

# The Tenterden Terrier



Number 86

Winter 2001



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

# The Tenterden Railway Company Limited

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

Registered Charity 262481

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Norman Brice – *Chairman*; Graham Bridge; Robin Dyce; Derek Dunlavy; Chris Garman;  
Carol Mitchell; John Weller; Brian Janes

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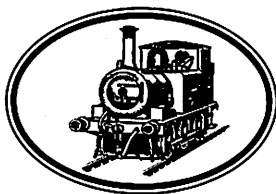
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*The Tenterden Terrier is published by the Tenterden Railway Company Ltd, three times a year on the third Saturday of March, July and November. Opinions expressed in this journal are, unless otherwise stated, those of the individual contributors and should not be taken as reflecting Company policy or the views of the Editor.*  
ISSN 0306-2449

## *FRONT COVER*

*Newly restored P Class No 753 on test at Tenterden Town Station, 10th October 2001*

*(Brian Stephenson)*

## *FRONTISPIECE*

*Thomas arrives at Tenterden and then receives a drink from his excited fans supported by Mrs Kyndley*  
*(Mick Blackburn/John Liddell)*

## *BACK COVER*

*Bodiam station garden in the summer time*  
*(Phil Lane)*

## **Contents**

- 3 Editorial
- 3 Lineside News:-
  - Commercial
- 5 Membership
- 7 Motive Power
- 9 Rolling Stock
- 11 Permanent Way
- 11 Operating
- 12 Groups
- 14 The 2001 Annual General Meeting
- 15 Letters to the Editor
- 17 Our Passengers and What They Think of Us
- 19 Book Reviews
- 20 At Beechbrook Farm
- 22 How Do We Keep the Visitors Coming?
- 25 William Rigby – Contractor to the Colonel, Part 1
- 31 Special Events – a Big Success in 2001
- 37 From the Railway Archives
- 41 Early Departure from Northiam







# Editorial

## Heavy weather

It was a pity that the AGM in July turned out to be so acrimonious. Several groups with pre-determined agendas were determined to be heard which, of course, they are perfectly entitled to do. Unfortunately, this undermined the whole proceedings, which it had been hoped would unite the railway at a time of very considerable difficulty. What is certain,

however, is that there will have to be a very considerable increase in volunteer input if it is to survive and members who are only prepared to turn up once in a while or make critical observations are of very little use in the general running of things. The Railway is a club which needs regular and concentrated input from its members for no financial return. Nothing less will work and nothing less will do.

# Lineside News

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

## Commercial

Congratulations to Sandra Marsh and the commercial team for winning the Heritage Railways Association, Best Timetable Award for our 2001 timetable. The award was received by John Snell on behalf of the railway at the HRA meeting at Towyn on 15th September.

### Shop

With the end of daily running and the Thomas weekends, an air of slight exhaustion is appearing on the faces of the regulars as our first year as an all volunteer outfit draws to a close. And this is not surprising. Day in day out through sickness and health familiar faces have appeared putting in something around 3000 person hours of voluntary work.

All this effort is paying off. Our new lines continue to be largely successful with one or two notable exceptions. Our customers continue to surprise us and can push aggressively down market if we are not careful. Some items will be slow sellers by their nature but others are slow because the shop manager got it wrong. Still the whistles and models continue to sell as do the extended range of books and videos. Jams and Honeys, particularly since we changed suppliers, are great hits with the coach parties we aimed for. However their teachers do not allow school parties into the shop so some of our traditional lines are suffering. On this basis schoolchildren, given other problems we have with them, are not a particularly profitable traffic for the railway.

We had done well to the end of July with an 8% increase on last year's sales for Easter-July. We then went on to surpass ourselves with a 27% increase on the August figures, an increase in ordinary running daily totals in September of over 50%. With overall monthly passenger numbers last recorded as being 5% down the performance was even more impressive. The Hoppers weekend was successful and enjoyable with many enthusiastic and appreciative customers. John Miller opened Bodiam shop for the first time. It looked very nice and sold nearly £200 from our normal stock. This was however surpassed by sales of £500 worth of bottled Beer! So even with a drop during Thomas September sales still bettered last year's by about 10%.

The two Thomas weekends were very busy. We could not match the vastly impressive performance of last year no matter how we tried. We had the stock – and given some difficult supply problems and the railway's continuing financial problems that is more of achievement than it seems – four people worked flat out every day but the weather was against us and outside stalls had to be abandoned. It looks as though the new shop layout can cope with sales of about £4000 per day but to raise this figure more sales area would be necessary. Also the Northiam group showed their usual initiative and commitment by flogging well over £100 worth of flags (at 60p each) to an apparently already

saturated market by the simple expedient of walking along the train as the engine ran round. Our particular thanks go not only to the usual suspects behind the counter but also to Helen, Christopher Awdry's new secretary, who, whilst Christopher got writers cramp, pitched in and manned the outside till whilst being much entertained by our resident comedian.

We have now got a new till and PDQ (credit card) machine. Creative assessment of the continuing cost of maintenance overcame concerns about spending. They have proved an improvement and are of real assistance at peak times. Of more importance to you potential customers out there is the imminent availability of a new Christmas card featuring a winter snow scene with a mixed train at Bodiam (Yes I know we haven't had any snow since we got there – that's why it is a painting). These are a snip at £2.99 per pack of 5. Exceptionally we will do these by mail order if you add £1 postage and packing for each order. The Hornby model of 'Bodiam' is freely available again but Hornby are running out of stocks so buy now. The model wagon predicted in the last Terrier turned out not to be Guinness but O Edwards, your one-time local Tenterden Brewer, and is a best seller. We now have supplies of that long discontinued enamel brooch of the railway's traditional and much loved garter emblem, which should join the maroon company tie as your proud badges of membership.

Overall the gift shop is a success story both financially and with the public who often comment on how much they enjoyed the shop. This on a railway that is taking a lot of stick and is struggling with management and financial problems is a real achievement for all. We are thin on the ground at Tenterden but can be proud of what we have achieved.

No let up yet though. Santa looms and the Roster has great holes in it at the moment. If anyone can fill them it would be great. If not well there are 6 weeks when some of us can rest before next February's Thomas rush finally tries to finish us off.

### **Wealden Pullman**

Demand for our premium dining service has been particularly high this year following several (free) features in newspapers and periodicals. We also continue to receive large numbers of appreciative letters from customers. If further confirmation of continued success were required, the Pullman Improvement Fund into which all

tips are collected shows a substantial increase over the same period last year.

A most welcome addition to the train took place on 31st May. Barbara has been out shopped as a Kitchen Parlour Car seating 18 people in her elegant saloon. For the record the formation currently consists of Barbara; Car 349 (42 seats); RU 69 (23 seats together with bar and kitchen) followed up by either the Great Eastern composite brake coach or BSO 73. It is hoped that 'Diana' (as she is still referred to by many despite the lack of branding currently) may soon be turned so that her kitchen abuts that in Barbara and becomes placed centrally within the formation.

Thanks are due to those who donated a washing machine and tumble drier recently. We are now able to wash tea towels and non customer-facing linen 'in-house'. This equates to a saving in laundry charges of approximately £80 per week during the busy season.

A staff training evening was held earlier this season for both new and seasoned staff alike. Customers consisted of many familiar members of staff from around the railway. As no lives were lost and no blood spilt, the evening was considered a great success. Further sessions are planned and these provide the ideal opportunity to come along and try your hand at something a little different – previous experience is not necessary and a free meal is provided during the course of the evening. If you prefer to remain out of sight like our effervescent assistant chef there's also a vast amount to do 'backstage'. Contact Chris Garman on 01424 441643 or via Tenterden Town Station.

### **Tenterden Town Station**

Despite the difficult financial situation, the upkeep of our busiest station continues. The Tuesday Group, led by Graham Hopker, have improved the customers initial impression of our site considerably. The group has spent all summer around the Tenterden site. The West side of the toilet block has been repainted and some of the louvres replaced. The sleeper barriers in the car park have been straightened and the yard gate repainted. However the largest task was repainting the level crossing gates. All the previous paint was completely burnt off, primed, undercoated and top coated, including the wire mesh to produce a first class finish. New reflective diamonds were obtained and the lamp cases painted. Robin Dyce and Christine Tibbatts have also repainted our GPO

telephone kiosk.

Three platform seats have been brought back from Wittersham Road and put into dry storage awaiting the rainy Tuesdays in the winter. The group would welcome more help in its unending task around the railway and especially Tenterden site. Robin Dyce joined the group after taking early retirement last March. Good company, good fun and good tea, but not always good weather are guaranteed – no skills just willingness to work. Come along any Tuesday about 10.00am or ring Graham Hopker on 01303 862811.

After 16 years continual service, the Tenterden toilets are starting to show their age. Quarry tiles are badly worn in places and many have come adrift, doorframes are loose in their apertures and the toilet cubicle partitions have seen better days. Indeed, one unfortunate individual became trapped when a door lock fell apart through wear! It proved necessary to replace 3 toilet pans due to frost damage earlier this year and at the same time concealed low level cisterns replaced their badly worn high level predecessors. This, together with considerable improvements to the plumbing, seems to have finally resolved the poor performance of these toilets. To prevent further expensive repairs, frost protection is now being fitted throughout for the first time since they were constructed.

Station gardens continue to be maintained by David Dedrick, Bill McKay and Geoff Ramsden whilst Sue Campbell again provided us with the beautiful hanging baskets this summer.

### **Bodiam Station**

Bodiam looked smart for the 'hoppers weekend', and with hop vines twined around the canopy supports, had a festival air for passengers arriving from Tenterden Town.

The grass in the paddock to the south of the picnic area was mown and was useful for staff

and exhibitors parking over the weekend, and for the few people who camped on site.

The rather untidy undergrowth on the raised ground beyond the picnic area has been cleared. The cut material was stacked to dry, and a couple of weeks later, removed to a bonfire. In the course of this, two nests were disturbed, made mostly of thistle-down, and six small animals, about the size of a mouse, ran out and into the adjacent hedgerow. They were tail-less (or just had the stump of a tail), were reddish-grey in colour and tended to bound along rather than run. Can anyone say what there were?

### **Carriage Cleaning**

For the first time, power points are being installed within the yard at Tenterden to enable the regular use of a vacuum cleaner. Previously all stock has been swept clean by hand each morning. However since the advent of carpeted First Class stock, together with considerable quantities of mud (ex Bodiam Castle grounds), such a practice is no longer possible.

Three coaches have had their lino flooring stripped and repolished to good effect. If anybody has a floor-buffing machine for donation, it may even be possible to keep them looking good! Following the trial of an improved cleaning solution, and the initiative of the Terrier Club, a start has been made at the external polishing of our service coaching stock. Jamie Douglas and Paul Hutchinson have already transformed 3 vehicles. Similarly, Guard Peter Taylor takes any and every opportunity to clean carriage windows, much to the amusement of young occupants. Indeed, it has even been known for Peter to specially arrange that service trains use platform 2 at Northiam in order that he may clean the 'other' side during station stops!

Our sincere thanks are due to all these individuals – any further offers of assistance would, as ever, be most welcome. Contact André Freeman at Tenterden Town Station.

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## **Membership**

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Who would have thought that a little gentle gardening would lead to so much. Those quiet Sundays at Bodiam, long before the return of the trains, are now remembered with nostalgia. On retirement life became much more hectic as we progressed up the ladder to Museum attendants, dish washers and envelope stuffers.

When Laurie Gurr found his eyesight becoming a problem we were elevated to Membership Secretary (just the one)!

Appointed 11 August, resources nil apart from ourselves (two old ladies) and two obsolete (one almost clockwork) computers, we began to find





*Wagon in Tenterden Brewery Company livery; the brewery itself was situated behind the Vine Inn in Station Road Tenterden.*  
(John Liddell)



*GWR railcar W20W at Harrogate station on an excursion, 24th August 1952*

*(G.M.Pierson)*

our way around 'The Register'. Luckily Laurie has given us a good database, without which we could not have managed. The daily post was heavy until mid September and included a number of complaints which had to be answered, but we are happy to report letters have reduced to a modest one or two per day, usually late renewals and new applications. Thanks to all those people who reconfirmed their membership during this time, we managed to identify 1644 fully paid members who were invited to attend the AGM. There remains a number of partly paid or unpaid members we have not yet been able to contact but we hope the November mailing will reach them and finally clarify the position.

Problems have arisen over the past two years partly due to the new levels of subscription being

misinterpreted by current members but also because it has been forgotten that annual subscriptions become due on 1st January each year. There are responsibilities of membership and if fees are not fully paid within 6 months the member stands the risk of being removed from the register. Please note no deletions have been made during the current year.

To save postage, information about membership renewal is sent out with the Winter edition of *The Tenterden Terrier* and we hope, this time, everyone will read the accompanying notes. We have particular requests for 2002 as there are gaps in our records that we would like to fill. Please read all the information carefully and take the necessary action.

**Pam and Sheila Stevens**

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## Motive Power

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2001 has not been a happy year for the Locomotive department with the number of major failures particularly high. The cost of running the longer service to Bodiam and for many more days than in previous years, which means less chance to catch up, is perhaps beginning to show through.

Two very different teams of visitors have helped out in recent months. In early September the annual visit from Interfleet Technology occurred. The students undertook a number of tasks including a washout, cladding on 1638 and an 'A' exam of class 14 no 48. They also carried out a bi-annual review of the departments Risk Assessment reports.

The end of the same month saw a visit from 357 Railway Squadron of the TA. Although the main tasks were P.Way work at Wittersham and operating, a group of 5 were allocated to the Loco department and were put to good use.

### Steam locomotives

No 8 'Knowle': Under repair for replacement of crown stays, delivery of which has been held up. The eccentrics have become badly worn and have to be replaced. Machining of the new ones, funded by the Terrier Trust, is in hand in October.

No 11 'P class': There has been continued reluctance by this engine to enter traffic. However during the half term week in October it

finally did, proving as popular as ever with crews, in its lively livery. A new regulator head was the main problem.

No 12 'Marcia': Work continues apace by owner Dick Beckett with David Brailsford and his trusty band providing the main manpower help. Return of the wheelsets is anticipated at the same time as No 24's wheels from Swindon Railway Works. New pistons have also been made and delivery of these is also expected soon.

No 19 'Norwegian' (376): In service but with leaking stays. This lady has been hard at work during the summer but has problems looming. The leaking stays are not the easiest repair and may mean another boiler lift over the winter. The smokebox door may also need replacement.

No 21 'Wainwright' (DS238): Out of service where loose thrust liners require repair. The loco is currently being prepared for this work which can only properly start once No 24 is complete.

No 22 'Maunsell' (65): In traffic and performing well. However this is the oldest of the two working USA tanks and there are concerns over the condition of the boiler. Specifically the inner firebox is near to minimum thickness limits and tube seals are giving cause for concern. So long as other faults do not develop then the engine will continue in traffic.

No 23 'Holman F Stephens': Overhaul continues on an as and when basis. Wheels and axleboxes are completed and work is in hand machining the re-metalled eccentrics.

No 24 'Rolvenden': This awaits the return of the wheels from Swindon. Other repairs, to axleboxes, connecting rod bearings and a crankpin, are being carried out as the opportunity exists.

No 25 'Northiam': In service over the summer but now needs work at the end of October for copper welding to the tubeplate in the firebox. Winter works scheduled include replacement of connecting rod bearings together with any more work found during the up-coming annual boiler inspection.

No 30 GWR Pannier 1638: Work continues slowly. Effort is directed to completing the cladding of the firebox and boiler. Much remains but will have to wait until finances allow.

### **Diesel locomotives**

No 20 (GWR railcar): Following the 'famous last words' of optimism in the last edition of the *Terrier*, the team suffered a slight set-back, when removal of the remaining floorboards in the Luggage Compartment revealed nine of the

floor joists to be beyond repair, possibly the consequences of an incident that occurred in pre-preservation days. However, that set-back was soon overcome, when, as a result of a concerted effort by the team during the Carriage and Wagon Department Work Week, plus a number of extra days put in during August, nine replacement items were produced. Hopefully, the task of fitting these replacements will have been completed by the time this report appears, along with other related work, maintaining the project's steady progress.

No 40 (BTH diesel, 'Ford'): Restoration is now complete and the loco has made several forays out of the yard at Tenterden, and specifically the Carriage Wagon siding. All that remains before complete re-entry into traffic is some outstanding paperwork.

No 41 (Ruston): In traffic as the Rolvenden Shunter.

No 44 (Class 08): In traffic as the Tenterden Shunter.

No 46 (Class 03): In traffic.

No 48 (D9504): This engine has been hired to the Channel Tunnel Rail link at Beechbrook Farm and arrived in early October.



*Pensioner's tea party*

*(Phil Lane)*



No 49 (14029): This engine has temporarily left for hire as a shunter on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at Beechbrook Farm, just west of Ashford and clearly visible from the M20. It arrived in mid-July and has performed reliably. As the first engine on site it has been responsible for ballasting the 17km of track on-site. It also featured in an article on the site in *Rail* magazine.

Class 33: This now remains the last large diesel available for rescue and emergencies. Unfortunately there is a dire shortage of drivers for this engine and this will need to be rectified in the near future.

Class 108 DMMU: These vehicles have given sterling service throughout the off-peak summer service and proved popular with visitors. It is true to say that without a steam service as well the DMMU would not be acceptable. Many

visitors enjoy the views, which are not available from a traditionally hauled coach. Thanks are due to Mike Grimwood and others for keeping it up to scratch, especially in view of several incidents of vandalism to which it alone has been subjected.

#### **Rolvenden Site**

Various items of equipment have been donated recently including a good collection of packing timbers, to replace the steady loss that is experienced. Julia Butterfield presented a 'Megga' and Multi-meter for testing of electrical equipment. Richard Moffat has found supplies of surplus paint donated by Nusteel Structures Ltd. As usual there are needs including rags for cleaning, firelighting and frost protection. A couple of rugged office chairs are looked for, especially by those who manage to break the existing ordinary chairs. A new item on the list is copier paper for all departments.

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## **Rolling Stock**

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### **Carriage & Wagon Working Week**

This annual event took place between 28th July and 4th August. In addition to most of the Carriage & Wagon regulars we were again joined by three North Yorkshire Moors colleagues from Pickering and the Railcar Group were also about in force. The weather was its traditional sunny self and satisfactory progress was made on several fronts. Our guests from Yorkshire carried out partial reboarding of Pipe Wagon No. KDB741895 (K&ESR No. 171) while our own staff got on with the exterior window surrounds and drop lights on Maunsell CK No. 5618 (K&ESR No. 56). These items were originally grain painted (scumbled) when the coach was restored several years ago but this finish had weathered badly. The flaky paint looked easy to remove but that wasn't the half of it. There were also several layers of base paint which required a great deal of elbow grease. On this occasion the surrounds and drop lights were finished in Sadolin wood stain (which we have previously used on Maunsell BNO No. 54) and the pleasing results should prove hard wearing.

Thanks are due to everyone who took part. This of course includes the NYMR gang – the wagon was quickly returned to traffic – and for accompanying this writer during evening explorations of a number of excellent hostelrys in the area.

### **PMV**

Towards the end of the summer catering PMV Southern Railway No. 1808 (K&ESR No. 74) unfortunately suffered damage to its gangway during shunting, although not as badly as on previous occasions. This was quickly corrected but further attention was necessary to the vehicle end, as well as to a number of other known defects including a leaky roof. The vehicle was accordingly taken out of traffic from 1st October and is currently receiving attention in the Carriage shed.

### **Woolwich Coach (K&ESR No. 67)**

Work has continued on a regular basis with further progress to riveting and welding on the underframe. Some very ancient nuts and bolts (some, inevitably, being of unusual sizes) are being replaced and the greater part of the metalwork has been given a protective coat of red oxide. We will soon have to turn our attention to fitting the replacement wheelsets. The K&ES Loco Trust bought these decades ago and it will be necessary to arrange for ultra-sonic testing of the axles and reconditioning of the axle journals.

### **Mark 1's**

No. 86 was the second Mark 1 this year to enter the carriage shed for attention to door frames and locks. Shed staff are getting into the swing of building new Mark 1 door frames although

remaining mindful that there ain't no such thing as a standard Mark 1 door – each BR works built its own variation on the theme! BSO No. 73 doors (which runs in Pullman livery) followed and received similar treatment. This vehicle had been suffering from severe flats and the opportunity was taken to change the wheelsets at the same time. This latter task provided an appropriate set task for Interfleet students taking part in that companies annual visit to the Railway in September. Thanks are due to Interfleet employees for their help with this work and we hope they learned something useful. No. 73 had unfortunately suffered some interior vandal damage whilst berthed at Orpins siding and this was also rectified before the coach returned to traffic (on ordinary service trains). The GER six wheel brake (K&ESR No. 81) has remained with the Pullman set due to the berthing problems mentioned in the previous report. No. 73 is likely to return to the Wealden Belle set, however, when Metro Cammell Pullman No. 349 returns to its owners in the New Year.

### Wagons

The Railway's largest freight vehicle, 'Frimtrol' No. B900427 (K&ESR No. 164) has been in the

works for replacement of wooden decking. Whilst the floor was out, the opportunity was taken to clean down corrosion in some very low areas of the structure and apply protective paint. Through vacuum piping was installed at the same time.

Following the success of the 4mm scale 'Huxford' wagon a further K&ESR model has appeared. This time it's No. 148 'O. Edwards, Tenterden Brewery'. Once again it's not a completely authentic representation, the model having only seven planks as against the prototype's eight but, as with No. 153, the lettering is a miniature photo reproduction of the original. Definitely recommended and available in the gift shop on Tenterden Town station.

### People

C&W part time Admin Officer Nick Pallant became redundant at the end of October as part of the round of economy cuts affecting all Departments. For practical reasons he has also had to relinquish his voluntary duties as Rolling Stock Administrator. Nick hopes to continue working as a C&W volunteer and also as Secretary to the Tenterden Special Events Group which runs the Steam & Country Fair.



*The opulent interior of newly restored Pullman car Barbara*

*(John Liddell)*

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## Permanent Way

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For various reasons P. Way news has not been published in the last few *Terriers*. Of course this does not mean we have been doing nothing, indeed it has been an interesting year for everyone associated with the department with the lows of the various washouts being followed by the highs of the Territorial Army visit in the first week of October. As the year 2000 accounts showed we have been spending as little money as possible, relying on the usual make do and mend philosophy. The second flood at Hexden did not cost the fortune that some would have you believe. It cost the hire of a 360 digger for one day, less than £200!

Basic maintenance from January to June, which included spot re-sleepering of Tenterden Bank, has now given way to preparation for the winter relay in January 2002 which, money permitting, will see more of the rotten wooden sleepers replaced and concrete ones in their place.

Hopefully another 10mph section can be eliminated. Concrete sleepers reduce future maintenance costs and give a better ride for staff and passengers alike. Volunteer numbers have remained constant throughout the year although we could always do with more hands if anyone wants to join our happy gang. Being based at Wittersham Road means that we are removed from the railway politics. This in turn helps maintain morale.

The Territorial Army visit was cut short by the security situation in Afghanistan. They pulled out the main siding at Wittersham Road which was made up of old 75lb flat bottomed panels and were well into relaying the main siding with 95lb concrete panels when they were recalled to base at Lydd, three days short of their intended stay. They had put in over 300 man hours of effort and contributed 10,000 litres of fuel to the railway, I look forward to their next visit.

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## Operating

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There have been several changes in Operating Department personnel since the last *Terrier*. Operating Manager Simon Long has resigned from his post and taken up alternative employment elsewhere. He has however retained the post of Locomotive Inspector and therefore will still be seen regularly on the footplate. Simon has made a huge contribution to the railway during the ten years of his employment and the eleven years as a volunteer prior to that. I'm sure everyone will want to wish him well in his new employment. Peter Salmon has filled the post of Operating Manager in an acting capacity.

Also due to leave the Company's employment under the redundancy scheme is Barry Holmes who has performed sterling work at Rolvenden as Steam Raiser / Running Foreman as well as numerous tasks for the Locomotive and S&TE departments. We still hope to see Barry driving as volunteer from time to time. Meanwhile Jamie Douglas has taken on the role of Drivers Roster Clerk and Keith Brown has taken on the Firemans Roster. Several other tasks previously undertaken by paid staff will now become volunteer posts to be filled in due course.

As will no doubt be mentioned in the Locomotive Department report, our two Class 14 diesels have moved to a temporary new home on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link site at Beechbrook Farm. This has created the need to train some more Drivers for the Class 33, which should be completed by the time you read this. In the absence of the Class 14s the Crompton is now the sole diesel locomotive suitable for use on the larger passenger trains in the event of a steam loco failure. Training of Drivers for the Class 108 DMMU is also expected to take place over the winter period.

Due to the raids on Afghanistan the Territorial Army cancelled the operating part of their exercise planned for 9/10th October. It is understood that Army chiefs considered an ongoing military exercise to be a risk to both the TA and K&ESR in the current climate. The TA spent the previous week relaying the back siding at Wittersham Road to a high standard under the supervision of PW manager Geoff Crouch. Meanwhile other members of the TA were trained by K&ESR staff to drive the line's Class 33 and Class 14 locomotives as well as the Class 108 DMMU.



The Department's web site has had a makeover. This is because the webmaster has changed program on his home computer to one that is far easier to build and load web pages with, particularly those that are frequently updated. Why not have a look at the site at [www.kesr.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.kesr.fsnet.co.uk)

With the reductions in the amount of paid staff we are able to call on (we have lost seven paid staff with operating qualifications in the last two years) the department needs all the volunteer

help we can get. Whether you are an existing volunteer or someone who would like to help to run the railway, we need your help. If you hold an operating qualification please try and help the hard pressed Roster Clerks by covering as many turns as possible. No volunteers will mean cancelled trains and lost revenue. If you have not volunteered to help run your railway before now is the time to do so, you will be made very welcome. Please contact Peter Salmon on 01580 761097 or e-mail [operating@kesr.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:operating@kesr.fsnet.co.uk)

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## Groups

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### People

The Directors would like to thank former Membership Secretary Lawrie Gurr for the creation of the membership database and also those involved for all the hard work which enabled the AGM mailing to take place. Pam and Sheila Stevens have taken over as membership Secretaries and all correspondence on membership matters should be sent to them at Tenterden Town Station.

The company has announced a number of redundancies designed to reduce our wages bill by some £100,000 in a full year. At the time of writing a new management structure was not fully in place and a full review will be made in the next issue of the *The Tenterden Terrier*. Changes that have been announced so far are shown on the frontispiece. Andrew Nash, Catering Manager, left us after a few months in the late summer and at the time of writing a replacement had not been recruited. Derek Dunlavy takes over as Managing Director following the resignation of David Stratton. Peter Salmon has stepped in as Acting Service Delivery Manager. We welcomed John Cobb as Accountant to the company at the beginning of November, to replace Philip Shaw who took over the role on a temporary (voluntary) basis in July following the departure of Tim Leigh. John is a member of The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and lives in Tenterden. Cathy Roberts has resigned as Company Secretary and is replaced by Nick Pallant.

It is the intention of the board to appoint a General Manager to the line as soon as possible.

### Museum

At the time of writing, the Museum has a few more days until it closes at the end of the season, but already it has seen nearly 6,500 visitors since April. Last year there were 5,821 total visitors.

The Museum will open again next Easter and during the winter months a great deal of cleaning is planned, including carpet cleaning by a contractor.

### CFBS News – Philip Pacey

In the summer issue of the *Terrier*, I reported on the disappointing start to the season at the CFBS, due to dreadful weather and the adverse effects on the whole region of the publicity attending the serious flooding further inland. The success of the season was still in doubt when I spent a week at St Valery in July. Happily, visitor numbers picked up dramatically during August, with an average of between 600 and 900 passengers being carried each day.

I spent the week of 9th-16th July at St Valery, sleeping in the dormitory at St Valery Canal and working on the restoration of another wagon; nowadays they get one out for me every year, and I reckon there are enough of them to keep me going into my 80s! A fourgon which I worked on briefly last year was in the latter stages of being converted to serve as a travelling toilet on the dining train which was scheduled to be introduced on certain evenings later in the summer (3rd, 10th, and 17th August, and 22nd September); leaving St Valery at 19.30, the train was to go to Noyelles and, on the return journey, halt on the embankment so that diners can enjoy the

panoramic view of the Bay, and of the sunset, while they eat. The first two of these trains were subsequently cancelled due to lack of bookings. However, the third, on 17th August, was a success, in spite of a minor mishap involving the derailment of the said 'wagon-toilettes' while the train was being assembled, and the fourth was also fully booked in advance.

The locomotives in operation when I arrived were Corpet 2-6-0T and Haine St Pierre 2-6-0T. On the 10th the Corpet suffered a broken spring and was replaced by the Buffaud & Robatel 0-6-2T. The Corpet was back in action on the 13th. However, the Haine St Pierre failed on the 14th and had to be replaced by a diesel loco. Restoration of the Cail 2-6-0T is progressing satisfactorily, but it is not expected to be in operation until 2003; permission is being sought to keep the Corpet going until then, but an overhaul is now overdue. 50% of the cost of overhauling the Corpet has been promised by Monuments Historiques. The need for a fourth larger locomotive is very clear and not a little urgent. The steam locomotives are currently burning Russian coal instead of the poor quality (but free) coal previously used.

Billard remorque R6, its body rebuilt off-site and reunited with its chassis, is in the depot. There is still a good deal of work to be done on it, but in any case it can hardly be put into use until railcar M42 is available. (A remorque is a trailing car.) The motorised chassis of M42 has been restored and was tested on site earlier this year, but work continues on the body off-site, and restoration is not expected to be completed for three years. Putting two and two together, I foresee the possibility that M42 and R6 may be used to provide a 'park and ride' shuttle service into and out of St Valery, where concern is growing regarding the number of road vehicles congesting the narrow streets at weekends.

An extra diesel-hauled train ran on Saturday 14th ('Bastille Day') and on Sunday 15th, as on some other Sundays, in conjunction with SNCF services to Noyelles, offering people from Paris, Amiens, Abbeville, Creil and Saint-Just a day at the seaside at Le Crotoy. Visitors to Le Crotoy leaving through the station building can now admire the restored ticket office, complete with

a life-like (although some say, cross-eyed) clerk.

By July there was little to be seen of the temporary measures which had been put in place to help alleviate the flooding earlier in the year, although the standard gauge line had still not been reconnected on the approach to St Valery Canal. The long term plan seems to be to replace the swing bridge and lock gates with an open bridge with a lifting section, and to incorporate a smaller, self-contained lock, alongside sluice gates, as part of the 'barrage supérieure'.

Since my visit in July, the large and formerly white municipal water tower adjacent to the station at Le Crotoy – outside the jurisdiction of the CFBS but unavoidably part of the scene – has been repainted with a view of the Bay and the sky overhead! In the lower quarter a chasseur and his dog walk on the beach and a pêcheur à pied digs in the sand; above them, gulls and a hot air balloon float in a blue sky! Having only seen a photograph, I had better withhold judgement for the time being. It certainly looks to have been tastefully done, but I'm inclined to think that there was a lot to be said for plain white.

I am remiss for not having previously mentioned the CFBS's 30th anniversary celebration, which took place at Cayeux on 8th July – the day before I arrived. A special train to Cayeux, hauled by the Haine St Pierre, was preceded by the draine and by the motorised chassis of railcar M42. Since my visit, I have learned that. On the occasion of the 'Trans-Baie' marathon in June, the CFBS ran a new kind of service, providing a 'park and ride' shuttle train between St Valery and a temporary car park at the top of the gradient (on the Cayeux line) behind the town. Participants in the marathon were obliged to park here and take the train (free of charge). The significance of this event is that it may presage a similar but more frequent service in the future, designed to alleviate the traffic congestion in St Valery which is now a feature of summer weekends.

Readers may wish to be reminded that there will be no Fête du Vapeur next year, because of the French elections. The next steam festival is planned for April, 2003.

# The 2001 Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Company held on 13th October was a stormy affair. There was criticism from the floor over the level of debt that the Company is saddled with and the general unprofitability of the Company. However, as the Chairman pointed out, this has been an issue for many years and there is no magic wand that will immediately resolve the problem. The method of appointing members to the Board was also criticised, although it had been accepted without question over the last 17 years. There is no doubt that the Directors felt undermined by the response from the floor on a number of issues, at a time, when it was felt that there should be a united front in response to the Company's difficulties. It was in these circumstances that two directors, who had previously indicated that they would be continuing in office, decided to resign.

Audited accounts for the year to 31st December 2000 showed that the Company achieved a profit of £75,325 before tax on a turnover of £1.3m. However, profit included donations of £96,534 and this meant that there was a loss on trading despite the fact that this was the year when traffic rose by 50% consequent upon the extension of the line to Bodiam. Massive overheads continued to weigh down profitability, including the high cost of servicing the company's debts. Finance charges amounted to £112,344 during the year. There were no questions raised at the meeting on the accounts as such.

Unaudited accounts for the six months to 30th June 2001 were also presented to the meeting and showed a loss of £99,000. This was a period when there was a very significant downturn in business due to the foot & mouth crisis and income dropped by over £100,000 compared with the corresponding period of last year. Although trading in the second half has been much better, the high cost of redundancies means that the Company will incur a loss of some magnitude for the year as a whole. Next year will however, benefit from a reduction of £100,000 in labour costs and the timetable will be reduced, but if services are to be maintained our volunteer input will have to be increased considerably.

Shop Manager, Brian Janes, was appointed to the Board and Graham Bridge, the Director retiring by rotation, was re-appointed. After the meeting, David Stratton (Managing Director) and Paul Wilson (Finance Director) resigned from the Board and the Managing Director's post was filled by existing director, Derek Dunlavy.

Following the formal business, three presentations were put to the meeting on possible means of raising longer term capital to alleviate the high cost of funding debt and revitalising the business. No decision has yet been taken on this matter, but if and when proposals are put forward a further meeting of members will be called.

For the benefit of members who did not attend the meeting, the proposals were as follows.

*The flotation of a public company.* As The Tenterden Railway Company is a registered charity, it is unable to raise share capital as distinct from debt. The suggestion is that a public company could be floated which would raise money from a share issue and take over the running of the railway and all its activities in entirety. This Company would enter into a lease or licensing agreement with the Tenterden Railway Company which would retain ownership of the land and track. The new company would have a separate board of directors appointed by its shareholders and the Tenterden Railway Company would be reduced to being a supporters organisation deriving its income from subscriptions and donations. The consent of the Charity Commission would have to be obtained and the bank and bondholders would have to be satisfied that the Tenterden Railway Company would be provided with sufficient resources to meet its obligations to them.

*A zero coupon bond issue from The Tenterden Railway Company.* This would retain The Tenterden Railway Company in its existing role. New debt capital would be raised and registered in the name of the applicant in multiples of, say, £200. Holdings would not attract interest but be redeemed at a premium of 15% over par value after 15 years providing that they were held by the original applicant to maturity. In other

respects, the holdings would be fully transferable. Original applicants only would also be entitled to immediate repayment on death, including a proportion of the premium accrued to date. This method of raising finance would not require the consent of the Charity Commission or the bank. If the proceeds were used exclusively to reduce our bank loan, which carries interest at 8.75%, interest savings would be more than sufficient to repay the debt plus premium on maturity. Debt could also be gift aided back which would attract valuable tax concessions to the Company.

*An appeal.* This is a traditional form of raising money which The Tenterden Railway Company has been successful with in the past. It does not

add to the debt of the Company, has valuable and immediate tax concessions in the form of gift aid and, unlike capital or loan issues, is very cheap to administer. It requires no authorisation from any of the organisations that have an interest in the company, but it does require the whole hearted support of our 1500 or so members.

A straw pole taken at the end of the presentations indicated a preference for a share issue from the members present, but it must be emphasised that no decision would be taken to proceed on this option without debating the various issues and consulting the membership.

**Philip Shaw**

# Letters to the Editor

## Gabrielle's Successors

Sir – In the Spring 1998 issue of *The Tenterden Terrier* I wrote about 'Gabrielle', a 0-6-0T ordered from the locomotive builders Hawthorn Leslie for the East Kent but never delivered. In the article I stated that no example of a Hawthorn Leslie side tank engine survived in preservation.

I had overlooked the fact that in September 1937 the locomotive department of R & W Hawthorn Leslie & Co was amalgamated with Robert Stephenson & Co to form Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn. Until 1960, the combined firm continued to build locomotives at the old Hawthorn Leslie works at Forth Bank, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, as well as at Robert Stephenson's premises at Darlington, and Hawthorn Leslie traditions were continued there.

Among the Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn engines built at Forth Bank was a series of powerful six-coupled side tanks delivered to the Central Electricity Generating Board between 1942 and 1955 for use at large power stations, particularly in the Midlands. The design derived from a Hawthorn Leslie locomotive supplied to Hams Hall power station in 1936, and they were intended to shunt thousand-ton coal trains from the main line sidings. They had 18x24 inch

cylinders and 3ft 7in or 3ft 8in driving wheels and weighed 50 to 52 tons. Many features were of familiar Hawthorn Leslie appearance, but the utilitarian full-width cab and the bunker owed more to the 'Austerity' 0-6-0ST design.

Two generally similar engines were delivered to the National Coal Board in 1954 for use on the Ashington system in Northumberland. In view of the relatively long hauls required at Ashington they had 4ft 6in driving wheels, and the front of the side tanks were sloped for better visibility.

About half of these engines still exist, eight ex-CEGB (including one in the United States) and one of the NCB pair. One survivor is works number 7597 which was built for Brimsdown power station in 1949 and was retired from the nearby Rye House power station in 1971. It has since been on several preserved railways, including a period on hire to the K&ESR in 1991. Unfortunately I failed to appreciate its historical significance at the time.

Another example is works number 7683, built for Meaford power station in the West Midlands in 1951. It was preserved on the East Lancashire Railway for a while, but is now at the Stephenson Railway Museum, Shiremoor, not far from its birthplace in Newcastle. It is a regular performer on the North Tyneside Steam Railway, from the museum to Percy Main, and in its smartly maintained lined dark blue livery gives a good impression of what Colonel Stephens' Hawthorn Leslies must have looked like when new.

Staplehurst

Tom Burnham

### **Pullman Berthing**

Sir – Having read the Summer 2001 issue of *The Tenterden Terrier* about berthing arrangements for the Pullman, may I make the following comments and observations.

In Tenterden Station yard there are three sidings. In order to tidy things up, plus make matters much better, why not give consideration to the following;

Move the Terrier locomotive ('Sutton') by means of tram-track, to where the wagons currently stand, (isolated) keeping the wagons in the same position. This will release the space occupied by the Terrier to increase the required space for berthing the Pullman – by splitting the same in order to retain the passageway, for passengers/customers to patronise the Station Buffet. (They will get a better view of our premier stock).

Continue with the tram track in order to rescue the passenger coach (mark I) which at present doubles as an office. Sooner, rather than later, this coach will be required to re-assume its original intention.

Waltham Cross

Tony Bush

*It would not be practicable to split the Pullman set because the whole length is needed throughout the day to fettle the train prior to departure. There are no plans to return the Mark I coach on the cattle dock to service – Ed*

### **Northiam Signalbox**

Sir – I and my friends are grateful to Nick Wellington for his detailed explanation of the reasons for siting the Signalbox at the Bodiam end of the station. On a visit to Northiam on a Thursday in August the situation I envisaged in my previous letter was only too apparent. It was a lovely summer day when mid-week traffic was at its peak. Far from their being three people on duty there was only one man to look after the booking office and the platform, and he had had no training on the operation of the crossing gates and the ground frame. The result of this was that the signalman had to walk the length of the platform to open and close the gates for every train movement. As to convenience of operating points, electric motors seem to be the norm today and in any event the length of point rodding for new installations is limited by HSE regulations. It seems to us that a major advantage in siting the box where it is now is that it is in a less conspicuous position than adjacent to the main road and so less likely to suffer vandalism, an important consideration with a line which is closed and unmanned for long periods during the year.

Sheffield Park, Sussex

B.W.Howe



*RS&H 0-6-0T No 7683 on the North Tyneside Steam railway at Shiremoor, 26th August 2001*

*(Tom Burnham)*



# Our Passengers and What They Think of Us

Based on a presentation made to members at the AGM by Carol Mitchell

This Railway was preserved by a group of mainly young men, who felt passionately that it was worth preserving. May be if they had known what lay ahead they might have thought twice. Perhaps we know what they wanted, perhaps not. Perhaps we wondered what the passengers who paid for most of it wanted and needed. Perhaps not.

In any event sheer economic forces dictated circumstances. Over the years the Railway has changed enormously. Potential visitors have more leisure time and more attractions to choose from. The experience we offered changed. Timetables became more ambitious. We diversified into more profitable activities such as on and off train catering services, retail sales and charters. Volunteer staff could no longer be expected to meet the increasing demands and we employed salaried staff in core areas.

As time went by, the Railway seemed to lose its direction, with different groups advocating and on some occasions implementing, their plans without full agreement and often without considering the passenger, our paymaster.

So, what do our passengers think of us?

A survey was carried out on passengers on the K&ESR in August 2001. The findings from this survey have been compared with the research projects carried out in 1991, 1996 and 2000. The results show that the repeat visitor rate has risen by 4% from last year, and is now 53% with a 33% core of regular repeat visitors. Word of mouth, distributed leaflets, local newspapers and magazines are consistently the most successful forms of advertising and promotion. 30% of visits are spontaneous and that the rest are all planned out in advance.

Whilst the effects of most other media have stayed fairly constant, Television, Radio and the Internet have grown in recent times. A 5 minute segment on 'Southern Steam' can probably explain the increase in awareness through Television. This shows the power of television. The 'Radio' although less successful than 'Television' was also a result of a 5 minute slot on a local station.

The highest proportion of passengers in August are the Under 14's with 33% of those who travelled. Adult passengers make up 50% of and are spread evenly in the 25-44 years and 45-64 years age brackets. The biggest growth market has been in the 65+ age range, which now makes up 15% of the market. However the 14-24 age range segment has shrunk drastically over 10 years to 3% of total customers. This could be due to the increase in computers and computer game ownership, rival tourist attractions or more young people going on holiday.

Passengers believe that the staff attitude is good and friendly and that they recognise and appreciate the efforts made to ensure they have a pleasant day out. Their perception that the railway represents value for money has dropped from the 1996 level. Since the opening to Bodiam the customer opinion on pricing has stayed the same, averaging out at 'Good'. There was however an increasingly large proportion of markings in the lower categories like 'Poor'

The on-train trolley service and the staff attitude are recognised as being prime assets by the passengers. The ability to combine the train journey and Bodiam Castle is appreciated by 13% of the customers who chose to comment, another 5% liked being able to travel to Bodiam, but did not name the castle.

Of the trains themselves was a high percentage of dissatisfaction with late departures and stops at stations. Unclean, or a lack of, toilet facilities on the service set showed how such simple issues easily detracted from the value offered. By contrast favourable rating was given for toilets at stations. It was noted that the cleaning of carriage windows has been greatly improved with no adverse comment compared with 14% in 2000. Coaches left untidy after parties have traveled also detracted from the value offered. Two of the more interesting results were favourable comments for the 'First class carriages' (Maunsell NBO), and the 'Victorian coaches'. There was only one first class coach in service throughout the survey, and the use of Victorian coaches refers to the occasional strengthening of the main service set on busy days.

Customers must have been very impressed with them. We might conclude from this that the running of Mk. I coaches is satisfactory to customers, but that the use of the Victorian or Maunsell coaches gives added value to customers, and helps to retain them.

Other important suggestions by passengers were:

- More information at ticket offices.
- Reducing buffet prices or increasing the value for money.
- A bus to the castle for the disabled or in the case of rain.
- Providing more to do at the stations between Tenterden and Bodiam.
- Providing more information on the trains and countryside.
- More activities for children.
- Having catering at Bodiam.

The following recommendations were also mentioned / brought up. Opening the museum earlier; the cost of first class supplements; more information on boat trips; extending the line; improvement to local signposts; worn out coach seats; the price of family membership; no hot food in the buffet; lack of different locomotives; no beers sold; and the untidiness of Wittersham Road.

Passengers were asked if they were likely to return. 66 % of them said that they would.

The Ashford & Tenterden, Maidstone and Medway Towns, Canterbury, and East Sussex areas, have been the major growth markets for the K&ESR. It seems likely that the combination of train journey and a trip to Bodiam Castle, combined with effective advertising and marketing, is the reason for this exponential growth, and the increase in regular repeat customers from these areas. However there has been a decline in passengers from Essex, Herts, Beds, Bucks, Berks, Bromley in Kent and all other areas of the UK, and the foreign markets. Essex and Bromley are probably a result of a lack of advertising and marketing. In the case of the other areas, this is probably due to the decrease in holidays in Britain due to foot and mouth. The areas with the greatest potential for growth are London, Surrey, Hampshire, Dartford, and the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells areas.

We know where our customers come from and what they think of their visit. The results are very encouraging. We are clearly getting a lot of things right. People think we are a pleasant and friendly place to visit. They are moderately satisfied with the

modest basic facilities like toilets, catering and the shops we offer. They are less satisfied with the comfort and character of the trains. When people find us they visit and by and large go away feeling reasonably content with their day out. Many of them will come back because we are usually a friendly crowd. Most of us try to make people feel welcome. But they also regard us as a quaint and rather shabby piece of history and there is no denying that we are rather shabby and down at heel in places. There are corners of the railway where stock, like elephants, go to die.

There is also the question of how distinctive a destination we are. Do they distinguish us sufficiently from the Bluebell or the RHDR? Well here the survey fails because it only tells us the views of the visitors we have not those we miss. Here we must project ourselves into the mind of potential passengers and ask how they might think of us

How about:

Time capsule	Living museum
Historic	Scenic
Old fashioned	Fascinating
Picturesque	Friendly
Preserving old skills	Interesting engines
Magical	Enthralling
Atmospheric	

In the past we have had an extremely uncoordinated approach; we have a Heritage Policy, which is quite often honoured more in the breach than the spirit. The result is what we see today – a somewhat motley group of stations and signal boxes, none of which are immediately identifiable as ours, with the possible exception of Bodiam.

What are we?

A tourist attraction

A good day out for all the family

A group of eccentrics trying to persuade others to pay for their hobby

The truth is, we are all these but they are not presented as a cohesive whole. The leisure experience we provide today includes many, and sometimes conflicting, messages to our visitors. We must find a way ahead. We should be presenting a style and character using our history as a base. With this magazine you will find a letter asking you what you think will attract both our passengers and us as volunteers. As has been said many times - we need to find the 'wow' factor – please help us.

*If you have ideas on any of the issues discussed in this paper please write to Carol Mitchell at Tenterden Town Station.*

# Book Reviews

*Sussex Narrow Gauge* by Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith published by Middleton Press, price £13.95. 96 pages of illustrated captions, hard laminated covers, ISBN 1 901706 68 0.

Published in July 2001, this volume coincides with the 20th anniversary of Middleton Press and is a worthy addition to the 225 or so books that have been produced by this house since its inception.

A superficial consideration of the subject might conclude that there has been little or nothing in the way of narrow gauge construction in this county, but the authors have unearthed no less than 24 lines, of which 16 were constructed for industrial purposes and the remainder for pleasure use. The Rye and Camber Tramway, a Stephens line, comes under the latter category, serving both golf links and the beach at Camber. There is also a link with Stephens and the Devil's Dyke Steep Grade railway, albeit a tenuous one, in that the operating company, The Rural Railway Company, was also used as a 'shell' organisation to promote the ill-fated Surrey and Sussex Light Railway for which Stephens engineered the route.

The industrial lines surveyed in the book were constructed mainly to exploit the gravel bearing costal plain, the chalk of the South Downs, Lower Greensand, Gault Clay, Upper Greensand and the great mass of Wealden Clay, plus an isolated pocket of Gypsum in East Sussex. All these have now disappeared. The main survivor amongst the pleasure lines is the delightful Volks Electric Railway, Britain's first public electric railway, linking the Aquarium with Black Rock and still retaining its vintage equipment.

The authors are to be congratulated on producing an album of exceptionally high quality photographs and researching a comprehensive selection of obscure lines which have not been written about elsewhere.

PDS

*A collectors guide to Railwayana*, edited by the late Handel Kardas published by Ian Allan

Publishing Co. 160 pages of liberally illustrated text, soft laminated covers, price £14.99, ISBN 0711026173.

The astonishing rise in both interest and value surrounding items collectively and colloquially known as 'Railwayana' has been a sensational feature of the collectables market over the last 25 years. Indeed, it would be hard to nominate anything which has risen in value so much and so fast. Nameplates, for example, which could be acquired for a few pounds in the 1960s, now fetch up to £40,000, although this is the exception rather than the rule.

This guide categorises collecting areas under ten headings to which each is devoted a chapter written by an acknowledged expert. To this extent it is a valuable aide memoir to those starting to collect and who may be daunted by the sheer range of items that appear at auction. However little attempt has been made to indicate current auction guide prices (where most transactions take place) and as an active buyers guide the book is of limited value. Expanded and published annually, it could achieve what Miller has done for antiques.

PDS

*On the Glasgow and South western Lines* by David Cross published by Ian Allan Publishing Co. 80 colour illustrations, hard laminated covers, prices £14.99, ISBN 0711027951

This album of colour photographs dating from the 1960s were taken by the late Derek Cross and have been selected and captioned by his son, David Cross. The captions have been well written and there is a useful introduction and map of the lines covered. Colour film emulsions have improved enormously over the last 20 years and this, combined with the grimy condition of locomotives in the 1960s means that the end results do not bear comparison with photographic standards that are achieved today. However, the subject matter of this album can never be repeated and it is fortunate that photographers, such as Derek Cross, were able to capture these scenes for posterity.

PDS

# At Beechbrook Farm

*Photographs by Brian Stephenson*

*K&ESR class 14s, 14029 and No 48 on hire to Amec Spie to assist in the tracklaying contract for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at Beechbrook Farm, photographed from the A20 road bridge just outside Ashford. Note also K&ESR Sturgeon wagon, no 148, top right.*







# How Do We Keep Visitors Coming?

**Simon Marsh reflects on what we need to do ensure that we keep our visitor numbers up in the 21st century**

As the 2001 season draws to a close, and the days are at their shortest, perhaps it is worth taking the time to reflect a bit on how we might ensure that we continue to attract visitors, and on how things have changed in the quarter century or so since we first ran trains for the paying public.

When the line first opened in 1974 there were very few visitor facilities. Catering was basic, from a Pullman coach at the back of the platform at Tenterden. Toilets were even more basic: a smelly rain-flushed urinal at the end of the station building – without even the benefit of the air freshening device now installed. Ladies were directed to the public lavatories at the top of Station Road. Car parking was where the carriage shed is now, later moved to the hard standing in what is now the public circulating area. Signalling equipment was being overhauled and painted by scruffy youngsters right next to the main entrance to the booking office. The platform was short and narrow, and dangerously overcrowded on busy days. Once on the train conditions were a little better in the four Maunsell coaches that, together with the GWR railcar, formed the entire operating stock, but after dark the lights didn't work. And the roofs had a tendency to leak. In the hands of inexperienced crews it was not uncommon for locomotives to stall on Tenterden bank, and poor fencing meant that animals often strayed onto the line. And, of course, the journey was only two miles long, with one train doing a number of round trips during the day.

It must be said that customer relations in the modern sense were a bit of an afterthought: our predecessors were rightly pleased to have succeeded in opening the line at all after the efforts of the previous decade, and proud to be able to show it off to the public. Their enthusiasm shone through. In those uncomplicated days it worked: visitors all entered into the spirit of the thing, and despite the drawbacks and limitations complaints were few and far between. The opening achieved coverage in the news

pages of the national media (the author still has a cutting from the *Guardian*, with a large picture of a train just below Cranbrook Road) and often in the first couple of summers an extra train had to be run at the end of the timetable to avoid disappointing would-be passengers.

The first extras the Railway provided were simple, but accepted by the public for what they were. The 'Wine and Dine' train consisted of two carriages and largely cold food – the potatoes were cooked in the mess coach at the end of the platform. Conditions on board, looking back, were primitive in the extreme. But the guests enjoyed the experience: it was something new. And the Steam and Country Fairs of the 1970s drew huge attendances from far and wide. (In those days it was relatively easy to find a weekend that didn't clash with a similar event locally: now it is all but impossible.)

Life was less sophisticated. The heritage industry hadn't yet taken off, and there wasn't a lot to do on Sundays. Horizons were more limited, and instant gratification with all the special effects was a thing of the future.

Over the years gradual improvements were made, partly in an attempt to keep pace with the times and with rising expectations, and partly because it was always the vision to run more trains over a longer line. Changes included new toilets, a shop, various experiments with car parking (including, for a time, on what is now Rogersmead) and a proper catering building. Some more ambitious plans for Tenterden never came to fruition. The line was progressively extended, and services improved. The Railway as we know it today emerged. The customer-facing side was recognised and developed – and it is worth recalling that the first full-time paid member of staff was a Commercial Manager – but the centre of gravity, and the main interest, was always with the engineering and operating functions.

That is the Tenterden Railway Company's

heritage, and for better or worse it has got us to where we are today. We have moved on considerably over the years, but if we are going to flourish – or indeed survive – as a visitor attraction in the consumer-driven 21st century we shall need to take stock and ask ourselves some difficult questions.

Customers are far less tolerant now, and far more inclined to complain if they don't feel they are getting value for money. They will quibble at the small print in brochures. They expect professional standards of service all the time. They don't buy the line that most of us are volunteers doing our best in our limited spare time. And there are many more leisure activities and visitor attractions they can choose from. If they don't like what they see, or what they think they will be getting, they will stay away, or not come back. Most of our visitors are not knowledgeable railway enthusiasts, but people who might just as soon go to any kind of heritage centre or family day out. They are looking for an experience, preferably a nostalgic one. Failing that, they would be just as happy at one of the new retail developments. Or going to France for the day. Not that there is anything wrong with (most of) these attitudes, but we must accept that they are a basic fact of modern life.

And we – all of us – have to decide how we react to it. Do we try to put the clock back to a mythical golden age of railway preservation, or do we fight to retain our share in a crowded leisure market? Or, to put it another way, is recreating an authentic steam railway incompatible with being a modern leisure attraction? Should our emphasis be on giving visitors a good time, or on restoring and operating antique equipment? Can we do both, with a little compromise on either side? These are all versions of the basic question, and we will all have our own views. But one thing is certain: if the visitors don't continue to flow, and if we don't welcome them, we shall become little more than a full-sized train set which will pretty soon be unsustainable.

Does this matter? If it does, what implications does it have for us?

First, we must accept that we are what we are, and where we are. This may seem obvious, but is it? Our history, from 1900 onwards, means that our infrastructure is

limited. We have very few original buildings, and none of any size. Our sites are small and awkward, with little room for development, or for things like car parks. We have sharp curves, a heavy gradient and six level crossings in 10½ miles: so it is a difficult line to operate. We have no spectacular features like tunnels or big bridges.

Although we are fairly near the coast, we are not actually in an important holiday area with large numbers of visitors staying for a reasonable length of time. Nor, despite the M25, is access from major centres of population all that easy. Not that it matters much these days, but local public transport is very limited. The countryside through which we pass is attractive, but not that stunning. Publicity is expensive, in time and money, and there is no magic button we can press to deliver significantly more business.

The fact that our finances are very limited, and significant capital expenditure ruled out for the time being, must also be taken into account. So must the fact that we are emerging – just – from a crisis that threatened, and may still threaten, our very existence. In the short term we simply haven't the capacity to do anything big or complicated.

Not all these factors are necessarily negative ones, but they are facts of life that have to be worked with. They constrain what we can realistically do, and mean that however hard we try we can never be like the North York Moors, the West Somerset or the Severn Valley. Or even the Bluebell. We must discover our strengths and play to them.

Secondly, we have to find out what the customer wants and expects, and where he (and she) comes from. At long last we appear to have got round to doing this on a systematic basis, and we must be prepared to be guided by the results. Early indications seem to be that our customer base is more local than might have been expected, that most people think we are friendly and give good value for money, but that we must provide much more than a train journey and give visitors more to do while they are with us.

Thirdly, we need to decide, as an organisation, and using all the available information as well as our own preferences (and since we are owned by our members

and volunteers our preferences are important and should be taken into account) what image we want to present to the visitor. This goes deeper than deciding on a logo, or what colour to paint the coaches. At the moment people can take away a very confused impression of what we are trying to do. Are we recreating the 1950s or giving people a Victorian/Edwardian experience? Is our main intention to get people from Tenterden to Bodiam (and hopefully back) in a vague 'heritage' atmosphere? And if so, can we really justify trains taking 45 minutes for a 10½ mile journey at an average speed of around 12mph and with lengthy – and often unexplained – stops at fascinating places such as Wittersham Road and the loop at Rolvenden? What, apart from trains, would encourage people to spend time and money with us? Are we prepared, or able, to offer them? The potential list is endless.

Given that many of us have strong views on these matters, and given our track record of vigorous internal argument, this may not be an easy process. The Image and Delivery Group that was launched at the AGM in October has kicked off the debate and is trying to involve the entire membership. It is described in more detail elsewhere in this issue; its work is important and has the potential to define our strategy for the future. Many of the most successful lines have a very strong image: the Keighley and Worth Valley, with its evocation of 1950s Yorkshire, or the Isle of Wight, spring to mind. We shouldn't be afraid to learn from others – this is not the same as slavishly copying them.

And fourthly comes the difficult bit. We have to be prepared to deliver. We shall need to make sensible decisions on how to provide the experience we want to give the visitor. And we shall have to follow them through. This might mean unwelcome choices, for example investing in resurfacing Tenterden station car park rather than in the overhaul of a historic vehicle. (On special event days when it's too wet to park on the grass, the small capacity of the car park can actually limit the number of visitors to the line.) It might mean disposing of cherished items of rolling stock in order to reduce unsightly clutter, something that other railways are beginning to do.

It will certainly involve getting used to looking at ourselves through the eyes of the

visitor and remembering that each and every one of us has a part to play in making a trip on our railway one to remember. To put it crudely, we are a tourist attraction, not a people mover. People don't have to use our services: unlike Connex, or for that matter a shopping centre, we provide nothing that anyone actually needs. Our sole reason for existence is to be a living museum. Our staff must look the part, and be prepared to take time to talk to the public, show them behind the scenes whenever possible, and generally put their needs and wishes first. Customer relations go hand-in-hand with driving engines and working signalboxes. Ought we to offer training courses? There's some self-interest in all this: we might even attract new volunteers! Actually we're not bad at it already, but if we're to get other people to help pay for our hobby we need to get still better.

There may be much in this short article that is controversial or unpalatable, but I suggest that it is time we thought seriously about these issues. There are bound to be differing points of view, and that is right and proper. We all approach the Railway from different angles. No-one has a monopoly on wisdom, and there are no absolutely right or wrong answers to some of the questions posed above. But we do need to be ready to meet the challenge of what the future might bring.

Why? Because unless we decide just what it is we want to offer the paying public, and then deliver it, that future is not rosy. All the sophisticated publicity in the world is useless unless people like what they see when they get here, and then tell their friends and want to come back. Unlike 1974 there's a lot of competition out there, and as the pundits worry about an economic downturn and the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September the outlook for the crowded leisure industry isn't all that certain.

Presenting a good face to the public isn't the only thing we need to do to pick ourselves up and ensure our continued existence. But given the state of our finances the income and goodwill of our visitors is absolutely vital, just when we are having to work for them harder than at most times in the past. Despite the difficulties of recent years we have a firm foundation to build on, and a chance to secure our position among the many visitor attractions of South East England. Are we going to seize it?

# William Rigby – Contractor to the Colonel part 1

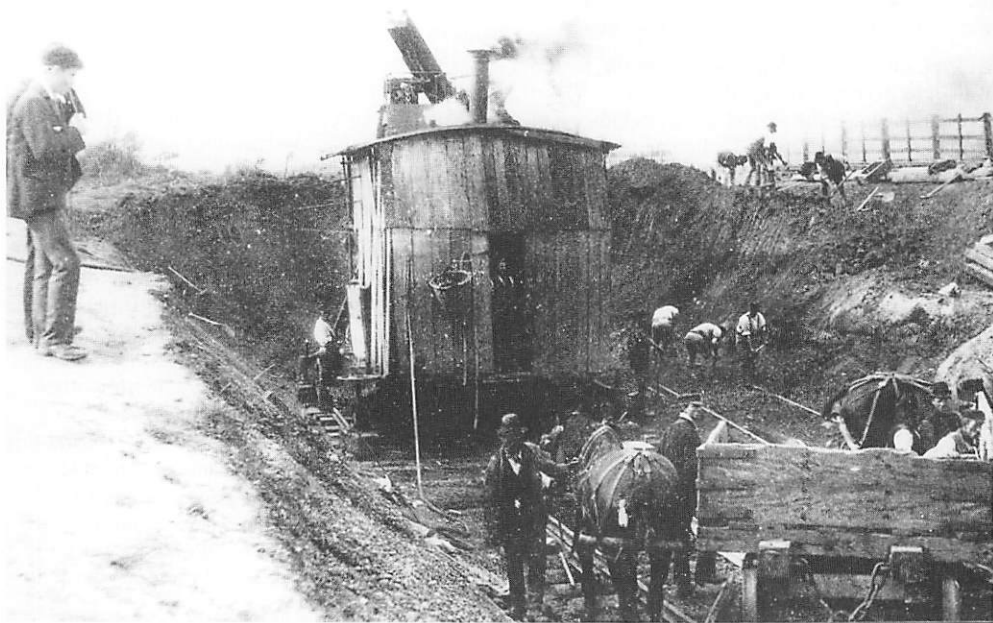
The influence of the railway contractor, the archetypal self-made nouveau riche of the mid-Victorian novel, has been insufficiently recognised by most railway enthusiasts, and by not a few railway historians. A few, like Thomas Brassey, have been rescued from oblivion by their biographers, but most of the men responsible for building our railways remain unknown to the general public and the railway expert alike.

William Rigby, the subject of this article, had a career as an independent contractor which lasted from the mid-1880s to just after the Great War. In this era most of the great trunk railways had already been built, but there was plenty of work for contractors in building feeder lines – including those authorised under the Light Railways Act of 1896 – and in rebuilding the existing main lines to handle heavier and faster traffic. Rigby is of particular interest to us, as he was involved with

Colonel Stephens for some of this period, not only as the builder of railways of which Stephens was the engineer (including part of the K&ESR), but also in the promotion and management of others, including the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway, of which he was Chairman for many years.

His career also illustrates the network of personal contacts between railway managers, directors, financiers, engineers and contractors that influenced the development of Britain's railways in the pre-Grouping era.

William Rigby was born in Addiscombe Road, Croydon, on 23 January 1850. His father, also named William Rigby, was born in Lowton, Lancashire in 1811. He had married Elizabeth Oliver (born in 1814 at Beechburn, County Durham) and had migrated gradually southwards by way of Leeds and Chesterfield, arriving in



*Steam navy at work on the Bexley Heath Railway near Brampton Road, Bexleyheath. Horses are leading the spoil trucks from the working face.*  
(Bexley Libraries, Boswell Collection)

Croydon shortly before William junior was born. William Rigby senior remained in Croydon, moving house from time to time to accommodate his growing family, until his death on 6 December 1884, a few years after his wife, Elizabeth (11 March 1879). William Rigby senior was a contractor, although he is not known to have carried out railway work. However, the young William Rigby may well have heard stories about trains from his uncle Cuthbert Oliver, a foreman on the railway, who used to visit the house.

The Rigby family was a typically large Victorian one, including Margaret (born 1841), Alice Ann (b. 1843), Thomas (1845-1936), Anne (1847-1878), George (b. 1849) and Elizabeth (b. 1852) in addition to William. Thomas G. Rigby, William's older brother, stayed in Croydon, where he went into business as a coal merchant with depots at several local railway stations and later took charge of the family contracting business. He became deputy chairman of the Croydon Gas Company and was also elected as a borough councillor, in which office he served with distinction, despite an early error of judgment in supporting Jabez Balfour rather too enthusiastically. (Balfour, at one time Mayor of Croydon and a parliamentary candidate for the borough, was subsequently convicted in connection with the Liberator Building Society fraud.) Sisters Alice and Anne and brother George also settled in Croydon.

William, on the other hand, moved to the East Midlands, perhaps taking advantage of connections from the period when his father had worked in the area. By 1871, he had become a contractor's clerk, and was boarding in Whitwell, Derbyshire, a village near Worksop. On 18 August 1873 he was married to Emma White, the daughter of a Barnsley callenderer, at St George's church, Sheffield, by the curate, Rev Thomas Rigby. It is uncertain whether Rev Rigby was a relation, although it may be significant that William was stated to be a resident of the parish. The couple returned to Whitwell, where their daughter, Margaret, was born on 28 October 1873.

William Rigby soon became a railway contractor in his own right, with an office at the Corn Exchange in Potter Street, Worksop, and a country house at The Aviaries, on the Clumber Park estate, where the establishment included a cook and kitchenmaid. Together with the rest of the estate, The Aviaries is now in the care of the National Trust. Rigby was evidently successful, as

in 1881 he was one of two people who each guaranteed a £3000 surety for the completion of the Blakedown viaduct near Kidderminster on the Great Western by its contractors, Abram Kellett and Samuel Bently. But the Rigbys did not have long to enjoy this prosperity together, for Emma died of pneumonia on 22 October 1880 aged only 33, leaving William to bring up Margaret. Perhaps because of this unhappy event, the family had by 1885 moved to Calverton House, Calverton, north of Nottingham, where in due course they were joined by William's unmarried eldest sister, also named Margaret.

No details have come to light of the contracts which William Rigby undertook in these early years of his career, although we may suppose that they were in and around the East Midlands. The first independent contract of which we have particulars is that for the construction of the Scarborough, Bridlington & West Riding Junction Railway. Despite its lengthy title and the company's original ambitions, the line as built (Railway No. 2 of the original Act) extended 13¾ miles from Market Weighton to Driffield. A contract for the construction of the line was signed on 12 May 1887, and Rigby began work shortly afterwards. Although the railway was to be worked by the North Eastern Railway, that company did not contribute to the capital, and one of the conditions of the agreement with Rigby was that he should apply for 9000 £20 shares (later reduced to 6000). In some cases he was able to resell his shares immediately – Henry Tate, the sugar magnate and founder of the Tate Gallery, was the largest purchaser – but he kept a considerable number himself. No doubt as a result of this fact, Rigby seems to have been quite closely involved with the management of the company. He was in attendance at most of the meetings of the board of directors during construction, and he offered to contribute £500 towards the cost of an Act to abandon Railway No. 1 authorised by the original Act, amongst other purposes. This would have enabled the Parliamentary deposit to be returned. During this time, Charles Grey Mott became chairman of the company. He had been a director of the Great Western Railway since 1868, and sat on the boards of other railways, including the Mersey Railway and the City & South London.

The work, which included some heavy cutting through the chalk near Enthorpe, was eventually completed. Board of Trade approval to open the



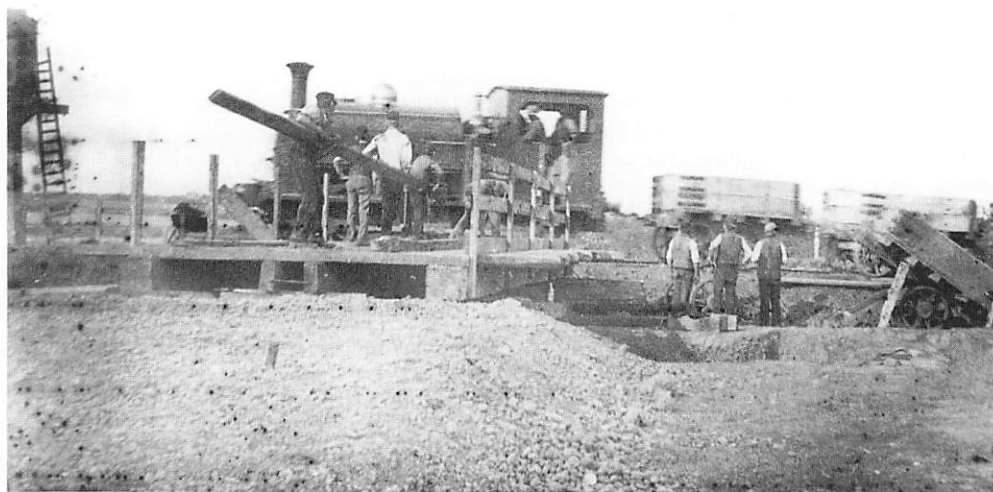
line to traffic was given on 2 April 1890 and the NER began its service on 1 May 1890. Much of the plant Rigby had used for the contract (including no fewer than nine locomotives) was advertised for sale by auction on 21 May 1890, although some equipment was retained for use on other jobs.

When the Driffield line opened, Rigby had already been instructed to start work on his next project, the 7-mile Newcastle Emlyn Extension Railway in West Wales, for which he had tendered £53,500. The contract was with the Great Western Railway, and so, no doubt much to his relief, Rigby was not required to help with finance. He was, however, required to provide two sureties of £4000 each, and these were his brother, Thomas G. Rigby, and William Burnett. The railway continued the Llandyssil branch of the former Carmarthen & Cardigan Railway (opened in 1864) along the valley of the Teifi river, and today the narrow-gauge Teifi Valley Railway occupies part of its trackbed. In 1892, problems arose when it was found that clay from some of the cuttings, which the GWR engineer had expected to be suitable for embankments, was not stable. The GWR had to purchase additional land to accommodate the wider embankments, and also 2500 cubic yards of heavy copper slag were purchased to weight the slopes of the

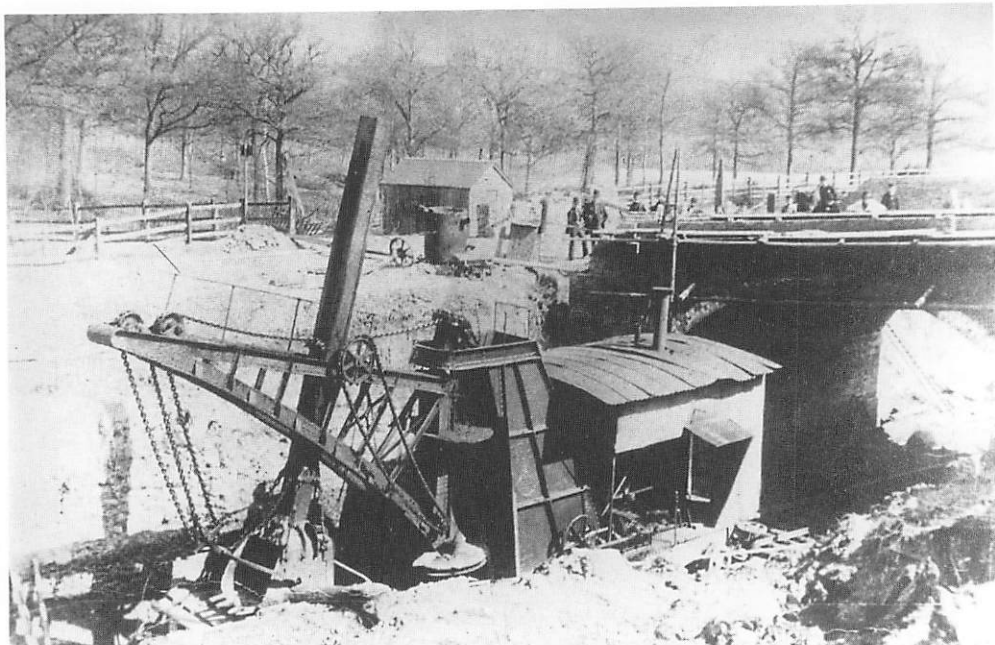
Henllan cutting to prevent landslips. The railway eventually opened on 1 July 1895.

Rigby's next contract took him to the South East, and set a course for the second half of his working life. The Bexley Heath Railway had been promoted chiefly by local landowners and comprised an 8¼ mile loop off the South Eastern Railway's North Kent line, from Blackheath to Crayford Creek Junction. Rigby was awarded the contract to build the line for £173,000 (of which £26,980 was to be taken in Bexley Heath Railway Company shares) and he started work in May 1891. The railway company had had to buy a house named Swiss Cottage adjacent to the line at Blackheath, and Rigby moved there at the start of the contract. He resided there until about 1897, when he moved to 2 Vanburgh Fields, Blackheath.

We have an unusually good idea of how the Bexley Heath Railway was built, as a local photographer, A.H.T. Boswell, recorded each stage of construction, from the first rough 'overland' route with its horse-drawn tipping wagons, right through to the landscaping of the embankments and the erection of signs at the stations. A steam excavator which arrived on the site in September 1891 was a favourite subject for his lens. We are also fortunate in having some



*Saddle tank locomotive, probably a Hunslet, passing a temporary bridge under construction at Pickford Lane on the Bexley Heath Railway*  
(Bexley Libraries, Boswell Collection)



*Steam navy near Barnehurst on the Bexley Heath Railway. This locality was so sparsely inhabited when the railway was built that it was known simply as 'Hills and Holes'*

*(Bexley Libraries, Boswell Collection)*

recollections of William Rigby from one of his navvies on this contract, 'Punch' Hollands, who stayed on after the line was finished to become a ganger on the South Eastern Railway, and was interviewed by Dr E.A. Course in the 1950s. Rigby was remembered as a fair employer, despite the remarkable invective which he used on the navvies, and as having a memorable set of whiskers.

His language was understandable, as the Bexley Heath Railway was not built without difficulty, and was not completed on time. The earthworks were in a mixture of sands and clays, and banks were prone to collapse, at least when graded to the angle specified by the long-serving Engineer of the SER, Francis Brady. But at last the line was ready for its final Board of Trade inspection, on 7 April 1895, when Brady, Rigby and a Mr Gray, who was Rigby's chief engineer for the contract, were among the party who embarked with Major Marindin in a train of special saloons at Blackheath station for a tour of the new works. The local paper was then able to report that "after sticking to his task with dogged determination, Mr Rigby has at length surmounted all difficulties." The railway was opened on 1 May

1895, and was worked by the SER. Six locomotives and other plant used for the contract were sold by auction at Welling on 3 May 1895.

Completing the task was one thing; being paid for it was another. Rigby was financially stretched by this contract and is said to have been on the verge of bankruptcy at times. In 1892, for example, he was unable to meet calls on some Scarborough, Bridlington & West Riding Junction shares, and had to agree to pay 4% interest until the outstanding balance was settled. The Bexley Heath Railway Company was in little better shape and Rigby had been obliged to accept part of his payment in debenture stock. After the line opened, the SER had to lend the local company £6000 to enable it to meet Rigby's final claim. As the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the SER rather drily minuted, "rightly or wrongly Mr Rigby has taken it for granted that from the fact of the South Eastern Company being represented by Directors on the Bexley Board, that the South Eastern Company, who are in possession of the Line, would see that he was paid for the work so done... if the amount is not paid Mr Rigby would be entitled to obtain the appointment of a Receiver... and there can be no doubt that [he]

would immediately avail himself of this remedy."

Rigby had certainly brought himself to the attention of the SER's officers and directors, and they seem to have determined to find him work so as to avoid the need for action which might bring down the shaky finances of the Bexley Heath Railway. In February 1896 it was agreed to ask him to carry out improvements at Ore station, and a steady stream of work followed for almost the next 25 years, to the mutual advantage of the parties. Much of this was not formally tendered, but was done either on a schedule of prices or on the basis of cost plus 10% profit. The SER was steadily modernising its facilities at this time, widening the main line as far as Orpington to four tracks and putting in new sidings and other improvements at many other places. These piecemeal jobs, with inevitable uncertainties and

often the need to work while traffic continued, were less attractive to the larger firms. For example, Rigby carried out widening from Sutton Street to Waterloo station, for which the well-known contractors J.T. Firbank and Walter Scott & Co. had declined to tender.

In the second part of this article, we shall look at some of Rigby's work in the south east of England in more detail, and also see how his Bexley Heath Railway contract led to his association with H.F. Stephens, and several of his railways.

**Tom Burnham**

*Thanks for supplying information are due to Beryl Lott (The National Trust, East Midlands Regional Office). Can any reader supply a photograph of William Rigby which can be used to illustrate part two of this article?*  
- Ed

## THE K&ESR 300 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

### May 2001 Wealden Belle

1st	Bob Clifford	(016)	£60.00
2nd	Miss J Osborn	(439)	£40.00
3rd	John Pearson	(206)	£30.00
4th	A W Dixon	(521)	£25.00
5th	Mr & Mrs D Edwards	(545)	£20.00
6th	A F Moore	(144)	£15.00
7th	P W Goodhill	(441)	£10.00
8th	L W Rowe	(269)	£5.00

### July 2001 Wealden Pullman

1st	Derek Drage	(538)	£60.00
2nd	L W Rowe	(269)	£40.00
3rd	Claire Stuchbury	(026)	£30.00
4th	Tony Pearson	(001)	£25.00
5th	Richard Stannard	(041)	£20.00
6th	Judy Featherstone	(036)	£15.00
7th	Colin Avey	(118)	£10.00
8th	Max Dunstone	(299)	£5.00

### September 2001 Rolvenden

1st	Richard Stannard	(040)	£80.00
2nd	Sandra Marsh	(338)	£70.00
3rd	W Sime	(522)	£60.00
4th	Colin Roe	(479)	£40.00
5th	Tom Webb	(411)	£30.00
6th	Peter Landon	(323)	£20.00
7th	A C Piggins	(455)	£15.00
8th	A Edge	(284)	£10.00
9th	Mr & Mrs Thorn	(481)	£5.00

### June 2001 Pullman

1st	Muriel Atfield	(115)	£80.00
2nd	C Garman	(012)	£70.00
3rd	Mr & Mrs F Turner	(065)	£60.00
4th	S W Sparkes	(462)	£40.00
5th	C M Dawson	(581)	£30.00
6th	Miss P Stevens	(127)	£20.00
7th	Harry Brampton	(473)	£15.00
8th	Colin Roe	(480)	£10.00
9th	Jan Henn	(501)	£5.00

### August 2001 Buffet

1st	P H Wilson	(042)	£60.00
2nd	Neil Rose	(158)	£40.00
3rd	Wilf Watters	(606)	£30.00
4th	Wilf Watters	(606)	£25.00
5th	Mr B A Rees	(072)	£20.00
6th	M Chalkley	(491)	£15.00
7th	Alan Dawes	(009)	£10.00
8th	D W Edwards	(174)	£5.00

### HAVE YOU JOINED THE 300 CLUB YET?

To join, phone Brian Heyes on 01622 744509 or Chris Garman on 01424 441643 for an application form.

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

# The Works of William Rigby

1887-1890	Scarborough, Bridlington & West Riding Junction Railway (Driffield-Market Weighton), 13¾ miles, £250,000, opened 1 May 1890. Engineers Sir Douglas Fox and William B. Myers
1890-1895	Great Western Railway (Newcastle Emlyn Extension), 7 miles, £53,500, opened 1 July 1895
1891-1895	Bexley Heath Railway (Blackheath-Crayford Creek Junction), 8¼ miles, £173,000, opened 1 May 1895. Engineer Francis Brady
1895-1905	SER Folkestone Harbour alterations and new Harbour Pier, opened June 1904. (NB: Rigby was not responsible for the new Folkestone Harbour station)
1896	SER Ore station improvements
1896-1901	SER Charing Cross viaduct widening (Sutton Street to Waterloo station), including new up platform at Waterloo Junction and new bridge over Waterloo Road, £22,102, brought into use 2 June 1901
c.1897	SER Ashford reservoir
c.1897	SER Folkestone Warren works – sea wall, drainage headings, opening out of part of Martello Tunnel
1897-1899	SER Maidstone (West) station reconstruction
1897-1898	Borough of Hastings and SER – reconstruction of Queens Road bridge
c.1898	SER Ashford sidings for breakdown train and for goods traffic, estimated at £195 and £3090 respectively
c.1898	SER Redhill sidings for goods traffic, estimated at £2600
c.1898	SER Hither Green sidings
1898-1900	SER Erith (i.e. Slades Green) locomotive sheds
1898-1905	SER St Johns-Orpington widening, brought into use Elmstead Woods-Orpington 6 June 1904 and St Johns-Elmstead Woods 18 June 1905. Engineer Percy C. Tempest
c.1899	SER Paddock Wood new sidings, estimated at £11,800
1899-1901	Sheppey Light Railway (Queenborough-Leysdown), 8½ miles, opened 1 August 1901. Engineer Holman F. Stephens
c.1900	City & South London Railway (Stockwell-Clapham Common), 0.9 miles, opened 3 June 1900
c.1901	City & South London Railway (Moorgate Street-Angel), 1.34 miles, opened 17 November 1901
1900-1903	SE&CR Corbett's Lane-New Cross widening, estimated at £130,000
1902-1903	Tenterden & Cranbrook Railway (Rolvenden-Tenterden Town), 1½ miles, opened 16 March 1903. Engineer Holman F. Stephens
1903-1905	Rother Valley Railway (Tenterden Town-Headcorn Junction), 8 miles, opened 17 May 1905. Engineer Holman F. Stephens
c.1911	SE&CR Hither Green sidings extension
1911-c.1916	East Kent Light Railways (took over from Kent Contract & Finance Co.). Engineer Holman F. Stephens
c.1913-1914	SE&CR Margate West widening
c.1915	Contract at Plumstead and Woolwich (Royal Arsenal extensions?)
c.1919	Port of London Authority extensions
1919	SE&CR Abbotscliff landslip repair
1919	SE&CR Strood Dock dredging
1920	SE&CR Folkestone Warren landslip repair

# Special Events – a Big Success in 2001

Although the year started on a disappointing note with the cancellation of the proposed military event, War On The Line in April, the two key events later on in the year proved to be highly successful and raised valuable funds for the railway. Our thanks go to Chairman, John Brice and the Special Events Committee for all the hard work involved in the planning and organisation of these activities.

## The Steam & Country Fair

Held over the weekend of 21st/22nd July, the Steam & Country Fair was a revival of the annual fairs, held during the 1970s and early 1980s in the field adjacent to the railway at Tenterden. As this venue is no longer available to us, the fair was switched to fields adjacent to the railway at Northiam, by kind permission of the landowner, John Cyster.

Centrepiece of the fair, as in the past was the Harris Brothers old time fair from Ashington in Sussex. This incorporates the famous 'Southdown Gallopers' dating from 1885, chairoplanes from the 1920s and swings from

1907. The five Harris Brothers – Robert, Fred, John, Ted and Douglas are the current working generation from a family that has been in the fairground business since the 1860s. They still live in traditional showmen's wagons but the family's steam engines were disposed of after the war, being replaced with mainly AEC Matador lorries sold off as Government surplus. These are now interesting period vehicles in their own right, being over 50 years old.

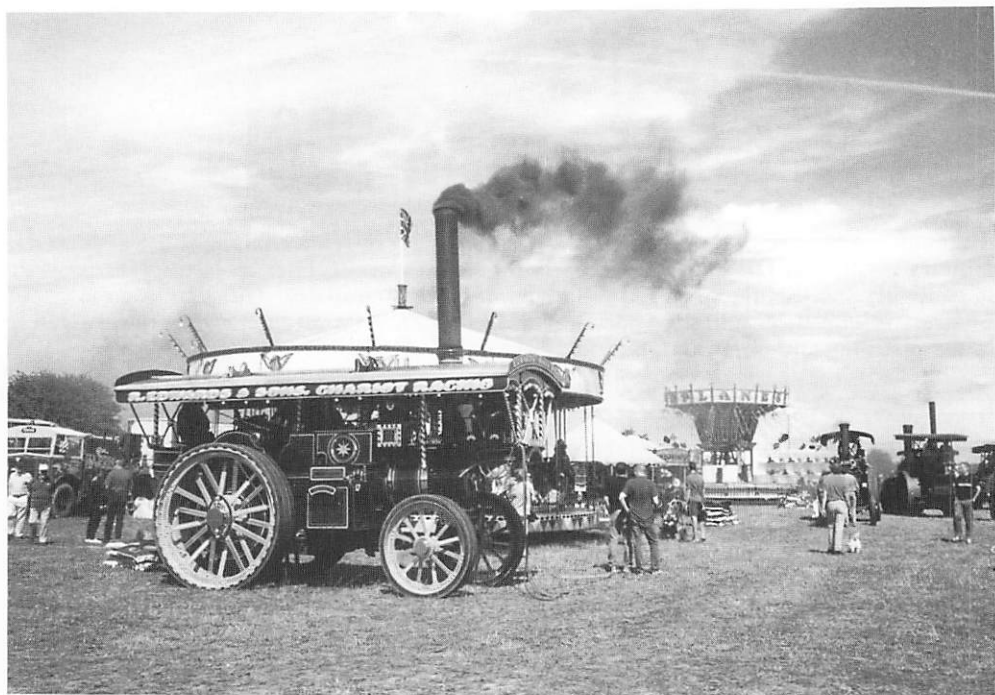
Powering the fair over the weekend, were two showman's engines – 'Margaret' a 1922 Burrell compound road locomotive, restored to original condition by its present owner, Nick Baker of



*The Harris brothers alongside their famous Southdown Gallopers*

*(John Liddell)*





*'Earl Kitchener' powers the Harris Brothers Gallopers*

*(Mick Blackburn)*



*The period interior of a showman's wagon*

*(John Liddell)*



*Paul Hatcher and Adrian Landi demonstrate the art of blacksmithing*

*(Mick Blackburn)*

Gillingham and 'Earl Kitchener' a Burrell road locomotive of 1915 vintage converted to full showman's specification in 1920, now owned by David Fowler of Tadley, Hants.

The show incorporated a wide range of exhibits – portable engines, traction engines, steam rollers, early motor cars, motor cycles, tractors and commercial vehicles. Musical entertainment was provided by three organs – a Koenigsberg 62-key Dutch street organ, a Wilhelm Bruder SoHNe 46 keyless organ and a Truman 20 note street organ. Notable amongst road vehicles present were two Super Sentinel steam wagons from the 1920s. Buses included London Transport STL 2692 in green country livery and RT 4139 in red.

There was a wide range of country crafts and stalls, displays of vintage tools and memorabilia on the showground. Stalls included woodcraft, pottery, novelty buttons and pyrography. A particularly interesting working exhibit was the Foster threshing drum dating from 1945, powered by a Field Marshall series II tractor, dating from 1948.

The programme of events opened at 10.00am on each day and parades throughout the day in the

arena ensured that there was never a dull moment until closure at 5.00pm. During the afternoon, a WW2 Mustang fighter plane flew over the site. A refreshment tent and licensed bar selling local ales provided sustenance for visitors and there was a tombola stall.

The only attraction missing from the fairs of the 1980s – animals, due to restrictions put on us as a result of the foot & mouth outbreak.

The fair was a great success, netting a profit of around £4000 as well as significantly higher than average fares on the railway from visitors who came by train.

In fact, for those long in the tooth, the whole event was very reminiscent of our great Steam & Country Fairs of years gone by, so were there any lessons to be learnt for the future? Well, we didn't sell out by far the excellent programmes and it was not for the want of trying. But, as one member of the organising committee pointed out, perhaps our programme sellers were not sufficiently pushy, young or pretty!

The fair will be repeated on 20th and 21st July 2002 and John Brice would like to hear from anyone willing to organise a large raffle, ready to go out in March, culminating in a draw during



*Sawing tree trunks with steam power*

*(John Liddell)*

the weekend. In addition he would like to interview potential programme sellers. Apparently, the only activity that will not be repeated is archery – does anybody know why? Philip Shaw

### **Hopping Down to Kent... and East Sussex**

After last year's washout and floods, it was a relief to have good weather for this, our second attempt, at an event based on the hop-picking theme. Last year, the event had to be held at Northiam, but this year Bodiam Station came into its own. Not that the other stations were ignored: Northiam had a classic car display and party visits to the nearby Rother Valley Brewery, while Tenterden town had the real-ale marquee, a steam roller and model traction engines, children's round-a-bout, dance-band organ and stalls. But Bodiam was the focal point.

At Bodiam a 30ft x 20ft marquee was set up on the picnic area, inside which were display boards on hop-pickers' trains, and Bruce Law's collection of hopping equipment, bygones and photographs were also on show. The tent was decorated with hop bines and the smell each morning, after the tent had been closed overnight was overwhelming! The marquee had plenty of spare space and was our safety-net had

it been a wet weekend. As it was the weather was ideal, if a little breezy. Outside the marquee and on the cattle-dock there were demonstrations of stripping the hops from the bines and visitors could try their hand also.

Tractors were on show in front of the cattle-dock, three on Saturday and four on Sunday, one of which was a narrow model for working in the hop gardens. There was also a display of working stationary engines further along the yard.

In the station waiting room, John Liddell had set up a continuous performance of his compilation video on hop-picking which seemed also to gather a continuous audience, some taking a nap!

The goods office was converted into a bar-come-shop for the weekend and its 'village stores' atmosphere looked very good and was popular with visitors. A selection of goods from the Tenterden Town gift-shop was available, and the bar stocked with the popular 'Hoppers Ale' from The Rother Valley Brewery, plus other bottled beers, wines and soft drinks. Indeed so popular was the Hoppers Ale that the entire stock was sold on Saturday and additional emergency



*Demonstrating the art of stripping hop bines at Bodiam Station, 15 September*

*(John Liddell)*

supplies had to be found for Sunday. All the 'Wealden Pullman' stock was sent 'down the line', and the brewery manager was having to call in stock from other outlets. Altogether, visitors took away 23 dozen bottles over the weekend and we could have probably sold more. Mark James was the stalwart of the sales staff and we took over £700.

Meanwhile Tenterden real-ale marquee had draught Hoppers Ale and that too sold quickly.

Back at Bodiam, our 'inner-man' needs were met by Jenny Farant, from Farm World, Beckley, who ran a barbeque on both days. Staff and exhibitors were given badges and were able to get their food at a discount. Jenny makes her own sausages with different flavourings, from her own animals. Those who had the pork sausages were, regrettably, eating Jake, who had met his end earlier.

Carol Dyce organised tea, coffee and canned drinks from the staff room kitchen, taking nearly £160 over the two days.

On the Saturday, Pam and Sheila Stevens, assisted by Daphne and Georgia Lindsay, set up stall on the picnic area and, using the left-over

prizes from the Steam and Country Fair tombola, raised over £200.

On Sunday the 'hoppers reunion' took place using the same location. We have gradually built up a mailing list of people with nostalgic memories of hop-picking holidays, and this was the first occasion on which they could meet each other at a set time. They had been given different coloured badges so they could recognise each other on trains and about the site, and at 3pm they assembled for tea and cakes. The cakes and scones were made by our volunteers and Julia Milligan made a large decorated cake with suitable wording on top.

As some commented, the tea party itself was nostalgic, as how many people these days meet outdoors over tea and cakes on a Sunday afternoon? John Miller welcomed the 35 or more 'hoppers' and invited Jean Wilkins, who headed our mailing list to cut the cake. Jean thanked everyone for organising the event and then we were treated to some impromptu singing of some traditional hoppers' songs, the verses of which seemed unending.

On Saturday evening, we had retired back to

Tenterden Town for drinks organised in the real ale marquee, and another barbeque. To begin with, music was provided by the dance-band organ, but this was succeeded by a group making music in the catering marquee. However by this time the crowd was getting thinner as the evening chill took a hold.

The verdict on the weekend. This was very much an end of season event and everyone seemed to enjoy the friendly atmosphere. But, using three stations does 'spread the butter very thinly', and to enable passengers to explore everything available requires a very intense train service, probably not justified by the numbers at this time of year. Put together on one site, the event would appear to be more substantial and the 'feeder' train service could be at usual levels for September. The Party visits to the Rother Valley Brewery from Northiam proved popular and it is hoped to arrange further visits for railway members.

So, in 2002, the event will all be held at Bodiam, including the evening 'get together'. The dates are 14th and 15th September and we shall be looking for ideas and helpers!



*Hoppers Ale from the Rother Valley Brewery at Northiam on sale during the Hoppers Weekend  
(John Liddell)*



*The country shop at Bodiam Station during the Hoppers Weekend*

*(John Liddell)*



# From the Railway Archives

John Miller takes a look back at the news at quarter century intervals from 2001.

## 100 years ago (1901)

A correspondent to a local newspaper suggests that the Tenterden Borough Council extends gas lighting down the hill to the Rother Valley Railway terminus at the foot of Rolvenden Hill, "The road to which is dreadfully dark in the wintertime".

In April, it is reported that the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway has agreed terms for the sale of its A1 'Terrier' locomotive No 670 'Poplar' to Mr Stephens of the Rother Valley Railway. The sale price of £650 is to be financed mainly by a loan from Barclays Bank. The engine, last working at Battersea, was delivered in May becoming No 3 'Bodiam'.

Thursday 1st August saw the opening of the Sheppey Light railway. Although an independent company, it is to be worked by the South Eastern & Chatham Railway. In a letter to his father, Stephens writes, "My little Sheppey Railway was opened for traffic... but it is too

early to say how the traffic will turn out."

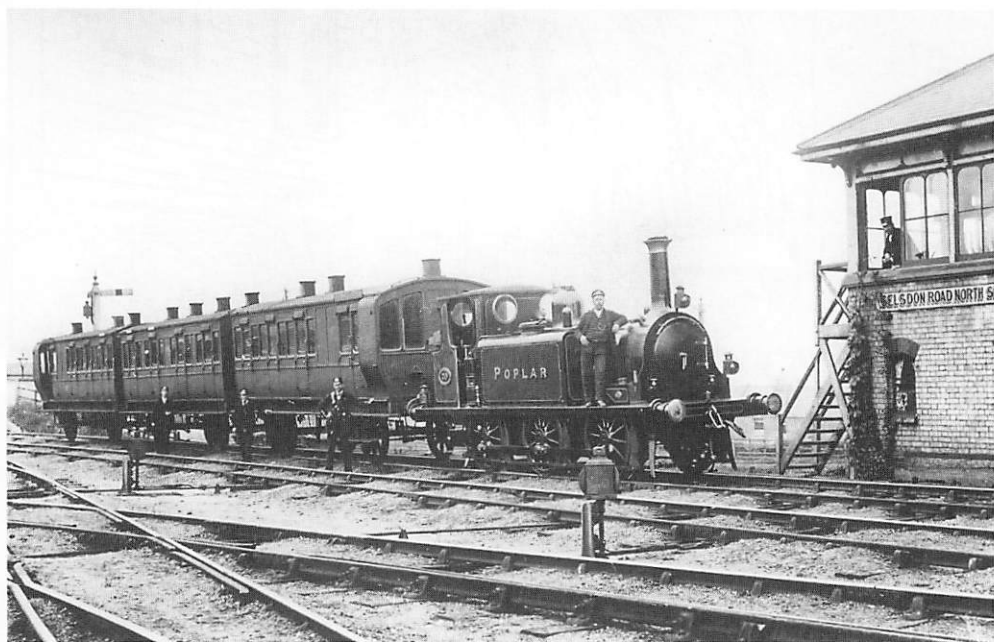
However, "The Rother Valley traffic is increasing well", and likewise, he reports that the Selsey line is doing well.

In March, a public enquiry was held at Rye into proposals for an East Sussex Light Railway which would link Northiam with Rye. The new line would be worked as a branch of the Rother Valley Railway. In December, the ESLR was authorised by the Light Railway Commissioners with a proposed share capital of £45,000 but we now know the line was destined never to be built.

## 75 years ago (1926)

In January, severe flooding is reported in the Rother Valley, a repeat of the scenes of the previous year, which were then said to be the worst for 50 years.

*The Kentish Express* reported that the water in the valley was steadily rising and published graphic



No 70 'Poplar' before becoming No 3 'Bodiam' at this time working the Woodside to South Croydon service

(Colonel Stephens Historical Archive)



sketches of the flooding. "Viewed from the higher ground the scene resembles a succession of lakes. The railway line between Bodiam and Robertsbridge became inundated on Wednesday afternoon and although the train service from Headcorn to Bodiam was maintained, the service had to be suspended between Bodiam and Robertsbridge... where it was replaced by road motors, which met the trains at Bodiam."

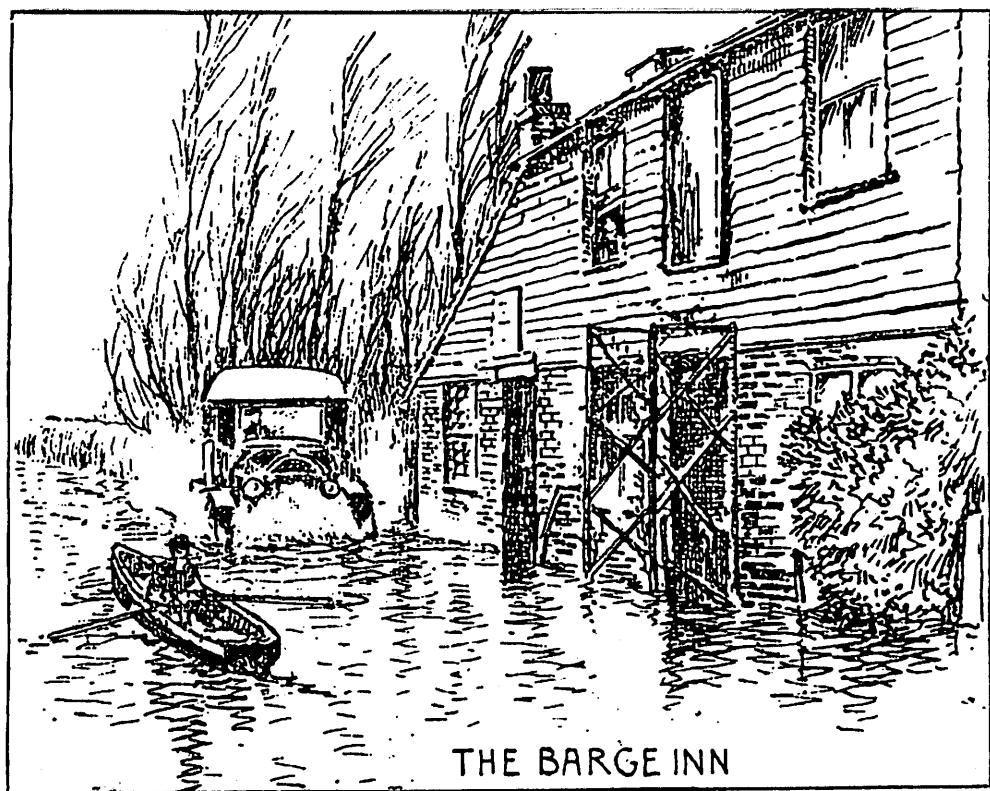
"Several roads were flooded and the Barge Inn at Potmans Heath (which had such an unpleasant experience last year), is surrounded by water which is gradually percolating through to the lower rooms. The landlord, Mr Springett and his family, have moved upstairs. The chickens, dogs and other animals have been moved from the yard to higher ground, but the water is still rising."

Also in 1926, the K&ESR was having a difficult time financially. Traffic had steadily diminished since World War One and the annual dividend paid to shareholders had fallen to ¼ per cent.

The losses on the Tenterden to Headcorn section outweighed the profits made on the Rother Valley section by almost £1,000.

In 1926, there was a national General Strike, perhaps the most comprehensive disruption to work that this country has seen. Most of the employees on the Colonel's railways remained at their posts, and Stephens sent a letter of thanks to all these staff when the strike was over. However, two men on the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway who did strike were summarily dismissed.

An amusing incident is recorded in Christopher Redwood's book on the WC&PR. The lineside fencing had deteriorated to such an extent that animals frequently strayed on to the railway. Local wags maintained that the grass was more succulent on the track than in the adjoining fields. At a 1926 court hearing concerning cattle killed on the line, an employee who was called to give evidence, described himself as a part-time engine driver. Prosecuting counsel asked if it



*Floods at the Barge Inn (now Barge Cottage), Potmans Heath, January 1926*



*No 17 'Arthur' hauling No 12 'Marcia' in the 'Sutton' centenary cavalcade, 26th September 1976  
(Brian Stephenson)*

was true that he spent much time chasing animals off the line. Witness agreed, leading counsel to comment, "So you are a part-time engine driver and a part-time cattle remover?" Laughter in court.

Otherwise, Stephens only consolation was that the Ashover and North Devon railways had successfully opened the previous year, though the Edge Hill Light Railway had ceased activities. Stephens health was beginning to fail – and the difficult staff at the Festiniog Railway didn't help matters!

### **50 years ago (1951)**

The Kent & East Sussex Railway, now of course, part of the Southern Region of British Railways, was being hit by the national coal shortage. Trains on the line were given low priority and some were being cancelled without notice. Not surprising, when one visitor in May recorded that he was the only passenger between Headcorn and Junction Road halt, where he was joined by another person for the journey to Robertsbridge. He estimated that the entire fares for the train amounted to six shillings (30p)

from which to pay driver, fireman, guard and station staff, let alone coal!

Another passenger in early spring, noticed that the black background paint around the large white letters was peeling off the station running-in boards, thereby revealing the original dark blue enamel. Was the paint a remnant of wartime, when station names were obliterated, or was the black applied following nationalisation because blue did not accord with the new corporate livery?

The correspondent mentioned above also recorded the locomotives present on the line in May 1951. '01' class No 31370 was working the Headcorn section and 'Terrier' No 32644 (formerly 'Fulham') was at work on the Rother Valley section. In the engine shed at Rolvenden were 'Terriers' No 32678 (formerly 'Knowle') painted black and No 32670 (formerly No 3 Bodiam) still painted in K&ESR green.

On the East Kent Railway, now also part of Southern Region, came news that goods traffic would cease as from 1st March. Coal traffic from

the Tilmanstone mine would continue but the line from Eythorne to Wingham would close entirely. Passenger traffic had already ceased from October 1948.

### 25 years ago (1976)

For the 1976 season, the K&ESR operational line was extended from Tenterden to just short of Newmill Bridge. The previous year, the limit had been 'Pope's Cottage', the permanent way hut opposite the present crayfish channels. In January, the abutments of the old Newmill Bridge were blown up by the Army, clearing the way for the reconstruction of the present bridge.

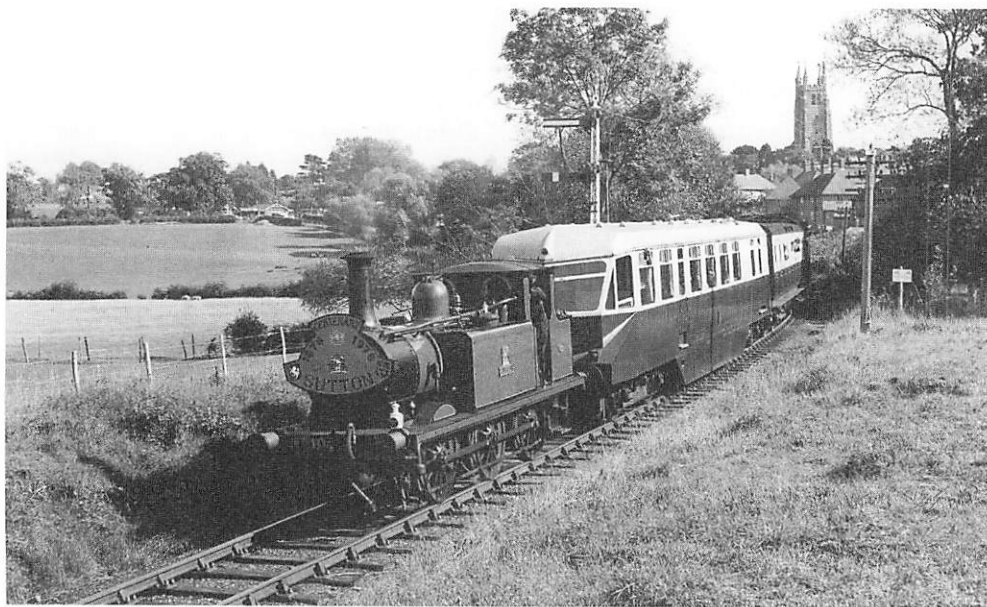
At Rolvenden, Mike Hart was in charge and there were several locomotives which have since left the railway. The big saddle tank (formerly No 56), which was known amongst members as the 'ugly tank', but officially K&ESR No 26, entered service after successful trials. It departed some time later and was last recorded at the North Woolwich Station Museum. 'Met', an attractive, but small Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST was then awaiting firebox repairs and now resides at Darlington Railway Museum. K&ESR No 17 'Arthur', which had been standby engine at the official re-opening of the K&ESR in June 1974, re-entered service after repairs and was often used on engineers' trains. 'Arthur' was of

interest to Colonel Stephens fans as it was of the same Manning Wardle 'L' class as WC&PR No 5, which was scrapped in 1940. 'Arthur' left the railway sometime ago and has now been rebuilt, re-boilered and renamed 'Matthew Murray', and it is a star on the Middleton Railway, Leeds.

A locomotive that only ever gave one day's useful service, was No 196 'Errol Lonsdale', an ex-army 'Austerity' engine, which had been stored on the railway since 1970. It was in steam for the spectacular cavalcade celebrating the centenary of No 10 'Sutton'. Others in the cavalcade were No 3 'Bodiam', No 17 'Arthur' hauling No 12 'Marcia' dead, No 19 (Norwegian), 'Austerities' Nos 23 and 24, No 26 and of course No 10 'Sutton' hauling the Woolwich coach. The whole procession proceeded to Cranbrook Road, where the locomotives uncoupled and came up the bank one at a time while the crowds watched from the fields either side. A wonderful sight to remember.

'Errol Lonsdale' left the K&ESR for the Mid-Hants Railway immediately after the cavalcade.

During 1976, a total of 39,741 passengers were carried, made up from 36,337 ordinary passengers, 2584 on Santa Special trains and 820 on 'Wine and Dine' trains. The K&ESR operated on 99 days.



No 10 'Sutton' with large headboard and Great Western railcar No 20 in use as a coach,  
26 September 1976

(Brian Stephenson)

# Early departure from Northiam

I was nearly there. After four and half miles of walking along the leafy lanes of East Sussex in the late May sunshine, I was going to make it. OK, I was cutting it fine, but all the earlier anxieties of missing the train drained away as I passed the bus on the A28. I checked my watch, it said 15:43. Everything was going to be fine, but what was this? The gates were open, that could only mean one thing, departure of the 15:45 was imminent! I broke into a run.

Tired legs were called for one last effort. On a good day, Lindford Christie might have made it, but I stood no chance. The DMMU growled over the crossing as I entered the station forecourt, and was already rapidly disappearing from view by the time I fought my way past detrained passengers in the booking hall and arrived breathless on the platform.

I saw the Station Master. "The 15:45!" I said. "Just gone." He replied.

"But it's left early!" I protested. "Look!" as I endeavoured to prove my point, "My mobile phone shows the time as 15:44."

The Station Master was in no mood to concede ground however. "Well my watch says quarter to." He said. "And so does mine." Added a man on the platform, obviously prepared to back the Station Master.

This was adding insult to injury. Not only having missed my train, it was now indicated it was my fault because my mobile phone clock was slow. I could have argued it kept accurate time. I could have pointed out that their own watch readings, even if correct, did not take into account the fact the DMMU had departed two minutes previously. It was plain in my mind that the train had left at least one minute, and probably two minutes early. The whole thing was infuriating, after all that effort, all those miles. I am normally a mild mannered patient sort, but right then I was furious.

It was also plain that further protests or arguing were pointless at this stage. Winning an argument, nor hurling abuse would put the DMMU in reverse to come and pick me up. Despite all my efforts, I had missed my train and that was that. It was time

to beat a retreat to the station garden before saying something I would regret.

I got to the garden. Sat down to rest my weary legs. Told myself to calm down, and consulted the timetable. The one saving grace was that there was one more train to Tenterden that day, at 16:45. At least I was not stranded. Thoughts turned to whose fault the early departure were down to. Was it the Station master, or what about the driver? No, surely it was the guard, but what about the signalman who opened the gates? Wait a minute though, were not all these suspects volunteers? If it were not for them, and the rest of the dedicated band, there would be no railway to ride on and enjoy. I started to see things differently. Who was I to get cross about a missed train, when others had given up months, some years of their life to ensure the wheels on the line kept turning?

Slowly I began to realise that getting a train away from Northiam on time is easier said than done. The busy A28 crossing does not help matters. The signalman operating the gates and the guard would both be mindful of blocking the road to traffic. The time the gates were shut needed to be kept to a minimum. Heaven forbid if the Ministry started complaining that the Queen's highway was persistently obstructed at Northiam Station for long periods. No, to effect precise on time departure at Northiam, guard, signalman and driver would need to be in two way radio contact; hardly the appropriate method for running a heritage railway.

I had calmed down by now. I went back into the booking hall and met the Station master. Perhaps he too sensed a thawing in attitude, and he tried to placate me by suggesting I board the 16:45 early on its down trip, and thus enjoy a bonus trip to Bodiam and back. A better option he thought than waiting around at Northiam. I accepted, thanked him, and he promised to tell the guard of the train's extra passenger.

'65' shuffled in. I boarded and slumped into a corner seat. The guard found me.

"So you're the bloke who missed the 15:45. What exactly happened?"

"Well its like this..." I began.

**Roger Bennett**



