

Tenterden Terrier



Number 93

Spring 2004



JOURNAL OF THE KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY

The Kent & East Sussex Company Limited

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

(Name changed 24 December 2003)

Registered Charity 262481

DIRECTORS

Norman Brice – *Chairman*; Graham Bridge; Daniel Jenner; Derek Dunlavey (Managing); Paul Hutchinson; Brian Janes; Carol Mitchell; Bill Morgan; John Weller

COLONEL STEPHENS' RAILWAY ENTERPRISES LIMITED *(A wholly owned subsidiary)*

DIRECTORS: Norman Brice – *Chairman*; Graham Bridge; Derek Dunlavey; Brian Janes; Keith Jones (Appointed 24 January 2004)

COMPANY SECRETARY & REGISTERED OFFICE:

Nick Pallant, Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6HE.

Telephone 01580 765155 Fax: 01580 765634 email: enquiries@kesr.org.uk

GENERAL MANAGER David Lloyd

OFFICERS:

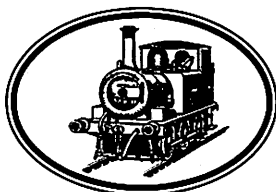
Accountant John Cobb
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Marketing Manager (Resigned 28 February 2004) Jane Armstrong
Publicity and Sales Manager Graham Sivyer
Catering Manager Andre Freeman
Shop Manager Brian Janes
Customer Service Assistants Lin Batt, Yvonne Bates, Diana Taylor
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Consultant Civil Engineer Peter Tobutt
Volunteer Liaison Officer Vacant
Health & Safety Derek Dunlavey

Finance Committee – Philip Shaw (Chairman); Norman Brice; Tom White;

Employment Committee – Carol Mitchell (Chairman); David Lloyd; John Weller; Chris Mitchell

Membership Secretary Stella Nuttman, Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6HE

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Editor.....Philip Shaw

Assistant EditorDuncan Buchanan

ConsultantTom Burnham

Editorial Office

109 High Street, Tenterden,
Kent TN30 6LB

Telephone 07790 562332

Email: philipshaw109@hotmail.com

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FRONT COVER

P Class with the vintage train, basks in the early Spring sunshine at Tenterden Town Station, 16th March 2003
(Tom White)

FRONTISPIECE

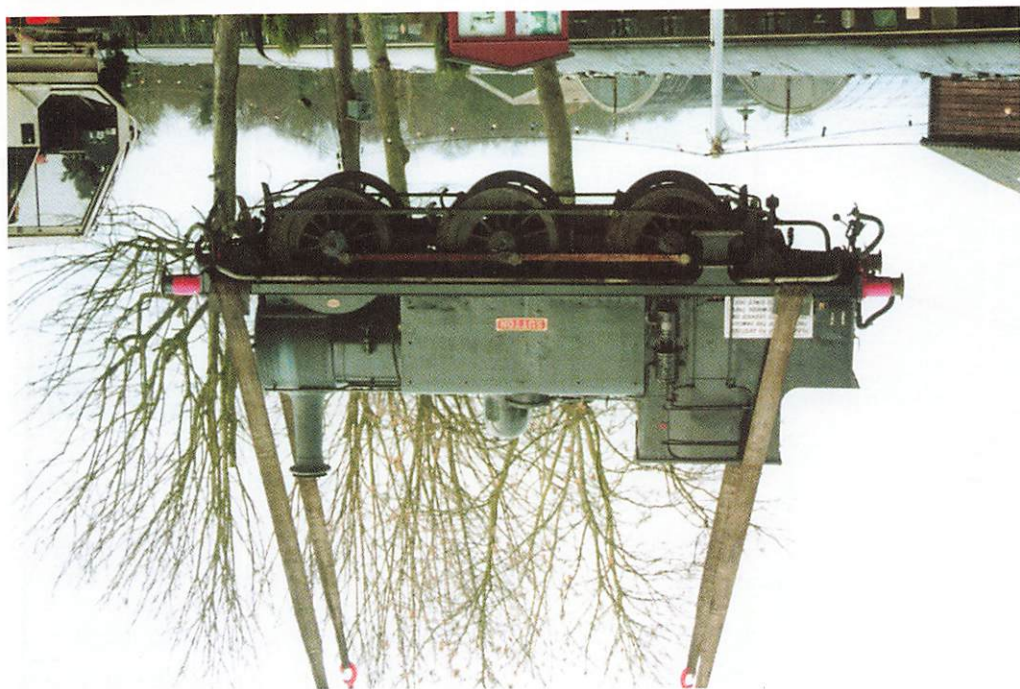
The tram comes to Tenterden, on 12th February 2004, whilst Sutton moves to make room
(John Liddell)

BACK COVER

Twilight at Northiam
(John Rose)

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Editorial

Learning with Thomas

The news that passenger numbers were 4% up last year was heartening. 'Turn up and go' passengers from Tenterden were significantly better, after the much debated downturn of recent years. So here our marketing is working. Had we managed to maintain our 'Thomas the Tank Engine' visitors at the previous year's level, the overall percentage increase would have been at least double the level achieved. Thomas is

very popular with small children and remains an important part of our business, but it now needs fresh ideas to restore the impetus. What can we do that we have not thought of; have our readers any views?

The magazine is increasingly dominated by the articles received from the same one or two members. Without these we would be hard pressed to produce a magazine at all. Well researched articles on current or historical subjects are always welcome in order to provide variety of content. The Editor will be pleased to discuss topics with would be contributors.

Lineside News

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

Commercial

Shop

In 2003 the shop ended up with sales increases slightly ahead of the passenger increases. This means that in the 3 years of virtually all-volunteering effort we have increased shop turnover by 20% on the record Bodiam opening year. Sales per passenger are up by over 40%. If it had not been for a poor August due to the hot weather we might have comfortably broken the £150K turnover barrier. As it was, a very successful Christmas left us just shy of this.

Although post Christmas period sales were not spectacular, footfall in the shop was high, as the trains were very full – indeed one or two were full to standing, and the shop was a convenient shelter from the cold and wet. Our only real consolation as we cleaned up the resultant mess in the shop was that the passengers seem to have had a good time even with the cold and the curtailment of the Sunday trains at Wittersham Road due to flooded bridges. If only we had proper wet weather facilities for the railway.

In November with no trains running, as an experiment, we opened the shop. We put notices out, including one at the top of Station Road, and the experiment proved successful with sales of around £2K for the three weekends, the middle one of which was quiet. This, with successful sales at two exhibitions on our behalf by the Maidstone group, gave us a good sales month. The shop volunteers missed the trains but the gossip was good.

You will be familiar with this column puffing our achievements but the real question is 'How do we compare with others in the Tourist industry?' Well recently we undertook a self-assessment using guidelines set by the Association of Independent Museums. In the main we passed this yardstick with some comfort. Our margins (gross profit) exceeded recommended levels. Our stockturn ratio (stock levels divided by annual sales) was on target for an ordinary shop and better than average for a shop like ours with specially commissioned merchandise. However sales per visitor, although good for a shop our size, were a little short (at £1.37 excluding VAT) of the target of £1.50 per head. Still more to work for.

This year started with a genuine surprise, the success of the February open days. Despite indifferent weather many people just came, enjoyed themselves and spent money. Trading was as brisk as it ever is on peak summer weekends. There is a lesson here somewhere.

The February Thomas was notable for an acute shortage of volunteers on every day and the (volunteer) manager having to work 11 days straight through. The usual winter overcrowding was eased by erecting a tent abutting the yard side of the shop and was largely successful in keeping out the freezing cold and increasing sales area. Business was, as is now usual, for Thomas almost too brisk for comfort but the profits keep the railway in cash

through the winter so it is all well worthwhile.

The main season kicks off with a couple of gala weekends (50 years since closure and 30 years since reopening) and weekends (when we are often short of volunteers) look much more interesting this year with a series of small special events. As with last year there is a fear that we may not be able to staff the shop and have to close on some days. This would be a great shame, as we believe that a welcoming, attractive and successful shop contributes greatly to our passengers' pleasure when visiting our friendly railway.

Marketing

It is often the wish that personnel changeovers in the Marketing Department might bring exciting and fresh initiatives that will add momentum to the advertising and communications activities.

However, the Kent & East Sussex Railway is a long-established organisation with a wealth of history that merits careful assessment before any new strategic decisions are taken. It is not by luck that the Railway has thrived over the past 30 years. There have been many contributory factors and one of the most important is the willingness of its army of volunteers to work long and hard to protect the organisation's future.

Thus, when taking up the post of Marketing Manager the immediate objective was to maintain the marketing communications programme, rather than change it. A long and thorough review of all aspects of marketing – and indeed of business drivers – would be vital before detailed proposals could be set down.

For 2004 the Marketing Department has therefore carried forward the initiatives introduced in 2003 to ensure that customer visits are maintained. However, wherever possible a brief review of each activity is conducted before booking to ensure that it will provide the most efficient results for the Railway.

It is efficiency and effectiveness that are always important drivers to strategy, however short term that strategy might be. It is the Marketing Department's policy to introduce ways to measure advertising effectiveness that are used consistently. For events where advance booking is encouraged it is somewhat easier to gather data on advertisement recall and with Santa Specials in 2003 the feedback was particularly revealing. For example, in one publication the cost per booking generated was £121. The feedback also confirmed the value of repeat

bookings in general and the mailing list in particular. This research has now been repeated with Thomas for February and thus a clearer picture is being formed about the origin of customers and how that might differ to the Santa event.

One of the most important goals for any Marketing Department is always to follow a plan. By doing so the company knows exactly to whom it is marketing its products and services, what they buy, why they buy and how often they buy. It also defines the measurable goals and precise details of how they can be achieved. It is often the case that organisations are forced by circumstance to become reactive rather than proactive with their marketing and the resulting inefficiency and potential for missed opportunity and failure is unavoidable. Therefore it will remain a priority to put such plans in place.

In the meantime, there are a few tactical adjustments to the communications plan that will be introduced over the course of this year:

1. To introduce consistency to the advertising imagery and collateral. Historically the advertising layout has varied greatly which has resulted in confused, diluted and ineffective messages being conveyed. This is often the result of cost restraints (allowing publications to prepare artwork themselves) and time constraints (taking low price offers at the last minute means little time to review artwork). A series of generic advertising layouts have now been prepared which should go some way to avoiding this in future.
2. To add clarity and consistency to brand messages. This is in part addressed by the first point, though specific issues regarding the brand demand attention. Brands themselves are valuable assets and when investment is made in building brand value that must be protected. There has been some debate about the merits of introducing a subbrand (eg The Farmers Line) in addition to promoting the original Kent & East Sussex Railway brand in its various forms. The most successful brands are simple, easily understood and consistent over time. They are also expensive to maintain. Subbrands are a luxury that the K&ESR can ill-afford. Therefore a quick decision has been taken to shelve any plans for subbrands and introduce clarity and consistency in the existing brand. For various reasons 'Kent & East Sussex Heritage Railway' has been selected as the brand name. It has the advantages of being true to its origins; being

familiar to those with existing brand awareness and avoiding misleading reference to 'Steam' which, when used to suggest exclusivity, could confuse.

3. To exploit the most cost-effective media which do not undermine the values of the brand.

The Marketing Department is inundated with sales calls from media representatives offering space deals. Not all are right for the Railway, however attractive the price. Each should be judged on its ability to deliver customers whilst providing the right environment in which to be seen. As one example, the website is perhaps the most cost effective medium to communicate to both customers and potential customers and therefore additional effort will be directed here.

4. In line with the stated business objectives of increasing customer visits and revenue earned, the underlying objectives will be to enhance the experience of a visit as well as extending the

earning potential.

To enhance the experience a number of new initiatives will be introduced which, for minimal expenditure, will seek to add value to the customer's visit. This will include: a range of activity sheets which educate and entertain children; informative displays onboard trains; a new guide book available for purchase; enhanced catering options and a greater variety of special events to appeal to a wider range of customer groups. Extending the earning potential will be addressed in part by these 'added value initiatives' (such as catering and the guide book) but also by encouraging loyalty to the Railway through repeat visits. For this the mailing list, which has already proved its value through promotion of Special Events, will be key. The comparative cost of encouraging repeat visits is low and thus presents an important opportunity to generate increased revenue at the lowest possible cost.

Operating

Since the last time Operating Department notes appeared in the Tenterden Terrier there have been a few changes of personnel.

Former Operating Manager Simon Long has relinquished the post of Locomotive Inspector. Simon will continue to work for the Operating Department in an advisory capacity and will still be involved in footplate staff assessments etc.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank Simon for the considerable amount of time and effort that he has put into the Department over many years. Much of the infrastructure, particularly at Rolvenden, is down to Simon's efforts.

Paul Wilson has now been appointed to the position of Locomotive Inspector on a permanent basis. Paul has been the Acting Locomotive Inspector since September.

Kent Evenden has kindly volunteered to fill the vacant post of Fireman's Roster Clerk. Many thanks to Kent for taking on this demanding task.

Following the discovery of a serious underground water leak on 1st October, emergency repairs were made to Northiam water column. The leak was discovered when Chris Greatley called in to check the water treatment

plant. Repairs to Northiam water column were completed in mid November with the concreting in of a new manhole. The repair of the underground water leak required 2 days hard graft with a hydraulic breaker to breaking out over a metre depth of solid ready mix concrete. The old rotted steel pipe work and fittings were replaced with modern alkathene, which should last for many years. Many thanks to John Collard, Chris Greatley, Pete Hubbard and Kevin Jones for their assistance with this project.

The 2003 incident training took place on Sunday 16th November. This time the department was joined by many of our colleagues from the Wealden Pullman.

The day was divided into two sessions. The morning session concentrated on training in the use of fire extinguishers, which included a couple of videos including one which told the story of the horrific fire at Bradford City Football Club. There was also a chance for everyone to practice what they had learnt by putting out paper and oil fires. Our thanks are due to Jonathan Burley for leading the morning session.

The afternoon session involved train evacuation from the Pullman set. Much was learnt about the difficulties of de-training a large number of

people and controlling panicking passengers.

Hot water has been restored to Rolvenden loco mess room. A new gas central heating boiler has been installed by Charlie Masterson to replace the old life expired one. With the hot water running again, attention moved to restoring the showers back to working order. All the junk that was stored in the shower room has been removed and James Veitch has decorated the area. The facility is now back in use and is available for Rolvenden staff to have a nice refreshing shower at the end of the day.

This years Santa Specials have not only been one of the most successful on record but also one of the most interesting and varied operationally.

All 7 operational locomotives have featured on the loco roster which included trains double headed with SECR P class 753 and Terrier 32678. After several years absence, the banking turns on the heavily loaded peak days were re-introduced. The banking duties were shared by Terrier 32678 and Norwegian 753. The banking turns also provided an opportunity for some valuable crew training as well as creating an additional spectacle for our passengers.

Other locomotives rostered during the Santa season were GWR Pannier 1638, USA tank DS238 and Austerities No 24 and No 25.

Following a night of heavy rain causing high

river levels at Hexden Bridge, services on 28th December were limited to the section of line between Tenterden Town and Wittersham Road. All trains departed from Tenterden as scheduled and, after a 10 minute run round at Wittersham Road, returned to Tenterden. All trains were hauled by GWR Pannier tank 1638, which also operated the two journeys scheduled for operation by the class 108 DMMU.

The weekend of January 31st and February 1st saw working parties at Rolvenden to tidy and clean the yard area in preparation for the Open days on February 14th and 15th. Although both the steam cleaners we had intended to use broke down, much was accomplished including the final moving of tools and equipment to the new running store, which has been fitted out over the last couple of months. The weather on the Saturday was atrocious, yet all the lads carried on working regardless. Many thanks to everyone that made the effort to help out over the weekend, the environs of the depot are much improved as a result. Thanks also to Pete Hubbard who cooked dinner for everyone on both days.

The first batch of Operating staff received training in the operation of the new A block system and Northiam level crossing gates on 8th February. We intend to have all the departments staff trained on A Block before the commencement of the main period of midweek



The view from the tram

(John Liddell)

running. A Block will enable us to operate with Northiam signal box switched out.

The Open Days on 14th and 15th February were a success as far as the Operating Department were concerned. A great many of our visitors took the opportunity to visit the loco yard at Rolvenden, where several members of the footplate staff were on hand to talk to our visitors. As a result four new volunteers have joined the department. At Tenterden, several visitors were allowed to visit the signal box and as a result two new signalmen were recruited. During the weekend several more people showed an interest in joining us and we are hopeful that many of them will eventually become volunteers. New faces are always

welcome and we are pleased that these people are keen to get involved.

If anyone who was unable to visit the railway on this weekend feels left out, the good news is you can still join us! Please contact Pete Salmon on 01580 761097 or 07940 240919 to find out more.

The Operating Department web site continues to be a success and has recently become the recipient of a Train Net Web Gem Award. Web sites selected to receive a Web Gem Award must meet a strict criteria and receive an average score of at least 7 out of 10 from the panel of judges. Visit www.ksr.fsnet.co.uk to see the site for yourself.

Motive Power

Steam Locomotives

No 3 'Bodiam' (32670): Re-assembly continues as and when resources, especially volunteer, are available.

No 8 'Knowle' (32678): In service. It is planned that this engine will visit the Mid-Hants Railway in March.

No 10 'Sutton' (32675): Currently still stored at Tenterden. There are suggestions that the

engine will be removed off the railway for overhaul but matters are still to be decided.

No 11 'P Class': In service.

No 12 'Marcia': Much recent effort has been put into the construction of the new cab and the fitting of the tanks previously fabricated by Dick Beckett. This has involved a bit of head scratching and quite a bit of riveting by Terry Harvey, Mac Macintosh, Ken George and David



No 3 progresses at Rolvenden, 14th February 2004

(John Liddell)

Brailsford. Once complete the cab assembly will have to be taken apart, so as to allow full access to the boiler for its steam test. However, it should go back together easily. There are a number of little problems that need to be solved due to the changes in the construction of the cab and the tanks.

The injector pipe work does not line up correctly with the new tanks, so a certain amount of pipe bending will have to be done. The cab side sheets do not butt up square to the tank on one side so a fair bit of fettling will have to be done.

Work continues on fitting the 'go faster' stripe down the sides of the tanks and the cab. Dick Beckett is currently working on producing a new balance pipe. The old one is life expired. In his quiet moments he is also fitting the axle boxes with new phosphor bronze thrust faces. Once this task is completed we will be able to re-wheel the engine.

No 14 'Charwelton': Stored unserviceable in Sewage Works siding.

No 19 'Norwegian' (376): In service

No 21 'Wainwright' (DS238): In service, though the paint work is beginning to look a little tatty. Boiler inspection due in late January.

No 22 'Maunsell' (65): Work continues to replace the firebox at Israel Newton. The appeal fund has broken through £20,000 but is still open to anyone who wishes to contribute to the new firebox for the loco. In simple terms every pound contributed means the loco will be in service earlier. If the company has to find the funds all on its own then things will soon become delayed. Please send contributions to the Treasurer, Kent and East Sussex Locomotive Trust at Tenterden Station. Even more effective contributions can be made by gift aid, again contact the Treasurer.

No 23 'Holman F Stephens': Overhaul continues as and when resources are available.

No 24 'Rolvenden': In service.

No 25 'Northiam': In service

No 26 'Selling' J94 (68078): Progress on this project has been severely hampered by the bad weather. Members have however managed to put together an estimate of the outstanding funds required to complete the project. In total we need to raise approximately £37,000. We

have made some progress towards meeting this target however, any help is always welcome. In the first instance please contact Bob Forsythe on 01233 630323.

We have dismantled the slide bars on the left hand engine of the locomotive in order to remove the back cylinder cover which has a broken slide bar lug. (A common problem with this type of locomotive.)

A pattern is being made and in due course we will have a new cover cast. This will then be machined to fit the loco. The pattern will be made available to other societies who have similar problems with this class of loco.

We have carried out an inventory of all the parts we have in store and are much relieved to find that we need to acquire very few items.

We shall be finalising the boiler repair contract in the very near future. Repairs will take place away from the site.

We will be having a crane day in March in order to lift the frames off the wheels, separate the bunker from the frames, reposition the cab roof and the track panel on which the loco stands. A society member has provided us with an agricultural poly-tunnel frame, which we will use to get the loco under cover. A ship's container will also be installed on site so that we can lock things away safely.

No 30 GWR Pannier (1638): In service

Diesel Locomotives

No 20 (GWR Railcar): Since the last report, attention has been given to refitting some of the renovated miscellaneous internal metal frame brackets. The opportunity has also been taken to renew some vacuum brake pipework in the vestibule area. This will ensure that No 20 can be moved more easily as a fitted vehicle when required.

No 44 'Dover Castle' (Class 08): There have been problems with battery charging and as a result starting the engine can prove unreliable. However the voltage regulator has been overhauled and improved reliability is expected. Many other minor maintenance tasks have been undertaken.

Class 33 'Ashford': In service though in need of remedial bodywork repairs.

Class 108 DMMU: In service



SECR family saloon under renovation, 15th February 2004

(John Liddell)

Rolling Stock

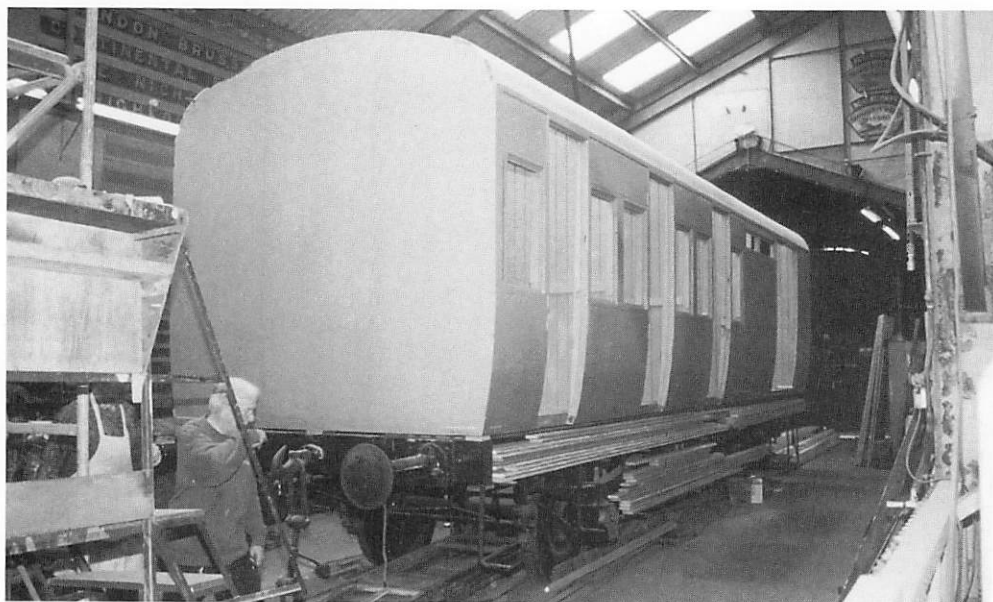
Millennium Project – Woolwich Coach (K&ESR No 67).

Progress on this project, which is being 50 per cent funded by the Millennium Commission, has been spectacular. For the first few weeks the coach was inside the shed, however, it almost appeared that the work was going backwards. All the side and end frame members were removed for remedial attention including the replacement of those timbers which were beyond repair. By the end of November, and thanks to careful planning by the staff involved, what appeared to be a jumble of parts had been transformed into a recognisable vehicle. A number of replacement steel roof hoops were obtained from an outside manufacturer and installed together with new matching wooded hoops in the passenger compartments. The latter items were made in-house. Preparatory work to the roof boards also went to an outside contractor – in this case a joinery firm most appropriately located on the site of Frittenden Road station. The boards themselves have only been partially installed at the time of writing to allow better illumination whilst the interior is reconstructed. Exterior and interior panelling is now complete and the

vehicle has compartment partitions for what is probably the first time since the 1930s. The seating bases have been constructed and the guard's handbrake wheel re-installed. The exterior has received several coats of grey primer but actual colour is to be seen inside the coach. Attention has turned to the reconstruction of the doors. It had been planned to contract this task out but it will now be undertaken in the carriage shed. Application has been made to the Millennium Commission for the first three installments of Lottery money and the first two payments received. Alan Brice, Julian Coppins and Phil Wood – not forgetting numerous volunteers – have all been prominent in the progress made so far. We remain very hopeful that the Woolwich Coach will see passenger carrying service for much of the 2004 season – and then we have Pullman Car Theodora to do.

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

Work has continued steadily on the Family Saloon whilst the Woolwich project has been underway. The body has been stripped, sanded and degreased ready for repainting and new mouldings made by Alan Brice (in between



Woolwich coach continues its rapid progress, 27th January 2004

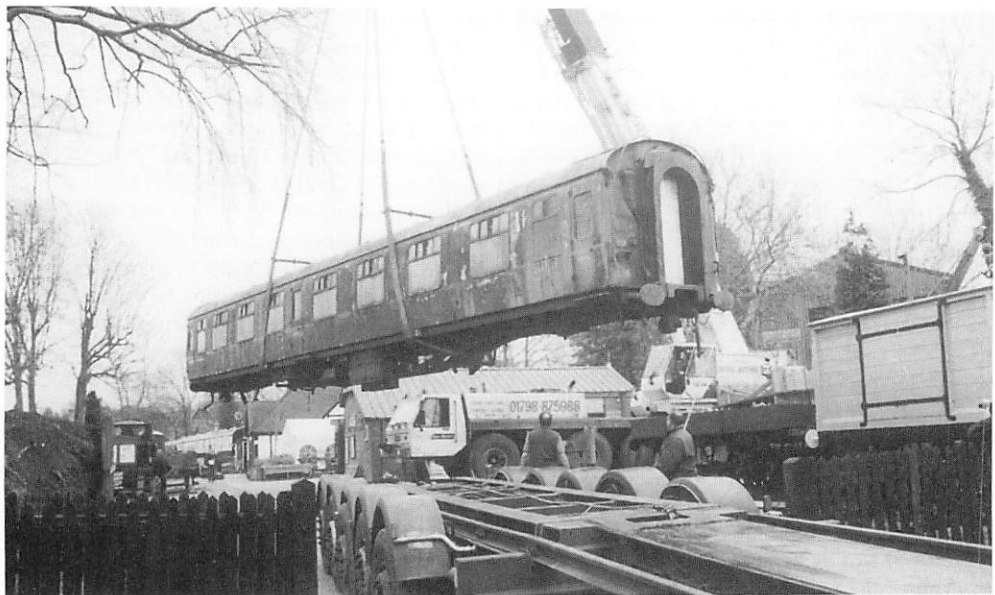
(John Liddell)

becoming a father -see 'People' below) and installed on the weather-prone 'south' side. The seating has been reupholstered by a firm in Maidstone and Carol Douglas has undertaken similar work on the interior side panels which are a prominent feature of this luxurious vehicle.

The existing carpet is to be retained and has been professionally cleaned.

Mark 1 RU No 69,

Everyone had been saying that the kitchen floor on the Pullman catering vehicle was going rotten, so despite C&W's tight work schedule,



Coach No 87 departs for the Cheddar Valley railway on 12th February 2004

(John Liddell)

time and money was found for the vehicle to come into the shed. In the event there was a pleasant surprise – the floor and underlying structure were quite sound and only the screws holding the chequer plating down were time expired! The floor was nonetheless replaced as planned in industrial vinyl and, as a precaution, the wall panel screws were renewed in stainless steel. Various work has been completed to the electrical system, the water pump has been moved from interior to exterior mounting and some bodywork items repaired. In addition, the RU has now again been named Diana. Thanks are due to Andre Freeman and Meg Gooch of

the Catering Department for their help with this work.

People

We offer our hearty congratulations to Craftsman/Supervisor Alan Brice and his partner Jo on the birth of their daughter Roberta during January.

Please note that Carriage & Wagon Working Week for 2004 will be held during 11th – 18th July. The main featured vehicles will be Pullman Car Theodora (a Millennium Commission & Lottery funded attraction) plus other possible items yet to be decided. Everyone welcome.

Infrastructure

Company Secretary's Report

Bernard Nicolas Sealy

Members should be aware that Bernard Nicholas Sealy, our former Finance Director, was charged with theft and false accounting following a complaint to Police by the Tenterden Railway Company. Mr Sealy was found guilty at Maidstone Crown Court and was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay compensation of £16,200 to the Tenterden Railway Company.

The company received payment from Mr Sealy of £16,200 in the form of a cheque from the Court Service.

This most regrettable matter is now closed: the jury found Mr Sealy guilty; the Judge imposed a penalty; and that penalty has been discharged in full.

Mr. Sealy resigned from membership of the Company on 3rd February 2004.

Change of company name

Early in January, following the necessary resolutions by the 2002 AGM and by the Board at its December 2003 meeting, confirmation was received from Companies House that the name of the Tenterden Railway Company Limited was changed to THE KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY COMPANY LIMITED with effect from 24th December 2003. The Registered Number, 1007871, remains the same. We are still legally the same body and our rights and legal obligations (to Bond Holders for example) continue unchanged. The Charity Commission has now also updated the Company's entry on the Register of Charities.

Trading subsidiary, Colonel Stephens Railway Enterprises Limited, is unaffected by this change.

2004 AGM

This will be held in Tenterden Town Hall at 2.00pm on Saturday 9th October 2004. The possibility of using a venue elsewhere was considered but it was concluded that Tenterden remained the best option. This item is for information. A formal notice will be issued in due course.

Nominations for the 2004 Election of Directors

Nomination forms are obtainable from the Company Secretary and should be returned completed, to the Company's Registered Office, by 2.00pm on 17th July 2004.

General Manager's Report

Once again a new year is with us; but what a change from two years ago when the finances were in such a poor state.

Visiting our stations you will see many changes for the better. Thanks to both the Tuesday and Gardening groups good things are happening all round. Site clearing has taken place and new gardens are being created.

At Tenterden the coach at the rear of the toilet block has gone, the catering tram is in position awaiting cleaning and painting, Phil Wood has been busy painting the toilet block, the buffers on the Pullman Dock are being restored and new security lighting is in place. The tram, a replica unit built by Balfour Beatty apprentices, is with us for a trial twelve month period. It is hoped that this will boost catering receipts at Tenterden.

Quite a transition that could not have been achieved without the help of the volunteers who work at the Railway, giving time and expertise.

Various departments will be reporting what they are doing this year but one point is worth a mention. The Maidstone group is generously paying for the Bodiam head shunt extension. This has been kindly agreed with the Rother Valley Railway Company, who are the owners of the land. The extension will offer stabling for up to ten vehicles which offers us the opportunity to move the coaches awaiting restoration, at Bodiam and Wittersham Road, out of site from our visitors. The trees surrounding the extension will shield the coaches which are mostly covered in unsightly tarpaulins.

The cascading effect will allow us to stable 'nice' vehicles at Bodiam and give the Permanent Way department valuable operating space at Wittersham Road. Once the ground frame is installed at Bodiam, the siding space will be useful for our restored wagons and will have easy access for shunting.

The Interreg funding has allowed us to look at signage and new signs are already in place at Wittersham Road. We are keeping the signs generic, with bi-lingual signs planned as part of the funding.

You will see several changes to our leaflets this year. Whilst they remain generic we have to constantly monitor what is and what is not allowed. We were recently challenged by the Advertising Standards Agency and Trading Standards regarding the use of the word steam. If you put steam in a leaflet then it is expected that a visitor will find steam in operation. If you

look at our 2004 leaflet the main heading is Kent & East Sussex Steam Railway. Inside we offer an off peak service, which consists of steam and DMMU. You will see how the two statements contradict each other. We know what it means, but those looking for loopholes in the system exploit our innocent approach.

Therefore on the Web Site we have substituted the word 'Heritage' for 'Steam', not to some peoples liking, but an accurate description of what we offer. We have added a disclaimer in literature to say we reserve the right to substitute a diesel for a steam service.

Our over worked computer system, used both by the bookings office and the various managers for general office work, needed the server upgrading, as it had reached its storage capacity. The booking system has been developed further and the database now holds details of over seven thousand visitors that are repeat customers. We are also looking at new ways to contact repeat customers who allow us to use an e-mail address as this saves on postage and envelope stuffing.

We are registered and monitored by the Data Protection Act and remove anyone from our data base who asks. Our database is also password protected with no access available from outside the Company.

This Railway is blessed to have so many volunteers who cover a multitude of tasks. Our recent open weekend has been worthwhile with many new volunteers joining. The expertise and dedication they bring will enhance our already expanding departments and progress much restoration work.

S&T Engineering

Much work has started to restore the overhead telephone wires to Bodiam. The current system extends from Tenterden to Northiam but was not restored beyond there during the Bodiam extension project. However during the project the existing poles were preserved and most are being restored to use. Cross-arms, stay wires and all the paraphernalia you would expect are required before the actual wires can be strung. A few new poles have been put in, where the old ones were life expired, but all poles will require a

cross-arm, or if they have one of the old centre insulators then they have received a short two pin cross-arm.

Between Padgham's Curve and Bodiam in addition to the telephone circuit an extra wire will be required to implement a train arrival treadle for the station. This addition is eagerly awaited by the station staff as they have no reliable method of determining when an approaching train is actually upon them.



Sawing the oak trunk for the Hawkhurst crane jib, 14th November 2003

(John Liddell)

It is hoped that the actual wires can be restored during the summer, with the Bodiam end receiving first attention to put the treadle to use as soon as possible.

The overhead wire gang has seen many of Chris Lowry's old gang back at work including Paul Vidler, Alan Sampson, John Pocock, Simon Marsh, Mike Artlett and Boris Perkins and without them the project would simply have not got off the ground.

Meantime the existing network has not been

ignored. Much detailed vegetation clearance has taken place to keep trees clear of the wires. New galvanised wire has been put up from Wittersham to Rolvenden for the exchange tie line between Rolvenden and Northiam. A complete day was spent, with a train, moving the various poles, reels of wire and ladders to keep progress going on the various mini-projects around the railway. Additionally two new poles were placed while there was a gang on hand to help. This included the final pole going in at Bodiam station.

Permanent Way

The closed season 2003-04 has seen the Balfour Beatty Tamper on the Railway. Based at Wittersham Rd P.Way Mess Room the Tamper Crew Trainer and Trainees managed to tamp over half of the line and donated ballast to fill some of the holes they had created. As a result of their efforts the line is probably in the best condition it has ever been in. With the return of the regulator in March, Tenterden bank will be tamped and the 10mph signs removed. We continue to patrol weekly, maintaining safety. The work at 'Lamings' in March 2003 has

proved to be well worthwhile, with no visible movement of the 'Slip'. The new drains have kept the water off the trackbed which has dried out nicely.

The Tenterden Gang have been busy spot resleepering the yard and down the bank. Point timbers at Henry's crossing have been replaced and we look forward to doing a lot more work in the closed season 2004.

Since Christmas we have cleared Bodiam Headshunt of decades of vegetation with

bonfires most Fridays and Sundays. Many trees and shrubs were chainsawed into bonfire size chunks and hauled down the trackbed to the fires. Unsurprisingly, there are no serviceable sleepers left and in some places there are no sleepers left at all. The sweeping downhill curve towards Junction Road is clear and we look forward to laying track at some stage subject to legal agreement(s) between K&ESR and RVR. My thanks to the generosity of the Maidstone Area Group which has donated sufficient funds to enable us to hire in plant for a week and to

purchase sufficient sub base and ballast for the project. We hope to lay 220 yards of track complete with drainage ditches and stock fencing.

If you would like a taster day out with PWay or wish to renew old acquaintances, give Geoff Crouch a call on 01580 714410, Monday to Thursdays, 9.30am to 6.00pm. Your day could include a healthy 3 mile track walk or a bash at spot re-sleepering or even a day ballasting the track, we will be pleased to hear from you.

People

Peter Benge-Abbott

In the 104 year history of the Kent & East Sussex Railway there have been a handful of significant figures without whom the line would not have survived. Holman Stephens' successor William Austen is a well known example, but, from the preservation era, it would be entirely unjust not to include Peter Benge-Abbott who died in November 2003 at the age of 77.

Peter first came to the Railway – as a volunteer – in 1966. Like a number who have become involved over later decades, he was not a Railway enthusiast but found the project to reopen the K&ESR appealing. He was also looking for, but perhaps did not always find, relaxation from running his family's successful contract painting business. Such experience of commerce and management is of high value to a heritage railway at any time – in the late 1960s on the K&ESR it was priceless. That was the era when, in the late summer of 1967, the first application for a Light Railway Transfer Order had been refused and it was in this context that Peter's greatest contribution began. Right from the start of the struggle to get the decision reversed his expertise in negotiations was needed – he was at the first meeting with Ashford's MP, William (now Lord) Deedes.

The K&ESR was a predominantly youthful organisation at that time and by the spring of 1968 it was realised that a person of suitable experience and gravitas was required to deal with the 'powers that be'. Peter was that person. He had attended K&ES Railway Association Committee meetings as an observer since the previous September but, following a 'grass roots' demand from the volunteers, he joined the Committee in April and immediately became

Chairman. He later commented that he found "The spirit of the volunteers good, but they and the Committee lacked direction". Peter immediately put an internal reorganisation into place and, most significantly, reassessed the aims of the project. He persuaded the Association to concentrate on the Tenterden - Rolvenden section in the first instance, and to abandon the original objective of a full commercial freight and passenger service in favour of a more credible scheme for a tourist railway. All this pointed the way forward although the changes did not always meet with universal approval. In those years there was probably no one else who could have carried it off. The new approach also enabled Philip Shaw's formulation of the then novel Guarantee Company – Registered Charity style of organisation which was put into place in 1971 and is still with us.

Peter resigned as Chairman in the spring of 1970 for business and family reasons having guided the K&ESR through the 'end of the beginning' – the difficult transition from initial failure to renewed hope. He was succeeded by his deputy, Peter Davis, who, together with Philip Shaw and others, saw that hope through to the purchase of the line, the granting of the LRTD and reopening. Nonetheless, to this day Peter Davis entirely credits the survival of the Railway beyond the turbulent 1960s to the achievements of his predecessor.

Peter Benge-Abbott was out of contact with the Railway for some years. On being asked, in the early 1990s, to help with research into the history of the preservation era he was reported to have said "That chapter of my life is closed". Maybe, but on meeting him one of his first questions was "What's happening with the

Norwegian?" He was awarded an Honorary Life Membership at the 2001 Annual General Meeting in recognition of his relatively brief but pivotal role in the Railway's revival. NP

Malcolm Dunstan

Longer standing members will be sorry to hear of the death of Malcolm Dunstan in July 2003 at his home in Tunbridge Wells. Known affectionately by many early volunteers as 'Big M', he became a member of the railway in the early 1960s and held the post of Membership Secretary almost from its inception, until the early 1980's.

He was also a long term member of the Locomotive Trust, remaining so until his death. In recent years Malcolm visited Tenterden only very occasionally, as he had no transport of his own and became less inclined to undertake the journey. He continued to work on a part-time basis with a newsagent in Tunbridge Wells, on whose behalf he operated a newspaper and sweet stall at Tunbridge Wells Central Station for some years. Those who came into contact with Malcolm will remember that he was a very jovial, outgoing, larger than life character who contributed a great deal to the Kent & East Sussex Railway in its formative years. CN

Groups

Ashford Area Group

The Ashford Area Group began its 2004 series of monthly meetings with a fascinating evening on Irish Preservation by Leslie Mc Allister. This was followed in February by an excellent presentation by Fred Garner on further aspects of the redevelopment of Kings Cross and the High Speed link. Our programme continues with:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 17th March | 'A Tour de France by Train' by Michael Bunn |
| 21st April | 'The Gloucester Warwickshire Railway' by Mike Dickson |
| 19th May | 'The Preservation Scene in East Anglia' by Gerald Siviour |
| 16th June | 'Vegetation Control on Network Rail and Clearance for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link' by Mark Yonge. |
| 21st July | 'Eddystone Rescue & Restoration and Southern Locomotives Ltd.' |

We have arranged a visit to the Birchley Railway, Biddenden on Saturday 31st July, and an afternoon visit to Chatham Steam Restoration, Rochester, in mid May. Other visits are being arranged, and details will be available at our group meetings. These are held on the third Wednesday in the month at Ashford Rail Staff Club, Beaver Road, Ashford, at 7.30pm, and all visitors are very welcome. More details and programme from Eric Graves tel: 01233 623687

Maidstone Area Group

The Group has attended various Shows over the

past 3 months, at Gillingham Model World and Broadstairs Model Railway Exhibition before Christmas and at the Dartford Model Railway Exhibition at the end of January. At all these Shows we had a stand where a number of items from the Tenterden Shop, including many of the ever popular Thomas items, were for sale. The amount raised from these sales was in excess of £1700 which was handed to the Shop. In addition at Gillingham and Broadstairs many Santa leaflets were handed out and at Dartford, Thomas leaflets and the current timetable were distributed.

For those who visit the Railway you may have noticed that the Tenterden yard crane situated outside the Carriage and Wagon Work Shop has collapsed due to rot. The crane was built by Ransomes to a pattern first made for the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. It was originally situated in the goods yard at Hawkhurst Station, which opened in September 1893 and closed in June 1961. It was rescued by some Members of the Railway and re-erected in the yard in the early 1990s.

The Group has agreed to finance the replacement jib at a cost of £950. The new jib, which weighs between three and four tonnes, has been manufactured and shaped prior to being craned into place.

The Group has also recently agreed to put £3,000 towards extending the Bodiam Headshunt by approximately 650 feet. Although the land belongs to the Rother Valley Railway Company, they have agreed that the Kent and East Sussex Railway can berth stock there which

is waiting for restoration. The work will be carried out by our own Permanent Way Department and to our main line standard so that when the Rother Valley Railway extends towards Robertsbridge very little work should be required to bring it into passenger use.

The Groups open meetings for the rest of this year are listed below.

- 26th May 'The Land of the Garretts and the Railways of Zimbabwe' by Nigel Menzies
- 30th June 'Vegetation Clearance for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link' by Mark Yonge
- 29th September 'The Croydon Tram Link' by Stephen Parascandolo
- 27th October 'RESCO Railways' by Doug Lindsay
- 24th November 'The Railways of the Ukraine and Finland' by Donald Wilson

For further details please contact Dave Tibbatts on 01580 763736 after 7.00pm.

Tuesday Group

Most of the time has been spent at Northiam



*Tuesday gang repair the rear of No 1 cottage at Northiam
(Veronica Hopker)*

tidying and smartening up the site.

By far the largest project is the repairing and painting of No 1 Staff Cottage which has been neglected over the years and a considerable proportion of the building has become very rotten indeed. Gordon Lilley (Nobby) has helped us on a few occasions and did a very good job rebuilding the chimney stack. This means we can now light the fire – the first time for many years I suspect! (If anybody knows of the last time there was a fire in the grate at No 1 I would be interested to hear from them.)

Some 300 bare rooted privet hedge plants have been planted along the back of No 1 Platform and 68 Lawson Cypress Gold planted at the back of the site. The rusty metal uprights which marked the boundary of the coal yard have been cut down to ground level and disposed of. All this work was done to help out the gardening group which is short of volunteers.

A new running in board for Wittersham Rd has been manufactured together with a new Wittersham Rd sign for the signal box. Both have now been put in place. These are of aluminium construction which appears the same as the previous wooden ones but, hopefully, will



*The front step of No 1 cottage receives attention
(Veronica Hopker)*



The gardening team planting the privet hedge at Northiam

(Veronica Hopker)

be maintenance free and last a great deal longer. It is the intention in the fullness of time to replace most of the wooden signage on the Railway.

Some of the Tuesday Group, being very versatile, helped Dave Tibbatts with the Trolley Service over the Santa Special period. **Gardening Group** As this is the first edition for 2004 should this be a 'look back' or a 'look forward' time? Perhaps just a brief re-cap on what has been achieved.

The garden at Tenterden in front of the office building is now maturing and hopefully will be fully planted by this summer. Wittersham Road has been 'attacked' and the bank strimmed ready for the spring. What was a heap of spoil from the installation of the 'facilities' has been transformed into a garden bank which is slowly being planted up, including hundreds of bulbs. Over the next few months perennials will be added so that in time this should mature into a very attractive area. We also have plans for 'the bank' but that is for the future!

Northiam gardens are slowly progressing and, providing we can overcome the rabbits (anyone fancy rabbit pie?), will be flowering by the time summer arrives.

Bodiam of course is in the capable hands of the Stevens sisters who continue to keep 'their patch' looking great as always.

Rolvenden has not been overlooked but it is a difficult Station to 'cultivate' due to the Weeding Train killing off anything that grows near the track. However, we plan to add a few more tubs and will have another look at the possibility of fighting the brambles.

At Tenterden changes are taking place due to the arrival of the tram and the altering of the flower bed. There will be changes as there always are with gardens. Old plants reach the end of their growing lives and so will be replaced. There is a great deal of work to be done at Tenterden to get all the garden areas looking really good and cared for. With help from the Tuesday Group and Phil Wood this will be achieved over the next few months.

We are currently planning a special event weekend in August called 'Stations in Bloom'. We are already receiving publicity for this event from the Royal Horticultural Society with more to follow later in the year. The main focus of the weekend is to attract people to the Railway.

Rother Valley Railway (East Sussex) Ltd – David Felton

In circumstances which virtually parallel the TRC's recent change of name, the name Rother Valley Railway Ltd became available, and the opportunity was taken in January to change to the historically correct name. Accordingly the

Company is now the 'Rother Valley Railway Ltd'.

There have also been other changes. For personal reasons, Gardner Crawley, Mark Yonge and Rick Edmondson have resigned as Directors, although Gardner continues as Chairman of the Trustees of the Rother Valley Heritage Trust, the owning Charity. The Board of Directors of the Company is currently David Felton, Helen Brett, Dick Arblaster and Roy Seaborne.

On the ground, work has concentrated in recent weeks on clearance and areas of undergrowth and brambles opposite Oak Tree Sidings, and in particular on the embankments approaching the first bridge, have been cleared.

Thanks to member Gemma Barclay, the RVR website has been re-invigorated and is now being maintained on almost a daily basis. For the latest news and views, go to www.rothervalleyrailway.co.uk.

Thanks to all members who helped and lodged forms of support or wrote in to Rother District Council endorsing Policy EM8 to the revised draft of the Rother District Local Plan. This is the policy supporting the extension of the railway from Bodiam to Robertsbridge.

News from the CFBS ~ Philip Pacey

November saw the arrival at St Valéry of 4-6-0T E332, dating from 1904, one of 12 identical locomotives built by Franco-Belge for the Réseau Breton. Since the closure of the Réseau Breton, E332 has been at the Blomay-Chamby railway in Switzerland, where it was long ago relegated to be a static exhibit in the museum. I'm told that the CFBS has had thoughts of acquiring it since the idea was first floated in an Indian railways sleeping car crossing the Ganges plain in December 1986! It is expected that it will enter service in 2005 or 2006. It will then be possible for the CFBS to run occasional Réseau Breton mixed trains, using the ABCDf carriage and various wagons from the RB.

A limited customer satisfaction survey, conducted during a holiday weekend and based on 138 completed questionnaires, revealed a high level (91%) of unqualified satisfaction. Visitors who wanted improvements asked for more trains, better parking facilities, discounted family tickets, and toilets at every station.

The final figure for passenger journeys during 2003 is an astonishing 113,105. This has encouraged the CFBS to schedule more trains in

2004, notably in the spring, and on Sundays and a few other days in October (and November 1st). My black-and-white version of the 2004 timetable is given below; if you are planning a visit, please double check times on the CFBS Web site (www.chemin-fer-baie-somme.asso.fr) and/or on arrival.

Special occasions during 2004 include 'Transbaie' on 13th June, an opportunity to enjoy a guided walk across the bay (strongly recommended), travelling on the train from Noyelles (departing 10.20) to St Valéry, and back from Le Crotoy to arrive at Noyelles at 18.40. There will be two opportunities to see steam trains at Cayeux – at the Fête de la Gare de Cayeux on 4th July, and on the Journée de Patrimoine on 19th September. On both occasions extra trains will operate; on 4th July there will be a shuttle service between Lanchère and Cayeux, and on 19th September a steam-hauled mixed train will run between Noyelles and Cayeux. Once again, special trains operated by SNCF will bring day visitors from Paris, Saint-Quentin, and Amiens to Noyelles, from where a CFBS train will carry them to St Valéry, on Sundays and holidays in July and August. Evening dining trains are scheduled for Saturdays 24th April, 15th and 29th May, 5th and 26th June, and 4th and 18th September, and on Fridays 9th and 23rd July, 6th, 20th and 27th August. For these, early booking is essential; details are available from the CFBS, BP31, 80230 St Valéry sur Somme, tel. +03 22 26 96 96, fax + 03 22 26 95 66.

The next Fête de la Vapeur is scheduled for 22nd-23rd April, 2006.

Timetable 2004

Cayeux		15.30	18.30
<u>St Valéry</u>		<u>16.15</u>	<u>19.15</u>
St Valéry	10.45	15.30	16.30 17.30
Noyelles	11.15	16.00	17.00 18.00
<u>Le Crotoy</u>	<u>11.45</u>	<u>16.30</u>	<u>18.30</u>
Le Crotoy	12.00	15.30	17.30
Noyelles	12.30	16.00	17.00 18.00
<u>St Valéry</u>	<u>13.00</u>	<u>16.30</u>	<u>17.30 18.30</u>
St Valéry	14.00	17.45	
Cayeux	15.00	18.30	

Bold type: every Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday, 3rd April – 26th September; Thursdays 15th, 22nd, 29th April, 20th May, 17th June – 9th September

Regular type: Saturdays April 24th, May 1st, 8th,

and 22nd, every Saturday in July and August, and 4th September; Sundays: every Sunday 4th April - 26th September; Mondays April 12th, May 31st, and every Monday in July and August; Tuesdays 20th and 27th April, 29th June, and every Tuesday throughout July and August; Wednesdays 21st and 28th April, 30th June, and every Wednesday throughout July and August; Thursdays 22nd and 29th April, 30th June, and every Thursday in July and August; Fridays May 21st and every Friday in July and August

Italic type: Saturdays: every Saturday July 10th - August 28th; Sundays May 30th, every Sunday July 11th - August 29th, and 19th September; Tuesdays: every Tuesday 6th July - 24th August; Wednesdays: every Wednesday in July and August; Thursdays: every Thursday July 8th - August 26th

Special timetable: October 3rd, 10th, 17th, 23rd, 24th, 27th, 30th, 31st; 1st November*

St Valery	10.45	14.30	16.30
Noyelles	11.15	15.00	17.00
Le Crotoy	<u>11.45</u>	<u>15.30</u>	17.30
Le Crotoy	12.00	14.30	16.30
Noyelles	12.30	15.00	17.00
St Valery	12.30	15.30	17.30

***Visitors are warned that this timetable may have to be modified as a result of work on the canal bridge at St Valery.** (I imagine that in these circumstances trains will run as shown, but from and to St Valery Canal).

N.B. Regular services between St Valery and Cayeux are diesel hauled. All other services are steam-hauled.

THE K&ESR 300 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

HAVE YOU JOINED THE 300 CLUB YET?

September 2003 Tenterden Mess Room

1st	Sandra Marsh	(129)	£80.00
2nd	Keith D Brown	(178)	£60.00
3rd	Mr B J West	(548)	£50.00
4th	Kevin McCardell	(457)	£30.00
5th	Clive Norman	(389)	£20.00
6th	Mr John Debling	(104)	£15.00
7th	Gillian Howie	(188)	£10.00
8th	Mr V E Bradley	(068)	£5.00

November 2003 Tenterden Mess Rooms

1st	Tim Spafford	(516)	£60.00
2nd	Ron Dawes	(034)	£45.00
3rd	Frim Halliwell	(029)	£35.00
4th	Frim Halliwell	(028)	£25.00
5th	Tim Spafford	(517)	£20.00
6th	Peter Landon	(323)	£10.00
7th	Mr R D Brown	(612)	£5.00

October 2003 Tenterden Mess Room

1st	Mr A J York	(187)	£60.00
2nd	Terry Hannocks	(562)	£45.00
3rd	John M Whitcombe	(429)	£35.00
4th	Mr & Mrs D Edwards	(545)	£25.00
5th	A P Koolman	(568)	£20.00
6th	Paul Hutchinson	(496)	£10.00
7th	Tony Pearson	(001)	£5.00

December 2003 Tenterden Buffet

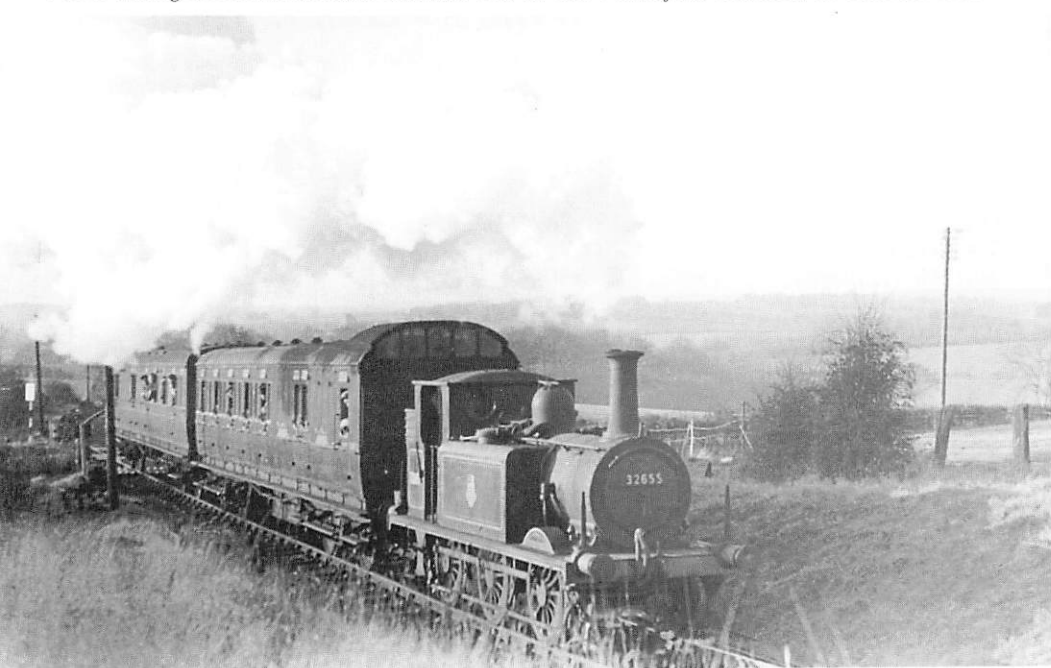
1st	Lawrie Read	(321)	£100.00
2nd	Philippa Jones	(295)	£100.00
3rd	Frank Lambert	(384)	£100.00
4th	T R Hailey	(504)	£100.00
5th	Keith Howell	(537)	£85.00
6th	Suzanne Ward	(004)	£75.00
7th	R Duke	(049)	£65.00
8th	M Keable	(317)	£55.00
9th	Mrs P C Hoad	(345)	£45.00
10th	Joan Williams	(281)	£35.00
11th	John Barnes	(396)	£25.00
12th	Tony Pearson	(001)	£10.00
13th	William Sime	(426)	£5.00

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

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



31065 leaving St. Michaels towards Tenterden with the 12:30 train from Headcorn, 28 December 1953



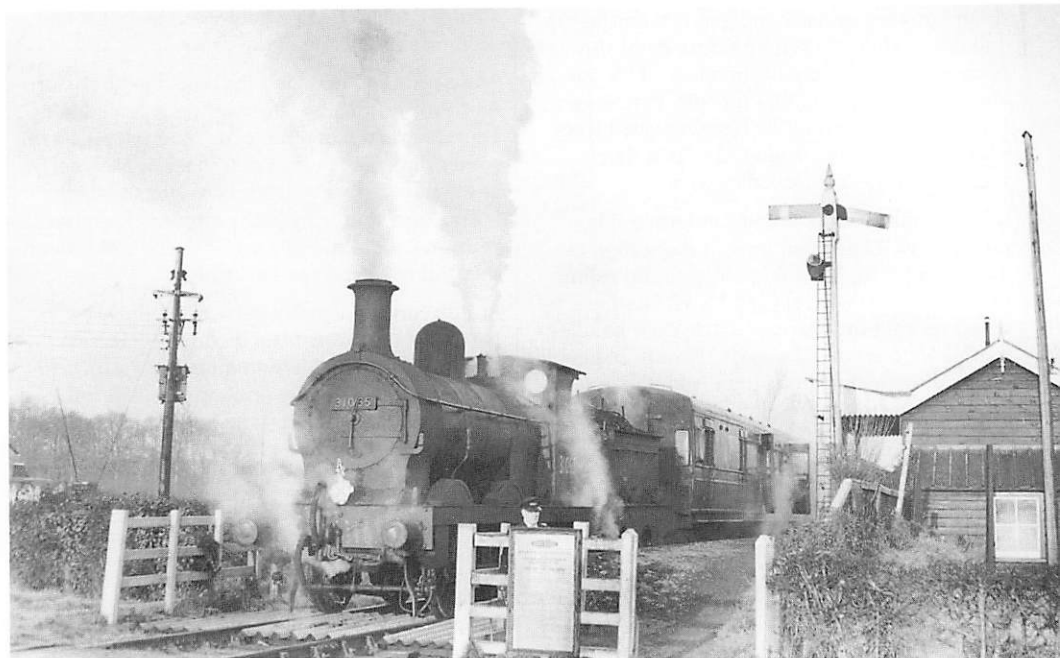
32655 ascends Cranbrook Road crossing with the 12:30 from Robertsbridge to Tenterden, 2nd January 1954

Last Trains to Headcorn

Photographed by Colin Hogg (courtesy Mike Esau)



32678 arrives at Rolvenden with the 12:20 train from Robertsbridge, 2nd January 1954



31065 at High Halden Road on the 8:50 Headcorn to Robertsbridge, 2nd January 1954.

Saturday 2nd January 1954

Ralph Gillam recalls the last train round trip with a party from the Norbury and South London Transport Club from London on that fateful day.

Charing Cross had all the bustle of a mid 1950s London steam terminus as our train pulled out across the bridge bound for Tonbridge hauled by Battle of Britain No 34098.

At Tonbridge a change of trains saw our party continuing forward behind 31756 class L1 on a stopping train to Headcorn under a grey overcast January sky.

At Headcorn, for a few more hours a junction station for the K&ESR branch, awaited a rather special empty stock train. This appeared from the Ashford direction behind 31064, class O1, which detached itself, ran around the six coaches coupled up to the rearmost and pushed them forward past the trailing connection to the K&ESR. Further manoeuvres found the train with its engine, tender first, ready to depart from the curving K&ESR platform. Whistles from the guard and locomotive urged the milling groups on the platform to board and shortly we were off aboard the last departure for Robertsbridge.

The short lengths of chaired bullhead rail laid on ash and in some places broken bricks and stones set the coaches swaying and gently bouncing up and down while blackening smoke drifts through open windows to hang in corridors. This was always the prettiest half of the line, here even in winter the closeness of the bare branched trees filled the landscape. Unlike the open water meadows of the Rother Valley section.

At the stations empty sidings underlined the intention to "close to all traffic", the section to Tenterden. The Biddenden loop found sister O1, 31065, and two very old LSWR coaches which sported full commode style door handles, waiting for our special to pass. Groups of people met and some joined our train from the grass grown platforms unaccustomed to so many intending passengers.

By the time we arrived at Rolvenden the train had become crowded with people of all ages intending to sample their local line for the last time. Here 31064 left the train and Terrier 32655 pulled all six coaches up to allow the other Terrier 32678 to join on at the rear.

In the gathering winter gloom whistles were exchanged and the little engines gradually

gathered themselves for the final public journey to Robertsbridge. At each station the crowds came some to wave some to squeeze aboard and the later the train became, but what did it matter, the wake had become a festive occasion.

Darkness cloaked the Terriers and their six green coaches as they struggled up and round the last curve into a Robertsbridge that had expected it an hour earlier!

The platform looked more like an Ealing comedy in the making. Flares lit a bizarre scene, at centre stage was a territorial army unit complete with their rifles, all ready to salute the arrival and departure. On arrival they were overwhelmed with dozens of passengers emptying from the train in a mass scrum. It was like Dad's Army meets St Trinians as, in the background, the by now empty coaches were shunted out to allow the Terriers to take water. Once this was done and the coaches filled up again the ranks of the elderly Territorials were again infiltrated by locals eager to wave off the last train for Headcorn, causing the military to abandon their attempts to present arms for fear of injuring someone in the process.

More whistling heralded this, the final departure on a journey that would never be repeated in its entirety ever again off into an all enveloping winter darkness. A darkness that saw long delays at wayside stations and level crossings as the train emptied little by little en route. Each time with smiles and friendly waves after an old friend they did not expect to see again.

At Rolvenden a lengthy delay while the O1 No 31064 took over from the leading Terrier, saw a double deck bus and quite a few cars held up at the level crossing until, with 32655 still coupled at the rear, the train left for Tenterden. Leaving behind in the yard 32678 and in some sidings two birdcage coaches, one a corridor version now rendered surplus by the closure.

A mighty struggle up the bank to Tenterden succeeded, amid showers of sparks from the two engines. Wisely it was decided to uncouple the banking engine, but allow it to continue banking as far as Tenterden St Michaels at least. Another final departure but now at each station it would

become more muted as the realisation dawned on everyone that this was indeed final.

But one more surprise was in store at St Michaels, the old wooden platform had succumbed to the large numbers of last day visitors and was in ruins. Nevertheless the scheduled stop was made and someone got off wriggling past the flimsy tapes that fluttered from the doomed structure like warning flags on a sunken wreck.

A whistle from the leading engine and with some assistance from 32655 we were off. Being in the last coach I watched the Terrier drop back into the darkness, with a final crow of whistling it stopped, reversed and the glimmer of its lamps was lost in the wooded gloom gathering behind us.

At the last station, lonely Frittenden Road, only a porter was present to wave us on amid the occasional shower of sparks when the engine was worked hard to keep its load moving. Then a sight to be remembered as we drew into the curved platform at Headcorn, a row of hurricane lamps along the otherwise unlit platform edge greeted us, it was all over.

Postscript: The delayed arrival meant that our connections had been lost, on from Headcorn.

Control came to the rescue, authorising the attachment of a passenger coach to an up Mail train. The arrival of Schools 30933, King's Canterbury, on this train saw us on our way to Tonbridge, would you get a service like that today?

The author is President of the Norbury and South London Transport Club.

50 years on; 30 years on

A re-enactment of the closure to passenger services on 2nd January 1954 will take place over the weekend 27th/28th March. On both days a small closure ceremony will take place at each station. Terrier 32678 (which ran on the last day) will be in steam, as will the P class, diesel 03 and the Ford diesel.

The following weekend, in true celebratory style, Cranbrook Town Band will lead celebrations in a re-enactment of the triumphal re-opening of the line in 1974. Locomotives in steam will include No 25, Terrier 32678 and the Norwegian. An air display from the Headcorn team will swoop low to salute the achievements of the railway.

We had hoped to borrow 01 class locomotive 31065, saved for preservation by Mr Esmond Lewis-Evans, and now working on the Bluebell Railway. However, despite discussions with the Bluebell management this has not proved possible.

Special Events on the K&ESR in 2004

May

8 & 9,
22 & 23 Heritage Diesel days

June

5 & 6 Celebrating the line's
mixed trains
12 & 13 The First World War
recalled by the Essex
Regiment
19 & 20
26 & 27 Day out with Thomas

July

3 Family History Day –
explore your family tree
with experts at Tenterden
10 & 11 Small Loco Weekend
17 & 18 Diesel days with visiting
locos

July (cont)

25 MG Car Rally

August

7 & 8 Stations in Bloom

September

11 & 12 Hoppers' Weekend –
remembering the golden
age of hop picking
18 & 19
25 & 26 Day out with Thomas

October

9 & 10 Austin 'Counties' Car Rally
25-29 Spooky Hallowe'en

December

4 & 5
11 & 12 The famous Santa Specials
18 & 19 with presents, free drinks
22,23 &-24 and chocolate

How Did We Do in 2003?

Year to December	2003*	2002	2001	2000	1999
Bank Balance	152,402	98,267	(76,946)	(156,467)	(259,035)
Stocks/Debtors	39,929	34,311	55,025	56,638	128,516
Current Assets	192,331	132,578	(21,921)	(99,829)	(130,519)
Trade creditors	60,418	104,295	118,476	80,716	294,049
Tax & SS	39,955	42,284	69,590	108,442	175,938
Accruals etc.	67,931	79,499	99,534	55,327	60,906
Other	47,138	45,307	38,297	28,612	39,754
Current Liabilities	215,442	271,385	325,897	273,097	570,647
Net current liabilities	23,111	138,807	347,818	372,926	701,166
Secured loan	381,821	412,403	439,250	468,330	310,619
Northiam Bonds	169,473	169,473	169,473	169,473	169,473
Bodiam Bonds	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Long term debt	1,051,294	1,081,876	1,108,723	1,137,803	980,092
Total Net debt**	898,892	983,609	1,185,669	1,294,270	1,239,127

* estimated

** = long term debt with bank balance

The annual audit of the Company's accounts is due to be completed in April and until then we are not in a position to comment in detail on the results. However, it is clear that we recorded a significant overall profit, although it may be lower than the previous year. More importantly, the table shows that we reduced our loan/bank creditors once again in 2003 to a touch under £900,000. This compares with approximately £1,300,000 at the peak of our debt problems in 2000. Furthermore, our trade creditors/tax liabilities have shown a dramatic reduction since 2000 and are now down to normal levels. The

upshot is that at the end of 2003 our total net current liabilities were very modest. This dramatic change in the fortunes of the company has been achieved only by adopting strict budgeting and financial disciplines. Our overall objective is to further reduce our levels of debt without prejudicing the capital investment requirements of the business. We are mindful of the fact that the Northiam bearer bonds come up for repayment in 2007 and we shall therefore be setting aside annual amounts to reserve from 2003 in order to provide for this liability.

Tickets Please!

Our annual review of passenger numbers
compiled by Ken Dow with commentary by
Philip Shaw

2002					2003				
	Op. Days	Trains	Paying Passengers	Avg. per Train		Op. days	Trains	Paying Passengers	Avg. per train
January	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
February	9	64	8533	133		6	48	5747	120
March	4	21	1904	91		6	50	4782	96
April	13	69	4080	59		17	93	6937	75
May	15	96	6817	71		22	130	8715	67
June	24	165	12029	73		21	121	10794	89
July	23	122	9521	78		26	138	10526	76
August	31	166	15663	94		31	167	15684	94
September	17	111	11516	104		19	112	11033	99
October	17	86	3432	40		13	66	4017	61
November	3	15	438	29		2	10	301	30
December	12	80	12637	158		12	83	12221	147
	168	995	86570	87		175	1018	90757	89
Pullmans		34	1821	54			33	1659	50
Charters		24	1411	59			21	1136	54
Sunday Lunches		23	1134	49			20	1175	59
Sunday Teas		1	55	55			0	0	
Privileges			1153					1853	
			92144					96580	
<i>Bookings from:</i>									
Tenterden			35789					42925	
Northiam			4733					4710	
Bodiam			4051					4645	
On train			1388					1647	
Pre-booked			40609					36830	
			86570					90757	
Notes:									
Total Thomas			21325					16679	

*Easter 2002 13/4 to 16/4; 2003 18/4 to 21/4

Total passengers carried in 2003 increased by more than 4% over 2002 to 96,580, which was also close to the 98,669 achieved in 2001, but still below the 2000 figure of 112,154. The 2003 figure would have been significantly better but for the steady decline in the number of 'Thomas' passengers. This may reflect a general waning of interest, but we have also felt it necessary to cut back the number of operating days in February to lessen the risk to our finances in the event of inclement winter weather. Thomas is still very good business, but it carries a high fixed overhead cost, irrespective of the number of visitors. The loss of passengers has therefore been

accompanied by a reduction in operating costs, so the end result has not been as negative as the numbers suggest. The fall in Thomas numbers is, of course, also reflected in a drop in the total number of pre-booked passengers from all sources shown in the table.

The number of running days was increased from 168 to 175 last year, but the key statistic in measuring profitability is the number of passengers carried per train and this improved from 87 to 89. It also compares favourably with 83 per train in 2000. Santa specials continued to trade strongly and we ran full capacity trains in most cases.

The Signal Box



Anthony Cooke taking tea in Rolvenden Signalbox with all signals pulled off for the next down train.

Ding – Calling attention. Yes this is the usual start to the day in all of our signal boxes. Swiftly followed (providing there is a repeat from the other box) by, 5-5-5, opening the signal box. All bell codes are repeated by your next signalbox. One in the case of Tenterden and Northiam; two boxes if you are at Rolvenden or Wittersham.

There then follows a testing of instruments. And then – making some tea!

The above I trust illustrates the initial complexity of being a signalman. So just how do you become one?

We of course assume you are a member.

Firstly, attendance on a course of 12 lectures usually commencing in January, covering all aspects of signalling, rules, practice etc.

These usually take place every three weeks

on alternate Saturdays and Sundays. Some sort of practical follows each lecture. These are varied, from walking each station site, to visiting each box, hand moving of points, hand signalling in the event of the failure of a signal, emergency speed restrictions, and acting as pilot man when the tablet or key systems (what we call block instruments) break down. Fortunately the latter are rare.

Whilst this is going on there will be a day's work at each box.

Then having been allocated to a specific box, by our Chief Signalman, Clive Norman, you will work a series of at least 9 training turns at that box.

Then you are a signalman? No you are not!

There is next a rules test with a pass mark of at least 60%. So far so good, but then you

have to pass out at your allocated box, by working a fairly heavy day in terms of trains, under the excruciating eyes of Clive Norman, at the end of which, if you see him get out his red pen and start writing in the train register, you will know you have passed.

It is a good feeling to see the words, "xxx has passed out at this the yyy box, this day; signed Clive Norman".

So is it worthwhile? Yes it is and it's enjoyable. I am afraid you have to pass out at each box having done training turns and retake the rules test at intervals depending on your previous pass mark. Each box has a different feel, different numbers of levers, different complexity, some are in the public eye, (TN), some relatively private, (RN), some out in the country with little contact with the public, (WM), and one relatively new, and with two platforms (NM).

Ultimately, the signalman is responsible for the safety of trains and therefore the passengers. Without his or her agreement,

nothing moves on the railway. Yes we do have the fairer sex as signalmen or should I say signalwomen? It is not a strenuous task, despite the fact that some trainees have trouble pulling certain levers; it's more of a knack!

As I write this, a signalman's course, usually held every other year, is just about to be completed, with the rules test at the end of January. There have been five regular attendees, some have already passed out as crossing keepers, and all have been allocated to boxes.

Those who would like to consider becoming a signalman should visit myself or any other signalman at any box. I am positive you will be made most welcome, shown round, even, but don't tell the Chief, perhaps being allowed to pull one or two levers without compromising safety of trains!

Anthony Cooke, signalman at Tenterden sometimes, more usually at Rokvenden, and a trainee at Northiam!



The author on the steps at Tenterden signal box

The Buckets

Since reopening of the K&ESR as a heritage line, a mainstay of the locomotive fleet has been the class variously known as Austerities*, J94s, Hunslet 18" and, in K&ESR operating circles at least, Buckets†. Brian Janes sets out the background and origins of these rugged, if not always loved, saddle tanks.



No 23 at Stewarts Lane for tyre turning on 9th May 1981

(Marshall Vine)

Sixty-odd years ago it became clear that an invasion of Europe was possible and a massive build up of resources was necessary. The need for extra motive power on the railways of Britain and at least initially on the Continent was paramount. For shunting, the Ministry of Supply – who ordered government locomotives – was heavily under the influence of R A Riddles, one of Stanier's assistants on the LMS and soon to be British Railways rolling stock supremo. The LMS faction, narrow-minded as they often could be, chose the LMS Standard shunter, known to many as the Jinty. However, under pressure from the locomotive building industry, it was sensibly decided that an industrial tank locomotive with shorter wheelbase was a simpler and more easily maintained alternative for the duties

required. The Hunslet Company took the lead and the 'Buckets', known to the wider world as the Austerities, were born.

The design of the Austerity saddle tank was summarised by Don Townsley, the knowledgeable historian of the Hunslet engine company, as an amalgam of the standard Hunslet 18 x 26in. cylinder steelworks shunter, first built in 1937 for Guest, Keen and Baldwins at Cardiff, and locomotives of similar power built to the order of Stewarts and Lloyds in 1941. Both designs were a natural progression from an 0-6-0 side tank, Works No 1506, built in 1930 for the Pontop and Jarrow colliery railway. In essence the frame of the Jarrow machine was married to the Guest, Keen engine and the extended saddle tank of the Stewarts and Lloyds variant. A larger

coalbunker was fitted and the cab roof had rounded eaves to provide a better loading gauge clearance. This 'trimming' of the cab was to some extent necessitated by the increase in wheel diameter from 4ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. on the previous designs to 4ft. 3in. on the Austerity so as to provide greater clearance above rail level and to permit the use of easily replaceable under-hung springs. The boiler proportions were chosen to give quick steaming without being un-economical during standby periods.

The locomotives were designed to give a minimum of two years hard work irrespective of the state of the track. It was accepted that as the locomotives were to be essentially for war-time use they need not be designed to last as long as normal locomotives. Indeed, Riddles was quoted as saying "I don't mind if you push them into the sea after we have won the war". Changes were therefore made in detailed design to economise in production time and to use available materials. Cast-iron wheel centres were used instead of cast steel, and steel castings were eliminated from the motion plates and frame stays. Lower quality steel was accepted and this was used in the 'as rolled' condition without annealing to save production time and costs. Cast-iron slide valves were fitted and the valve chests being placed between the cylinders, a very old-fashioned set up by mainline standards of the period. A khaki livery was adopted but this changed in March 1944 to dull green.

The first 'Austerity'* left Hunslet's works in Leeds on 1 January 1943, less than six months after the initial order for fifty locomotives had been placed. Hunslet's production was supplemented by Robert Stephenson and Hawthorns, Hudswell Clarke, Bagnall and, later, Vulcan Foundry and Andrew Barclay. Of the 377 Ministry locomotives supplied between 1943 and 1946 Hunslet built 120, RSH ninety, Bagnall fifty-two, Hudswell Clarke fifty, the Vulcan Foundry fifty and Andrew Barclay fifteen. After the war, 106 further Austerity locomotives were built, seventy-seven for the National Coal Board, fifteen for the steel industry and fourteen more for the Army. With the exception of two from Robert

Stephenson and Hawthorns Ltd and eight from the Yorkshire Engine Company, these all came from Hunslet. There were very few observable variations throughout the 485 locomotives as built.

The first two engines built were temporarily loaned to the LMS. As further engines were built, they were allocated to various military establishments, dumps, depots, docks, etc, while some were loaned to industrial concerns, collieries and to the Ministry of Fuel & Power for working at open-cast coal-mining sites. After D-day only a small percentage went to the Continent. In Belgium, they were used almost solely at Antwerp docks. In the Netherlands 27 engines worked with the state railways and remained in service up to 1952. A few were loaned to the Dutch State Mines at Limburg and 9 remained there. Six engines were sold to the Tunisian State railways in 1946. A year or two passed before disposal of the bulk of the locomotives in 1946 and 1947.

In May 1946, at a time of steel and other material shortages, the LNER was tempted by the availability of cheap nearly new machines. As a result they purchased 75 engines of which 29 were in service at various military establishments, 40 were new in store at Longmoor and the remainder were still under construction by Andrew Barclay. Some changes were made, the most obvious being an increase in capacity of the coal bunker by an upward extension in the middle and consequent alterations to rear cab windows from round to a narrow rectangular. These engines were classified in the clear standard LNER locomotive classification system J94. Withdrawals started in 1960 and were completed in 1967. Six were sold out of service to collieries or opencast sites and the remainder scrapped.

Many of the remaining WD engines were used by the coal-mining industry in the UK and came under the control of the NCB on its formation on 1 January 1947. The collieries were mainly in the Northumberland and Durham fields together with the Nottinghamshire and Derby areas, but the engines later spread to all other areas including Kent. Further engines were sold in Britain to various

industrial concerns, steelworks as well as dock authorities such as the Port of London Authority and the Manchester Ship Canal Company.

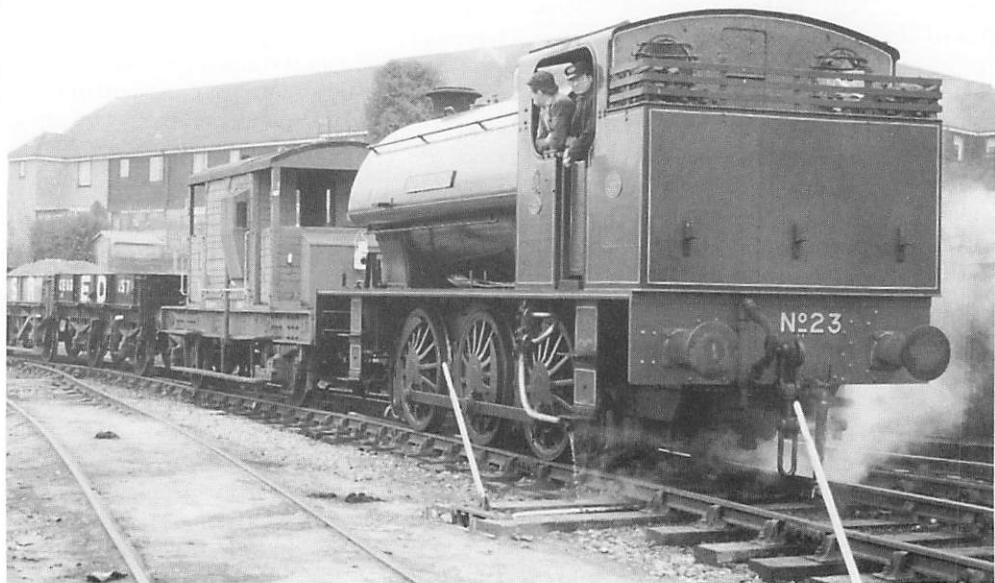
By early 1952, 90 engines remained under Government control numbered as WD 100-189. In 1952/3, fourteen new 0-6-OST's were built for the WD and these became WD 190-203. Many of the locomotives serving for long periods at military establishments such as Longmoor, Bicester, etc were named. The current K&ESR engines all came from the new batch and were built by Hunslets as 3791/1952 (No 23); 3800/1953 (No 24); and 3797/1953 (No 25).

Each was stored initially at the Longmoor Military Railway. The WD logbook for No 23 shows it was put into service at Bicester in 1956, as WD 191 Black Knight. Given general repair in 1957/58 it was stored in May 1962 at No 1 Engineers Supply Depot, Long Marten, before final transfer in December 1967 to No 1 Railway Group, Royal Corps of Transport at Shoeburyness. There it worked for only nine months before

again being put into store. From Shoeburyness it was sold out of Army use, arriving at Rolvenden in February 1972. It ran only a total of 23,178 miles during its 20-year military career. No 23 entered service in August 1974 and was named Holman F Stephens after the great and good Colonel.

As WD 200, No 24 saw service at Bicester before transfer back to Longmoor and then went to Shoeburyness. Upon disposal it was privately purchased for use on the K&ESR, arriving in January 1971. No 24 formerly carried the name William H. Austen in honour of Stephens' assistant and successor but for some obscure reason this has been changed in recent years to Rolvenden an old K&ESR name once carried by Terrier No 5.

No 25 worked at various Army locations, including Longmoor in 1957, before coming to the K&ESR in 1977 from the Command Ordnance Depot at Bicester where, as ARMY 197 it had been named Sapper. During its first two years it remained Army property parked on a back siding at Rolvenden but in October 1979 it joined our running fleet as



An early picture of No 23 shunting in Tenterden headshunt

(Robert Berry)



*No 196, Errol Lonsdale, at Longmoor Military Railway in 1967, cautiously negotiating Liss Forest crossing protected only by Stop roundels.
(Brian Hicks)*

Northiam, another old K&ESR name.

Three Austerities have also come and gone over the years. The first of these was former Longmoor Military Railway No 196 Errol Lonsdale, (Hunslet No 3796/53), which was on the Kent & East Sussex from 1970 to 1976. This locomotive never received a K&ESR number and saw very little use before moving on, initially to the Mid-Hants Railway and it is now in South Devon. A second engine, Linda, an ex NCB locomotive (Hunslet 3781/52) worked on the K&ESR in the late 1980s. It is, of course, now unrecognisably re-clad as the Mid-Hants Thomas and still visits regularly. A static exhibit at Tenterden for many years was former No 27 (intended to be called Rolvenden) which was a genuine wartime loco (RSH 7086/43). As WD 75050 she was one of the shunters in Antwerp Docks, passed to the NCB and was modified in later years with a Porta-style gas producer firebox by Hunslet's. Her present whereabouts are uncertain (at least to this writer) but no doubt one of our readers can advise.

Another example a genuine J94, BR No 68078 (Andrew Barclay 2212/46) hovers around but has never been on the railway. This was sold by BR in 1963 and then worked at Widdrington screening and washing plant near Morpeth, Northumberland. Put into store in 1978 it was purchased in 1984 by the GWR Preservation group. In 2000 it was briefly TRC property before passing to an associated owning group.

For better or worse the Austerity 0-6-0ST has become particularly associated with the K&ESR in preservation. 23, 24 and 25 are and are likely to remain the mainstay of the railways heavy haul fleet. If not entirely suited, or designed, to run at line speeds on a 10½ mile railway doing daily mileages and speeds they never achieved in previous service they are, as they were designed to be, reliable and easy to repair. Their deep, choked, booming exhaust blasting up Tenterden bank is a familiar and reassuring feature of railway life.

** This term was first applied to a locomotive by the*

New York Times, no less, to Bullied's Q1 but later came to be applied to all Ministry of Supply engines.

† The origin of the local term 'Buckets' is uncertain. One explanation states that crews at one time complained that the locomotives' ride produced stomach cramps (hence 'Gut Bucket') whilst a second alleges that, in the early days following reopening, a not far-off standard gauge line referred to the K&ESR as the 'Kent & Rusty Bucket Railway'. Another alludes to them being as common as buckets and spades on a beach. Take your pick.

There has, I believe, even been a scurrilous K&ESR 'folk song' about the Austerities to the tune of 'Camp Town Races'. In the best traditions of these matters the opening lines were spontaneously composed by a loco crew and later enlarged on. It ran something like this

Clap and cheer the Bucket's here
Do dah, do dah,
Clap and cheer the Bucket's here
Do dah, do dah day.

Going to run all night, going to run all day, too
many Buckets on the line can drive the staff away.

They paint Buckets brown and green
Do dah, etc.

Mainly cos' they are obscene
Do dah, etc.

Chorus

We've got one that's painted blue,
Do dah, etc
It's held together with super glue
Do dah, etc.

Chorus

We all like Buckets lots and lots
Not much, not much.....

(Song fades out in footplate clatter).

Sources:

Hunslet Engine Works, D H Townsley, Plateway Press;

Continent, Coalfield and Conservation, A P Lambert & J C Woods, IRS;

War Department Locomotives, R Tourrett, Tourrett Publishing;

Nick Pallant



No 26, Linda, at Maesteg colliery on 24th May 1973

(Tom Heavyside)

The Kent and East Sussex Railway

– An Appreciation of the Old Company

With the railway finally achieving the legal name under which it has traded for so long Brian Janes looks back at the achievements of the company that first acquired that name 100 years ago.

What is this 100 year old company title that we celebrate and which after a 45 year history became lost on Nationalisation. Such was its power that, a dozen years later in the 1960s, it could inspire in a bunch of schoolboys and assorted oddballs the desire to persist for over 10 years to resurrect and then run our railway for another thirty years.

In its Wealden isolation Tenterden was in decline from one of the most important towns in Kent to a rather unimportant backwater and had wanted a railway for many years. The main line railway companies could not be tempted to build anything across the rolling High Weald with its wet and treacherous Wealden clay. Even if they could afford to do so, rural people did not travel far and so were not greatly troubled. However, in the age of horse-drawn road transport anywhere more than 4 miles from a railway station was at a serious economic disadvantage when it came to receiving and dispatching goods. Many farmers and landowners were suffering badly from an agricultural depression starting in the 1870s. Parliament scratched its head and in the 1890s came up with special powers to simplify railway building and some finance, as advocated by experts who thought they could provide cheap rural railways.

Holman Fred Stephens had come to the Weald as a very young man to help build the South Eastern Railway's Hawkhurst branch and became an enthusiast for light railways and the needs of Tenterden and the Weald in particular. Twenty years of effort produced one prosperous railway for the town and a scattering of lost chances.

The Rother Valley Railway's opening in 1900 was a great operational and commercial success. This stimulated the promotion of a line from Cranbrook to Tenterden and on to Ashford. The SE (and now C) R persuaded the promoters by bribes (a substantial subsidy) and political

pressure to take on a line, that they had promised to operate, from Tenterden to Headcorn and Maidstone, rather than the promising Ashford line. The Cranbrook line was authorised but failed to raise capital. This fate was also shared by the East Sussex Light Railway that was authorised from Northiam to Rye via Peasmarsh; a railway that even had the temerity to obtain powers to take over the operation of Stephens' pioneer narrow gauge Rye and Camber Tramway. This spider's web of lines, particularly the East Sussex line, was the reason for the renaming as the Kent & East Sussex Railway in 1904. In the event, the only outcome was 'The Town Extension' (the contemporary name) of 1903 and the Headcorn extension of 1905. It was probably fortunate that much of the wider network was not built. The Headcorn line was always a loss maker and the Cranbrook line would have run through empty countryside that was close to, and would have abstracted traffic from, that line. The Rye and Ashford lines were more natural transport corridors but would have struggled for traffic in the face of competition from nearby roads and rivers.

Nevertheless, when this extension fever was over, the Kent and East Sussex Railway was established as a growing and profitable concern. It was attaining dividends on its ordinary shares of something around 2% at a time when mainline companies were averaging around 3% and their rural branch lines were known to be unprofitable. Such was the lines reputation that when in 1913 Parliament enquired into the need for general improvement in rural transport and whether this might be served by light railways or road transport, the Railway and the area it served was chosen as a principal study case. The resultant report is a fascinating insight into contemporary rural transport problems and concludes that the railway was supreme. Ten years later it might be a very different story but

before World War I the K&ESR was seen as a model concern.

The report was written by a G A Birls who studied the effect of the K&ESR and its cost relative to possible investment in road transport. Inevitably a heavyweight economic document, the report nevertheless throws interesting sidelights on the operation of the railway and transport in the area. Tenterden was a modest metropolis of 3,429 souls (7,800 in 2001) and was served by good and improved tarmaced roads. Indeed, the only important road of those surveyed still made in the by then outmoded water-bound tarmacadam was the Hurst Green to Robertsbridge road – the present A21 London to Hastings road. Not much long distance road traffic in those days.

The surveyor of Kent roads estimated that to replace the K&ESR with 20 motor lorries and buses daily would double the amount of traffic carried by all the main roads between Headcorn and Robertsbridge! To accommodate these 3-5 ton petrol and steam monsters, his repair budgets would double even if the roads were substantially upgraded beforehand. Existing road competition to the railway was not very significant and amounted to a bus service from Hawkhurst station to Northiam once a day and, of more significance, a horse bus 3 times a day from Headcorn to Tenterden. This latter was estimated to take nearly £1000 per year but was thought to make a loss and was subsidised (presumably by the operating company), a particular source of concern to the K&ESR.

The other important source of competitive pressure was the conveyance of coal and road stone by the river network for the area from Rolvenden to Robertsbridge. Mineral rates on this section were half that charged on the railway's northern section so as to compete with small boats serving the river wharves on the Rother and its tributaries. However even at this low rate very little road stone traffic was captured.

The railway itself was seen to be in fine shape physically and operationally. Paying a 2% dividend on ordinary shares, and 4% on Debentures, it had a very healthy ratio of operating costs to total income of 53% on the Tenterden-Robertsbridge section. The railway's rolling stock was assessed as fully adequate and

all trains ran mixed. Money was actually lost on the Headcorn extension but this was amply covered by the SECR's income guarantee.

Overall traffic was healthy. The biggest money earner was incoming general goods such as cattle feed and bagged manure, groceries, drapery, furniture etc with 47½% of incoming tonnage but returning over 80% of gross goods revenue. Coal and minerals represented the balance of the 30,000 tons of incoming goods. Outgoing goods were far less significant with some 700 tons of hops (all consigned to Bricklayers Arms), 300 tons of timber and milk. Somewhat surprisingly, livestock was not significant. The railway was carrying 240 passengers a day in 1911 and this traffic peaked at 110,000 passengers during 1912, a greater number than the modern heritage railway has ever achieved.

Mr Birls concluded that the K&ESR "dealt with the goods and passenger traffic of the district at roundly 60% of the cost that would be incurred by a Road Motor Vehicle Undertaking doing the same work". Perceptively, however, he commented: "though it is probable that the convenience both to the travelling and trading members of the community would on the whole be greater with the more expensive (road) system".

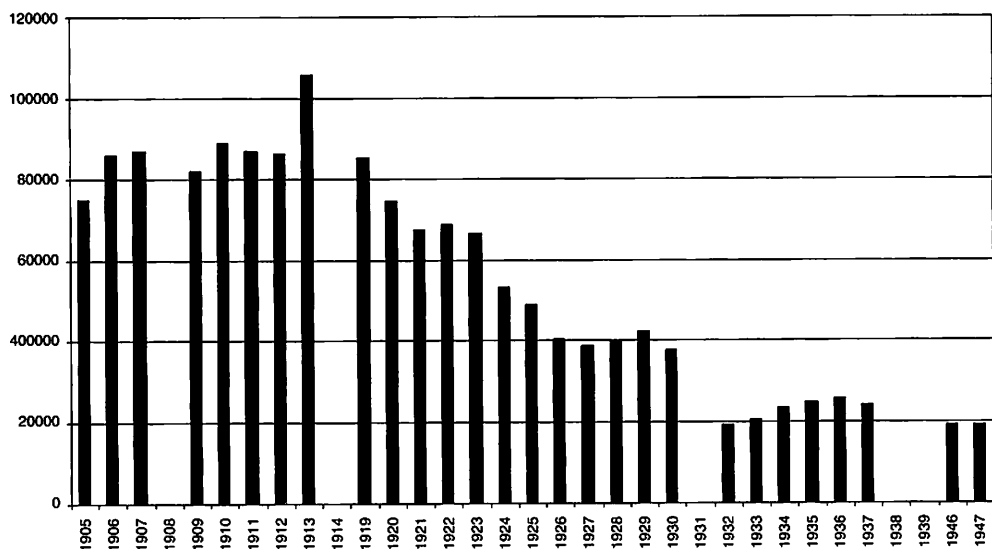
Stephens of course loved the line like a child he never had. He designed it with equipment and stock that was fully in accordance with the tenets of light railway theory. With relative financial success he had begun the processes of upgrading and the line was upgraded throughout with 80lb. bullhead rail in 1905 just as the theorists proposed. However the perennial problem of lack of capital inhibited him and resulted in the introduction of second hand stock. Nevertheless, even this stock was upgraded regularly as, for instance, he introduced steam heated stock in 1911/12, disposing of older stock to other lines. As time went on he experimented with pioneering steam and petrol railcars. He was instrumental through his contacts in government in ensuring that locally managed light railways were excluded from the grouping of railways in 1923. However, one does wonder whether the network proposed for the High Weald, if successful, could possibly have survived the grouping net.

Perhaps Stephens loved the line too much.

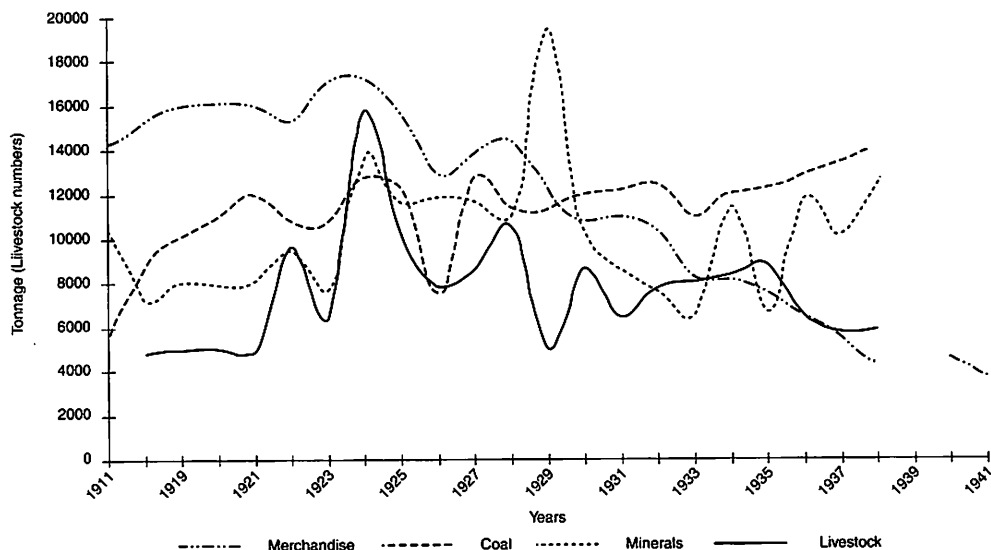
Mr Birks predictions were only too shrewd. The impact of road competition arising from substantial technical advances in the early 20s stole first the very profitable first class traffic, which had disappeared by the mid-twenties, and the remaining passenger traffic and most importantly the profitable general mechanised traffic. Indeed the railway was only sustained by

reducing costs and a steady grip on the relatively less profitable coal and mineral traffic and success, in the twenties at least in gaining livestock traffic. By the thirties however it had lost much of the farming traffic it had been built to carry. The following tables show these trends clearly.

K&ESR Passenger Numbers 1905-1947



K&ESR Goods Traffic Trends 1911 to 1947



These changes reduced the line's profitability dramatically; dividends fell to 1% in 1920, $\frac{3}{4}$ % in the following year and $\frac{1}{4}$ % in 1926, and expenditure was continually postponed. That, and the successful introduction of railmotors, caused stock needing overhaul to be set aside. For reasons of accountability Stephens would not allow it to be sold or broken up. This had two inadvertent effects. Enthusiasts discovered a quaint railway with lots of, to them, picturesque relics. But Stephens reacted adversely to the publicity of so much dereliction and many enthusiasts then found a less than welcome reception. A great publicist, Stephens' previous policy had been to court the technical and early enthusiast press to ensure that his policies reached a wide audience.

Stephens' optimism kept him going but with his passing in 1931 the era of the light railway had passed too. His loyal assistant, W H Austen, realised that Stephens' insistence on the completely independent management of light railways, that was so influential in deciding their separateness at Grouping in

1923, was now too limited. He set about regularising the finances of the railway by putting it into receivership in 1932 and looked increasingly to the Southern Railway as a patron. Hiring locomotives and engineering services became the usual practice and the 'junk' was slowly disposed of. But the modern Stephens' legend had been born. The Kent and East Sussex was perceived as a run-down decrepit railway of the greatest charm. This message had great power and was perhaps the prime mover in the successful revival of the line. But, for well over half the life of the old company, this image was totally untrue. Undercapitalised it might have been, but for a good period it was a progressive, and indeed model, light railway that served its community with distinction. This is the old company we should seek to emulate.

The precise title of the old company was The Kent and East Sussex Light Railway Company. The word light has been omitted in the re-naming of our Tenterden Railway Company – Ed

Change at Shepherdswell: How Golgotha Tunnel came about

“Things do not always work out as planned.”

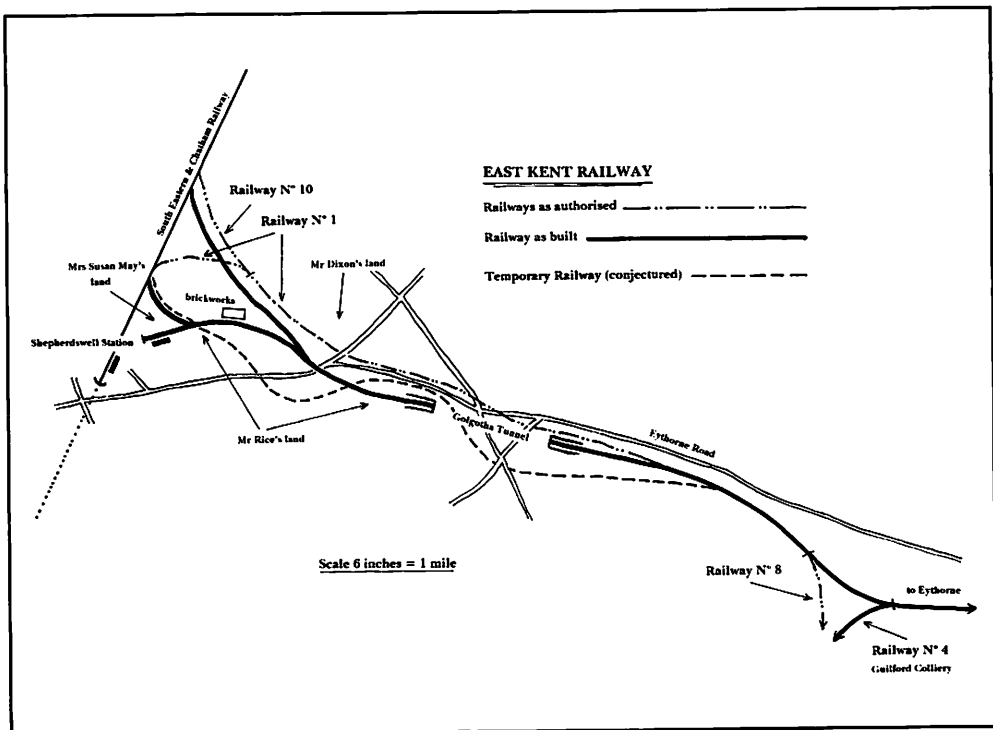
This could have been the motto of the East Kent Railways on which Stephens spent so much time to so little effect in terms of operating railways. Not only did many of the 40 projected railways and spurs fail to get built but also, when they did, they did not do so in the way originally planned.

Shepherdswell station, sidings and shed always had an unfinished rambling appearance that belied its status as the operational centre of a rural light railway with fairly busy colliery traffic. It was not planned that way and was indeed never intended to be in that precise location at all. Neither was a major tunnel planned – this was not the Stephens way of building a light railway.

When the railway was planned the operational hub of the railway was to be at Eythorne, where

the branches from Tilmanstone, Guilford and Deal would have met the mainline from Shepherdswell to Sandwich Haven. Here were to be placed the sorting sidings together with associated facilities like an engine shed, workshops etc. Sandwich was to be the main shipping point and Shepherdswell was probably thought of as a secondary outlet. The line to it was to have climbed at 1 in 40 over the ridge from Eythorne then down at in 50 through a triangular junction in a cutting well to the north of Shepherdswell (SECR) station.

This is where the trouble started. The landowner here, a Mr Dixon, had laid out speculative roads for a housing estate that would have been severed by the new railway. He held out for purchase of the whole estate at great cost. What we might today call a ransom strip.



Tilmanstone colliery production was imminent, and construction traffic hauled by traction engines was destroying the rural roads, so a railway was urgent. Fortunately the coal interests promoting the EKR had in 1908 taken a lease on land belonging to a widow, Mrs Susan May, on land between the proposed junction and the SE&CR station. In May 1911 they reached agreement with Mrs May that, on condition that the land was quickly restored to its original state, a sharply curved temporary railway could be built through a shallow cutting. The railway could then pass over other land, including a brickworks, that belonged to a director of the company, H R H Rice. The necessary agreement for a temporary junction with the mainline was secured in an agreement signed on 7th September. The line was then quickly made through the cutting and turned sharply south along a temporary embankment that was visible for many years near the end of the later EKR platform. Although they did not yet know it, the temporary cutting, and Mrs May's land through which the line passed, was destined to be the site of Shepherdswell HQ and the cutting the permanent junction to the mainline.

The temporary railway then crossed the Eythorne road before swinging back towards Tilmanstone. This sinuous course was to avoid Dixon's land by staying on Rice's. The sale deeds for the land concerned survives. They show that the route followed closely the south side of the Eythorne road up to the summit where it veered south, crossed the Waldershare road at a crossroads, and passed on to other land. It probably then came gently back alongside the Eythorne road, rejoining the permanent formation from the south some way short of the later Eythorne station. A temporary track was laid as a surface line on this land and on to Tilmanstone colliery and was reportedly in operation by the end of October 1911.

The intended permanent route lay on the north side of the Eythorne road going up and over the ridge where a shallow 16ft cutting was planned before crossing the road on the level and falling to Eythorne junction and sidings. However, at the hearings into the light railway order, things and not gone well. The hearings were almost solely devoted to two problems at Shepherdswell. As a consequence the permanent route was

changed forever.

First Mr Dixon's speculative building site on the bleak fields adjacent to the Barfreston road seemed to pose an insuperable problem.

Although the speculation had proved a failure and only one house had been built the railway would ensure none ever could be. Except at great expense this land could not be acquired

Further towards Eythorne things were nearly as bad. Near the summit cutting the railway was to carve its way through a complex of roads. In particular it was to cut a bridle path on the line of a roman road at Shepherdswell Firs near a spot long called Golgotha. At the hearing into the order in 1911, the Light Railway Commissioners decided that a bridge should be built here. This made necessary a reduction of the gradient from 1 in 40 to 1 in 50, and the commission decided the railway would gain sufficient advantage in reduced operating costs to offset the extra cost of cutting and bridge construction.

Stephens left the hearings with his tail between his legs and clearly thought deeply. To avoid severing Dixon's land meant bringing the line further south by about 50 yards. This forced the south Dover-facing spur of the Junction with the SECR to make too sharp a turn. A plan then seems to have been devised to use Mrs May's land to create a south curve. This may well have been on the site subsequently adopted for the EKR station, for this was always an odd island platform style construction in a seemingly unnecessary cutting. However this connection could not be built as the SECR somewhat understandably objected strongly to it, as it would have been driven right through the existing station and yard. The Dover connection was abandoned.

With the main line forced south by the need to avoid Dixon's land, the alignment for the line to the enforced shallow summit cutting and bridge was not ideal. A cutting and tunnel south of the Eythorne road, passing under the complex of roads that had caused trouble at the enquiry, came under consideration. Dixon seems to have been amenable to selling a small portion of his estate and Rice sold the land for the Tunnel and its approach in September 1912. The original alignment was to be regained after the originally planned crossing of the Eythorne road. The

additional cost of all this extra work would be justified by the first class alignment as the Collieries came on stream and the cost of haulage was reduced. The Tunnel was now built quickly probably commencing well before the land sales were complete. Tilmanstone commenced coal production in May 1913 and all coal traffic passed over the temporary line, The permanent line including Golgotha Tunnel was completed in the first week of October 1913 and the coal traffic was transferred to that. The temporary line over the hill was then pulled up and the rails and sleepers utilised elsewhere for sidings etc. The land reverted to agriculture but was later put to other uses. The railway built three staff bungalows on one spot and other areas close to the village went under houses in the 1960s. Indeed the author lived in one of these when it was first built and would have been much intrigued if he had known at the time that the 'railroad had run through the middle of the house'.

The formation of the revised line was now permanently connected by a further line from the end of the tunnel cutting and the Eythorne road level crossing joining the 'temporary' cutting through Mrs May's land. It passed through the brickworks site which was used for the original ramshackle, and obviously temporary, engine shed and the small fan of sidings that became so familiar.

The original proposed line from the crossing on an embankment to the cutting to the northern junction (railway number 10) formation was constructed after the First World War. However, its alignment was such that a Dover facing spur could never be built. The embankment was widened sufficiently to take a fan of seven sidings and a full double junction agreed with the, now, Southern Railway. A signal box was also built for the mainline. However the failure of Guilford Colliery and the construction of a ropeway from Tilmanstone to Dover Harbour made further expenditure pointless. One line was only ever laid on it for a siding and the author remembers the embankment solely as a great place for butterflies.

Brian Janes

Sources and Acknowledgments: Colonel Stephens Railway Archives; Network Rail National Deeds Centre; Richard Osborn.

Letters to the Editor

Successful Santa

Sir – As the retiring Santa Special event manager, I would like to place on record my thanks to everyone over the past four years who has been involved with the Santa Specials. Working together, we have managed to reduce the number of days and trains we operate whilst increasing the number of passengers. This year we carried 11,158 passengers over nine days of operation.

Because of this success, we are now operating close to our operating capacity. The challenge now is to maintain passenger and staff (paid and volunteer) satisfaction and motivation. As always, there have been days where we have been very short of volunteers. In particular I would appeal to anyone who thinks they would like to play the part of Santa to come forward. There are many areas we can 'sort out' on the day, but Santa is the star of the show and we desperately need more volunteers to spread the load. Don't put it off – put your name forward now. You will be made very welcome.

I leave the event in the capable hands of Kevin Goodsell. Please support him the way you have supported me. Kevin can be contacted via the company offices.

Tenterden, Kent

Graham Bridge

Rolling Stock Numbers

Sir – In the Winter 2003 issue, Rowena Forbes raises a number of points and in relation to the matter of rolling stock numbers and their use in this journal.

It is, of course, all too easy for those of us who work on the Railway to overlook the fact that we may be more familiar with the K&ESR than those who only visit occasionally or contemplate it from their armchairs. Some members may also not be aware (although, following delivery, details have generally appeared in this journal) that all rolling stock has received a number in continuation of the series used by the pre-nationalisation company. Furthermore, many items are also known by some official, semi-official or popular term (e.g. Petros, the Loco Trust Birdcage and the Frimtrol – i.e. Disabled Brake Saloon No 75; ex SE&CR Birdcage No 61 and Weltrol No 164). In addition, many items, while having a K&ESR number, run in service with the livery and number of a former owner (USA No 21 runs as BR No DS 238 and coach No 88 as SE&CR

No 2947). The *Tenterden Terrier* has therefore conventionally referred to a particular locomotive or vehicle by an all-encompassing description; for instance 'SE&CR Family Saloon No 177 (K&ESR No 84)'.

With regard to publication of a stocklist, there was, of course, a stock book some years ago which ran through several editions. This was, unfortunately, not an economic proposition and an updated version is not planned. An on-line version is, however available on the Company web site (kesr.org.uk). Even if you don't own a computer this is, of course, accessible to very nearly everyone as just about all reasonably sized libraries now seem to have a public internet terminal. A simplified stock list has also been available from the Tenterden Town shop for about the past five years for £1 and has been updated from time to time. This has been produced on behalf of the Friends of Vintage Carriages (C&W staff support group – I am the Hon. Secretary) the income going towards the restoration of our older vehicles. I am a little surprised that an allegation that no such listings were available was allowed to appear in the *Terrier* without either my colleagues or myself being first given the opportunity to comment.

C&W Tenterden, Kent

Nick Pallant

Baie de Somme Happenings

Sir – Perhaps it would be pertinent to add to the report of Norman Brice. 'Twins Together' *Terrier* 91.

Having reached Amiens independently on Friday 25th April an inspection of the station revealed massive publicity for the 'Fete de la Vapeur en Baie de Somme'. Arrival at Le Crotoy in the midst of periods of heavy showers and bright sunshine necessitated a stop in a local cafe before visiting British first world war graves in the civil cemetery and then moving to Le Crotoy station the location of which is marked by the recently decorated water tower. The south facing beach was not tempting.

The late arrival of the train forming the 12.30 departure to Noyelles and St Valery allowed a visit to the small but excellently presented museum in the former goods shed. The train had been delayed by the late arrival of the main line steam from Amiens. Not having been able to visit Cayeux sur Mer on my last visit this was the primary destination this year.

The two lines of the Baie de Somme form a V shape which join at Noyelles. During the Fete if

you begin at the end of one line and wish to return to your start point you have to change trains at Noyelles but if you wish to travel on the other branch you stay on the train and the engines are changed. By virtue of some brisk running the hour late departure from Le Crotoy had been reduced to a thirty minute late arrival at Cayeux.

Once the Haine St Pierre 2-6-0T No 15 'Noyon-Guiscard-Lassigny' had been filled to capacity with water and coal, the latter having been piggy-backed in bags on to the foot plate before being shovelled into the bunker, the time deficit was back to 45 minutes.

No 15 proceeded down the loop and while setting back onto the coaching stock promptly derailed with the pony wheels and front drivers off the rails blocking the route towards St Valery. After much shrugging of shoulders and upturned palms, and the disappearance of a draisine into the shunting head never to be seen again, the realisation that even the locals were receiving no information indicated now was the time to look for a bus to St Valery some 14 kilometres away and from where the Terrier Trust coach was due to depart for Tenterden.

No buses, but a friendly hotelier arranged for a taxi which took an interesting route through the streets of Cayeux, which have the air of not having been disturbed since the Belle Epoch period of the 'Reseau des Bains des Mer', past

Brighton Plage, the lighthouse of le Hourdel and through the narrow streets of St Valery to the station.

P.S. Is The Albert Canal in the Somme valley or Belgium or both?

Tenterden, Kent

John Weller

Mis-Number

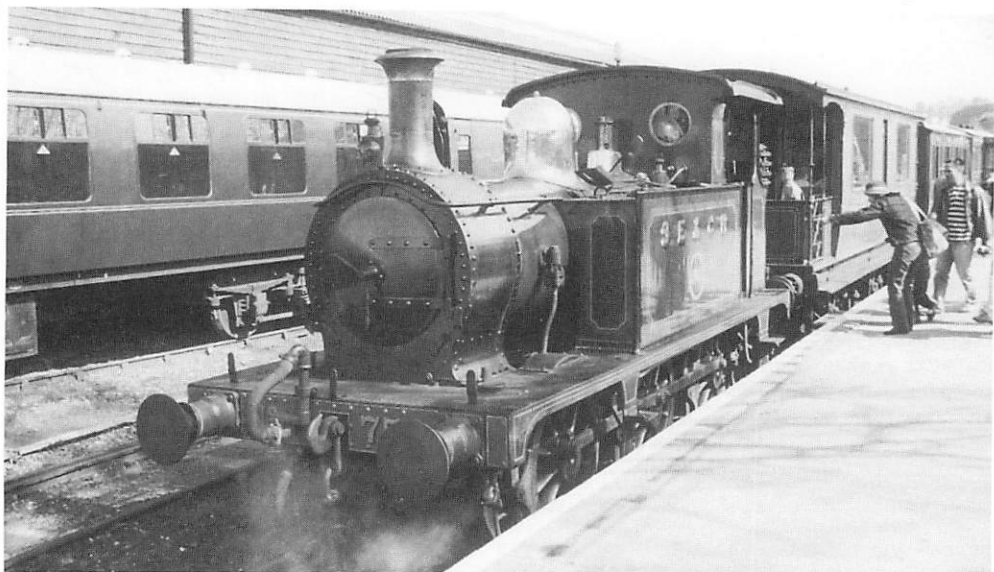
Sir – I am sure I will not be the only member to draw your attention to the 'howler' in the reply given to M Wakefield's enquiry regarding 'Pride of Sussex'. Our 'P Class' has had several incarnations on our railway as far as numbering is concerned (1556, 753 for example) but never No 14. The K&ESR number for the 'P' is 11; No 14 is of course 'Charwelton'.

May I also comment on Mr Mitchell's remarks on 1638. I would suggest that we have for many years been guilty of "trying to have that which we do not possess" as far as our own Hunslet Austerities are concerned. As far as the majority of our fare paying passengers are concerned, I would venture to suggest that whether or not the livery, class number or chimney capping is correct, is of very little importance.

As to the reference to the heritage and image groups, surely, if they had their way, 1638 would be disqualified from running our railway for being post-1920s.

Ashford, Kent

Barry Holmes



'P' class running as No 753 at Tenterden Town Station on 16 March 2003

(Tom White)

Book Reviews

The East Kent Railway. Volume two: Nationalisation, the Route, Rolling Stock and operation, by M. Lawson Finch & S.R. Garrett, published by Oakwood Press price £14.05 230 pages in A5 format, soft laminated covers. ISBN0-85361-609-4

The second volume of this admirable study covers the East Kent as it ran in the post nationalisation period, a general description of the route, locomotives and rolling stock from the beginning and method of operation. British Railways had every reason to be unimpressed with their acquisition; by 1947 annual passenger numbers had fallen to a miniscule 556 and general merchandise to a lowly 3296 tons. This left the Tilmanstone Colliery traffic accounting for virtually all of the revenues, with 255,658 tons of coal carried in the last year of independence. Accordingly, passenger services between Shepherdswell and Wingham were withdrawn virtually immediately; interestingly Stephens himself had withdrawn the twice a day service between Eastry and Sandwich Road as long ago as 1928 after only three years of operation and beyond that the lonely platform at Richborough Port had never seen a public service train since the day that it was built.

Within two years the upper sections of the line, which had merely been a convenience for local farmers by carrying fruit and vegetables, were closed and the truncated section of three miles of light railway from Tilmanstone to Shepherdswell settled down to a period of comparative prosperity. By 1977 after the modernisation of the colliery, coal traffic had virtually doubled to 500,000 tons – all of it transported by train to supply the Kingsnorth Power station. No attempt was made to restore the aerial ropeway between the colliery and Dover Docks, which had at one time seemed likely to threaten the Railway's very existence. The miner's strike of 1984 spelled the end of Tilmanstone and the whole of the Kent Coal field which had never been profitable to the National Coal Board. As a result, the East Kent Railway, which had no future as a coal carrier closed, although the section from Shepherdswell to Eythorne, and with it the famous Golgotha tunnel is now in the hands of a preservation society.

In the ups and downs of historical events, there are a number of 'might have beens' that could

have prolonged the Railway's survival. The Authors point out that the railway came too late to benefit from the port traffic which blossomed during the Great War and that Richborough itself could have been developed as a major port. As for other collieries, Guilford Colliery very nearly did come about and arguably could have suffered less in the way of geological problems than Tilmanstone. But the die was cast, Kent had no future as a coal mining area. For Stephens, this must have been his biggest disappointment. **PDS**

Power of the BR Standard 4-6-0's by Gavin Morrison, published by Ian Allan publishing, price £19.99. 112 pages of captioned photographs in A4 format. Hard covers. ISBN 08609 35779.

In April 1952 the first of the Riddles designed Standard 5 4-6-0s emerged from Derby Works, the first of more than 250 Standard 4-6-0s to be constructed between then and May 1957. Developed from the highly successful 4-6-0 designs of the LMS, the two classes of BR Standard 4-6-0 were designed for both passenger and freight traffic and saw service over much of the British Railways network, proving to be adept at handling the great variety of service on which they operated. Unfortunately, the classes were destined to have a short life, with the decision made in 1955 that all steam traction would disappear in favour of diesel and electric power, with the result that many of the classes survived in service for less than a decade. Fortunately, a number survive in preservation where modern enthusiasts can appreciate the powerful lines of the final types of 4-6-0s built for operation on Britain's railways.

Drawing upon his own collection and those of other well known railway photographers, Gavin Morrison provides a pictorial tribute to these popular locomotives in his latest contribution to the highly successful 'Power of' series. Examining both types in detail, the book examines the careers of both the Standard 5s over the near 20 years that they operated on the BR network. Illustrated with approximately 250 photographs, the book reveals the important role that the two types had during the last years of main line steam on routes such as the Somerset and Dorset, the South Western main line and Cambrian coast lines amongst many others.

This is an excellent book; both the subject and reproduction of the photographs is of the highest quality. **PDS**

