

The Tenterden Terrier



Number 81

Spring 2000



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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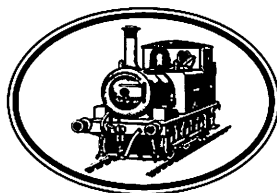
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The Tenterden Terrier



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FRONT COVER

Principal guest, Christopher Fildes, speaks at the Bodiam opening ceremony whilst Dr Heather Couper, representing the Millennium Commission and Railway Patron, Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson, look on.

(Brian Stephenson)

FRONTISPIECE

Terrier 32678 heads the Vintage train at Bodiam on opening day

(Brian Stephenson)

CENTRE SPREAD

No 65 heads the 11.49am Bondholders' train to Tenterden Town on Opening Day

(Brian Stephenson)

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Editorial

A dream realised, but what of the wakening?

The opening to Bodiam is a magnificent achievement, but it could prove to be either the Railway's saviour or its Achilles heel. The £2m investment in the project means that we will have to generate much higher levels of income merely to service and pay off our considerable debt. The Board has moved both sensibly and decisively by setting up a Commercial Group to

come up with new proposals and new ideas for developing and promoting the railway. We eagerly await their proposals, in the anticipation of a move forward, which can reverse the stagnation of passenger numbers seen in recent years, into a decade of growth.

This edition of *The Tenterden Terrier* has been published six weeks later than usual, following the company's financial difficulties and also to incorporate news of the re-opening to Bodiam.

Lineside News

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

Commercial

General

Following a disappointing performance last year, when passenger numbers fell by 6.4%, 2000 has started extremely well, with passengers totalling 12,866 in the first two months of the year compared with 2973 in 1999. Virtually all this was due to an astonishingly successful Thomas event which we staged for the first time in February and attracted around 11,500 visitors and boosted takings both for catering and in the shop. The Weather was exceptionally kind to us during the period and there was little else open at this time of year to take people elsewhere.

Filming

On 15th March 2000, the Railway featured on the BBC programme 'The National Lottery: UK 2000', hosted by Carol Smillie. This was in

response to a request from the BBC for a 'human interest story' as one of the regular features that are now being incorporated into the lottery draw programme. The story centred around the demolition train of 1955 on the Headcorn section, when long-standing member, Doug Lindsay (then aged 14) rode on the locomotive with the crew during his school holidays. Filming was carried out on 6th/7th March, with Jonathan Marsh (Sandra's son) playing the part of the youthful Doug and featured Locomotive No 25 with a flat wagon and brake van, representing the demolition train. The four minute film was broadcast from BBC Manchester on 15th March, when Doug and Daphne Lindsay, Sandra and Jonathan Marsh attended.

Motive Power

A group from the Chemin de Fer de la Baie de Somme spent a weekend on the railway and some worked hard on 'Marcia' during that time. A return visit is planned.

Some work has been hampered by a Flu epidemic at the shed. Several staff were absent around Christmas, when the extended holidays usually give ample opportunity to progress many items. The February 'Thomas' event meant that the usual winter round of maintenance work had

to be suspended for a while to ensure maximum availability of engines for the event.

The wants list contains the usual request for rags, simply leave them at Rolvenden with any of the staff and they are sure to be well used and save the railway money. Additionally the shed staff compliment several members on the quality supply of cakes for afternoon tea. One member of shed staff is said to be especially pleased!

Steam locomotives

No 3 'Bodiam': Work on the frames has been inspected at Ian Riley's workshops in Bury. Some corrosion has been discovered in the rear section of the frames and an extra strengthening plate will be required. Following completion of this work the new bunker will be installed. In parallel, work continues on some of the boiler fittings.

No 8 'Knowle': In service. An annual boiler exam and some remedial work has been carried out.

No 11 'P Class': The new boiler has been delivered and steam tested. The boiler was then lifted into the frames and work commenced on putting it all together. Ashford Area group intend to donate a sum of money from their model railway exhibition towards the completion of this Ashford locomotive.

No 12 'Marcia': Steady progress has been made on this loco now that space has been available to permanently keep it indoors. Although a privately funded project, help has been received from many sources. Some parts had been lost from the original dismantling and replacements have been found. The tedious work required to

clean, strip and paint the frames before the boiler can be lowered into the frames, is the main task at the moment.

No 14 'Charwelton': In service. The annual boiler exam at the end of 1999 resulted in a number of firebox rivet renewals. Attention was also required to the safety valves and blowdown valve.

No 19 'Norwegian': In service, after masquerading as 'Donald' for the Thomas event (or was it 'Douglas?'), a boiler inspection and washout is due.

No 21 'Wainwright': Work continues to complete the retube of this engine.

No 22 'Maunsell': In service and some work to the trailing springs has been completed.

No 23 'Holman F. Stephens': This loco was withdrawn during December and did not quite manage to survive the Santa Special season. A 10 year overhaul is now required. In the meantime, it is being protected while funding and a place in the overhaul queue can be found.

No 24 'Rolvenden': Beginning to come together with the 10 ton crane used to lift the saddle tank



Thomas The Tank Engine parades at Tenterden Station, 20th February 2000

(John Liddell)

back onto the boiler. This is the high priority project for the moment. Lining out has been completed during the first week in April. It is possible that the engine might be ready for Easter.

No 25 'Northiam': In service

No 30 GWR Pannier Tank: The frames have returned from Swindon and are in the shed. Painting of the frames has been completed, involving many of the Saturday Cleaners gang. New footplating has been installed at the rear end and is now being riveted into position. The new bunker is complete and been offered up for setting up and marking out purposes.

The remaining work on the boiler by Chatham Steam Restoration has been discussed and schedule agreed upon which will tie in with the finances available.

Diesel locomotives

No 20 GWR Railcar: work continues in its steady way on replacement of frame sections as they are required on the south side of the vehicle. C&W continue to help, especially on some of the bigger more complex pieces. The Main control gear assembly, at the Robertsbridge end, has been overhauled as a 'homework' exercise by Neil Edwards.

No 46 Drewry 03: In service

No 48 Class 14: Driver training has now taken place and the loco is in service. Work has been required to repair a cylinder head gasket oil leak.

No 49 Class 14: Withdrawn in January to provide spare parts for another loco.

Crompton: Awaits an 'A' exam and air receiver exam.

No 50 Ford Diesel: Work has been carried out by Clive Lowe, Boris Perkins and John Houselander which enabled the engine to haul brakevan specials in the platform at Tenterden during the diesel day in January. Some other matters require finishing before the loco can enter service.

Cranes

10 ton Grafton: laid up for overhaul.

10 ton Taylor-Hubbard: As mentioned previously this was used to lift No 24's saddle tank on the same day as the annual steam test was required. Some running repairs have been carried out and a boiler water treatment dosing system has been fitted.

36 ton Ransom Rapier Breakdown crane: Successfully passed its annual boiler exam.

Rolling Stock

With the Railway now open to Bodiam, the running fleet is clocking up 30 per cent additional mileage. This is likely to stretch C&W department to its limit. However, the regular sight of the vintage train against the background of Bodiam Castle (as seen on the National Lottery programme!) helps to make it all worthwhile.

Mark 1's and Maunsells

Routine maintenance and minor defect repairs kept everyone busy during the winter months. A comprehensive programme of steam heat testing (using a convenient steam roller) identified a number of leaks and defective heaters – all of which were rectified. The electrical systems were given a going-over at the same time and all was well for the start of the Santa Special Season. For the second year running there were no major problems – and particularly no refunds to cold or unlit passengers.

Pullman Car Barbara (K&ESR No. 52)

Barbara returned from the Contractors at Rye during March. The bogies remain at Sellindge. Steam heat, vacuum and below sole bar electrical systems remain to be put in order. Various internal works, including the kitchen area, also still need to be completed and the seating has to be made and fitted. Further progress on this vehicle is, however, on hold pending an improvement in the Railway's financial position.

Maunsell BNO No. 4432 (K&ESR No. 53)

Coachbuilding work on this vehicle has continued at a steady pace. During the winter attention switched to the 'Robertsbridge' (guard's brake) end. Unfortunately, the entire framework and flooring between the passenger saloon and the end vestibule door were found to be in need of renewal but this major task is well in hand. The new floor and framing are complete and the luggage doors are receiving attention to replace time expired members. Replacement of



Filming for the National Lottery Programme at Bodiam, 6th March 2000

(John Liddell)

further roof boarding should start soon. Weekday volunteer labour has continued with renovation of the interior panelling and top-light sliding windows. Although this project now qualifies as 'restoration' rather than 'overhaul' No. 53 should, on return to traffic, be fit for many more years service.

Woolwich Coach (K&ESR No. 67)

A few odd jobs have continued in preparation for a major push on restoration. The timber for the new floor is, however, now in stock. Other pressures have prevented much being done during the winter months but the Woolwich coach remains high on C&W's priority list. In the meanwhile, the coach continues to dry out in the carriage shed.

SE&CR No. 177 Family Saloon (K&ESR No. 84)

The serious defect in the oak cross member above the 'Headcorn' end bogie has now been corrected. Repairs proceeded quite rapidly in the hands of full-time staff with volunteer assistance. Just to be on the safe side the 'Robertsbridge' end cross member and some other timber components were replaced at the same time. The steam heating pipe has been re-routed to avoid taking structural strength out of

the cross members. Just getting to the various underframe parts involved major dismantling, but this was found to be well within C&W's ability. The most spectacular aspect was lifting the body on to a bolster C wagon with the aid of the Railway's 36 ton crane, the said wagon having been the temporary home of the coachwork during the course of repairs. The Family Saloon was back in service in time for filming the National Lottery programme train.

L&SWR Saloon No. 11 (K&ESR No. 83)

The purpose-made tarpaulin protecting this vehicle whilst in storage in Orpin's siding was damaged by the high winds over the Christmas period. Fortunately, the manufacturers were able to make repairs and the saloon is now once again shielded from the elements. The antics of C&W staff whilst trying to re-cover the vehicle, first in Rolvenden yard and later in the platform, might have made an excellent silent film!

Wagons & Vans

A Lowmac, TOPS No. KDB 905096 has recently been acquired for use by the S&T Department and has become No. 176 in the K&ESR fleet. Carriage & Wagon has undertaken the necessary examinations and maintenance to allow it to run on the Railway, including the requisite tests to its

very useful Hiab lifter.

The SE&CR brake van (K&ESR No. 102) also suffered a loose roof canvas as a result of the winter's high winds. A replacement roof covering has been fitted, the opportunity also being taken to touch-up the paintwork and complete other routine maintenance.

Catering PMV No. 1808 (K&ESR No. 74) was in the shed during late March for both wheelsets to be exchanged for a spare set with much better tyres. This work was made necessary by a bad flat on one wheel of the Robertsbridge end axle. At the same time, new brake shoes were fitted,

repairs made to the gangway connection and roof canvas and worn areas of paint touched in.

Sign Writing

Meg Gooch takes care of sign writing throughout the Railway in addition to her duties in C&W. Meg has been extremely busy in the run-up to the Bodiam opening and the splendid work of this highly skilled young lady is evident from one end of the line to the other. Amongst many other jobs, all the 'finger' boards had to be changed to include Bodiam in the destinations whilst the locomotive headboards carried on 2 April were also Meg's work.

S&T

Installation work continued through last Autumn and early winter on site at Northiam in parallel to the fabrication and overhaul of material for use there, carried out in our workshops at Tenterden.

During November, the final 3 rail post signals for the Bodiam end of the site were craned into place over an intensive working week. The signal motors were also fitted to three of the signals at the other end of the site, following completion of their overhaul by Nick Wellington, with assistance from outside contractors. Three new telegraph poles were also put in place on this section using the 3600 digger and crane, and were completed in half a day.

Overhead line construction is now all but complete on the Wittersham side of the site, and attention is now turning towards the other side. Two poles remain to be erected before wiring can begin.

The two lattice built starting signals were also erected in early December, following construction of cast concrete bases for these, in November. Particular mention must be made of Pete Lamont, Clive Lowe and "Frim" who all gave up their work to assist with this essential task at short notice on the day, when it was discovered that the concrete lorry did not have the long delivery chute that was expected!

Signal wiring has now been completed through the platform itself under the direction of Paul Vidler and Simon Marsh.

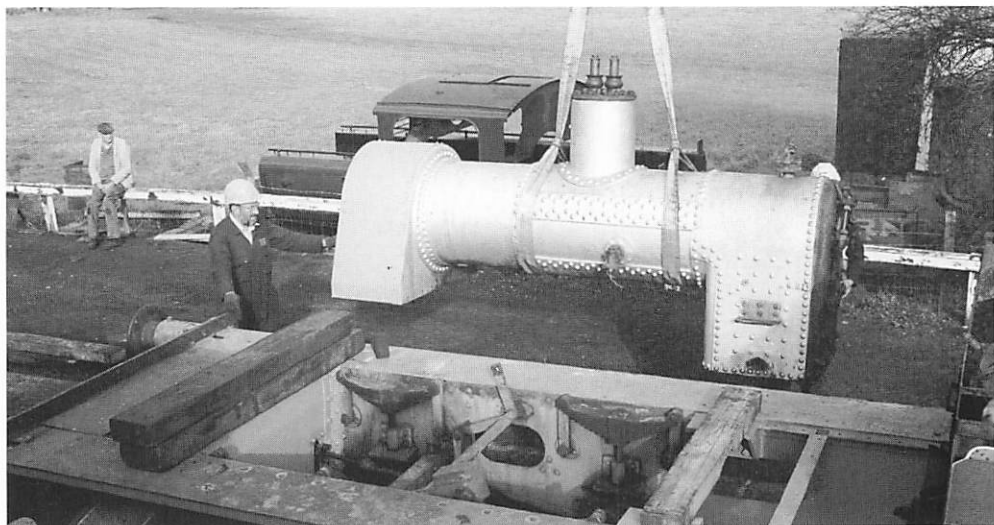
The mechanical locking of the lever frame was carried out in January by staff from Balfour

Beatty Rail Maintenance at Ashford, with assistance by our own staff and manufacturing contractors. The locking has been carried out using all new materials, the work has been carried out to a very high standard, and will perform with little attention for many years, allowing us to concentrate our efforts on the other lever frames.

Ken Deans' work on the electrical locking controllers is now bearing fruit with over half of these now in place under the box. Ken has worked hard to renovate these from poor conditions of storage to a high standard, spending almost every Thursday beaver away on them.

Interior painting of the box is also well advanced, led by Tony Pratt along with Gerry Sivior and his friend John. Electrical conduit has also been installed by André Freeman, in preparation for wiring in the coming weeks. Two of the six electrical control 'location cabinets' have been completed at Tenterden by James Palk and Kent Evenden. These are pre-wired before being taken to site and bolted to concrete bases, for their cables to be wired in. A warm welcome is extended to Dave Stickland from Dover, and also to Dave Petken (already a Guard) who has diversified into signal engineering mid-week. Alex Edwards left us in December having spent 7 months with us full time, during the main restoration and ground-works stage of the work. We wish him well for the future and are grateful for his contribution to the project.

We need a laptop / portable computer (PC), 486



Marcia's boiler is lowered in to the frames, under the supervision of Barry Holmes

(Lawrence Donaldson)

or better specification, preferably with facility to connect an external screen and keyboard. This will assist the department in the preparation of diagrams and associated records etc., also for the programming and maintenance of the electronic telephone exchanges at Tenterden.

Perhaps someone can persuade their IT department at work to donate one to us; due acknowledgement will be given.

A further addition to the S&TE wagon fleet is that of crane hoist wagon KDB905096. Built originally as a Lowmac WV at Swindon in 1958, for the carriage of vehicles or machinery, the vehicle was converted around 1990 to a crane, along with three different other wagons, as an

experiment in materials handling for the BR S&T function. The HAP930 crane can lift around one tonne on level track and is powered by its own on-board diesel-hydraulic plant. This will give us the capability to handle cable drums, 'location cabinets' and ground frames etc. which are at the limits of manual handling, without the need to use a 10t. steam crane for a ¼ tonne lift. It awaits some remedial and certification work, along with the training of operators. It was previously in use on the Western Region of BR but was found lurking in the depths of Derby Railway Technical Centre, (now Serco). The vehicle is privately owned by two S&TE staff, and its acquisition has been at no cost to the company.

Infrastructure

Managing Director

Graham Bridge reports that having been in the post for just six weeks, he has started a steep learning curve that will continue for some time. The opening of Bodiam, on time, demonstrates what can be achieved. Everyone who worked on both the extension and kept the existing section running should be very proud. Bodiam and daily running will provide new opportunities and challenges for all departments. It is essential that we maximise income and minimise expenditure whilst running a safe railway. The

to Bodiam is complete, now we must make sure it was worthwhile.

The 'Tuesday' gang

At Bodiam the gang has now installed the wicket gates, which comprise the foot access gate from the public road and the platform gate by the old gents lavatory. Both are in the vertical picket style. A 2.1 metre five bar Kent gate has been erected next to the rebuilt lean-to and allows wheeled access to the platform. Additionally, all the original post and rail fences have been overhauled, repainted and, where necessary,



John and Alan Brice painting the roof of the new toilet block at Bodiam

(John Liddell)

mated to the new level crossing posts.

The cattle dock has been tidied up, its stanchions repainted white and the wooden steps rebuilt. The wooden lamp post, at the rear of the old gents lavatory, has at last been erected and is now complete with its vintage style Windsor lantern wired up to a time switch. It seems that no one can remember a lamp in this position though an early photograph clearly shows it and the original post survived almost unnoticed until the station was refurbished last year.

The team has turned its attention to Northiam where number 2 platform has been white lined and has the platform fence lifted to the level of the new tarmac surface. Members have painted and erected the several wicket gates necessary for controlling passengers, including the two metre wide five bar gates locked from the signalbox and giving access to the foot crossing.

In the Bodiam working week from the 13th to 17th March finishing touches were applied to the station, including erection of the running-in board, an impressive blue and white replica of the original measuring 2.62 x 0.584 metres.

Bodiam Station

With just a week to spare, the inside painting of the station building was completed ready for the re-opening. The waiting room has a fitted bench seat along three walls and looks quite smart.

The restoration of the permanent clock has still to be undertaken, similarly a poster board and framed handbills await further work.

The booking office has a counter, new glass hatch screen, a ticket rack from the museum collection and shelving. Other fittings have still to be made. The goods office is painted but remains an empty room until shelving and counter are constructed and a blitz will be made on this in the next few weeks.

Members may be surprised by the interior brown and cream livery, but this was researched in the 1970s from paint samples and the reminiscences of old employees. It is consequently as authentic as it is possible with the passing years, for the 1930s/1940s period..

Following David Strivens temporary indisposition, much of the electrical work has fallen to Henry Cooper. Henry has spent long hours in the loft and out in the freezing cold, feeding cable through conduits. At present, all the outside lighting is controlled by sensors, which come on automatically during the hours of darkness.

John Liddell has also spent hours at home making notice boards, of which there are ten. Three K&ESR boards on the station building are intended for internal advertising of our services, while LNER, LMS, K&ESR and Southern boards

on the fence at the end of the platform, may be used for paid advertising.

Pamela and Sheila Stevens (Hinge and Bracket) provided a colourful display in the garden and with planted containers, for the re-opening day. They have also replaced failed plants in the platform privet hedge and in the mixed thorn boundary hedge. Some specimen young trees have been planted in what is intended to eventually be a picnic area, behind the new coal merchants office (toilets!).

The new toilet block building was contracted, largely to our own paid staff, led by John Brice, who provided a much cheaper quote than outside contractors. Underneath the weatherboarded shell is a simple block construction containing Ladies, Gents and disabled toilets with baby changing facilities in both Ladies and Gents toilets. Lastly there is a lockable store room. The resulting building is largely hidden from view from the other side of the valley, especially the Castle, since it is overall painted in matt black. The outdoor sign indicates that it is a coal merchants building for

Huxford, previously well known at Northiam, but who, originally, also had a coal staith at Bodiam.

Robin Doust managed to rub-down and repaint one of the platform bench seats just in time for re-opening. During the summer months, it is planned to restore another bench seat, following a recent donation to cover the cost of a memorial seat.

Permanent Way

Whilst the department is very busy, almost all the work concerns the Bodiam extension and is reported elsewhere. During January a short, three weekend, blockage of the line occurred beyond Rolvenden to enable many sleepers at Lamings Slip to be changed and the whole length re-ballasted and tamped. Routine patrols continue along the whole line with minor problems being resolved locally. The end of major work on the Bodiam extension in sight, means that work can now turn to deferred problems on the Tenterden to Wittersham section.

People

Miss Katherine (Kay) Smailes

Long standing members may remember Kay Smailes who died on 28th December, 1999, aged 87 years. Kay was a teacher and for the last ten years of her career was at Benenden School where Princess Anne was amongst her pupils. Following her retirement, she took an active interest in the Kent and East Sussex Railway.

In the 1970's she worked in the railway shop with her friend Dulcie, but later found the introduction of electric cash tills difficult to cope with, and offered her services (from 1977) to the new Tenterden & District Museum. Kay always insisted that she represented the railway by working as a volunteer at the museum. Later, she took on the supervision of the regular cleaning teams and her amusing accounts of 'life as a cleaner' was something to look forward to at the AGM's. Although outwardly, Kay was the stereotypical 'school ma'am', she had in fact a considerable sense of humour.

At the railway, she continued for a number of years assisting Gerald Siviour with the organised school visits, until her increasing deafness made this difficult. Kay also wrote for the *Tenterden*

Terrier somehow managing to decipher Colonel Stephens' impossible handwriting.

The setting up of the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum was an abiding interest and at a special opening for her, she took very careful note of every display. Kay expressed regret that it had all come too late for her to take an active part in its running.

The funeral was on 14th January 2000. Miss Smailes family have suggested donations to the Railway Museum in her memory. EJRM

Alan Merrells

We sadly report the death of K&ESR member Alan Merrells aged 49. Alan was a real railway enthusiast and a mine of information about railways, both in Britain and abroad. Ill health precluded operational involvement on the K&ESR, but he spent a great deal of his time publicising the railway. As a committee member of the Ashford Area Group, he arranged speakers and outings and will be sorely missed. He could always be relied on to help out any speaker with obscure railway facts from his usual front row seat. An encyclopaedic memory of railway information has been lost. EG

Operating

1999 was an extremely busy season, with numerous works trains for the Bodiam extension and associated works, on top of the usual Commercial department requirements, which included numerous charters and special workings. The departmental staff responded well to requests to crew trains and signalboxes, often at short notice.

February saw the visit of probably the most famous locomotive ever to work on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. Thomas worked mainly around Tenterden station and proved to be almost as popular with the crews as it was with the thousands of junior admirers who paid us a visit. Thomas was rebuilt from a 1941 built 14" Hunslet saddle tank 'Brookfield No1'. Credit goes to all the operating department staff who put in a tremendous effort to make the nine-day event a success.

In connection with the Bodiam opening, the opportunity was taken to review the Incident Manual and update it to include the extended line. The weekend of 13th-14th November was used for Incident Training. This exercise included an excellent lecture by Mark Stuchbury highlighting the responsibilities of staff involved in major incidents. The afternoon session, on both days, simulated some failed train incidents, which put some of the normally unused sections of the rulebook into practice. This type of training is repeated on an annual basis to ensure that staff are competent if the unexpected happens. Duncan Buchanan and Peter Lamont put much time and effort into making this a very successful weekend.

Duncan Buchanan has also wrestled with the complexities of the timetable. A vital task consuming many hours but essential to the smooth running of the railway.

There has been the revision of the Safety Case Exemption which was completed and sent to H.M.R.I in February. Thanks to Derek Dunlavy for his expertise and assistance with this document. Other office work vital to the extension has been the updating of the Rulebook local instructions to include the new arrangements for Bodiam.

Operating department staff have installed

signs, whistle boards and mileposts and our intrepid digger drivers Alan Wood and Simon Long have been kept busy on several occasions.

Route learning commenced on 5th February and coincided with a series of meetings with Guards, Signalmen and Footplate staff to discuss arrangements for the new season. A great deal of time has been spent on ensuring that the records for all the staff are as up to date as possible and to this end we now have a database for footplate members, which will shortly be extended to include all the other operating staff. All workers undertake regular rules refreshers and our team of Inspectors has been working steadily to achieve this end.

To assist with the ever-increasing workload and the requirement to maintain high standards, Adrian Chapman, Michael Harman and Peter Salmon have been appointed to the new grade of Footplate Inspectors. They, along with Operating Manager Simon Long, are responsible for the training, supervision and discipline.

Basic Railway Safety courses have been run on several and it is pleasing to note that all the staff attending to date have passed the exam successfully. It is now a requirement of the Safety Critical Work (Railways) Act 1994 that all safety critical staff attend this course and pass an exam. Safety Critical staff are defined as all staff who work on the track as part of their duties or anyone who is required to walk on the lineside and who may endanger trains. Drivers, Firemen/2nd men, Guards and Signalmen all undergo Basic Railway Safety exams as part of their periodic rules exams. The separate exam is required for other staff who do not pass operating rules.

Class 14 No 48 has now entered traffic following driver training. This proved to be a longer than expected task due to the complexities of the modified braking systems (to enable the working of air braked trains) requiring extensive alterations to the Drivers manual and the training course.

Our thanks go David Manger, Michael Cadiz and Barry Holmes who have kindly donated to the department, television and video

equipment which will now be installed in the classroom and used for showing training videos during the various courses run by the department. It pays to advertise!

The department still has vacancies for new volunteers. If you would like to join us we would be very pleased to hear from you, full

training will be provided. Potential Guards should contact Chris Wood (01580) 762346 and potential footplate staff and Signalmen should contact Simon Long (01580) 761097. The Operating Department has at last moved into the computer age and can now also be contacted by e-mail at operating@kesr.fsnet.co.uk

Other Groups

Maidstone Area Group

April 24th marks the 25th anniversary of the first meeting of the Maidstone Area Group and the start of the open meetings. There have been 231 evening presentation of slides or films given by many presenters over the years.

For many years the Group arranged coach outings to many other preserved and narrow gauge railways but unfortunately, in the past couple of years, these have been cancelled due to poor support.

In the past this Group has been present at the Kent County Show as well as having various floats at the Maidstone Carnival and in 1989 received a Silver Award which was given considerable coverage in the local press. At these events the opportunity was taken to make the public aware of the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

The Group is holding its 19th Model Railway Exhibition on 21st and 22nd October at the Senacre Technology College, Sutton Road, Maidstone. These events have raised many thousands of pounds for the groups finances.

The largest source of income has been the collection of waste paper which, to the end of February, amounted to 1,321,880 kg and has raised £28,312. Paper can still be left in the container behind the Administration Block at Tenterden where at present the Group receives over £30 per tonne collected.

Since the Group was formed it has raised over £46,000 and helped finance 44 projects for the railway which have included £10 for a platform seat, £63 for soap dispensers, £58 for a vacuum cleaner for the Carriage and Wagon Department, £462 for the purchase and delivery of the Pullman - now on-train - catering PMV, £1404 for Buffet furniture, £2015 contribution to New Mill Bridge and up to £17,000 for the Carriage and Wagon Pit.

Over the past 25 years there have only been four

chairmen - John Liddell from 24th April 1975 to 15th October 1985, Colin Edwards from 15th October 1985 to 6th December 1989, Steve Thundow from 17th January 1990 to April 1994 and the current chairman Dave Tibbatts, since 13th April 1994. During all this time there has been one person who has been a continuous member, Treasurer and Model Railway Exhibition Manager, Dave Felton.

The Group is still raising funds and representing the Railway, on the last occasion at the Model Railway Exhibition at Dartford in January, when a lot of interest was shown in the forthcoming events, in particular the Thomas event last February.

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Back from the Brink

Chairman, Robin Dyce, explains how the Company intends to address its financial problems

As all members will be aware, the Railway's overall financial position is far from satisfactory.

Since the start of the year, the newly-formed finance group has been examining the Railway's finances. Firstly, the total amount of our debts had to be determined as without this the future of the railway could not be secured. Secondly, the 1999 records have to be 'reconstructed' to determine exactly how this situation arose. Thirdly, measures have to be introduced to ensure that this sort of thing can never happen again. Finally, a business plan has to be developed against which the future of the business can be effectively managed and monitored. From the initial process, it transpired that the records were in disarray, with many figures having no bearing on what the Board had been led to be the case. This has meant that the Railway was found to have substantially greater liabilities than had previously been declared.

From the start of the Bodiam project, the Board had been aware that with very large sums of money involved and inevitable time delays in receiving payment from grant agencies, there was always going to be a problem in monitoring our cash flows. However, the situation in which we found ourselves, following an injection of cash from the Bond issue, masked the underlying financial situation. However, I am happy to confirm, that as far as can be determined at the present time, the Bodiam 2000 Millennium Extension is not the reason for our financial problems.

As soon as we became aware of the serious financial situation, our bankers were invited to a meeting at which we made clear our understanding the position. The Bank also expressed concern about the information that we put before them.

The bank then appointed a firm of independent reporting accountants, Grant Thornton, to undertake an assessment of the business, the outcome of which was that

the bank has agreed to continue to support us. Many people have asked what does the bank and indeed Grant Thornton know about running a railway? I can assure everyone that both organisations understand the workings of a business – and that is what the Kent & East Sussex Railway is. Grant Thornton, in particular, understands the workings of a charity and also the interactions within a largely volunteer workforce. It advised the bank that we have a business worth saving. The agreement with the bank and Grant Thornton is that we have to develop a realistic and robust business plan by 30th September, to show by then that we are capable of operating a profitable business and, most importantly, that it is capable of repaying the bank's support for us. The continuance of the support will be dependant on our progress. The challenge has been accepted, so how do we get the railway back on its feet?

Following a staff meeting on 5th February, I launched a general appeal to members for funds to help save the K & ESR. I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of members, who collectively have subscribed £84,000 at the time of writing. I hope that you will understand when I say that that I cannot write individually, but I trust that you will accept my heartfelt thanks through the medium of this article. The money has been invaluable at a time of year when we can generate little income to sustain our basic overhead structure and pay off our debts. However, we are perfectly aware that it will not of itself solve our structural problems

Grant Thornton highlighted a number of issues. A notable point is that the Board has to become more focused to give greater accountability and control of the railway's affairs. It was felt that, with a board of 10 members, accountability had become diluted, the real issues had become blurred and the business had suffered as a result.

Accordingly, I shall be recommending to

members at the forthcoming AGM, that the board be reduced from a maximum of 10 to 6 directors. The meeting will be held in September this year to give time to prepare detailed financial information for members on measures taken to ensure our recovery and also to set up appropriate systems. The accounts for 1999 are likely to show a substantial loss for that year.

I have had concern that for some time that our constitution allows directors to be elected purely on the basis of a 'popular' vote and accordingly it is not possible for the Board to request that a person with a particular qualification be elected. With this in mind, and following the undoubted success of the finance group, the Board has agreed that in future 'policy groups' will be set up to advise them directly in certain areas and on appropriate issues. These groups will have no executive powers, but the Board will take into account the recommendations of the policy groups when making decisions.

Grant Thornton also commented on the need for a review of the Company's management structure in order that our finances can never be permitted to run out of control again. This matter is being considered by the Board and I shall report to members on our decisions as soon as possible.

Our overall financial situation decrees that costs must be reduced and income increased. The annual wage bill at £390,000 is not sustainable and is similar to the projected income from fares. Even allowing for a reduction in project wages following the completion of Bodiam, we shall still have to find a further £100,000 in this area. Regrettably, we shall have to make compulsory redundancies as voluntary redundancies will not produce the required savings.

For some years passenger numbers have been falling and whilst, in monetary terms, the shortfall has been made up from charter operations, it is a trend that must be reversed. Marketing has been identified as an area in which we can improve our business. Following consideration of a report on 8th April, written by Donald Wilson, the Board agreed to set up a

Commercial policy Group, similar to the Finance Group, to strengthen our commercial operations. Grant Thornton has suggested that university researchers may also be able to help in this area and this will be followed up. We shall also carry out market research to learn more about the needs and aspirations of our visitors and potential visitors and to ensure that we adapt to those needs.

The huge success of the February Thomas event shows what can be done. What we now have to ensure is that we provide a quality attraction that is second to none, that our visitors feel that they have had value for money and will return again, perhaps with their friends.

I and my directors accept responsibility for the unacceptable state of the company's finances and we are facing up to our responsibilities by putting the house in order. On behalf of the Board, I believe that I can say, with confidence, that the situation from which we are now extricating ourselves, will never happen again.

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Ray Collins has collated the numbers for 1999.
The *Terrier* editorial team provide a commentary.

1998					1999				
	Op.		Paying	Avg.			Paying	Avg.	
	Days	Trains	Passengers	per Train	days	Trains	Passengers	per train	
Jan/Feb	13	50	2924	58	12	54	2745	51	
March/April	21	136	6687	49	27	137	6029	44	
May	16	128	9907	77	16	116	9114	79	
June	21	147	6003	41	26	137	6579	48	
July	31	202	9344	46	31	292	8207	43	
August	31	211	14606	69	31	205	12776	62	
September	24	145	8170	56	25	136	7525	55	
October	14	72	3138	44	15	78	3273	42	
Nov/Dec	15	85	10451	123	17	80	9861	123	
	186	1176	71230	61	200	1135	66109	58	
Wealden Pullman and Charters			3212				3228		
Sunday Lunches and Teas			2015				1961		
Privileges			3904				3899		
			80361				75197		
<i>Bookings from:</i>									
Tenterden			59504				55962		
Northiam			11092				9294		
On train			634				853		
			71230				66109		
<i>Schedule analysis</i>									
Catering and Charters			5227				5189		
'Thomas' (May & Sept)			8263				8292		
Santas			9700				9304		
Scheduled services Jan/Feb			3174				2973		
Scheduled services Mar/Dec			53997				49439		
			80361				75197		

There has been a change in the presentation of the numbers this year. Previously the Sunday Lunches and Teas were contained within the monthly ordinary passenger numbers. They have now been drawn out separately, thus the 1998 numbers are changed from those presented this time, last year, in the Terrier.

Overall our passenger numbers were down. Santa Specials by 4%, June-July-August, a key period, by 8%, and March to October by 7.5%. Thomas saved part of the fall outside the June-August period. Over the year ordinary passenger numbers were down by 7.2%. Catering/charter numbers dropped by much less, which reduced the overall deficit to 6.4%.

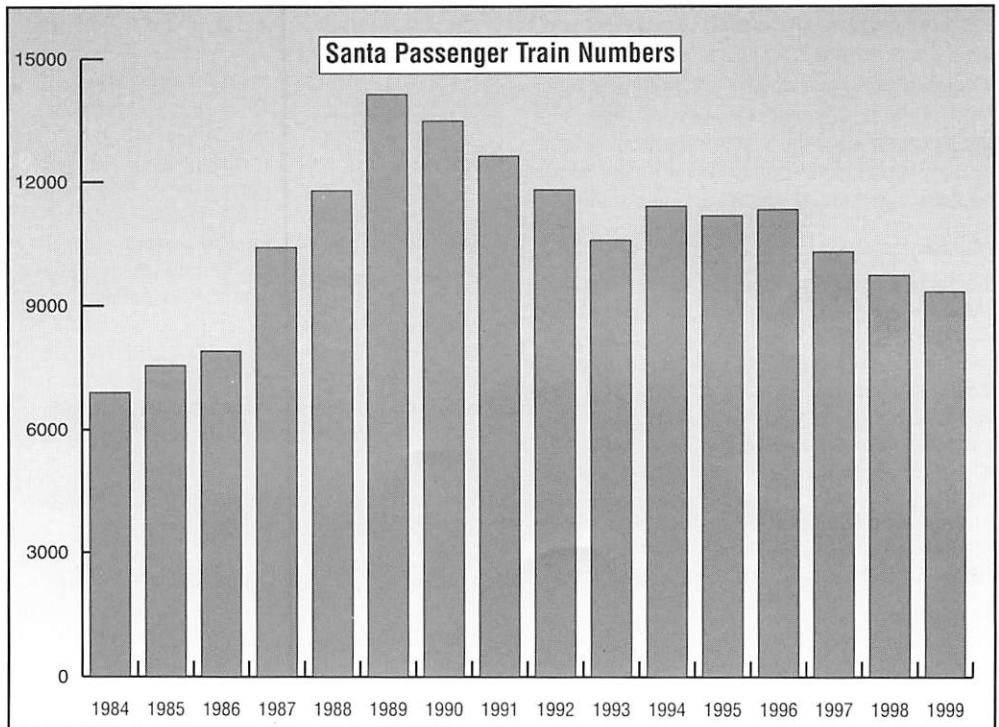
Specifically the Santa Specials are symptomatic of the malaise. The chart shows the long slow decline in passenger numbers. This is not something that has happened suddenly, it has not been due to lack of rolling stock, though that was a cause a few years ago, nor have we retained our income when compared against inflation. Simply we have not got enough passengers. Something radical must be done. A significant amount of our total income is dependant on getting the Santa offering right.

Overall, 1999 was the lowest point in our fortunes since 1995 and also well down on numbers carried in this early 1990's.

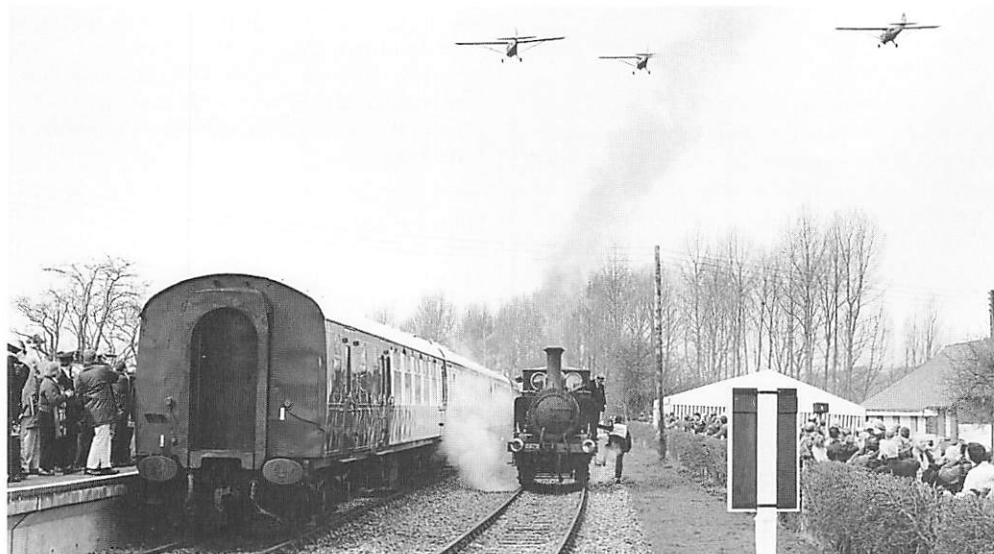
It seems that we are quite successful in attracting passengers for events, group visits, or special trains but ordinary passenger numbers need more attention. Among heritage railways reporting last year, some have reported their highest ever passenger numbers, whilst others have reported small drops.

The outlook for 2000 is good with the extension now open and undoubtedly many will travel during the year. In any event 2001 will be the critical year when the initial novelty is over. Will we attract the park and ride market to the Castle, especially from Northiam, a site with enormous free advertising potential as its sits astride the A28? Will we attract sufficient of the Castle visitors to make the extension viable for the long term? While the future has great potential, we must get out there and capture it, not wait for it to come to us.

Passenger numbers may not be the complete story but each passenger brings in more than the simple ticket price to the railway by the time the buffet and shop have been visited.



100 Years Later



*Three vintage aircraft from Biggin Hill airfield pass overhead as No. 32678 runs round the VIP train
(Mike Esau)*

“Line reopens on 100th Anniversary”

This was one of the Kentish Express headlines on Thursday 30 March 2000, over an item giving news of the re-opening of Bodiam Station. Over the next two days, there was some nervousness as the weather deteriorated, resulting in drizzle on Saturday evening. However, on Sunday 2 April, it was dry, if overcast, with even some glimpses of the sun.

The first arrivals at Bodiam at about 8.00am, were the catering team preparing coffee in the marquee, which had been erected on Vinall & White's car park the previous Friday. The duty station staff unlocked and made ready the station building, checked the toilets and arranged the planted containers around the podium from where the speeches would be made, and hoisted the flags. The public address system arrived and was tested and John Liddell's photo record of the Bodiam extension was ready in the goods office. By 9.00am we were ready to go.

Meanwhile at Tenterden Town, the 'bondholders' train drawn by USA No 65 was ready to depart at 9.00am with just under 200 purchasers of £1000 and £5000 bearer bonds and their guests.

The second train of the day, pulled by Terrier No 2678 and Austerity K&ESR No 25 'Northiam', was ready to leave at 9.30am conveying 100 especially invited guests to the Bodiam ceremony. Before departure, the Railway's President, Lord Deedes, (Bill Deedes, the journalist), made a brief speech from the platform. He regretted his timetable did not allow him to join the party to Bodiam. In passing, he admitted that he had been a member of the cabinet (when he was the Member of Parliament for Ashford), which approved Dr Beeching's closure plans for branch lines. He intended to go to Church following his visit and pray for forgiveness for both himself and Dr Beeching. He then waved his goodbyes as the train departed for Bodiam.

Back at Bodiam, the excellent 29 strong Battle Town Band had installed themselves in the second marquee, which had been erected facing the platform, alongside Vinall & White's drive. The band struck up as we saw the exhaust of the 'bondholders' train approaching down the valley, about a mile away. The train was played into the platform and the bondholders were advised to proceed via the level crossing for coffee in the

marquee.

Once No 65 had run-round, this first train departed for Wittersham Road, and half-hour or so later, we could see the V.I.P. train approaching. This train was played in with much gusto from the band and the guests, who been served a light breakfast on their journey, assembled on the platform.

The locomotives, Nos 25 and 2678, then ran-round and backed the train to the Robertsbridge end of the platform, opening up the view of the Castle and the crowd, which had assembled opposite the platform to view what was to follow.

Robin Dyce, Chairman, started the proceedings, referring to the opening of the railway 100 years ago to this day, and to the various vicissitudes which had befallen it over the years. Then, quite unannounced, there followed a dramatic fly past from east to west, low overhead, of three light aircraft, led by Mrs Sue Sadders of Rolvenden. Her son Miles, is a member of the permanent way team.

This was followed by another unplanned event, when Peter Davis, a Director, presented the 1966 draft contract for the sale of the K&ESR to the archivist, John Miller, for safe-keeping in the company archives. Robin Dyce continued by saying that 50,000 hours had been worked by 200 volunteers on the various aspects of the extension, and that the project had been entirely

managed by the railway's own staff. The "icing on the cake is that it was achieved within time and cost limits," he said.

Unfortunately, Sir Alastair Morton was indisposed and his place as principal guest, was taken at short notice by Christopher Fildes, journalist and a member of the National Railway Heritage Committee. Mr Fildes reminded those present that Bill Deedes had helped the K&ESR when, as the MP for Ashford, he had spoken in the house of Commons against the demolition of the railway. "The Ministry of Transport had the idea" he said, "that the K&ESR was infested with level crossings!".

After conveying Sir Alastair's best wishes, Mr Fildes said, "you cannot stop here – on the day when the K&ESR engineers its way onto the main line and the Wealden Belle runs to, and through, the Channel Tunnel, Sir Alastair will be there himself!".

Dr Heather Couper, representing the Millennium Commission, admitted that from the outset she was a railway enthusiast. About 20 years ago, she had seen a K&ESR steam train at a distance long after the steam trains had supposedly gone and she thought, "but that looks so right in the landscape". At the Millennium commission it had given her great pleasure to support the application by the K&ESR for funds to open the line.



No 32678 and No 25 about to break the ribbon and officially open the line to Bodiam

(Mike Esau)



No 65, Maunsell, heads the 16:27 departure from Bodiam to Tenterden, 2nd April 2000 (Mike Esau)

The Railway's Patron, Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson, then thanked everyone for attending and congratulated the railway, and its staff, on its achievements in opening the line to Bodiam.

Following the speeches, there was one final surprise for eight K&ESR members when they were called to the podium for a presentation by Sir Lindsay. All eight were involved with, and representative of, the tremendous effort to get the extension completed. They were presented with plaques, painstakingly made by John Liddell, who much to his surprise was amongst the recipients. The others were Project Manager, Peter Barber; Permanent Way Manager, Brian Muston; Chairman of Bodiam 2000 Ltd, Norman Brice; Richard Halliwell; Duncan Buchanan; Peter Hemsley and Peter Watson. A plaque intended for Sir Alastair was received on his behalf by Christopher Fildes, who undertook to arrange delivery.

It was intended that the principal guests would view the photo display and inspect the waiting room and booking office, but as there was a considerable crush of people around the building, movement was difficult. Unfortunately, there was no means for the station staff to identify the V.I.Ps or photographers, or to distinguish them from general onlookers. Eventually, a tour of sorts took place and many of the guests bought a platform ticket as a

souvenir.

Meanwhile, a white ribbon had been tied between the platform canopy support and the 'stop' board on the far side of the run-round loop. Sir Lindsay then vigorously waved a green flag and the train, which had been patiently waiting at the far end of the platform, edged forward. With whistles sounding, Nos. 2678 and 25 breasted the tape – it parted to the sound of whirling cameras and a lusty rendition from the band. To the general relief the canopy remained standing.

The train proceeded over the level crossing and came to a halt on the Northiam side. Final thanks were given while the road traffic cleared, then the V.I.P train returned to the platform for the special guests to embark. The V.I.P train then left for Tenterden Town at about 11:15 am, once again breaking a white ribbon for the benefit of the photographers.

The 'bondholders' empty train was passed at Northiam on its way back to Bodiam to pick up those who had so handsomely supported the financing of the extension. This train left for Tenterden Town a little before midday, while the band played its final selection.

The Bodiam booking office did a roaring trade in 50p platform tickets – nearly 400 were sold and at Tenterden Town, a further 107 were purchased.

At lunch time, the Norwegian locomotive No. 376 arrived at Bodiam with the vintage train of five carriages, this was followed by a further seven public trains, most of the seats being pre-booked. Additionally, the Wealden Belle ran in the early afternoon, serving bucks-fizz and canapés. In total, eleven trains marked the first day of Bodiam operations, carrying about 1500 passengers.

The general consensus was that it had been a very successful day and thanks were due to all those, too numerous to mention by name, who had made it possible. Particular thanks are due to our Bodiam neighbours, Vinall & White, for their co-operation on Centenary Day.

John Miller

Apart from those mentioned in the text, other guests included:

Chairman, Kent County Council –

Cllr Frank Fox and Mrs Fox

Chairman, East Sussex County Council –

Cllr Maurice Skilton MBE

Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle – Mr

Charles Wardle MP and Mrs Wardle

Chairman, Rother District Council –

Cllr Pauline Bullock and Mr Bullock

Town Mayor of Tenterden –

Cllr Jill Kirk and Mr Kirk

Director, Government Office for the South East – Mr

David Saunders and Mrs Saunders

Director of Transport & Environment,

East Sussex County Council –

Mr Bob Wilkins and Mrs Wilkins

Chief Executive, Ashford Borough Council –

Mr Alan Baker and Mrs Baker

Chairman, Bodiam Parish Council –

Mr Geoffrey Goodsall

Chairman, Ewhurst Parish Council –

Mr Alastair Neill

Chairman, Northiam Parish Council –

Mr Peter Hayman

Millennium Commission –

Mr Richard Mountain & Mr Patrick Doughty

President C.F.B.S. France –

M. Jean-Marc Page and four colleagues

Business Manager, Nat-West Bank Plc –

Mr Darren Horne

Company Auditors, Day, Smith & Hunter – Mr Peter

Bourne & Mrs Bourne

Company Solicitor, Hallett & Co. –

Mr John Lowings

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Opening Up the Weald

Keeper of the archives, John Miller, relates the first opening of the railway – One hundred years ago.

"By Rail to Tenterden", "Incidents on the First journey" and the title of this article were the headings of the Kentish Express & Ashford News of Saturday, 7 April 1900, reporting the opening for passengers of the Rother Valley Light Railway on the previous Monday, 2 April. Goods trains had commenced the Monday before that, on 26 March 1900.

Then opening of the R.V.R. warranted one and half columns on page six of the then broadsheet newspaper. The report included sketched scenes along the line and the first public timetable. On the same page, the activities of the local Board of Guardians and their workhouse were reported; there was news from the front, the Boer War; in local government election results, the apathy of Ashford electors was deplored, and the virtues were extolled of California Syrup of Figs for the treatment of 'habitual constipation'.

The unnamed reporter opened by saying that "Tenterden had been under the disadvantage of having no railway connection", and that efforts had been made in the past to bring the district "more in touch with the outside world". The new railway "goes a long way towards supplying the one great want of the neighbourhood, and although it is but a light line, it meets the requirements of the locality". The report saw the main benefits to be to the agricultural and commercial interests of the area.

However the reporter did also see advantages for passengers. The businessman leaving by the first train from Tenterden at 7.30am was enabled to catch a fast train at Robertsbridge to arrive at Cannon Street at 10:09am, "or nearly two hours earlier than hitherto". Such was the leisurely life of a century ago. A number of other examples of train timings to various destinations were given. Tenterden was, of course, the present day Rolvenden station, then the terminus of the line. It was to be a further three years before Tenterden Town was reached.

The total length of the line between Robertsbridge and Tenterden was stated to be 12½ miles. There follows a long paragraph

giving facts about the stations which are best summarised in tabular form:

Station	Distance from Robertsbridge	Single Fares Third	First	Station Master
Bodiam	3½	4d	10d	Vacant
Northiam	7½	8d	1s 2d	Mr Sales
Wittersham Road	9½	10d	1s 7d	Mr Jameson
Tenterden	12½	1s 1d	1s 10d	Mr Coles

(Note 1 shilling = 12d = 5p)

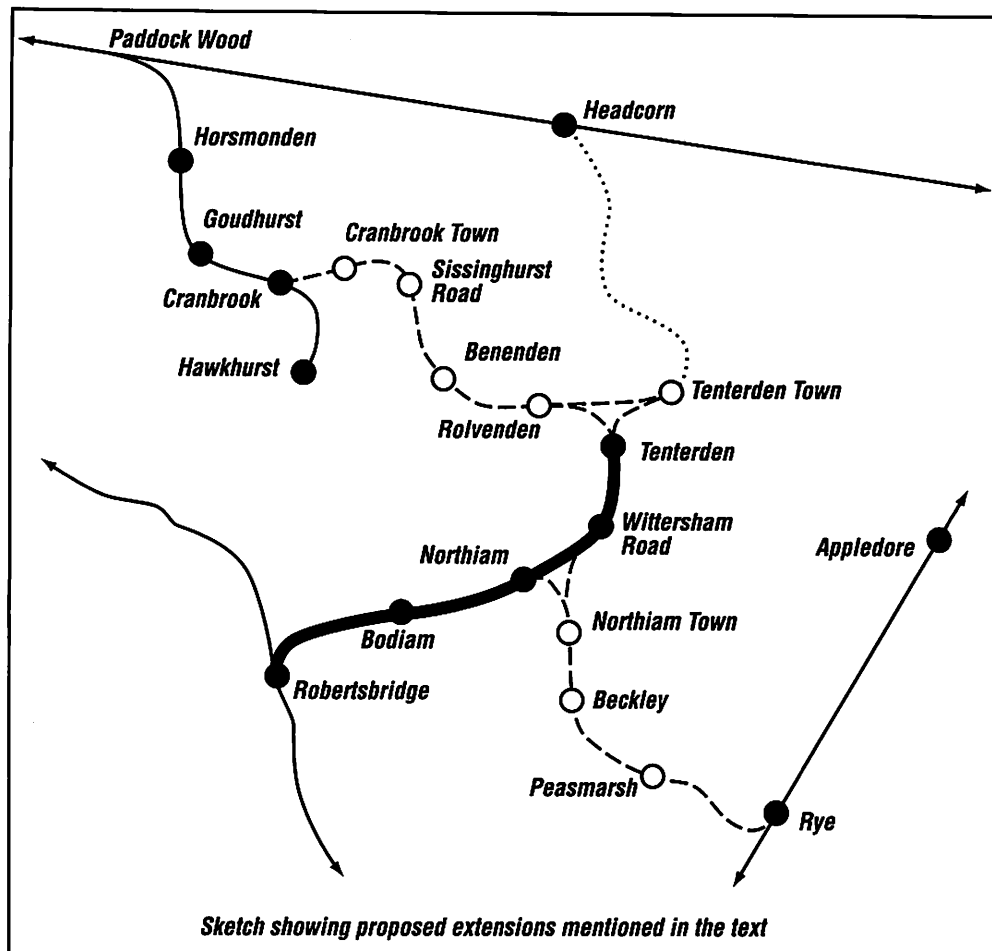
A siding was provided at Salehurst but no platform until later years, and the third class return fare for the whole line was two shillings (10p).

The countryside through which the railway passes was described as mostly hop gardens and marsh pasture land. "The flatness of the landscape is relieved on either side by gentle rising hills and undulating woodland scenery, with picturesque farm houses and white cottages nestling among the trees, and at intervals, the little rural villages from which the names of several stations are taken". This description has the ring of present-day hype but was possibly true of this locality a century ago.

The reporter continues, "At present there will be four trains each way and two on Sundays carrying 1st and 3rd class passengers, and when traffic develops, trains will be added to meet the requirements of the service".

"The rolling stock consists of two engines, six carriages and a sufficient number of trucks". As we know, the engines were No 1 'Tenterden' and No 2 'Northiam', both built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co. the previous year to the specifications of Holman Stephens. The carriages were four-wheelers built by Hurst Nelson & Co. and were described as "constructed of light coloured teak, comfortable, with windows extending along the whole length of the carriage enabling one to obtain excellent views". Carriages Nos. 1 to 4 were third class and Nos. 5 and 6 were first class.

"The carriages are all fitted with automatic



brakes and at present are lighted from the roof by the usual oil lamps, which, however, will probably shortly be replaced by acetylene lamps." This latter comment suggests the reporter was given some sort of briefing, probably by Holman Stephens, prior to writing his report.

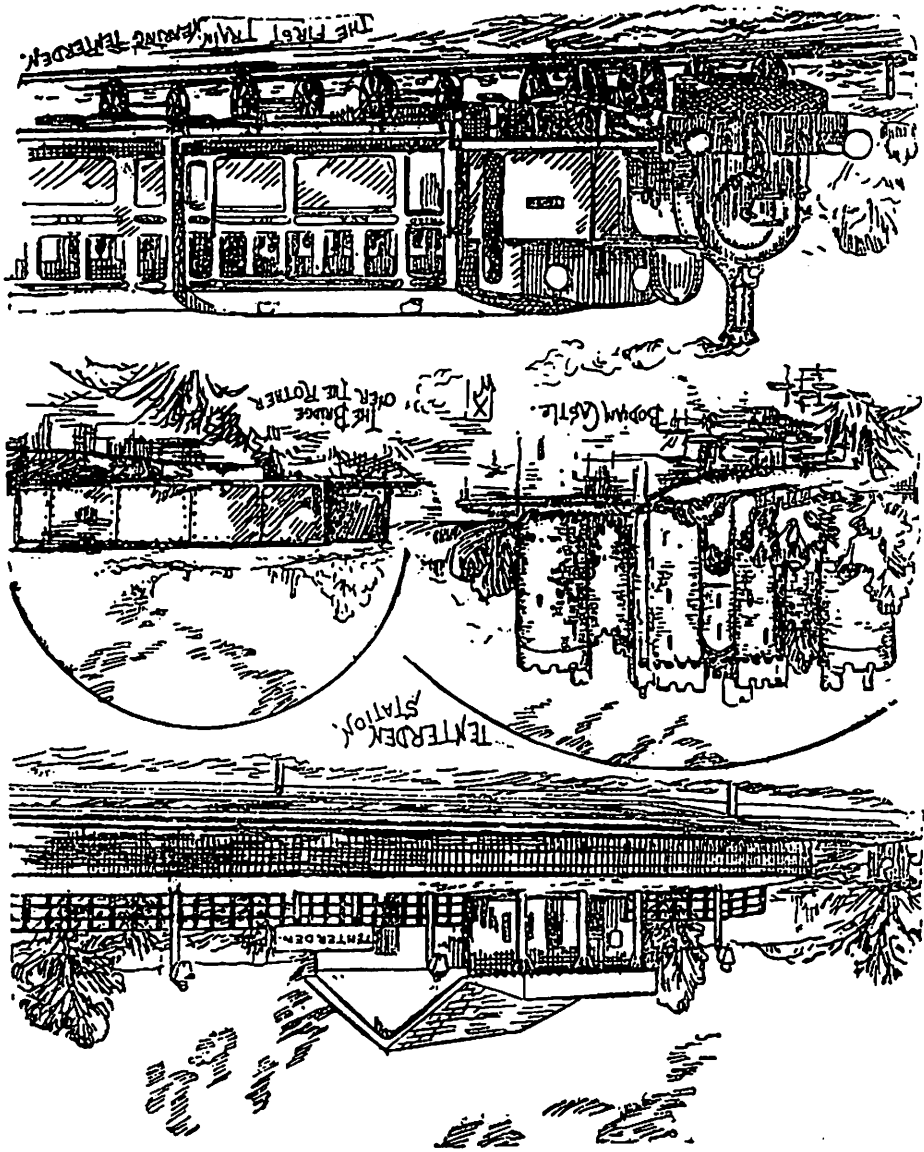
Operationally, the railway was described as being run "on the flag and ticket system", possibly a misunderstanding of 'staff and ticket' system. Also, the "various stations are connected with each other by telephonic communications".

"The line is well conducted and everything is carried out under the direction of Mr David Barr, the travelling manager, who was eleven years on the County Down Railway and four years on the Furness Railway". This

gentleman is not mentioned again in any archive papers, so we must assume this reign as railway supremo was a short one.

"Contrary to the custom on most lines, tickets are not issued at the stations, and passengers have simply to take their seats in the train. Some little time after departure of the train, the guard, or collector, enters the carriages and tickets are issued as the train proceeds on its journey, after the manner adopted on tramways". This practice continued right up to nationalisation in 1948, but many of the early used tickets in the Museum collection are machine date-stamped so must have been issued at booking offices.

Halfway through the report, the scene on opening day is described. "Flags were displayed at the various stations and at the



houses in the vicinity of the terminus at Tenterden, while the engine was decorated with primroses (!). At an early hour several hundred residents assembled in the roadway at Ashbourne Mill, close to the terminus, to witness the departure of the first train. A large number also lined the platform and at 7.30am the first train steamed out of the station laden with some sixty passengers".

"The journey was a pleasant one in every way and the travelling was smooth and comfortable. The train stopped at each intermediate station for the taking up of passengers and arrived at Robertsbridge Junction at 8:30am. Flags were flying at prominent positions, and the arrival of the train created interest amongst the passengers on the main line".

The reporter then describes the reactions of his fellow passengers. "One lady, whose flushed, excited face reflected the pleasure and novelty afforded by her first experience in a railway carriage, remarked to a lady sitting opposite that that was the first time she had been in a train, while her friend had on one occasion been in a train before". This rather twee account continues, "One little girl, with unconscious humour, expressed the hope that the train would not go fast". Speed on opening day was restricted to 15 mph.

"Considerable interest was evinced as the train passed objects with which passengers were familiar, and remarks such as "Look, there's our old mill", and "How do you like it", and "I should like to go back again", were freely given expression to as the train returned to the terminus".

"One man, eagerly looking out of one of the carriage windows as the train rounded a slight bend, expressed the opinion that the line had not taken quite the course he thought best, but that "they could have saved a mile if they had gone yon". Then, as now, there were always armchair experts.

While some accounts state that Sir Myles Fenton, Chairman of the R.V.R., did not visit the line until 4 April, this eyewitness account gives the afternoon of the opening day as the time of the visit. Sir Myles, who was also a director of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway, accompanied by Sir Godfrey Goldsworthy, arrived at Robertsbridge a few minutes before 2 pm, presumably by main line train. There they were greeted by Mr Lord, the station master, and by "Mr R.F.Stevens,

the engineer of the line under whose personal supervision it has been constructed". One can imagine Stephens' irritation when he undoubtedly read this report with this mistake in his name. Stephens had been appointed General Manager the year previously and in 1900 was also made Managing Director.

The party left Robertsbridge by the 2:08pm train and Stephens gave his guests a conducted tour of the whole line with brief inspections of each station. Crowds continued to assemble at each station throughout the day to witness the arrival and departure of trains.

The reporter then gave some more useful information. "Omnibuses meet all trains at the terminus at Tenterden". These were small horse-drawn buses operated by R.&J. Bennett & Co. which ran between the terminus and Tenterden High Street. Apart from Tenterden, it was also proposed to run buses and vans (for parcels and goods deliveries), to Rolvenden, Wittersham, Peasmarsh, Beckley, Northiam and Sandhurst, connecting with the various stations.

The reporter had also been well briefed on the possible extensions to the railway and the following paragraph is of some interest: "At present Rolvenden does not possess a station", because "it will be on the extension, which it is proposed to commence almost immediately". "In addition to this, an extension of the line is sanctioned to Tenterden Town, also to Benenden, Sissinghurst Road and Cranbrook Town and station, where it would join the Cranbrook and Paddock Wood Railway. The work is to be proceeded with at an early date. Powers are also to be asked for during the current session of Parliament to construct a branch to Northiam Town, Beckley, Peasmarsh and Rye". Such was the optimism that attended the opening of the new railway.

Finally, the report summed up the first week of operation. "During the week the line has been well patronised by passengers, many travelling out of curiosity. The advantages of the line to the town of Tenterden are every day growing more apparent, especially to the business part of the community".

There is then a postscript from "a Northiam Correspondent" written in that curious language of the time: "Excitement, long deferred, was fully up to its highest pitch on Monday morning on the opening of the Rother Valley Light Railway. The 7.30am from Tenterden, on arrival at Northiam

station, was quickly filled by an eager throng, all agog for their first ride on the new rail, some wending their way to Hastings, others to Robertsbridge Market. Many were not content with a short jaunt, but in jocular manner said they might as well inspect the whole line, consequently they rode to Tenterden, and thence to Northiam, arriving

by the 2.58pm train in merry mood, their verdict on the inspection being that it was a little bit of all right, and riding to 'Hampsted in a Wan' was a fool to it. First impressions are sometimes the best, and the opening day on Monday certainly ought to augur well for the future".

Rother Valley Railway.—April

UP.		WEEK DAYS.				SUNDAYS.			
		a m	W	M	S	p m	p m	a m	p m
Tenterden dep.....		730	930	1013	948	1 8	535	935	530
Wittersham Road		741	941	1024	959	119	546	946	541
Northiam (for Beckley)		750	950	1033	10 8	128	555	955	550
Bodiam		8 6	106	1049	1024	144	611	1011	6 6
Robertsbridge Junction		820	1020	113	1038	158	625	1025	620
8 { Cannon Street ..		109	123	123	1216	354	855	....	848
5 { Tun. Wells		9 3	1150	1150	1110	242	710	....	7 5
5 { Hastings		855	1055	1137	1137	235	7 1	11 4	944
5 { Eastbourne		948	1235	1235	1235	344	810	....	....
5 { Lewes		1042	1239	1239	1239	426	825	....	....
5 { Brighton		119	1 7	1 7	1 7	456	856	....	....

W Wednesdays and Saturdays excepted.

M Wednesdays only.

S Saturdays only.

DOWN.		WEEK DAYS.				SUNDAYS.			
		a m	W	T	a m	p m		a m	p m
8 { Cannon St. dep.		550	825	936	1132	5 0	....	8 8	....
5 { Tun. Wells		746	948	1048	126	6 0	....	953	....
5 { Hastings		8 0	1036	1036	130	6 0	....	745	555
5 { Brighton .....		....	750	750	1035	4 0	....	....	150
5 { Lewes.. .....		....	816	816	1110	437	....	....	215
5 { Eastbourne.....		....	835	835	1117	445	....	....	259
Robertsbridge Junction		832	1110	1110	2 8	632	....	1030	628
Bodiam.....		846	1124	1124	222	646	....	1044	642
Northiam (for Beckley)		9 2	1140	1140	238	7 2	....	11 0	658
Wittersham Road		911	1149	1149	247	711	....	11 9	7 7
Tenterden arrive		922	12 0	12 0	258	723	....	1120	718

W Wednesdays and Saturdays excepted.

T Wednesdays and Saturdays only.

Letters to the Editor

The wrong day

Sir – Thank you for the Winter 1999 edition of *The Tenterden Terrier*; yet another excellent production.

The article "Armagh and Staplehurst come to Tenterden" was particularly interesting. However, the author appears to have missed the prime reason for the misreading of the timetable which led to the crash.

The Folkestone Boat Express was known as The Tidal as the contemporary Folkestone steam packets' depended on the state of the tide to enter the harbour. Thus the daily timing of the express varied by an hour or so each day. This was the undoing of the foreman in charge as, by his interpretation of the timetable, he expected the train to arrive around an hour later than it in fact did. With work on the bridge incomplete, disaster was inevitable. A contributory factor was the irregular laying of detonators. Had they been set at the prescribed distance of 1000 yards, on such a straight section of track the accident could well have been avoided.

Wadhurst, East Sussex Norman Johnson

Drivers

Sir – I was recently looking through your past issues when I came across the letter from Jack Burrell in No 76 concerning the driver named Gatford who was transferred from the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway to the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead in 1936. His name was Tom Gatford and according to Peter Strange, who took the accompanying photograph, he had been a regimental sergeant-major and therefore always wore impeccably-polished boots!

There is a story that Alf Hill, who had been the chief fitter at Clevedon for many years, and whose two sons were by then working on the railway, had set his heart on becoming a driver. He may have even hastened the departure of the previous incumbent. When a vacancy was filled by a driver from one of the Colonel's other lines he was devastated.

Crediton, N. Devon Christopher Redwood

Mileposts

Sir – Further to Mr Davies' letter, I can say that there three systems of mileposts at various times on the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

The first ran from Robertsbridge on the north and west side of the line. These were concrete posts with the mileage and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile dots beneath as a cast protrusion. The second was measured from London (I believe London Bridge) after Nationalisation and ran from Headcorn, being placed on the east and south side of the track. These were of two sorts – a wooden plate painted red with white numbers on an short wooden post – about six inches high and a small non-ferrous plate on angle rods about eighteen inches high with just white painted numbers with quarter miles in fractions. The last ones were erected in the late seventies from Tenterden and erected on the north and west side under Phil Rimmer's supervision. He also removed any previous ones at the same time to avoid confusion. I don't know how far he got, but I believe he used a 30ft tape to measure the distances.

During the late seventies, when much of the line was being cleared, I tried to find as many mileposts as I could. This was relatively easy, by counting sleepers. Of the concrete ones, which looked a bit like the markers that the Post Office used to used to mark underground telephone cable positions, except that they were tapered towards the top, many were still in position. No 13 was well visible just above Cranbrook Road (until removed by Phil Rimmer) and $13\frac{1}{4}$ was removed to make way for the foundations of Tenterden Signalbox. $13\frac{1}{4}$ remains were scattered on the bank near the whistle board. Most of the other posts in the Rolvenden area I could not find, but on the remaining, unopened section most were in situ, but several were lying flat on the ground – were they ever properly erected – are any still there under the soil? Of the BR ones, I found No 57 in situ about to fall off its post, so I took it home and still have it somewhere. No $57\frac{1}{4}$ was nailed to Rolvenden P.W.Hut – quite erroneously as it should have been at Northiam Station. I found several metal ones between Northiam and Bodiam, some illegible and some with just the post. I cannot remember many of

the sites now so I will not be much use in positioning the new ones. The preservation era method of line measurement was the telegraph poles – they were easier to find – marked in large painted numbers starting from Tenterden. I believe this system is still in use in some departments.

On a completely different note – a list of TRC 'firsts' was included in the editorial of *Terrier No 79*. Another 'first' that I think we could claim is that of a refreshment trolley on the train. The only other instance I can recall was on the West Somerset, but I believe our trolley was in operation before they opened. Can we claim to have started something that has been taken up by BR and their successors?

Reading

Tony Pritchett

Fares fair?

Sir – The fares on the Selsey Tramway listed by Stephen Garrett in his interesting article in the Winter 1999 *Terrier* seem to have been one third lower in 1934 than when the line opened some thirty seven years before. One shilling single and 1/6d return were the original fares between Chichester and Selsey, as against 8d and 1/- respectively mentioned by Mr Cox in his report for the Southern Railway.

The Author of an article about the Tramway published in 1898 considered the fares to be high, and compared them unfavourably with those of the London Brighton & South Coast railway, which offered cheap day return ticket from Chichester to Bognor Regis for only one shilling during the summer.

Still, he observed that "the inhabitants of the villages who were wont to spend half a day in a carrier's cart on their way to market must find the new method of journeying to Chichester a great boon". Though perhaps there were still a few like an old Cornishwoman of 150 years ago in a story by 'Q'. When she was first offered the chance to travel by rail instead of the old horse-drawn carrier's van from redruth to market in Truro, she replied in a voice of scorn, "What, ninepence for only a few minutes in the train? Why, I could be nearly all day in the van for a shilling!"

Cambridge

Tom Burnham

Now it can be told

Sir – during the summer of 1975 the limit of operation was just past Rolvenden. The signalling at Tenterden was being installed and a working week was in progress. The weather was hot and most of the team retired to the Vine for the evening. On returning to the station, after closing time, six of us decided to walk down the line. It was either the sultry night, or the beer, or perhaps the quality of the conversation, but Rolvenden came and went and, without realising it, we were at Wittersham Road. In the siding was a pump trolley: we looked at each other and the temptation was too much to resist. Five minutes later the points had been barred over, the trolley was on the main line, and we were off.

Four manned the handles and the other two crouched in the middle with torches for the vital work of spotting the overhanging branches. We were fit, but it wasn't easy to keep the trolley going through the dense undergrowth without losing our momentum. Every so often we changed places on the move, taking care not to fall off. If memory serves me right the only deliberate stops on the outward journey were for level crossings, and to pull aside an electric fence near, I think, Cysters. I can still hear the expletive on the night air as someone jumped off and heedlessly grabbed the wire, despite the shouted warnings from the rest of us.

Bodiam was reached in the small hours and, feeling slightly elated, we stopped to drink from the outside tap and have a rest on the overgrown platform. The atmosphere was eerie as we looked out across the dark and silent valley to the castle and village, wondering about those who had sat there before us.

Eventually we all clambered aboard the trolley and set off home. The journey back to Wittersham seemed to take an age as fatigue set in. We stopped moving more often and the abiding memories are of the spotters shouting "duck!" as low branches loomed out of the darkness and of our youngest member having to be prodded awake with the toes of our boots.

Just before dawn we locked the trolley safely away in its siding and started the walk to Tenterden. As it got light we paused in a

brake van stabled at the locked barrier to shelter from a sharp summer shower. And then, footsore but satisfied, we staggered up the bank and into the mess coach that used to be at the end of the platform. A couple of hours later and we were awake and back on the job. No-one was any the wiser.

It was a youthful episode, not to be repeated – or forgotten. The pump trolley is now on a plinth at Tenterden. The line to Bodiam looks very different. But three of us are still regular volunteers, and have been retracing our steps recently on the pre-opening works trains.

"One of the Secret Six"

(Name and address supplied)

THE K&ESR 300 CLUB GRAND DRAW

In aid of the 2001 Steam & Country Fair.

Prizes will be drawn on Monday 28th August 2000
(‘Sixties’ Weekend)

Promotor: Brian Heyes, 6 Springet Way,
Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent ME17 4HR.

Tickets and enquiries:
Chris Garman 07957 867213

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HAVE YOU JOINED THE 300 CLUB YET?

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

December 99 Wealden Belle

1st	N Swinburne	(587)	£60.00
2nd	Mrs S M Spring	(346)	£40.00
3rd	Mr & Mrs D Edwards	(542)	£30.00
4th	W F Cobbett	(259)	£25.00
5th	Jeremy Nelson	(425)	£20.00
6th	R Bennett	(482)	£15.00
7th	James Veitch	(617)	£10.00
8th	Mr & Mrs D B Milner	(488)	£5.00

November 99 Santa Meeting

1st	Robert Gorham	(210)	£60.00
2nd	A J York	(185)	£40.00
3rd	James Veitch	(617)	£30.00
4th	Mrs G I Ellis	(615)	£25.00
5th	Helena Withers	(265)	£20.00
6th	Robin Dyce	(227)	£15.00
7th	Mrs S F Simmons	(609)	£10.00
8th	Wilf Watters	(603)	£5.00

December 99 Wealden Belle

1st	A J Clark	(064)	£200.00
2nd	A M H Baker	(191)	£150.00
3rd	Mrs S F Smmons	(609)	£100.00
4th	J P Crawford	(170)	£90.00
5th	A T R & G H Allen	(172)	£80.00
6th	Michael Hanham	(372)	£70.00
7th	Neil Rose	(159)	£55.00
8th	F T Kent	(310)	£45.00
10th	Mr V Bradley	(068)	£25.00
11th	Robert Munn	(436)	£20.00
12th	Mrs P C Hoad	(530)	£15.00
13th	Keith Howell	(534)	£10.00
14th	L A Scott	(087)	£5.00

January 00 Station Masters Office

1st	R Haliwell	(030)	£60.00
2nd	J R Crawford	(525)	£40.00
3rd	N Patchingce	(095)	£30.00
4th	Mrs P C Hoad	(345)	£25.00
5th	R Duke	(048)	£20.00
6th	L G Hersey	(363)	£15.00
7th	R Lukehurst	(100)	£10.00
8th	W E Cobbett	(262)	£5.00

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Winter Images



It was one of those dull winter afternoons that you cannot capture on film, damp, chilly with rain not far away as the low leaden clouds scudded in from the south-west. Cars had their headlights on, necessarily so as dusk fell early.

I took myself first to Northiam. I donned my HV vest and headed westward along the line towards Bodiam, intent on studying the new signalling layout at first hand. Very quickly I was in a different world, one that lacked people, no houses in view, without road noise. I scrunched my way along the ballast, the line curving away from the station, which was soon hidden from sight. After incessant rain over previous days, the Rother had burst its banks and so the valley meadows were awash, with little lakes lapping up almost to the railway fence. On the other side of the line land-drains gurgled noisily. The steely colour of the water lent to a monochrome image. Branches and debris from recent storms littered the four-foot.

I eased my way past two wagons at the operational limit where the depth of ballast surprised me: Colonel Stephens would have been truly amazed! Curiously the new stone from the Lizard contained flecks of colour, unlike the usual greys of granite used for railway ballast in the south-east.

The only signs of life were large skeins of geese making their way against the wind and seagulls enjoying their new watery playground. The outer home signal from Bodiam stood high and stark, as a sentinel awaiting its train. Hard to believe that it was brand-new. The signal's red aspect was already broken: was this a shooter's target or an accident in construction? The line beckoned enticingly ahead up the valley but I retraced my footsteps away from this solitary place.

As I walked back towards the station, the last train of the day arrived, announced by the locomotive's white exhaust smoke above distant trees. A few minutes later the engine came into my sight as it ran around its carriages. In the

gloaming it was unrecognisable at first. Or was it? I saw figures silhouetted. Only on a Terrier could they stand outside the cab like that. As I reached the station platform sure enough there was Knowle at the head of four vintage coaches and an old bogie carriage, a true KESR train.

In the cab a solitary oil lamp showed the water level in the gauge glass, otherwise the only illumination was the orange glow of burning coals. Soon the few passengers gathered themselves back into their seats, crossing gates were opened and the guard displayed his green lamp. With little noise Knowle started its train over the crossing for its final trip of the day. Within seconds only the red tail lamp was visible, disappearing towards Wittersham. The station resumed its slumbers.

I overtook the train and stopped beside the road above Rolvenden level crossing. Standing there, I watched car lights moving like glow-worms in the distance as dusk gave way to darkness. The timber yard lamps were not yet on and the only illumination at the station filtered from the signal box windows. The signalman had made his cabin cosy, if the lingering pall of smoke from its chimney was anything to go by.

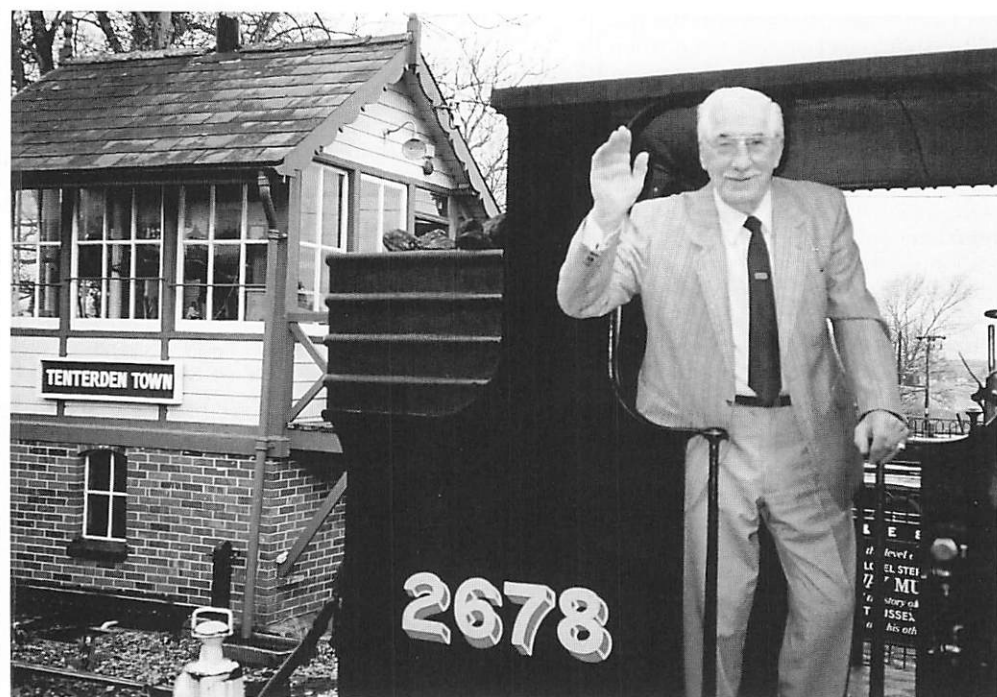
The engine whistle sounded shrilly. Soon a smudge of white steam could be seen, then the dim lights of the carriages. The distinctive Terrier profile became distinguishable as it drew closer. The train coasted past the signal box where no doubt the locoman and signalman exchanged a rapid greeting as well as tokens. At the deserted platform it halted for the level-crossing gates to be swung across the road.

At Cranbrook Road it was raining gently but otherwise still, the road deserted. To the train crew's undoubted relief the crossing was manned. I saw the crossing keeper was deep in conversation with someone in his box, seemingly oblivious to the approaching train. A warning bell rang and my fear the train would be stopped was dispelled. A toot of the whistle sounded as the driver acknowledged the opening gates. With a steady, even beat and a trail of white exhaust smoke hanging low over the train, Knowle made brisk progress over the crossing. Passengers seemed oblivious to the outside world as they approached journey's end. I listened to the sound of the engine as it pounded up the final stretch of line until, suddenly, there was total silence; its climb up Tenterden Bank was over.

Neil Rose

'Monty' – 1930-1949

A former driver reminisces



The author poses at Tenterden Town Station on Terrier No. 32678, 2nd April 2000 (Kentish Express)

The morning PT session at Tenterden C of E School could not come soon enough for me to get into the playground. It gave me a grandstand view of Tenterden Town Station. If I was lucky the 11:20am Tenterden to Headcorn train would be coming into view, punching up the 1 in 50 gradient to finally stop, simmering at the platform.

How I wanted to be down there. At 11:20am a shrill blast on the whistle and she was away. With a crisp bark on the exhaust and a plume of steam the train disappeared into the cutting above the Goods Yard, coming into view again racing along the far end of the large embankment, eventually disappearing into the cutting of St. Michaels tunnel, leaving a trail of smoke as the fireman tended his fire. Then the spell was broken and it was back to classroom. I was hooked at 11 years old, not on glue sniffing, but the aroma of hot oil, and steam.

My Grandfather, Walter Goodman, used to drive Bennett's Horse Bus from Tenterden to Headcorn Railway Station, becoming redundant when Colonel Stephens opened the Headcorn section of the K&ESR. He got to know the Colonel at this time, dropping him off his bus close to wherever the construction workers were, on the new Headcorn section. Once the line was open the horse bus finished and Grandfather went to work managing the Gents Outfitters Department at Bristow's in Tenterden High St. (now Adin Coates).

Once the Railway was running, Col. Stephens visited shopkeepers and other businesses canvassing trade for the railway. He bought shirts, collars, and other clothing from my Grandfather when staying at the White Lion. It was in the shop that I met the Colonel. My Grandfather introduced me, and told him I was railway mad, and the Colonel said if I was still keen when I

left school he would train me to run a railway. That was my only meeting with him. Regretfully his health deteriorated and he died in 1931.

My Grandfather took me on the train to Wittersham road or Northiam when he went fishing on the River Rother, so I had met some of the old Station Agents on the line. I particularly remember Arthur Taunt of Tenterden station who was a rotund Dickensian character with a large drooping walrus-like moustache. He was also a coal merchant with his own coal wharf, in his station yard, with his own private owner trucks that his coal came in from the collieries. They had A.TAUNT in large letters on the sides, and can be seen on some of the old photos.

I applied to Bill Austen at Salford Terrace, at the beginning of 1933, reminding him of the Colonel's promise. He replied, telling me to report to George Dobell at Tenterden Station to be interviewed by him. George tested me on writing and arithmetic, then said I could start next Monday morning. My hours of work would be 7.30am to 5.30pm with an hour for dinner (sandwiches) which had to be taken in stages according to the midday shunting of the yard by the train from Robertsbridge which could, and often was, up to an hour late arriving, having roped off trucks at every station, and shunted the empties out ready to be returned to Robertsbridge by the 4.30pm. My wages were to be 10/- (50p) with a deduction for National Health stamp of 4d (2p). It was a six day week. My duties were to clean the urinal with disinfectant (there was no flush), Sweep out the office, waiting room and goods room, then sweep the platform. Farmers then arrived with milk churns for the 8.00am train to Headcorn, which had to be unloaded and rolled to the platform. Some held 9 gallons and the big ones 17 gallons. Once a week I had to clean and trim the wicks of all the signal lamps and hand lamps, refill with paraffin and replace to their positions. The Tablet and Staff machine's brasswork was polished every day, and I worked my way round cleaning all the Station windows as I got time. If the water crane overflowed I ran to the wind-

pump to shut it off and vice versa.

By the end of 1933 I had been sent to relieve the Agents at Rolvenden and Bodiam. The Agent at Rolvenden was Jimmy Norton, who also ran the Printing Shed next to the station building. He printed tickets and advertising material for the Colonel's other Railways, and privately for local functions. It was also his duty to sweep out the two carriages left in the platform each afternoon, also wash the outsides with a long handled broom if necessary. One can understand that with such a diversity of duties, he did need occasional relief, apart from his one week annual holiday.

One day in 1934 I was told to report to Eastry Station on the East Kent Railway. Lodgings were found for me at 10/- (50p) per week and my wages were increased to 12/6 (62½p). For a 14 year old this was sheer boredom. Two trains a day with an odd weekly pit prop special from Richborough Port. Any parcels for traders in Eastry had to be delivered on an old sack barrow, half a mile to the village.

This was becoming a frustrating way of learning to run a railway and I took solace in the arms of a beautiful girl who worked in the Eastry bakers shop. I impressed her by taking her to the pictures and buying her chocolates. Alas I became deficient in petty cash to the extent of 3/- (15p). Mr Carnell, the senior Station Agent at Staple Station, found out and I was relieved of my post, so bringing my youthful romance, and career, to a premature end. By scrounging a ride in the guards van from Shepherdswell to Dover and then to Ashford and a lift to Tenterden, I arrived home.

My mother was in tears having received a letter from Bill Austen informing her of my misdemeanour, and demanding that the East Kent Railway should be reimbursed of 3/- (15p) forthwith, or else! My Mother naturally thought that the 'or else' bit meant, at the least, deportation to Australia. I never did forgive Bill Austen for inflicting such trauma on my mum, a widow on 10/- (50p) a week pension. The letter also ordered me to appear at 23 Salford Terrace to explain how I had practically run the

East Kent Railway into bankruptcy.

I ran the gauntlet down the hallway of No 23 Salford Terrace, past Mr Iggulden, and Mr Osborne, Chief Clerk, and Clerk, respectively, who peered disdainfully at me. I was ushered in front of THE DESK, the one now preserved in the Tenterden Museum. I awaited the invitation to sit, and would I like a cup of tea? It never came.

Bill Austen sneered at me over his half moon glasses. I cannot recall ever seeing him smile. After reading me the riot act, he produced a letter he had been sent by Driver Nelson Wood of the K&ESRly (he was an earlier protégé of Colonel Stephens from the Bere Alston-Callington Branch of the Plymouth Devonport and South Western Rly.) Nelson had repaid the cash for me, and requested that I be transferred to the locomotive department at Rolvenden where he would guarantee to look after me, and see that I behaved myself. It was to be my last chance, and I took it. It was a dream come true, as I was a steam addict at heart and hated the thought of being a Station Agent, albeit how senior. Pulling

gratefully on my forelock, and bowing from the waist submissively, I backed out, this time I looked disdainfully at Messrs Iggulden and Osborne, now joined by brother clerks, Fred and George Willard, who had no doubt by now already placed bets on the certainty of deportation.

Reporting to Charlie Turner, the Fitter in charge at Rolvenden Loco Shed I was given details of my duties. Keeping the shed swept and tidy, cleaning out the inspection pits, drying sand for the sandboxes in the shed on the river bank, which was next to the only W.C. on the K&ESRly. This was a galvanised tin shelter perched on stilts partly over the stream with a hole in a wooden seat. The stench in Summer was terrible, when the stream was low. In winter the stream flooded, lapped around one's ankles, and cleared the offending effluent away. These buildings are shown very faintly on page 24 (without description) at the end of the group of the three dump sidings in Stephen Garrett's 1999 of the history of line (1999 edition).

Charlie Turner's son, Maurice, was the



Monty Baker on 'Saddleback' K&ESR No. 4 at Northiam with a mixed train for Robertsbridge, c1935
(Colonel Stephens Historical Archive)

apprentice. Jack Hoad was an improver (advanced apprentice). In K&ESRly terms this meant that you had finished your apprenticeship, but they did not have to pay you full wages. Old Amos was the coach and loco painter, he lived in a shack by the paint shop on a pile of old rags. A Tortoise stove for heat, and cooking, surrounded by enough paint, turps, etc. to have caused an inferno had it ignited. He seldom washed, his hair was white, his long beard ginger through chewing tobacco. He mixed all his own paints, and varnish, from raw materials. The finish of his painting was superb. The last loco he ever painted was No 3 'Bodiam' which was rebuilt at Rolvenden in the Thirties after cannibalising No 5 'Rolvenden', to make one out of two.

One set of railcars were running at this time thanks to Charlie Turner's tender loving care, but breakdowns were getting more frequent with big end failures, and burnt out valves. They usually got back by using the other end car in reverse, but too risky for running in service. At these times I had to prepare the spare loco and go firing on it. Meanwhile Charlie repaired the broken down railcar, which in turn held up the rebuilding of No 3 'Bodiam'.

Help appeared in the shape of George Gray from the Selsey Tramway, who came to Rolvenden, after the closure of the tramway in 1935, primarily to repair the Shefflex set. After this, he took over the Tenterden Station delivery service from Tom Beach, the existing horse and dray being replaced with a brand new Bedford Lorry (paid for initially by Mr Austen personally). The Shefflex now ran on odd occasions when someone found time and patience to mend it.

When Charlie Turner, and his son Maurice, left in 1937 the Welsh fitter Dai Evans arrived, with his son, Owen, as apprentice. Evans could not drive steam locos, or railcars. Jack Hoad occasionally acted as fireman when we were very short staffed which caused friction with the fitting department as they needed Jack there. When Nelson Wood was sent to Basingstoke with No 2 'Northiam' for the film 'Oh Mr. Porter' an apprentice from the East Kent

Railway, Bunny Abbott, went with him. They each had a week break half way through filming and I took over from them. Gainsborough Film Co. had initially said it would be done in a fortnight, but actually it took eight weeks just to do Gladstone's parts. Nelson returned to finish off and bring No 2 back to Rolvenden via the main line.

We were now having to hire locos from the Southern Railway. The first was 1556 P class, followed by a string of varied classes. K&ESRly No 4 had a broken piston ring in 1938 which damaged the cylinder. This was rebored by hand with some Heath Robinson equipment that had a handwheel like an antique mangle, and it took young Evans, the apprentice, weeks and weeks of hard work, with very fine cuts, before it was done.

During this period SR 0334 worked No 4's duties most days. No 4 had not been re-boilered at this time. This occurred later in the 1940's, when 3440 stood in for No 4. With the threat of war looming, and still not getting a full fitters wage, Jack Hoad volunteered for the services and joined the RAF, thus depleting the fitting staff even more, making it more difficult to keep our own locos operating.

Bob Blair was the senior fireman at this time, and was sometimes rostered to drive at holidays, and other busy times, but he hated it and much preferred to be on the shovel. I was just the reverse, getting more and more experience driving when I was rostered with him. As we were the only two firemen at the time, drivers Nelson Wood and Jimmy Webb took Charlie Crouch and Jack Masters, both platelayers, as their firemen. By early 1939 the motive power was in dire straights with leaking tubes, then burst tubes, plus derailments in various goods yards if we went in too far with the loco, as the old flat bottom track was so rotten. This made it necessary to always have a third loco on standby to take a gang to re-rail the loco.

When the Emergency Food Depot was to be built at the far siding at Tenterden Station (where the Museum is now) we had difficulty getting the old derelict rolling stock out as we could not get a loco in, and

had to have a long line of empty trucks in front of us to reach the old stock. The siding was then renovated to take the truck loads of materials that arrived to erect the buildings. Later when the vans of sugar were arriving at Headcorn, we kept a bundle of sandbags in the loco toolbox, along with a brace and bit to bore through the van floor to let the sugar trickle through and fill a sandbag. Our tea cans had wood chips and strands of hessian floating on the top, but our tea was sweet! The hole in the van was sealed with a twist of grass to prevent further waste.

When the evacuation from Dunkirk started, the K&ESR side of Headcorn Station main line was taken over by the Voluntary Services to serve tea and food to the returning troops and we were able to help them during our lay over time at Headcorn. I shall always remember what a demoralising time that was.

From this period the Railway became very busy with special trains as fear of invasions developed. We ran wagons of old telephone poles to be stuck in fields of the Rother plain to prevent airborne troops landing. The poles were pushed off the flat wagons at each farm occupation crossing and dragged, mainly by horses, to their place in the field to be dug in. The poles were supplemented by any old car or farm vehicle that could be spared. This was a deterrent to the Germans, but very bad for our aircraft trying to make forced landings during the Battle of Britain.

We were now on call at any time. The police would cycle round and tell us to report to work, and maybe we had not long been home. I had a motorcycle and was issued with a Defence of the Realm driving licence (which I still have). This was also my pass to get past the trigger happy Armed Road blocks between my home, then at St Michaels, to the loco shed at Rolvenden and return.

With the threat of invasion by Hitler now imminent and diversion of traffic over the K&ESR line as a result of bomb damage to the Southern Railway north of Headcorn, or Robertsbridge, meant us moving vast amounts of defence material, such as cement, coils of barbed wire, spiral metal

stakes that screwed into the ground to support the barbed wire, shells and other types of ammunition, bundles of sandbags to be filled from many wagons of sand.

Many of these trains traversed the K&ESR in either direction more than once, before eventually finding their final destination. It happened once when Charlie Crouch, my platelayer/fireman at the time, and I had taken a train of barbed wire from Robertsbridge to Headcorn between service trains in the morning, and then called out in the early hours to fetch it back to Robertsbridge. Running during the night was safer than daytime as the gangers working on the track suddenly had unexpected non-timetabled trains bearing down on them, with the footplate crew praying there was not a rail missing, or a few sleepers out at the time. We did have a close shave one day when I saw the Bodiam ganger heading towards us on his pump trolley as we came off Five Span Bridge, towards Junction Road. I slapped the steam brake on while Charlie wound on the tender brake. Luckily the ganger spotted us, stopped, gave the trolley a quick push backwards and remounted. He was quite old and his pump action did him credit. The only casualty was Cyril Packham, the guard, who when the loose coupled wagons came up to the hard braking loco, somersaulted from one veranda end of his Brakevan to the other.

In early 1942 another driver was required on the East Kent Railway. Sammy Austen, the Rolvenden Fitter, was now doing some spare driving, so as I was single (but courting) was sent to the EKR. Fred Hazell eventually took my place on the K&ESR. I was told it was temporary, but I was working the extra coal trains out of Tilmanstone Colliery with the Kerr Stuart 0-6-0T No 4. This was the most powerful loco on the EKR and was only used for Colliery work. She had a lovely ramshorn regulator which stretched right across the cab, was very short wheel based, like the USA 0-6-0T plus outside cylinders, which with a full load up through Golgotha Tunnel gave it a waddling duck action. Whilst washing out, or for repairs to take place, I used No 6.

On 21st June 1942 I managed to get a Saturday and Sunday off and got married at Bodiam Church, returning to Shepherdswell on the Sunday evening to start work at 5am on Monday 23rd. As we were in lodgings with Vic Hoyle, the Colliery train guard, and his family in a mobile home, it was not practical in the long term and I gave my notice in towards the end of 1942 and went into the army. Unfortunately I did not fulfil the Colonel's wish to be trained to run a railway, but I would not have missed it for anything.

After my army service in England, I went to Egypt and Palestine. Although I should not have been demobilised until 1947, through my late entry, I was surprised to be told to return to England as there was a shortage of loco drivers. I reported to the de-mob centre at York, collected my civvy clothing, and, even more surprising, instructions to report to Major Terry Holder, newly appointed manager by Capt. Jack Howey, the owner, on the RH&DRly at New Romney. Italian prisoners of war repaired the track. We got the service running and I

was lucky to have the chance to drive Laurel and Hardy when they visited the railway in 1947. I left in 1949 as the remuneration was poor, went into estate management, then publican and hotelier, retiring in 1979. My last wish is to travel on the first official passenger train on the Bodiam extension and who knows, maybe see or feel the ghost of my old friend Harry Batehup as he stands with his red flag under his arm waiting to see this train across the level crossing. Perhaps, one day, he will have the other hand out, as he used to, with the staff for the driver to proceed on to Robertsbridge?

My thanks to the volunteers, and enthusiasts. My friends Philip Shaw, John Miller and Simon Long. The numerous Chairmen and their officers over the years who have given so much of their time, and labour, to preserve the railway the Colonel Stephens was going to teach me to run. I wish you all well. You have all made a better job of it than I did!

Monty Baker

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Gazelle, the Early Years

Part 2: A grand day out.

In Part 1, we saw how 'Gazelle' had been built for William Burkitt, a wealthy corn merchant and maltster of King's Lynn, Norfolk, who as a boy in Chesterfield boasted to his friends that he would one day travel from the east coast to Chesterfield and back in a single day on his own railway engine. 'Gazelle' made a test run from Lynn to Downham Market and back on Sunday 5 February 1893, but seems to have seen little use during the next four years. But if 'Gazelle' was idle during this period, much was happening further north. Despite the optimism of the speeches William Burkitt had heard at the luncheon after the first sod of the Lancashire Derbyshire & East Coast Railway had been cut in 1892, shareholders had been reluctant to invest in the "East to West", as it became known, and in 1894 the railway's directors had been compelled to accept an offer of support from the GER with important conditions attached. Lord Claud Hamilton and his expansionist board of directors at Liverpool Street hoped for a stream of coal trains from the new line, up the Great Northern and Great Eastern Joint line from Lincoln to March, and on to London via Cambridge, and so they were not at all interested in providing direct access from the coalfields to the ports. The abandonment of plans to extend west of Chesterfield and east of Lincoln and the grant of running powers to the GER was the price of their assistance. Another sign of GER influence was the appointment of Harry Willmott as general manager of the LD&ECR in 1895. Mr Willmott had spent the whole of his working life with the GER, latterly as London area goods manager, and it is likely that he and William Burkitt would have been acquainted.

The first part of the LD&ECR opened for goods in December 1896, and with the official opening throughout to Chesterfield on 8 March 1897, William Burkitt was able to begin planning the epic journey which he promised some sixty years before. Although the route clearly took advantage of GER

running powers, it would be interesting to know the details of the negotiations, which involved the provision of pilotmen and inspectors for the various sections, and perhaps special opening of signal cabins and level crossings, as few of the lines covered had regular passenger services on a Sunday.

The great day came on Sunday 25 July 1897. 'Gazelle' stood ready with steam up at King's Lynn station, with John Wilson, the District Locomotive Superintendent of the GER, at the controls once again. Just after six o'clock Mr Burkitt left Lynn on his own engine for Chesterfield. Detailed timings are shown in the following table, and are based on those quoted in an article in the Locomotive Magazine of May 1901, which differ slightly from those in contemporary press reports.

Miles			am
	King's Lynn	dep	6.10
27	Spalding	arr	7.15
		dep	7.30
67	Pyewipe Jn	arr	9.20
		dep	9.40
105	Chesterfield	arr	11.20
Miles			pm
	Chesterfield	dep	3.00
10	Langwith	arr	3.25
		dep	4.00
38	Pyewipe Jn	arr	5.00
		dep	5.15
78	Spalding	arr	6.55
		dep	7.10
105	King's Lynn	arr	8.25

'Gazelle' gained Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway metals via Lynn Harbour Junction, and headed westwards. The River Nene was crossed by the long Cross Keys swing bridge, carrying both rail and road and giving an opportunity to catch a glimpse



'Gazelle' in the Locomotive yard at Kings Lynn after the trial trip to Downham Market, 5th February 1893
(Dr Tice F. Budden, courtesy National Railway Museum)

of the remains of the ill-fated dock. Immediately after the bridge was Sutton Bridge station, the first of several stops to take on water. With a full tank, 'Gazelle' continued along the M&GN towards Spalding, joining the Great Northern Railway at South Junction.

At Spalding, there was a fifteen minute stop to take water again and probably to change pilotmen, before 'Gazelle' set off on the next portion of its journey, diverging on to the GN & GE Joint line at North Junction, and struggling northwards against a powerful headwind which blew straight across the featureless fens of south Lincolnshire. 'Gazelle' probably took the GN & GE Joint avoiding line at Sleaford, rather than diverting on to wholly GNR metals through the station, as the next recorded water stop

was at Ruskington, a few miles north of Sleaford. From here the line passed through slightly less low-lying ground around Nocton, before dropping down again to the flood plain of the River Witham on the outskirts of Lincoln. Again, it is uncertain whether 'Gazelle' passed through the GNR station at Lincoln, but it seems more likely that it followed the GN & GE Joint avoiding line from Greetwell West Junction as far as the curiously named Pyewipe Junction, which was no doubt greeted with relief by the travellers.

Pyewipe was the eastern extremity of the LD&ECR and although there was no station (the few LD&ECR passenger trains that reached this end of the line continued on to Lincoln), there were water columns and an inspection pit for the benefit of the engines

of goods trains. LD&ECR enginememen used to avail themselves of the Pyewipe Inn while their locomotives were being watered, but as this hostelry had to be reached by means of a ferry boat hauled across one of the local waterways with a chain, and as 'Gazelle' paused here for no more than twenty minutes, its crew no doubt relied on their own resources.

William Burkitt may already have travelled over the recently opened LD&ECR by passenger train, but even if he had, he was no doubt eagerly awaiting the opportunity of inspecting the newly built works from the excellent vantage point of "Gazelle's" open footplate. Leaving Pyewipe Junction, a few miles of generally level running westward brought 'Gazelle' to Fledborough viaduct, which crossed the River Trent and its flood plain with ninety nine brick arches and a girder span. The first serious climbing began soon afterwards, with a couple of miles at 1 in 120 to cross over the GNR main line at the isolated two-level interchange station of Dukeries Junction. Another mile, and 'Gazelle' stopped at Tuxford, where the LD&ECR repair works were situated (the buildings, no longer in railway use, can still be seen from the A1 bypass road). Here the crew found the LD&ECR water columns easier to use than those they had previously encountered; the Derbyshire Times commented that quite twenty minutes could have been saved on the journey if the water cranes on the joint lines had been as convenient as those on the "East to West".

In 1897, the coal mining district extended no further east than Warsop, and the countryside of the Dukeries, studded with palatial seats of the nobility and gentry, was as yet unsullied by industry. Mr Willmott had great, though largely unrealised, ambitions for tourist traffic to this area, and used to promote the LD&ECR as the 'Dukeries Route' wherever possible. At Ollerton, which was visited by the Royal train a few years later when King Edward VII stayed at Rufford Abbey for the St Leger races, the line began to climb through Sherwood Forest, past Edwinstowe and Clipstone siding, to a summit in a sandstone cutting by Warsop windmill. It continued

on a falling gradient past the Warsop marshalling sidings, where the scenery started to become more industrial, and then climbed again at 1 in 100 to Langwith. This station was then a junction only for the twelve-mile branch to Beighton Junction, on the Midland Railway main line to Sheffield. It had four platforms, a refreshment room and a small locomotive shed. William Burkitt knew Langwith well, as his firm had premises there, as well as his brother Samuel's extensive farming interests.

Continuing westwards from Langwith, 'Gazelle' continued to climb at 1 in 100 to reach the summit of the LD&ECR at Scarcliffe, 521 feet above sea level, and almost as much above King's Lynn. Beyond Scarcliffe station the line plunged into the notoriously wet, one and a half miles long Bolsover tunnel, problems with which had delayed the opening of the LD&ECR through to Chesterfield. Finding what shelter they could on the open footplate, the travellers no doubt wished Mr Burkitt had ordered a cab for 'Gazelle' and pondered on the fact that on the return journey they would be going uphill through the tunnel.

Shortly after crossing the River Doe Lea and a Midland Railway branch line on a brick viaduct, 'Gazelle' began to climb again to a short (501 yard) tunnel at Duckmanton, before making its final descent to Chesterfield, crossing a main road, the Chesterfield loop line of the Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, the Midland Railway main line and the River Rother all at the same point across a viaduct of seven brick arches and four girder spans to reach the terminus at Chesterfield Market Place station.

'Gazelle' steamed into Chesterfield forty four minutes after it had been expected, thanks to delays waiting for other trains, taking in water and waiting for pilotmen or inspectors for the various sections. A considerable crowd had turned out to greet William Burkitt, including his brother Samuel, his thirty two year-old nephew William Burkitt junior, his old friend William Oliver, Charles P. Markham of the Broad Oaks Iron Works, who was the Mayor of Chesterfield and also a director of the LD&ECR, A.W. Byron, a director of the Weldless Steel Tubes Co.,

Harry Willmott and A.K. Smith, respectively general manager and engineer of the LD&ECR, Cecil Browne, resident engineer of S. Pearson & Son who had built the western half of the LD&ECR, M. Scorer and several others.

All present crowded round to congratulate William Burkitt on his journey, and the engineers among them inspected 'Gazelle' with particularly keen interest. Samuel Burkitt then entertained his brother and friends at a luncheon, where the proceedings were no doubt enlivened by many reminiscences about Chesterfield in the good old days.

William Burkitt started his return journey on 'Gazelle' at 3pm. Following the climb through Bolsover tunnel, there was a stop at Langwith, which had one of the three refreshment rooms on the LD&ECR to take tea. Presumably this was by special arrangement, as the "East to West" ran no passenger trains on Sundays in its independent days. The route of the outward journey was retraced without further incident, and 'Gazelle' finally arrived back at King's Lynn at about 8.25pm, only

five or ten minutes late.

The total distance covered there and back was about 220 miles, with an average running speed of 33 mph, and maximum speeds of up to 40 mph – quite an achievement for the smallest standard gauge engine then running to perform such a journey without a bearing running hot or a nut working loose. William Burkitt, too, showed that he came of hardy stock by riding on an open footplate for eleven hours at the age of seventy two to make good his youthful prediction.

After this feat, 'Gazelle' again left the limelight. Samuel Burkitt died in 1898, and his brother evidently decided that he was unlikely to use the engine again, as it was advertised for sale once more in the Locomotive Magazine of September and October 1900 in terms similar to those of the 1894 advertisement "to railway superintendents, inspectors, &c. A beautiful and highly-finished locomotive engine, 4-inch cylinders, with car to hold four persons, on six wheels... Two trial trips of 80 miles, running perfectly smooth and remarkably steady. Highest speed 45 miles per hour. To



P. MARKET PLACE STATION CHESTERFIELD

Chesterfield Market Place station in LD&ECR days

(Commercial Postcard, courtesy Chesterfield Library)

be sold on account of a death. For further particulars apply by letter to 'Gazelle', c/o Locomotive Magazine...." The reference to a "car to hold four persons" has been taken to mean that 'Gazelle' hauled a separate passenger carriage, but it seems clear that the advertiser was in fact referring to the footplate area. The interest aroused by the advertisement led to the publication of a short illustrated description of 'Gazelle', with some details of the Chesterfield trip, in the May 1901 issue of the Locomotive Magazine, but no sale resulted.

Mr M.G. Greenacre, who worked for Dodman's from 1903 to 1910, recalled seeing a locomotive of the 'Gazelle' type in use in the sidings of the West Norfolk Farmers' Chemical & Manure works at South Lynn. 'Gazelle' would not seem well suited to be an industrial shunter because of its small adhesive weight and non-standard buffer height. Perhaps tests were being carried out to assess the feasibility of rebuilding 'Gazelle' or of building a new locomotive to suit conditions at the works, but further details are lacking. Mr R.H. Clark, historian of the M&GN Joint Railway, has suggested that a second locomotive of the 'Gazelle' type was built by Dodman's and ended up in Australia, but there is no evidence of this in the records of the Australian Railway Historical Society.

William Burkitt himself died at the age of 81 on 7 June 1906, leaving an estate valued at £219,501, a very substantial sum in those days. The business was taken over by his nephew, William Burkitt junior, who was also the principal executor of the will. The fate of 'Gazelle' was evidently not his first concern, for it was not until about 1909 that the locomotive that had been his uncle's pride and joy was sold to the machinery and scrap dealer Thos. W. Ward & Co. of the Albion Works, Sheffield.

Writing in the Winter 1977 edition of the *Tenterden Terrier*, R.S. McNaught recalled a story he had heard from an old M&GN driver. When a fireman, he had been sent one Sunday from Spalding to King's Lynn with a senior driver to "bring back" an engine. They went to Lynn by pony trap as there were no trains on a Sunday, and to their astonishment found it was 'Gazelle'

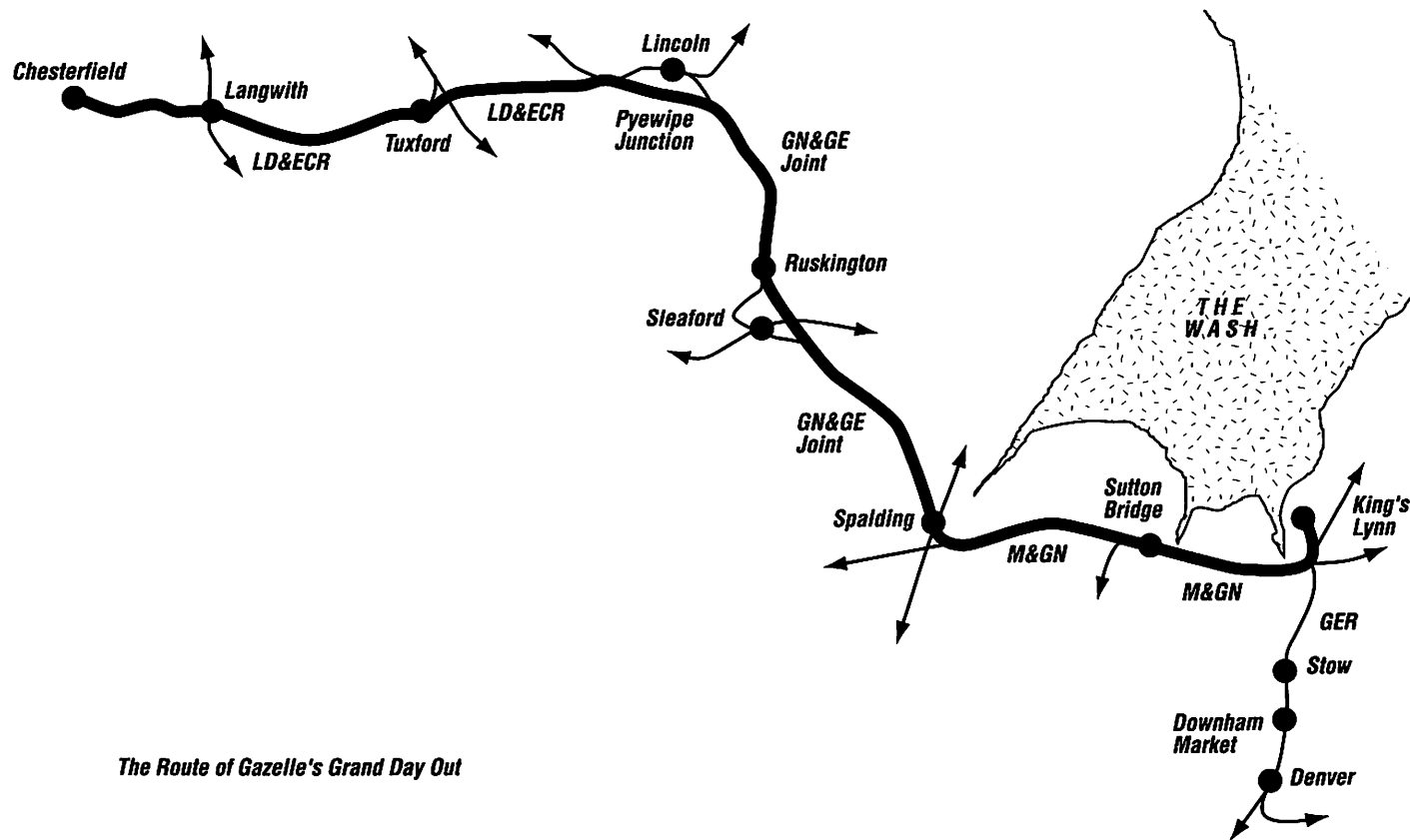
they had to fetch. She kept running out of steam, and what with the necessity of opening the crossing gates themselves, they had only reached Sutton Bridge by nightfall, and they had to leave 'Gazelle' on a siding for a few days. Two other men subsequently brought her into Spalding, and after an overnight stay Great Northern men took her on to Lincoln. It would be tempting to suppose that this episode was the first stage of the move from Norfolk to Ward's, but as in so many other aspects of the 'Gazelle' story, the true facts are elusive.

Ward's advertised 'Gazelle' for sale in January 1910, and in February 1911 she was purchased by H.F. Stephens for the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, which he was then reconstructing. She was used as an inspection engine during the work in more or less her original state – a small temporary windshield was fitted – and she was photographed in the locomotive shed at Kinnerley by G.M. Perkins of Knighton on the occasion of the official reopening on 13 April 1911 (Railway Magazine for September 1911). She was then rebuilt by W.G. Bagnall of Stafford with smaller driving wheels coupled to the leading wheels, and other alterations so that she could be used on the Criggion branch.

Stephen Garrett writing in the Summer 1997 edition of the *Tenterden Terrier* has already recounted the later history of 'Gazelle' on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire, and how it has survived in the most unlikely fashion to become a prized exhibit in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, its longevity a tribute to its original builder. On display at Tenterden, it is a fitting memorial to those two "bustling individuals" of nineteenth century King's Lynn, Alfred Dodman and William Burkitt.

Tom Burnham

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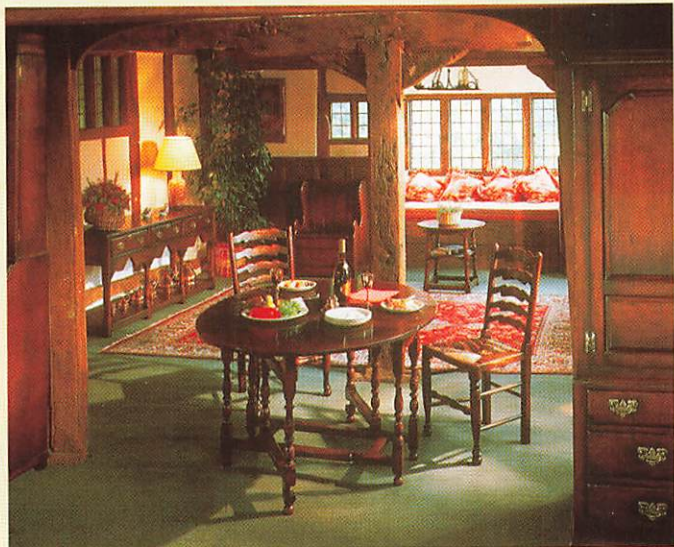


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