is if a six-compartment First was used. On comparing No 100 with the Metropolitan First Class 8-wheeler, one of the obvious design features is the round-topped doors, but early Metropolitan vehicles had square-topped doors. Rounded tops were not introduced till 1868, which means the date in the *Commercial Department Handbook* must be wrong, whatever the true origin of No 100.

I admit to being swayed by the argument that it is most probably the part-body of Metropolitan Railway First No 100, but we can never be quite sure. Unless...

Ramsgate, Kent

John Lloyd

Snailbeach Survivals

Sir – Stephen Garrett wrote an excellent piece on the history of the Snailbeach District Railways in the Spring 1998 issue of the *Terrier*. The closure events between 1947 and 1962 set out by Stephen have happily, however, left us with a rather rosier situation than he implies.

I worked and lived in Shropshire in the 1960s and on visiting Snailbeach in 1965 I was pleasantly surprised to find the major

part of the loco shed complex intact together with all the surrounding track and pointwork. In fact, anyone who could have found a suitable wagon would have been able to exercise it over considerable distances.

At that time the standard gauge branch from Shrewsbury to Pontesbury and Minsterly was still in operation for dairy traffic although it would soon join the ranks of closed lines in the area.

I left Shropshire in 1970 but continued to visit the Snailbeach area regularly on holiday. By the late 1980s the loco sheds were beginning to look distinctly at risk but in 1994 I received a pleasant surprise when I visited the site.

Shropshire County Council had decided to take the area in hand in view of its place in the Shropshire industrial history, presumably as an inducement to tourism. Creation of a visitor centre in a former mine building was well advanced together with repairs to the loco sheds. Hopefully the last remains of the Snailbeach District Railways are now safe for the foreseeable future.

Tenterden, Kent

Dave Strivens

The Sixties Weekend

Sir – I am writing to congratulate everyone who had a part in your 30th year celebrations held on 30th and 31st August. It was thoroughly enjoyed by my two friends, my husband and myself on the Sunday. My friends and I were the three females making a spectacle of themselves dancing on the platform to the 6T's, who I must say were very good. My husband had his Camcorder stuck to his eye most of the time. He and I were the only one's dressed for the occasion which was very disappointing, also it was sad not many cars or motorbikes graced you with their presence.

We had a lovely train ride behind the Norwegian and took in the lovely scenery all around. Keep up good work everyone, the Kent and East Sussex Railway does you proud.

Gravesend, Kent

(Mrs) Lesley Minnitt

The Wickham Trolley

Peter Davis recalls motorised transport for K&ESR lengthmen during the British Railway era

In British Railway days the line had its own Wickham Trolley. It was kept locked away in the trolley shed at Robertsbridge and was used for inspections and transporting lengthmen to the site of major renewals or other work requiring a larger gang.

The trolley could be seen out and about in the evenings after the last train, or on Sundays. It is pictured here at Bodiam in the Spring of 1953 with its proud driver, probably the ganger. It was painted black with the initials BR and the number 31 in cream. The crest above the number cannot be identified, perhaps it is the makers badge? The headlamp seems to indicate that it will be running after dark, at that time lamps were seldom used on any train during daylight hours.

The trolley was an early model and similar to those used on the line in the formative years of preservation. It had a JAP side valve V twin engine and an eccentric but effective variable speed friction drive. The axles were unsprung and these lightly constructed vehicles were both noisy and lively, particularly at around 40mph, as early K&ESR volunteers will testify.

The trolleys were designed to be lifted clear of the track by four men so a substantial handle was provided at each corner. This was necessary for clearing sections or for turning, as they were uni-directional. In the early preservation days turning was usually avoided by running them back to back rather like the Ford railbuses.

Trolleys of a similar type were certainly available

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3rd	Wilf Watters	(604)	£60.00
4th	P J Ellis	(418)	£40.00
5th	Mrs G I Ellis	(615)	£30.00
6th	Peter Landon	(323)	£20.00
7th	J Green	(448)	£15.00
8th	Maggie Remnant	(249)	£10.00
9th	D K L Morgan	(358)	£5.00

August 98

Luncheon Train

1st	D A Chalk	(350)	£60.00
2nd	Richard Johnson	(434)	£40.00
3rd	Keith Howell	(537)	£30.00
4th	Mrs P C Hoad	(345)	£25.00
5th	C A White	(577)	£20.00
6th	K S Adlington	(373)	£15.00
7th	J Freeman	(051)	£10.00
8th	Simon Long	(021)	£5.00

July 98

C&W BBQ

1st	P S Jarvis	(450)	£60.00
2nd	Jeremy Nelson	(425)	£40.00
3rd	P J Ellis	(418)	£30.00
4th	D E Brittenden	(089)	£25.00
5th	Peter Wilson	(228)	£20.00
6th	D J Strivens	(231)	£15.00
7th	Brian Remnant	(246)	£10.00
8th	Mr G A Aldrige	(147)	£5.00

September 98

Buffet

1st	D J Strivens	(231)	£80.00
2nd	Ken George	(133)	£70.00
3rd	Ron Dawes	(034)	£60.00
4th	Mr & Mrs Edwards	(544)	£40.00
5th	Mick Blackburn	(551)	£30.00
6th	A Freeman	(050)	£20.00
7th	Mrs V Hopker	(475)	£15.00
8th	Bob Clifford	(211)	£10.00
9th	Jean Craske	(466)	£5.00

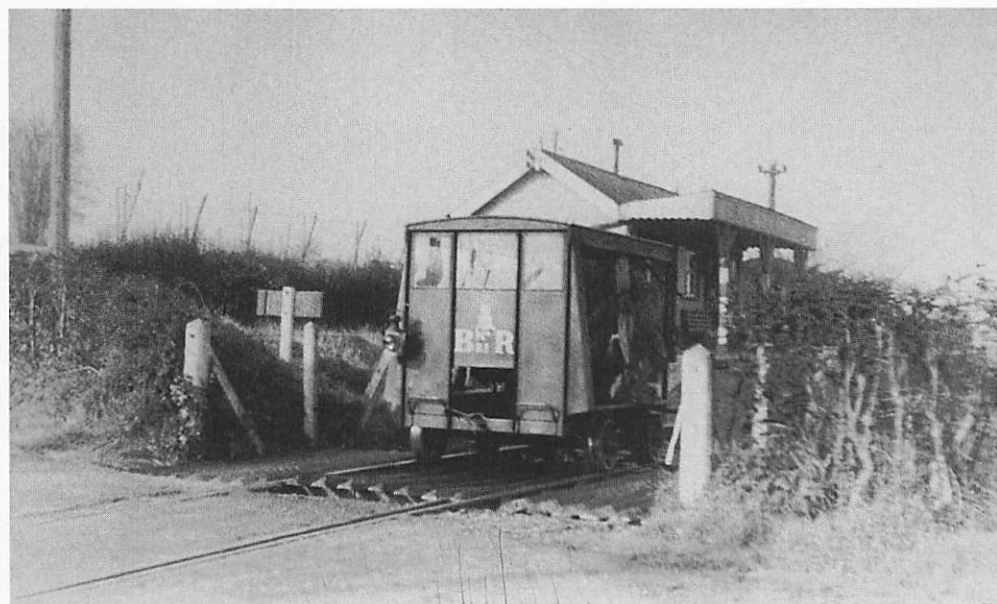
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by the 1920s and it is surprising that the Colonel did not see their potential for providing really cheap, if rather crude, lightweight trains. A pair

of Wickham's on the Criggion branch would surely have been preferable to riding in Gazelle's bunker.



*The Wickham Trolley at Bodiam (top) and departing from Bodiam for Northiam in the Spring 1953
(Graham H. Odd)*



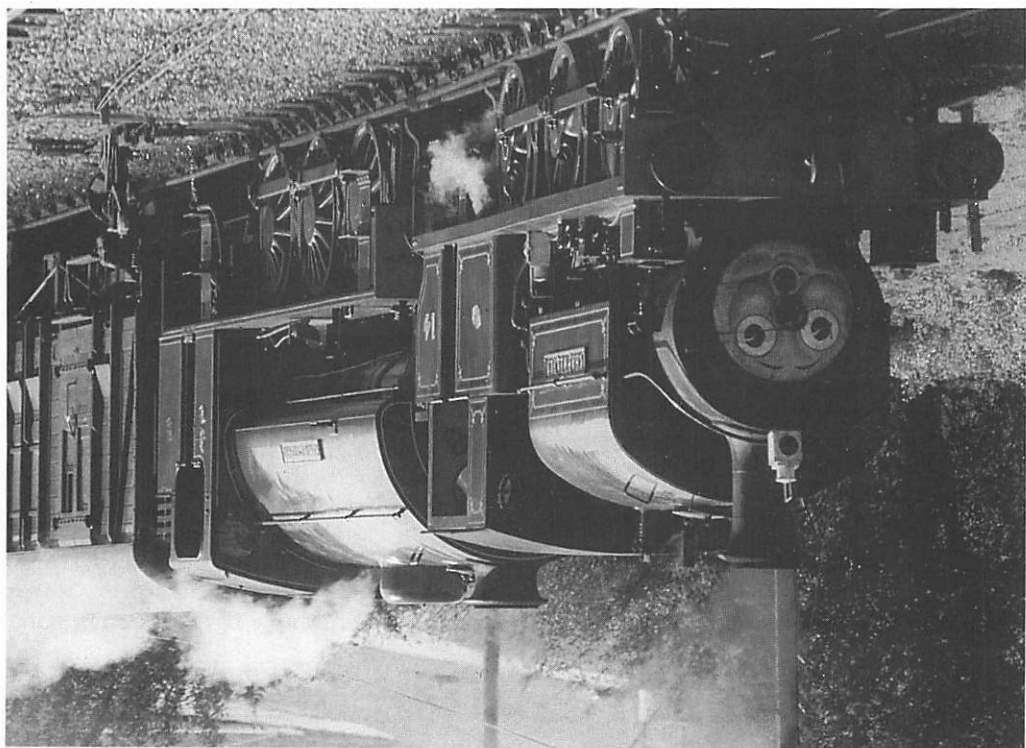
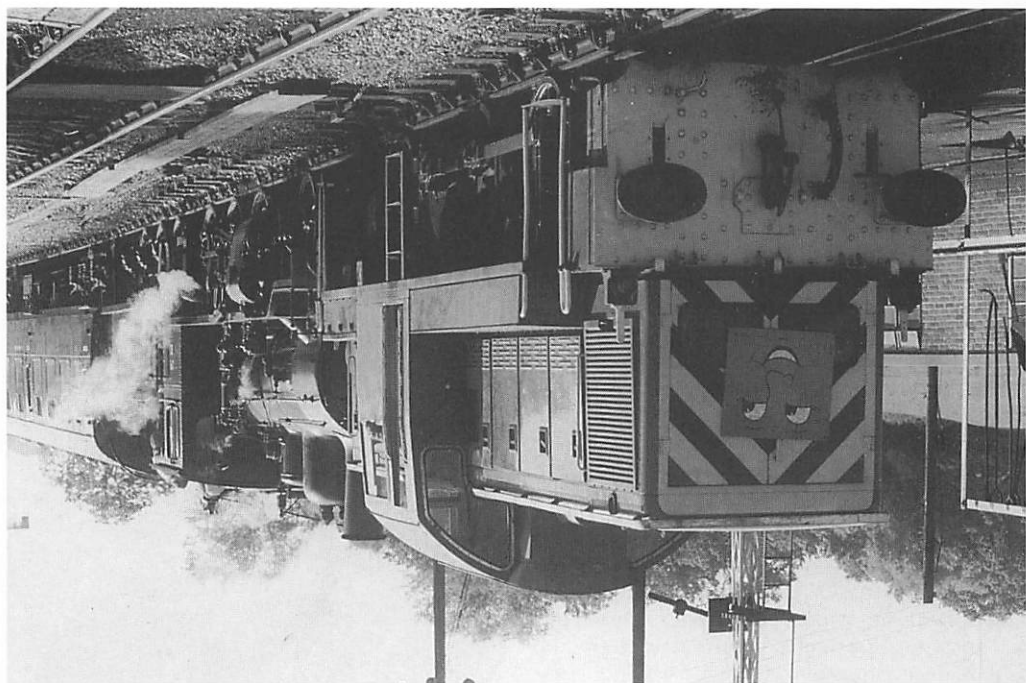
Thomas's Friends

by Duncan Buchanan



The ever popular Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine weekend attracted 3000 passengers over the weekend of 19th/20th September.





Thameside Retrospective

Nick Pallant recalls a one-time influential Area Group and assesses its role in the history of the preserved K&ESR – part 1

Area Groups have been a feature of the preserved K&ESR. It was as long ago as 1964 that several members first met mid-week in a Surrey Pub. Area Groups, as we now know them, developed from the late 1960s onwards, the still very active Maidstone and Ashford Areas, for example, having come into existence during the 1970s. Various others have come and gone, most famously the Thameside Area Group.

The Thameside Group was able to trace its origins to what can be best described as Gordon Lamming's 'Youth Adventure Project'. This dated from about 1969 and developed into the Blackheath and South East London Group. By the end of the 1970s various people who had been members were still associated with the K&ESR and it was around this nucleus that the



*George Wright gives the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath MP a driving lesson at the reopening of Wittersham Road station, 16th June 1978
(Brian Stephenson)*

Thameside Area Group was formed.

Thameside catered for members in South East London and North West Kent and has a distinct place in the history of our Railway. During research for this article it was suggested to me, by someone who had not been a Group member, that Thameside, was the most outstanding Area Group produced by the K&ESR.

To put the story in context, when Thameside Group was formed, the Railway had been re-opened for four years. Over the previous twelve months membership had risen by 14 per cent but passenger figures were down by 6 per cent, Wine & Dine Trains and Santa Specials were doing well but the general service less so. The operating section had been recently extended from Newmill Bridge to Wittersham but there had been a delay in reopening the station. The first three Mark 1 coaches had been delivered and two more Austerity engines had arrived.

There is no intention of decrying invaluable work done elsewhere. A comparative analysis of the various Areas would doubtless be unwieldy and boring. I must also add that this whole saga occurred whilst I was on the 'inactive list' but, as with certain passages in my book *Holding the Line*, absence permits some objectivity about this period.

The early notices regarding the Thameside Group were unremarkable. The inaugural meeting took place on Monday 21 March 1978 at St Michael's Church Hall, Upper Wickham Lane, Welling. Support was welcomed and Tony Pritchett was the Secretary. Meetings soon moved to the Corner Pin pub in Slade Green, which was to be the Group's long term venue. By following February a youthful Neil Sime (today, the K&ESR's Resources Manager) was Secretary and John Liddell was about to show some of his still-popular cine films. Meetings were quickly established on a six-weekly cycle.

The autumn of 1978 brought, however, a foretaste of Thameside 'get up and go'. It is here that the legendary name of George Wright enters the story. George was aware of an ex-

LB&SCR fruit van in Crabtree sidings, Belvedere, and organised its recovery and delivery to the K&ESR. This required moving the vehicle from an isolated section of track, rerailling it onto an overgrown siding (which itself needed clearing) before being pushed 400 yards in to British Gypsum's works. All this was completed on October 29th, George Wright having persuaded ten volunteers to take part. The van reached the Railway on November 11. The volunteers included Charlie Masterson, Nick Wellington, Neil Sime and Pete Lawrence – all still active volunteers – as well as Kevin Jarvis who was later to be prominent in Thameside matters.

This is an appropriate moment to say more about George Wright, a much missed and still highly regarded figure. In 1978 he was in his late thirties, married and living in Upper Belvedere. George had been a BR driver since 1963 and had a total of 24 years railway experience. He had been a driver with the K&ESR since 1974. I believe I only met George Wright once, on a cold December day when we as a family were at Tenterden for a Santa Special. A giant of a man leaned out of 'Maunsell' and asked my then small children if they would like to visit the loco's cab. Years later I deduced this to have been George Wright. Despite his imposing presence there was something kindly in his manner and from an adult's point of view something else – charisma.

It says much about the Thameside Group that a projected trip to the Mid Hants Railway was cancelled due to lack of support, but a sponsored pump trolley marathon held on 30 September 1979 between Wittersham Road and Bodiam was met with much greater enthusiasm. £700 was raised and distributed between the Permanent Way, C&W and Mechanical departments with a small sum retained for group use. Other points worth noting from around this time are the election of a new Committee, with Charlie Masterson as Chairman, and the Group taking over responsibility for the care and maintenance of Rolvenden Station. During 1980 they built the canopy (a replica of the original) which is still in use. Leading figures in this project were Bob Gilbert, who was well known in SE London railway modelling circles, and the late John Harman who was a Tenterden resident and father of Michael, one of today's K&ESR drivers. Its interesting, to see that by this stage the

Thameside Group was beginning to include people from outside its area.

The 1979 company Annual General Meeting saw the election of Thameside member Tim Stanger to the Board. This was not in itself of particular significance – Tim's banking background was the type of experience the K&ESR would continue to need. It was, however, the first Thameside foray into an area where Group members would later become pre-eminent. Tim remained on the Board until 1982 during some of which time he held the post of Company Vice-Chairman.

The dawn of the 1980s saw the Group begin work on two land-mark projects. The first of these was a start on restoring the GER six wheel coach and initially work was carried out away from the K&ESR at the premises of Resco Railways in Plumstead. It was to be a crucial step in the eventual establishment of the Victorian train. The second was the notable innovation of Steam at Bodiam.

The first Steam at Bodiam event was recorded in items from Neil Rose and George Wright which appeared in *Tenterden Terrier* No 23, Winter 1980. Neil's piece was a personal recollection. He congratulated Charlie Masterson and George Wright on reawakening Bodiam and the consequent tidying-up, which at least temporarily stopped that end of the Railway presenting a moribund and forlorn appearance. George Wright's item told the detailed story in his own words:

"The idea of a steam event at Bodiam over the Sunday and Monday of the 1980 August Bank Holiday was first discussed at a Thameside Group meeting in December 1979. Major Rose of the Railway Inspectorate was approached and after an inspection gave his approval to the plans. The general idea was for a sponsored pump trolley to run from the station platform at Bodiam to Northiam at hourly intervals; in addition a steam engine and coach would run alternately with a pump trolley along ¼ mile of track in the other direction towards Junction Road. Resco Railways kindly agreed to loan their recently restored District Railway coach and the Board gave permission for 'Marcia' to provide the motive power. On 17 August we fought our way through the jungle between Northiam and Bodiam with a diesel hauled supply train and a start was made on cutting back the heavy undergrowth which had grown



Crabtree sidings, Belvedere, 29th October 1978

(Peter Frost)



The A.C. cars railbus waits to depart for Bodiam on 30th May 1983, the platform was built by members of the Thameside group

(Hugh Nightingale)

up on both sides of the track. The problem of water supply at Bodiam was solved by running a pipe 150 yards from the station to a private house, connected up to a primitive but very effective water column, consisting of a sleeper built trestle surmounted by three 45 gallon drums coupled together and emptied by means of a three inch rubber pipe.

On Saturday 23 August 'Marcia' and a train consisting of two wagons, the District coach (heavily sheeted) and a brake van left Rolvenden at 9.00am and proceeded to Northiam without incident, assisted over Wittersham summit by the diesel which then returned to Rolvenden with the train staff. From there the jungle was tackled by means of a flat wagon propelled ahead of the train with four men on board armed with chain saws. Sunday dawned bright and sunny and by 11.00am a continuous stream of visitors were arriving; by 6.00pm over 700 passengers had ridden on the train, nine pump trolley trips had been completed to Northiam and 15 towards Junction Road. On Monday a similar number of passengers were carried and 57 members recruited over the two day period."

It has often been commented that the Thameside Group did well in merely persuading the Railway Inspectorate to allow an event of this

kind. The need to use both the operating and non-operating sections of the Railway raised a few eye brows 'in-house'. It is understood a dispute took place over the locked barrier which then existed beyond Wittersham Road. It is further alleged that this became very 'political' and was ultimately resolved through negotiations carried out by George Wright in person with the departments involved. This looks like a manifestation of that reputation for controversy which the Thameside Group acquired and to which we will return later. It needs to be added, however, that such reputations invariably attach themselves to any individual or group, both inside and outside the steam railway movement, who are prepared to be innovative and pro-active.

Whatever obstacles had to be overcome, Thameside Group was becoming a force to be reckoned with. By contrast, the Medway Group, which had been formed around the same time, closed in October, apathy being given as the reason. It might be invidious to seek other reasons. Both Thameside and Maidstone covered adjoining and not dissimilar suburbanised areas which have traditionally had a high percentage of TRC's membership.

Restoration of the GER coach continued to make



Gordon Lamming, in white shirt, leads the south east London group replacing rails just below Cranbrook Road, C1970

(Kent and Sussex Courier)



The opening of Dixter Halt, 23rd May 1981. (L-R standing) Quentin Lloyd, Andy Wilton, Charlie Masterson, Mark Yonge, David Stratton, George Wright, Mark Stuchbury, Jim Wales, John Pritchard, Ray Newington, Neil Sime (obscured), Paul Hatcher, (kneeling) Kevin Jarvis, Colin Whitbread.

(Brian Stephenson)

good progress, work continuing in at Resco's yard on Tuesday nights under the supervision of Phil Rimmer. The winter of 1980/81 had kept Group members busy with George Wright and Colin Whitbread having overhauled the six flange greasers installed on the Railway two years previously. John Harman and Bob Gilbert had started work on the roof of Wittersham Road signal box, Charlie Masterson was replumbing the RU and the Group had acquired and renovated a Permanent Way trolley for future general use on the Railway.

Major Rose had approved running the four wheel AC railbus which the K&ESR then owned, from Bodiam to a new halt near Great Dixter. This was built in an eight week period, the first working party arriving on site on Sunday 1 March. During April, George Wright and Charlie Masterson hired a flail and cleared the line between Northiam and Bodiam. John and Molly Baker together with other members of Sussex Group (who were increasingly working with Thameside) prepared Bodiam station during March and April. Mr. Quentin Lloyd of Great Dixter opened Dixter Halt in pouring rain on 23 May 1981. Thereafter the weather improved and during the Spring Bank Holiday (24 and 25 May) Marcia and the District coach

worked towards Junction Road and the railbus to Dixter Halt. Paul Hatcher's one third scale traction engine and 160 foot length of 5 inch gauge line provided alternative attractions. 1473 people attended and the profit over two days was £1400. The Railbus carried 1,169 passengers in 14 trips. Thameside Group were able to make payment towards the purchase of Mark 1 BSO No 73. The whole event was repeated on 30-31 August.

The regular meetings were well attended by that time and one account of activities was able to point out to the general membership that the Group "helps your railway". Thameside was riding high and it is unsurprising that at the 1981 company Annual General Meeting George Wright was elected to the Board. In addition to his other activities, he had been responsible for steam driver training since 1979. He believed that, if elected, his experience would assist in expanding and improving the prosperity of the Company. He also stated he was committed to the renovation of the Rother Bridge. The Thameside Group in general was becoming committed to pushing the Railway on towards Northiam – and of course ultimately Bodiam.

(To be continued)

Nationalisation of the Kent East & Sussex

Fifty years in retrospect –
by Stephen Garrett

On 1st January 1948 the major railway companies of Great Britain came into public ownership as British Railways. Many of the minor railway companies were also included in the new organisation but some of these, including the Kent & East Sussex, did not actually come under new management straight away.

A preliminary meeting with the Southern Region's Absorption Committee took place at the Charing Cross Hotel on 16th January 1948. The K&ESR was represented by W H Austen, W H Austen Junior and Arthur Iggulden. It was noted that the K&ESR employed 47 staff and that these were not paid on National Agreement Rates nor was there any Staff Pension Fund.

K & E S R Staff - 1948

Station Agents	6
Gatekeeper	1
Clerks	2
Gangers	5
Temporary Lengthmen	9
Loco Fitter	1
Engine Drivers	3
Guards, Porter Guards, Acting Guards ..	3
Yardman	1
Motor Drivers	2
Lengthmen	7
Carpenter	1
Fitters Mate	1
Firemen	4

Note: There were also staff employed on the line's behalf at the Salford Terrace offices in Tonbridge.

The assets of the line were also considered. Rolling stock consisted of 4 locomotives, two of which were on hire from the Southern Region, eight coaches, six goods vehicles for internal use only, two hand-operated breakdown canes and two road motor vehicles. Arrangements were to be made for the rolling stock to be inspected. Other assets included two houses, five bungalows and Mr Austen's petty cash float of £30.

Many of these matters were to be discussed time

Transport.

A B I L L

[AS AMENDED BY STANDING COMMITTEE B]

To provide for the establishment of a British Transport Commission concerned with transport and certain other related matters, to specify their powers and duties, to provide for the transfer to them of undertakings, parts of undertakings, property, rights, obligations and liabilities, to amend the law relating to transport, inland waterways, harbours and port facilities, to make certain consequential provision as to income tax, to make provision as to pensions and gratuities in the case of certain persons who become officers of the Minister of Transport, and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid.

*Presented by Mr. Barnes,
supported by*

*Mr. Herbert Morrison,
Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,
Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Attorney General
and
Mr. George Strauss.*

*Ordered, by The House of Commons,
to be Printed, 2 April 1947.*

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[Bill 60]

(P. 5688) (a)

An extract from the Salford Terrace office copy of the Nationalisation bill. The Colonel Stephens lines included in the undertakings transferred to the commission were:- The East Kent Light Railways, The Kent and East Sussex Railway, The Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway and the North Devon and Cornwall Junction Light Railway.

BODIES WHOSE UNDERTAKINGS ARE TRANSFERRED TO
COMMISSION.

PART I.

Railway Undertakers.

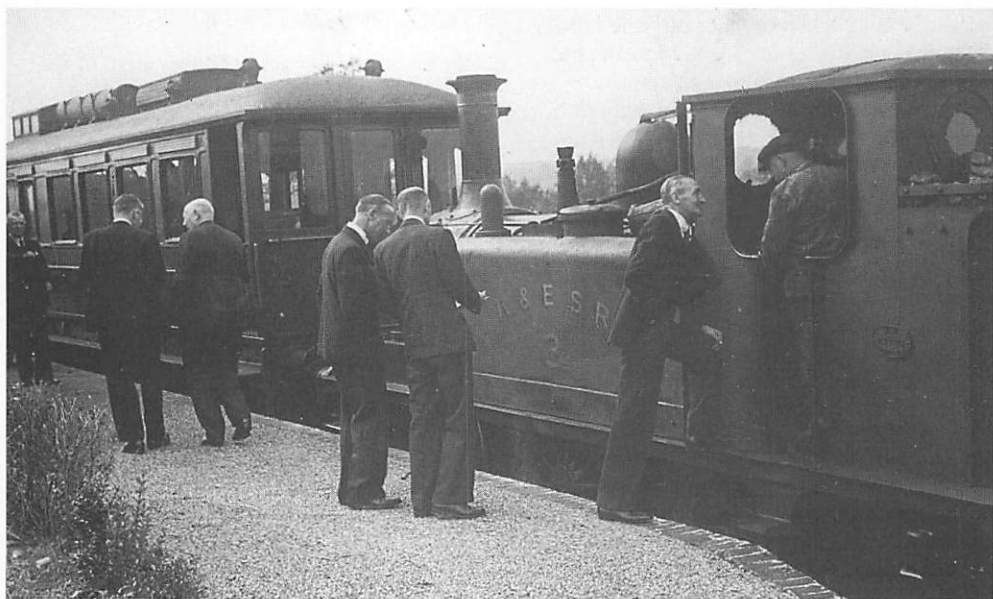
The Southern Railway Company.
The Great Western Railway Company.
The London and North Eastern Railway Company.
The London Midland and Scottish Railway Company.
The London Passenger Transport Board.
The East Kent Light Railways Company.
The Kent and East Sussex Light Railway Company.
The King's Lynn Docks and Railway Company.
The Mersey Railway Company.
The Shropshire Railways Company.
The Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway Company.
The Easton and Church Hope Railway Company.
The Forth Bridge Railway Company.
The North Devon and Cornwall Junction Light Railway Company.
The Salisbury Railway and Market House Company.
The Southport and Cheshire Lines Extension Railway Company.
The Weymouth and Portland Railway Company.
The Whitechapel and Bow Railway Company.
The Manchester, South Junction and Altrincham Railway Company.
The Oldham, Ashton-under-Lyne and Guide Bridge Junction Railway Company.
The West London Extension Railway Company.
The Cheshire Lines Committee.
The Great Central and Midland Joint Committee (Lessors).
The Great Central and Midland Joint Committee (Lessees).
The Great Central and North Staffordshire Railway Committee.
The Great Central and North Western Railways Joint Committee.
The Great Central, Hull and Barnsley and Midland Committee.
The Great Western and Great Central Railways Joint Committee (Lessors).
The Great Western and Great Central Railways Joint Committee (Lessees).
The London Midland and Scottish and Great Western Joint Committee (Severn and Wye and Severn Bridge Railway).
The Methley Railway Joint Committee.
The Metropolitan and Great Central Joint Committee.
The Midland and Great Northern Railways Joint Committee.
The Norfolk and Suffolk Joint Railways Committee.
The Somerset and Dorset Railway Joint Committee.
The South Yorkshire Joint Line Committee.
The Whitechapel and Bow Railway Joint Committee.
The Axholme Joint Railway.
The Dumbarton and Balloch Joint Railway.
The Dundee and Arbroath Joint Railway.
The East London Railway Joint Committee.
The Great Northern and London and North Western Joint Committee.
The Grangemouth Branch Railway.
The Great Western and Great Central (Banbury Junction Railway) Joint Committee.
The Halifax and Ovenden Joint Committee.
The Halifax High Level Joint Committee.
The Hammersmith and City Railway Joint Committee.
The London Midland and Scottish and Great Western Joint Committee.
The Metropolitan and London and North Eastern Railways (Watford Joint Railway) Committee.
The Mid Nottinghamshire Joint Railways.
The Otley and Ilkley Joint Railway.
The Princes Dock Branch Joint Railway.
The Swinton and Knottingley Joint Line.
The Tottenham and Hampstead Joint Line.
The Birkenhead Railway Company.
The Hammersmith and City Railway Company.
The Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway Company.
The Tenbury Railway Company.
The West Cornwall Railway Company.
The West London Railway Company.

and time again as the year proceeded but one issue seems to have seen no further discussion. This was the vexed problem of whether the newly formed British Transport Police would have jurisdiction on the K&ESR. On the larger lines it was simply a matter of transferring the powers of existing railway police forces to the new body but as the K&ESR had never had such powers it was possible that legislation might be required to create them. However, I have seen no further references to this issue and it may be supposed to have been quietly ignored.

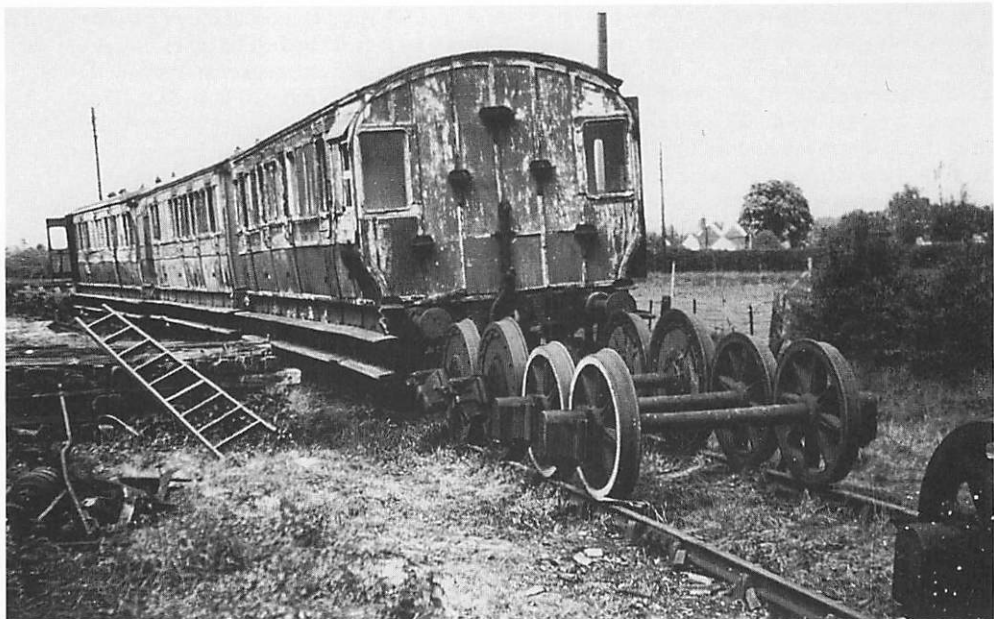
The meeting concluded by agreeing that Austen and his staff at Tonbridge should continue to operate the line for the time being and that a tour of inspection should be arranged. This took place on 4th February with Terrier 0-6-0T No 3, still proudly bearing its K&ESR lettering and green livery, hauling the Southern's inspection saloon from Headcorn to Robertsbridge. As detailed in Philip Shaw's article in *Tenterden Terrier* No 54 there was considerable consternation at the apparent absence of any sort of rule book and the defective state of much of the line's signalling arrangements. Other aspects to come in for criticism were the state of lineside fencing, the poor maintenance of sidings, cart roads and platforms, the water supply at Headcorn where the wind pump was considered

to be life expired, and the use of tow-roping to work various sidings on the line. It was not all bad news. The external maintenance of station buildings was considered to be "reasonably good" and it was noted that electric lighting had been installed at Tenterden Town and Northiam. At Bodiam the inspection team made the common mistake of assuming that the siding on the northern side of the running line was "... a running loop in course of formation". Nobody seems to have disabused them of this notion though it would have raised more problems for the signalling department by splitting the Robertsbridge to Northiam block into two sections.

Reports were still awaited on the state of the line's two locomotives but it was decided that the only other items of rolling stock to be retained would be ex-LSWR bogie brake third corridor carriages Nos 1 and 6 and the four ex-LBSCR open wagons which could be used for internal traffic on the line. By April most of the condemned rolling stock had been gathered at Headcorn for scrapping. Locomotive No 4, the ex-LSWR 0-6-0ST, had obviously failed its inspection and was also brought to Headcorn from where it would eventually travel to Ashford in August for scrapping. No 4 was described by O H Prossor in an account of a journey over the



*The SR inspection train at Bodiam, driver Jimmy Webb, W.H.Austen extreme left, 4th February 1948
(Col. Stephens Historical Archive)*



Stock lined up for scrapping at Headcorn station, March 1948

(N.W.Sprinks)

line in 1947 in the January 1948 issue of *Railways* – “No 4 is kept considerably cleaner than the average main line loco, and looks well in her green livery, gold lettering, and with the red coupling rods so popular on colliery, industrial, and light passenger carrying railways. She works on 160 lbs per sq. in. of steam, but, like most main line locos in these days of decreased maintenance is a few lbs. light in blowing off.” No 4 may have looked well but by 1948 was worn out and the decision to scrap was no surprise. Terrier No 3 on the other hand was fresh from a 1947 overhaul at Brighton and was retained for further service. It would probably have surprised everybody to know that No 3 would be going through a further extensive overhaul fifty years later!

By 1948 the line was used to relying on hiring additional locomotives. It is not clear whether these ceased to be considered as hired from 1st January 1948 or from the point when Austen handed over the management of the line. The year started with two familiar ‘Southern’ residents on the line. These were ex-LSWR 0395 class 0-6-0 No 3440 and Terrier 0-6-0T No 2678. No 3440 left for overhaul at Ashford on the 26th January and returned to Rolvenden on 26th April with its new British Railways number

30576. In the absence of the ‘0395’ an ‘01’ 0-6-0 No 1434 ran in its place. It does not seem as if No 4 was immediately replaced on its withdrawal but Terrier 0-6-0T No 2640 arrived in July to complete the normal quota of four locomotives to maintain services on the line.

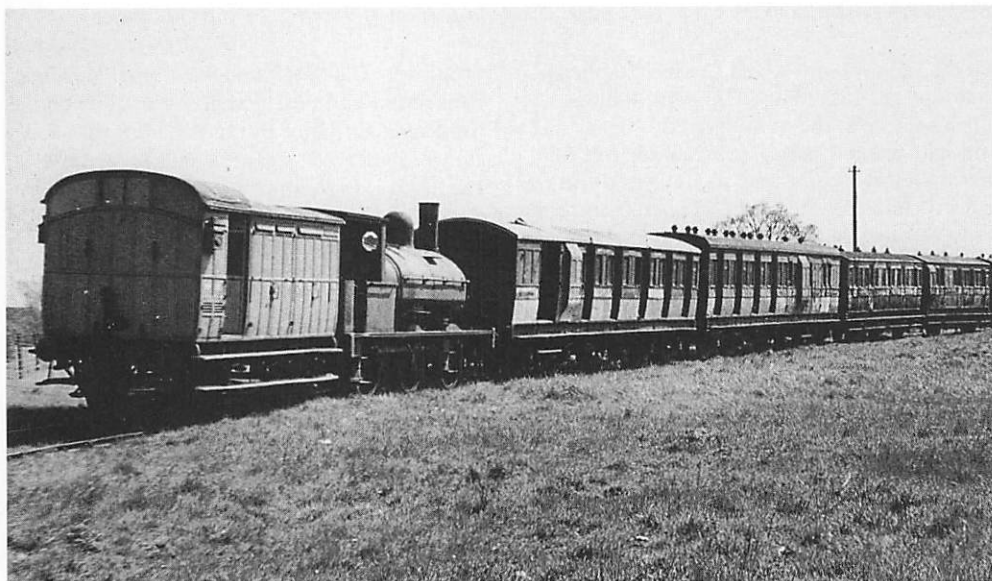
One additional item of stock appeared on the line in April. This was a 10 ton goods brake of LSWR origin which was to be attached to all mixed trains. Curiously the same report that mentioned the arrival of this vehicle went on to state that “a man qualified to act as guard” was employed on all but three trains daily. Did the goods brake travel without a guard on those trains?

The Absorption Committee met again on the 29th April. Austen was to hand over the line on 3rd May. His services were to be retained as an adviser and all the remaining Tonbridge staff were offered employment with the Southern region. Having decided the fate of its staff the Committee went on to ponder the future of the K&ESR itself. Despite an estimate of £293,000 to bring the line up to ‘main line’ standards it was recognised that it would be poor policy to close the line so soon after Nationalisation. This did not prevent it from obtaining estimates as to the scrap value of the line, a figure of £41,701

being presented in May. Fortunately, it was agreed by November that a middle course should be pursued by which the K&ESR should be put into a reasonable condition falling somewhat short of the complete rebuild that would have been needed to bring it up to 'Southern' standards. The running track was to be replaced with rails salvaged from the Elham Valley line. Platforms were to be rebuilt though most of them were to be shortened and the loop platform at Tenterden Town was to be demolished. Elsan chemical toilets were to be provided at Bodiam, Northiam and Rolvenden. Presumably the evil smelling example at Tenterden Town was already there as there is no mention of it in the Committee's recommendations. At Rolvenden the carriage shed and cleaning stages were to be demolished and three of the carriage sidings were to be removed. At Frittenden Road it was proposed to withdraw both passenger and freight facilities and to let the premises. Salehurst and Tenterden St Michaels were to receive more lenient treatment. Although the platform at Salehurst was to be demolished passenger traffic was to be safeguarded by carrying a light folding set of steps on trains. At Tenterden St Michaels the 100' 0" platform was also to be demolished but would be replaced by a 12' 0" platform. In fact none of these last proposals were acted on.

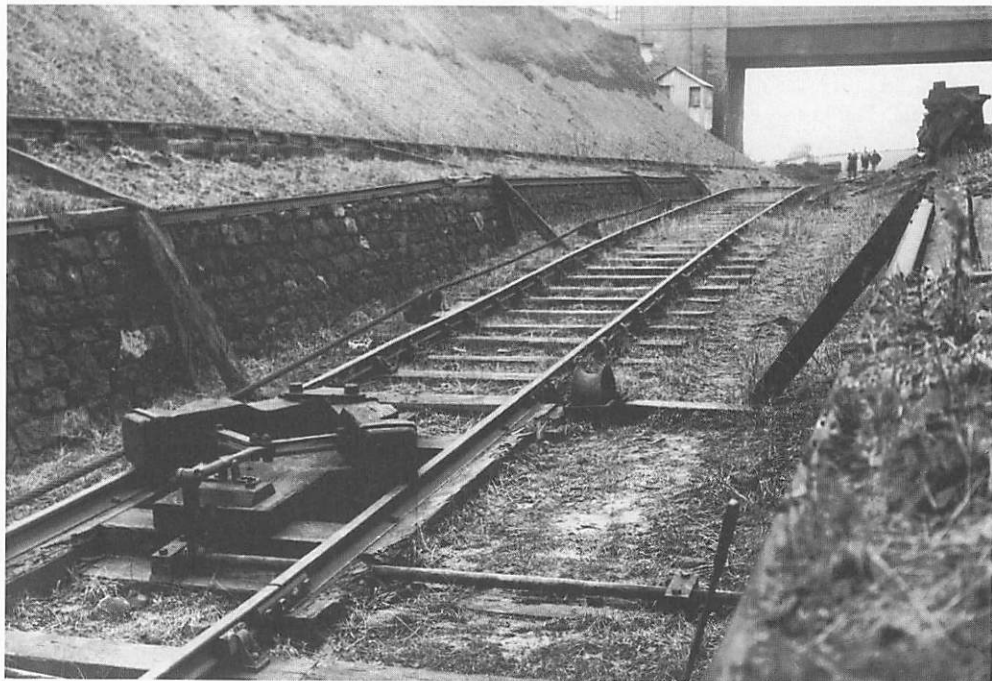
Apart from the allocation of two more ex-LSWR corridor brake third carriages, Nos 3170 and 3171, to the line, services continued much as they had done in independent days. Three return services ran in each direction from Tenterden in the early morning, late morning and late afternoon. The early morning return service leaving Headcorn at 8.50am provided the only through service and arrived at Robertsbridge at 10.33am. If this train left Headcorn powered by the '0395' or '01' this would come off at Rolvenden to be replaced by one of the Terriers in deference to the limited axle loadings insisted upon between Rolvenden and Robertsbridge.

In August No 2678 was repainted in British Railways livery and became No 32678 thus providing the opportunity of seeing locomotives of the same class operating alongside each other in K&ESR, Southern and British Railways liveries. You see, there is a precedent for mixed liveries on the line! What the pessimists or optimists of 1948 would have made of other aspects of the modern scene on the preserved K&ESR is hard to judge. It is likely that some of the warm emotion aroused by the line contributed significantly to its survival in 1948 just as it continues to do today.



By 16th April 1948 the scrap line had become longer, including saddle-back locomotive No 4 which was sent to Ashford. The remaining wood bodied vehicles were scrapped on site. (D.L.Smith)

Runaway at Ratley



Looking up the last part of the incline towards the summit by the Camp Lane overbridge. The Brakesman's cabin is on the left by the bridge. Photographed in 1935 after 10 years of disuse.

(Rail Archive Stephenson)

Of the railways with which Colonel Stephens was associated, the Edge Hill Light Railway must have been the most ill-fated. Never officially opened, it had an economic role for less than three years, and an accident during its construction cost the life of Stephens's successor as its engineer, a man described as "probably the last of the old school of railway promoters".

The EHLR was essentially a branch of the Stratford-upon-Avon & Midland Junction Railway, the 'Shakespeare Route', which extended from the London & North Western Railway at Blisworth via Towcester, Fenny Compton and Stratford-upon-Avon to the Midland Railway at Broom Junction near Alcester. Branches linked Towcester with the Midland at Ravenstone Wood Junction, Olney, and with the L&NWR at Cockley Brake Junction, Banbury, and there were also connections with the Great Central Railway at Woodford and the Great Western Railway at

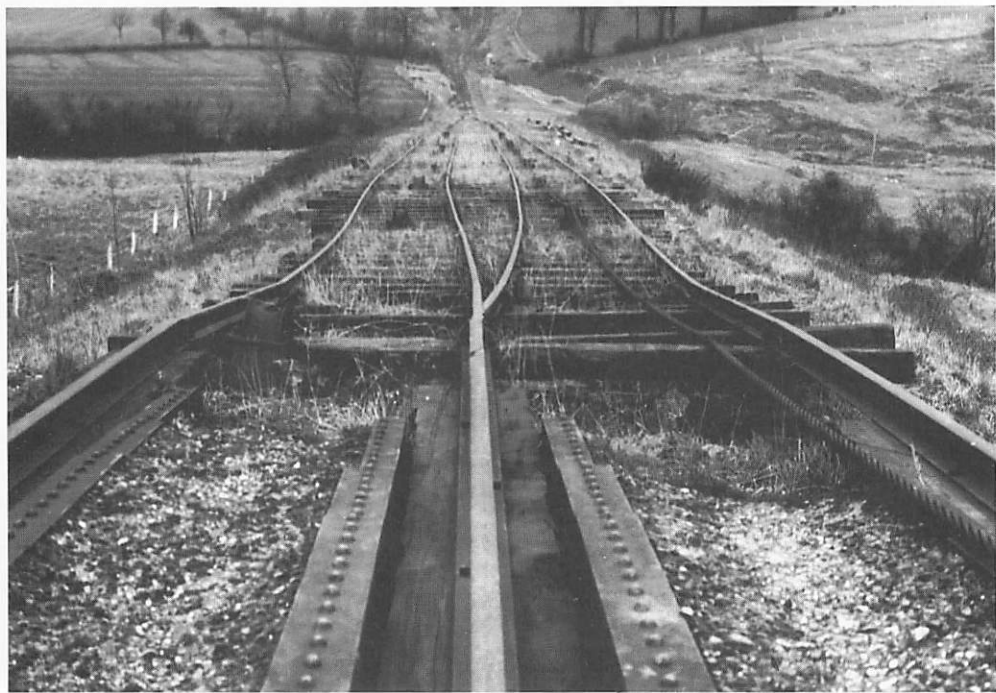
Stratford. The SMJR had been rescued from bankruptcy and near dereliction in 1909 under the chairmanship of Harry Willmott, who had previously served as general manager of the Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Railway for the whole of its brief independent life.

The East & West Junction Railway (predecessor of the SMJR) tapped the Northamptonshire Sand ironstone field between Blisworth and Towcester, and the Banbury ironstone field at Byfield, and its promoters had looked forward to carrying the ore to the ironworks of South Wales and the Midlands. However, the traffic did not develop to the hoped-for extent. Several mines were started, but their production was small and erratic, as the South Wales ironmasters in particular found that it was usually more economic to bring higher grade ore from Spain and the north of England by sea.

During the Great War, action by enemy submarines against coastal shipping revived interest in iron ore that could be transported by land. The Home Ore Department of the Ministry of Munitions was established to encourage the development of such resources, including deposits of ironstone that were known to exist in the vicinity of Edge Hill (the site of a battle in the Civil War). In March 1917 Harry Willmott was interviewed on the subject by the Birmingham Gazette, suggesting that the proposed quarries could be worked by prisoners of war, and on 26 April he visited Edge Hill accompanied by the deputy chairman and engineer of the SMJR (Sidney Herbert, and Russell Willmott) to assess the prospects for a branch line from the SMJR, running southwards from the goods siding at Burton Dassett. This had been used to rail small quantities of ironstone carried by an aerial ropeway from nearby quarries.

The Ministry of Munitions was unwilling, and the SMJR unable, to finance the building of the branch railway, and so it was carried forward as a separate company under the title of the Edge Hill District Minerals Light Railway, sponsored

by the directors of two related Black Country iron companies, T & I Bradley Ltd. of Bilston and T & I Bradley & Son of Darlaston. Harry Willmott became chairman of the light railway company and Arthur E Diggins of the SMJR was its secretary and later traffic manager. The promoters acquired mineral rights over 600 acres around Edge Hill and appointed Holman F Stephens, who had lately reduced his military commitments, as engineer. Stephens's office in Tonbridge proceeded to draw up plans for a total of 11¼ miles of railway, including a triangular junction with the SMJR at Burton Dassett and three branches serving different parts of the ore field. In August 1917 an application for a Light Railway Order was submitted. Stephens gave evidence at a public enquiry by the Light Railway Commissioners, held at Banbury town hall on 8 and 16 November 1917. In view of objections from landowners and the local authorities, the proposals were scaled down to a total of 5½ miles, and it was agreed to construct bridges instead of a number of level crossings. The SMJR would have running powers from Burton Dassett to the foot of a cable-worked incline (just over two miles) and passengers might be



Looking down the incline from the bottom of the three rail section

(Rail Archive Stephenson)

carried over this portion. A high-level line from the summit of the incline to the quarries would be for mineral traffic only. The maximum permitted speed was 12mph on both parts of the line. The Light Railway Order was finally approved on 17 July 1918, and it was sealed by the Board of Trade on 20 January 1919. The railway's title had been shortened to Edge Hill Light Railway, although the revised scheme did not in fact reach Edge Hill itself.

Once the Light Railway Order had been obtained, Colonel Stephens seems to have stood down as engineer in favour of Russell Willmott. Russell Willmott, Harry Willmott's son, was already secretary, general manager, engineer and locomotive superintendent of the Isle of Wight Central Railway (of which his father also happened to be chairman), as well as the part-time engineer and locomotive superintendent of the SMJR – a railway equivalent of Pooh Bah in W.S. Gilbert's *The Mikado*!

Construction of the Edge Hill Light Railway (which had by now become a subsidiary of the Banbury Ironstone Co. Ltd.) began shortly, and at the annual meeting of the SMJR in February 1920, Harry Willmott expressed the hope that it would be feeding traffic to the SMJR by the end of the year. This was not to be the case, however, and construction work was suspended for a while.

Two Brighton 'Terriers' were purchased to work the low-level line, No 1 (an A1X, LB&SCR No 673), which had been on loan to the Longmoor Military Railway, in 1919, and No 2 (an unrebuilt A1 class, LB&SCR No 674) in 1920. The Edge Hill had no engine shed, and the spare 'Terrier' was kept at the SMJR's Stratford-upon-Avon locomotive shed, where any repairs that might be needed were also carried out. It seems that this arrangement was a 'gentlemen's agreement', no doubt facilitated by the fact that the two companies shared chief officers. As a quid pro quo, the SMJR is said to have used one of the 'Terriers' for its Stratford to Broom Junction trains at times when it was short of locomotives.

Tragedy struck the Willmott family in 1920, when on 25 June, Russell Willmott died at his home at Newport, Isle of Wight, after a long illness. He left a widow and three children. He was aged only forty and had seemed to be embarked on a promising career in railway

engineering and management.

To replace Russell Willmott as engineer of the SMJR and EHLR, Harry Willmott brought in a civil engineer of his acquaintance, Edgar Ferguson, who although more or less retired could be persuaded to act on a consulting basis.

Edgar Oswald Ferguson was born in Lewisham in 1846 and, while still a young man was appointed in 1869 as one of the Midland Railway's engineers for the difficult 17 mile section of the Settle & Carlisle railway from Settle Junction to Dent Head. In 1871 his responsibilities increased when the contractor for Ferguson's section was unable to complete the work, which therefore had to be finished by the railway company itself. After this, he acted as engineer for a number of railway projects in the Yorkshire Dales before joining the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway where he was resident engineer for part of the company's Derbyshire Lines from Beighton to Annesley, including the Chesterfield tunnel.

About 1893 he left the MS&LR and set up as a consulting engineer with an office in Corporation Street, Chesterfield, becoming well known as a promoter of railways in the bustling coalfields of Derbyshire and South Yorkshire. Among the lines with which he was connected was the Sheffield District Railway, opened in 1900, which provided the Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Railway with a route to the Midland Railway's Sheffield station. This brought him into close contact with the LD&ECR's general manager, Harry Willmott, whose headquarters were at Chesterfield Market Place station. Indeed, Edgar Ferguson had been one of the guests at the official luncheon to commemorate the opening of the LD&ECR in 1897.

Edgar Ferguson continued to be involved with railway developments in South Yorkshire, particularly in connection with the Sheepbridge Coal & Iron Co., which owned several of the newly built collieries in the district. He was also resident engineer for the Yorkshire Dales Railway from Skipton to Grassington, opened in 1902. He became interested in light railways, and was engineer of the Derwent Valley Light Railway (opened in 1911-12). He was engineer of the proposed Barnoldswick & Gisburn Light Railway (1904) and the twenty-four mile Longridge & Hellifield Light Railway,

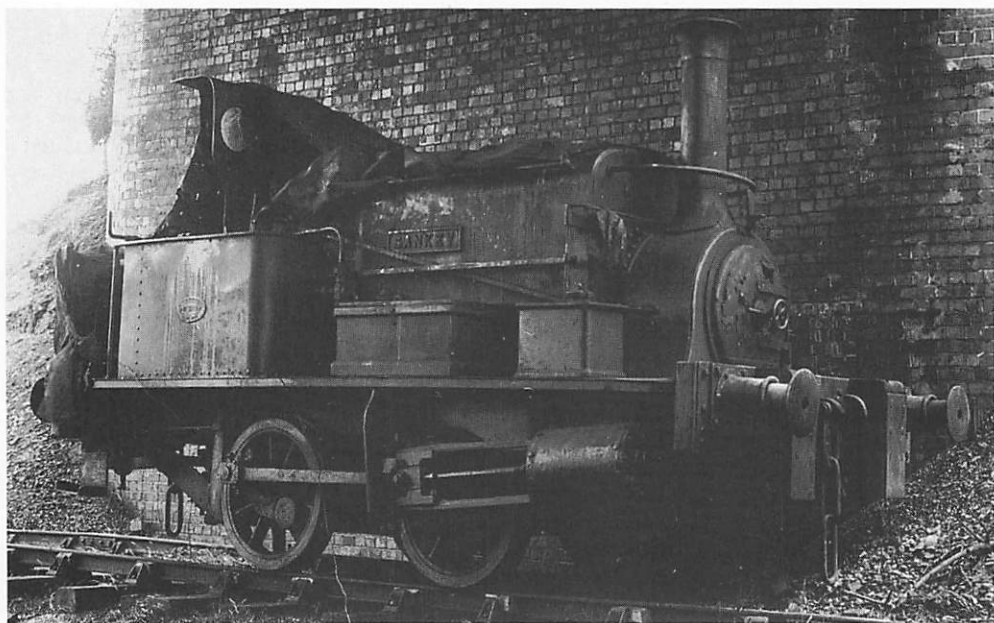
which had been proposed as late as 1918 to serve the new Fylde waterworks. Ferguson was well known to the lawyers of the Parliamentary bar, and by the time of his Edge Hill appointment had moved to London from Chesterfield (though he still kept up an office in the latter town), and was living with his wife and a grown-up daughter, Joan, in Holland Park.

It was said of Edgar Ferguson that few could tell so many stories or relate more of the inner workings of the early days of railways, and the Parliamentary fights on many of the great schemes, and that he was always ready with a joke and a smile, even in depressing times. He certainly succeeded in charming the author of an article about the Yorkshire Dales Railway in the Railway Magazine of 1902, who, having been supplied with "a great mass of statistics" by Mr Ferguson, concluded that "the rapidity with which the new line has been completed is only another proof of his ability and foresight".

Under Edgar Ferguson's direction the construction of the Edge Hill Light Railway was resumed, and by June 1922 the incline was complete enough to enable a third locomotive to be carefully hoisted up to assist with building

the upper part of the line. This locomotive was a typical Manning Wardle 0-4-0ST named 'Sankey', and one of its nameplates can be seen on display in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum at Tenterden.

The cable-worked incline was the only such installation on the railways serving the ironstone industry of the Midlands. It raised the line from 400 to 700 feet above sea level and had a ruling gradient of 1 in 6. It was worked solely by gravity, with descending loaded trucks pulling up empties by means of a steel cable that passed round a horizontal steel brake wheel, 15 feet in diameter. As can be seen in the photograph, the incline had a rather unusual layout. There was a single track on the lower portion, a short section of double track in the middle so that ascending and descending wagons could pass, and three rails (with a common centre rail) on the upper portion. At the summit, the three rails converged into a single track and then divided again into three. The three tracks were crossed by the Camp Lane overbridge, which was the only shelter for 'Sankey' as the upper part of the line had no engine shed. The brake wheel was located south of this bridge, but was controlled from a brakesman's hut north of the



Manning Wardle 0-4-0ST 'Sankey' standing out of use under the Camp Lane overbridge 1935.

(Rail Archive Stephenson)

bridge, near the top of the incline. At the time when the incline was completed, there was no communication between top and bottom, and the brakesman had to rely on flag signals and on his judgement of the speed of the cable.

On Tuesday 10 October 1922, the chief officers of the light railway arrived to inspect the incline, where a permanent brake wheel had just replaced the temporary one used during construction. Harry Willmott, Arthur Diggins and Edgar Ferguson, respectively chairman, general manager and engineer of both the EHLR and the SMJR, were standing by the top of the incline, just past the hump. John Brenchley, the ganger in charge, had had four trucks loaded with 9 tons of ironstone apiece the previous day, and now he worked the points for them to be shunted into place at the top of the incline and hooked on to the end of the cable. The same number of empty trucks were fastened to the bottom end of the cable, and the men took their positions – Robert Taylor in the brakehouse at the top of the incline, Cyril Woodfield at the runaway points at the bottom of the incline, and another pointsman at the incline top points. Brenchley checked the brakes on the loaded wagons, put one of them on, and started the set of wagons off down the hill, a little too fast for his liking. Taylor, the brakesman, could see no more than about eighty yards from his hut, and had to judge his braking according to the speed of the cable. He also thought it was going too fast, and screwed the brake on as quickly as he could. The brake was slow to act as the screw had a fine pitch, but at last it was on and clouds of smoke billowed from the brake wheel. However, instead of slowing down as they had done in tests the previous Friday, the loaded trucks got away again after a slight check, and gathered speed down the incline, pulling the empties up faster and faster.

Woodfield at the bottom of the incline saw what was happening when the loaded trucks were about half way down, and pulled the point lever to divert them into the sand drag at the end of the runaway siding. (E S Tonks suggests that they collided with one of the 'Terriers' but there is no mention of this in contemporary reports. It may have happened on a later occasion.)

Things did not go so well at the top of the incline. Brenchley shouted a warning to the

three men standing by the top of the incline, who were busy watching the operation of the brake wheel. Arthur Diggins turned round, and was horrified to see that far from being brought to a standstill by the brake, the empty wagons were hurtling towards them over the hump, travelling at thirty to forty miles an hour. He shouted to the other two to stand clear. Harry Willmott hastily stepped out of the way, followed by Arthur Diggins. Edgar Ferguson started to follow, but as the oldest of the group at 76, he was not so quick on his feet, and as he stepped over the last rail the leading wagon struck him below the left shoulder, throwing him clear of the running line. He fell awkwardly, with his left leg under him, and lay unconscious beside the track.

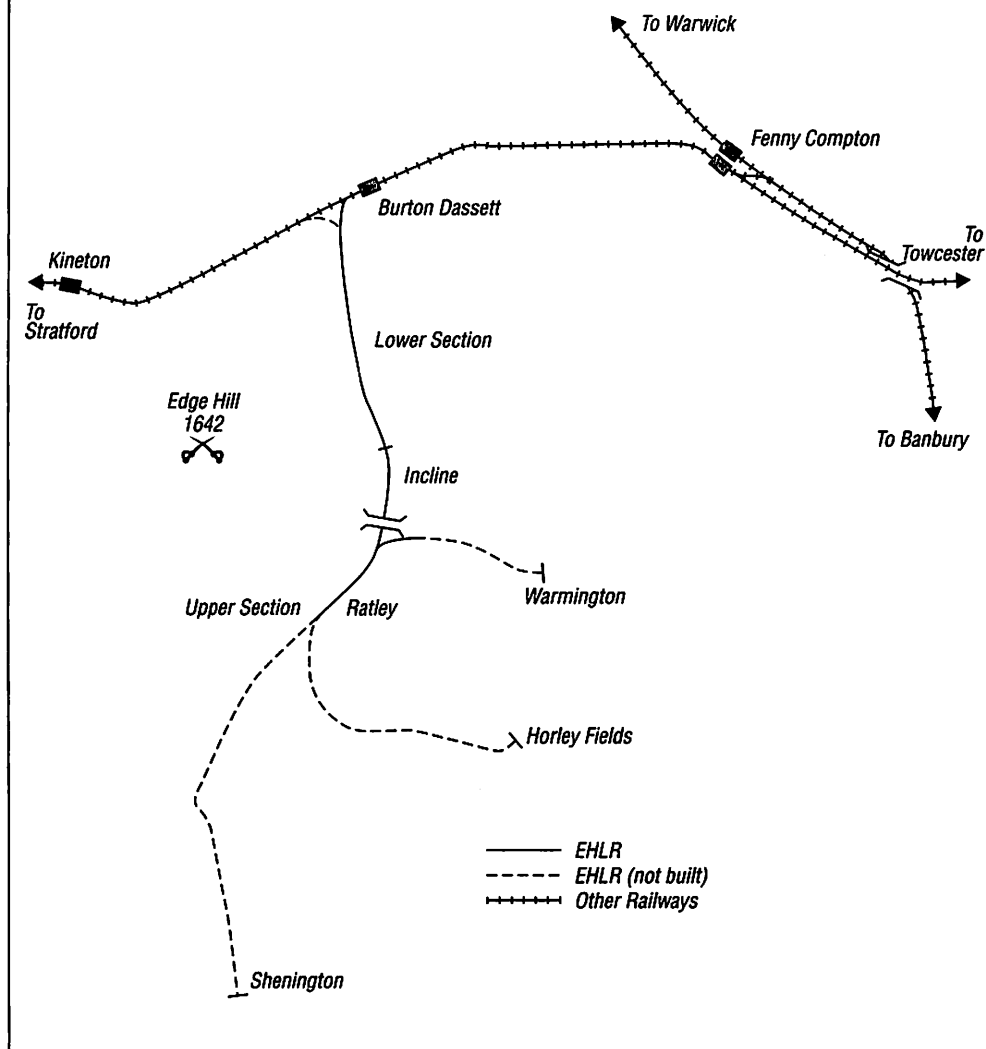
As the noise died away, the men hurried to his aid. No doctor could be found to come quickly to the spot in that remote part of Ratley parish, so Arthur Diggins got a motor car and had Mr Ferguson taken straight to the Stratford-on-Avon hospital, a distance of some fifteen miles. Dr Earnshaw Hewer set the compound fracture and Joan Ferguson hurried to her father's bedside. He tried to explain to her how the accident had happened, but could not make himself clear. He died of shock and concussion at 11.45pm on Thursday 12 October.

At the inquest (from the report of which in the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald many details of the accident have been taken), the coroner recorded a verdict of death from shock and injuries as the result of an accident, and stated that there should be a better indication to the man applying the brake as to what he ought to do. A telephone was provided by the company for this purpose.

The Edge Hill Light Railway continued in use for little more than two years after the accident. At times as many as thirty five wagons a day of ironstone were despatched to the Midlands, but the ore was all consigned by the light railway company itself, excavated from cuttings along the upper part of the line. The EHLR was always shown in official returns as "under construction" and "not open to traffic", and seems never to have received a formal visit from an Inspecting Officer of Railways. The last load of ore was brought down on 27 January 1925, and the railway was "temporarily" closed in the face of falling demand (Bradley's Bilton iron works had in

The Edge Hill Light Railway

(Not to scale.)



fact closed in 1922). The track and rolling stock were not scrapped but left to rust where they stood - at first no doubt in the hope that activity would shortly be resumed. They became the object of much curiosity from railway enthusiasts in the 1930s and were photographed on several occasions (curiously enough, no surviving photographs of the line before closure are known). Between 1940 and

1943 much of the low-level part of the EHLR was covered for a new munitions depot, connected (as it still is) to the former SMJR line at Burton Dassett. The remaining EHLR rolling stock, including all the locomotives, which were by then in a very sorry state, was cut up for scrap in 1946, and the light railway company itself was wound up in 1957.

Tom Burnham

Bodiam in Site

Peter Barber reports on our Millennium project

Progress on the ground has been dramatic during the summer. The contractors have completed the works on the formation and at Bodiam station. Our permanent way department have pulled out all of the stops and assembled track in the Bodiam station area.

The trackbed formation between Northiam and Bodiam level crossing has had substantial works on it to reverse the years of neglect and poor original construction. Every crossdrain has been replaced with spun concrete steel reinforced pipes, these have been bedded in on a concrete base. Where possible the pipe size has been increased and the level dropped to improve the drainage for the railway and the local land

owners. Mill Ditch has had the steel Armco pipes replaced with twin 1.2 m concrete pipes, each 2.5 m pipe section weighed over three tonnes. At Mill Ditch the track level has been raised by 400 mm to disperse the loading of the trains over a greater surface area of the pipes. There has been extensive French drainage and ditching in the bottom of the borrow pits to remove all potential water related problems from the formation. The excess spoil from this works has been tipped and graded off in the Rother side borrow pit where it does not affect the drainage.

During the works, certain areas started to cut up due to the poor original construction. These soft



Peter Barber directs operations while standing on the new pipes at Mill Ditch, 23rd July 1998 (John Liddell)



Bodiam Station takes shape, 19th October 1998

(Brian Stephenson)

areas were on the top of rises and in cuttings. This is where the soil type changed from alluvium clay to Wadhurst clay. Due to the structure of the clay it held up when it was damp, but when it dried out there was no bonding between the clay particles and the clay turned to powder, then sloppy mud when rained on. These areas were budgeted for and have been dug out and replaced with stone fill. The track bed was then graded with a grader to remove the dips and rises, and leave a smooth surface.

Bodiam station has been the focus of matters, having to build a station that will safely fit our passenger requirements but have the feel and look of Bodiam station, a K&ESR back water light railway station. This was always going to be a balancing act, with the prime objective being the best all round package for the railway. To maximise revenue the platform has been

expanded to accommodate five coach trains. To limit the platform length the Northiam end loop point has been put in the road, with the switches on the Northiam side and the crossover on the station side. This allows the clearance point on the loop to be beside the station building rather than 20 m past the building towards Robertsbridge.

The platform has been built using brick edging rather than concrete oversails. All materials used in the retaining wall are resistant to salt and frost damage. The bricks used are Staffordshire blue dragface bricks with mortar dyed to give a slag colouring. On the running side there are three rows of brick with the edge being bullnose with a 25 mm radii. The back edge being the same style but with two rows. The edging continues down the ramps.

The track layout will remain similar with the



The new point hovers over Bodiam level crossing during the road closure, 25th July 1998 (John Liddell)



Diggers in combat! At Bodiam Station 25th July 1998

(John Liddell)

main difference being at the Northiam end of the loop, where the point will now be across the road instead of the station side of the road. At the Robertsbridge end the track work allows for any future expansion to Robertsbridge.

The track laying ahead is quite daunting for our organisation, nearly 9000 sleepers to lay. To get a comparison the big push from Hexden bridge to Northiam would only go half way between Northiam and Bodiam. There is also the extra factor that nearly 50% of the line is on a curve, requiring the sleepers to be lined up on a curve, and the rail to be cut and drilled.

After the level crossing was laid the council came out to assess the new crossing. The engineer arrived first and had some concerns about the levels on the crossing. When his clerk of works arrived he was asked to try the crossing out at around 35 to 40mph. A wry smile appeared on

the clerk of works face as he climbed into the van. With tyres smoking the van headed off at speed over the crossing towards Staplecross, the same was repeated in the Bodiam direction. Obviously not convinced with the ride the van departed at breakneck speed hitting the crossing at a vast rate of knots, screeching to a halt spinning round and returning at equal haste. The van then squealed to a halt and the clerk of works appeared out of the smoke to say that the ride was not too bad if you didn't push it!

I must say a big thanks to all those who have put themselves out on the project so far, they have got the project up to speed. As a side issue John Liddell has remembered that there are two six o'clocks in each day!

By the time this is published the first track laying push will have taken place, but others will follow so please get involved and help out.



Bolting up the fishplates on the 50th track panel from Bodiam, 22nd October 1998, the 6th day of the working fortnight, (l-r) Doug Barrow, Andrew Howe, Peter Hemsley. (Brian Stephenson)



*No lorries for hours, then, like Red Buses, 4 at a time! 88 Bullhead sleepers per lorry await unloading,
4th September 1998*
(Brian Stephenson)

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