

# Tenterden Terrier



Number 95

Winter 2004



JOURNAL OF THE KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY

# The Kent & East Sussex Railway Company Limited

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

(Name changed 24 December 2003)

Registered Charity 262481

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**VICE PRESIDENT:** Admiral Sir Lindsay Bryson KCB FRSE

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Paul Hutchinson; Brian Janes; Carol Mitchell; Bill Morgan; John Weller;  
David Lloyd (Elected 9 October 2004)

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

**DIRECTORS:** Norman Brice – *Chairman*; Graham Bridge; Derek Dunlavy; Brian Janes;  
Keith Jones

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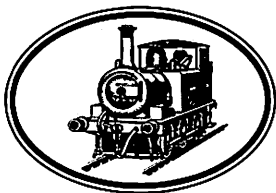
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Marketing Manager .....	Vacant
Publicity and Sales Manager .....	Graham Sivyver
Catering Manager .....	Andre Freeman
Shop Manager .....	Brian Janes
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Chris Mitchell

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

ISSN 0306-2449

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Printed by Rother Valley Press Ltd, Tenterden, Kent.

## FRONT COVER

*P Class rounds Orpin's crossing as it leaves*

*Rokuenden, 1st May 2004 (Brian Stephenson)*

## FRONTISPIECE

*Harry Hickmott with the Pearlies, and John Miller in the Hoppers Hut during Hopping weekend,*

*12th September 2004 (John Liddell)*

## BACK COVER

*The Newly restored Woolwich Coach in all its splendour*

*(Brian Stephenson)*

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# Editorial

## The Numbers Business

The appointment of our new General Manager from a marketing background of hotels, pubs and restaurants is a move designed to tackle our greatest problem, that of falling passenger numbers within the core volume business. In 1990, when the Railway re-opened to Northiam, we carried 81,934 fare paying passengers. This

year, with numbers running 8% down on 2003, the overall figure is expected to be broadly similar. These figures do exclude our prestigious and successful Pullman trains, which have shown good growth, but these have and always will have, limited carrying capacity. The extension to Bodiam, which took the Railway virtually to the doorstep of a major National Trust property, has not so far produced the expected results, so a new approach, which brings to us the experience of someone who has worked within a broader range of leisure related businesses, is most timely.

# Lineside News

Compiled by Duncan Buchanan

## Commercial

### Catering

The 2004 season has seen a substantial increase in visitor spend on catering products. The September Thomas event certainly helped, with one area showing a ten-fold increase over the equivalent weekend last year. Our thanks are due to those who, once again, worked solidly through the event to ensure both our customers and financiers were well fed!

Special mention must also be made of our growing team of younger volunteers. Kieran, Kane and Andrew have shown great dedication in the manning of the refreshment trolley this season. Their assistance has been invaluable and all have proved themselves to be very capable individuals.

The long awaited redevelopment to the rear of Tenterden buffet has, at long last, now started. In order for this work to proceed, it has been necessary to hire two portable buildings. One now forms a temporary Guards booking-on point and staff messing facilities, whilst the other houses catering stores. Much time was spent preparing for this relocation, but it paid off – the messroom was plumbed in and tea was available within hours of its arrival onsite! Following the transfer of all catering stores to the temporary cabin, the old buildings were swiftly demolished. This confirmed just how decrepit they had become: there was evidence of considerable wet and dry rot (the catering manager knew only too well how rotten the roof was as he fell through it the previous

week!). The site was cleared with the assistance of Keith Jones, Duncan Buchanan, Nick James, Andy Lamb, Matthew & Dave Stubbs. The new building is scheduled for completion by early December, weather permitting, just in time for the hectic Santa Special season. In addition to the construction of the new building, certain other works are being carried out whilst plant is onsite: drainage is to be provided to the Wealden Pullman dock beneath the kitchen vehicles to alleviate a long-standing problem and provision is to be made for an improved electrical supply. These additional works are being carried out at no expense to the company through the generosity of a member. Whilst the new building will dramatically improve the working environment in the buffet kitchen, financial constraints dictate no new equipment can be purchased at this time. Several opportunities for sponsorship or donations are available therefore!

Further assistance is always required – the imminent Santa Specials are great fun and provide vital financial support for the lean first quarter of the forthcoming year. Contact Dave Tibbatts or André Freeman at Tenterden Town Station if you would like to assist in any way.

### Wealden Pullman

As these notes are compiled, the last 'standard' Wealden Pullman services of the season are being run, with just our popular Christmas and New Years Eve services remaining. We have, for the fourth year running, been successful in



32678, Knowle, awaits departure from Tenterden during Closure Weekend, 28th March 2004

(Neil Rose)

operating all of our services without recourse to agency staff, although it's been nail-bitingly close on occasion. This could not have been achieved without the tireless efforts of the roster clerk and the dedication of all those who have given freely (and sometimes grudgingly!) of their time. Our sincere thanks are also due to Chris Garman who looks set once again to win the Philip Shaw 'Mug of the Year' award for greatest number of rostered turns. Our Chefs; Carol, Keith, Meg and Sharon have also achieved miracles despite our recalcitrant kitchen equipment.

The 2005 season will see significant changes to the formation of the Wealden Pullman set. Car 349 will be leaving the line in January to return to its owner for refurbishment and a third career in main line usage. Mk1 Staff Car No 73 will also be withdrawn for overhaul and return to service train usage. These vehicles will be replaced by Pullman Car 'Theodora' and Maunsell NBO 54. 'Theodora' is being restored as a multi-purpose vehicle. She will carry a bar, accommodation for 15 people and small kitchen

area. Provision has also been made for computerised presentations, audio commentary and data systems. Such technology was unheard of when 'Theodora' last carried fare-paying passengers over forty years ago, but is now an essential requirement of any conference venue. These facilities are essential if we are to regain the corporate business market that we hitherto enjoyed, but have been unable to accommodate for many years. 'Barbara' is scheduled for repainting during the closed season, as her decidedly tired paintwork would not stand comparison with that of freshly restored 'Theodora' on anything other than the darkest of nights. It is also hoped that time will be found to complete 'Barbara's' restoration, some of which has remained unfinished since 2001.

2005 looks set to be a busy year aboard the Wealden Pullman, with a full programme of services planned, several charters already booked and many more in the pipeline. If you would like to join the happy and successful team, where training to nationally recognised

standards can be provided, contact Meg Gooch at Tenterden Town Station or Meg@kesr.org.uk

### **Shop**

Well it has been a good year to date. Sales are 6% up in the shop, despite passenger numbers on the railway being some 8% down.

As I write this we are just recovering from the last Thomas event of the season. We have been putting up progressively larger tents for our second shop and this time it had a 40ft frontage. The first weekend started well on the Saturday and the Sunday set a new sales record for a Thomas day of £5.7K. However we fell just £200 short of our first ever £10K weekend. But next weekend we did achieve it – the magic first £10K weekend, and as a bonus the first £20K for a Thomas event. A 27% increase on last September and 15% up on September 2002, the previous best. A lot of profit for the railway. Successful volunteering at its best and most satisfying.

If you read these notes regularly Thomas records are perhaps becoming too predictably shouted about but the shop team are just as proud of our all round record. Overall our sales improvement this year has been consistent. Thomas Sales are 6.6% up but ordinary days

are 5.7% up so we are continually improving. Indeed sales in the shop and catering are strong performers this year in marked contrast to the fall in passenger numbers on all types of days. We must be satisfying our visitors when they come, if only there were more of them.

With daily running over we are trying to keep up our sales presence with the shop open on non-running days in November and our eyes on selected model railway exhibitions.

At the shop we are running a sale of transport books, DVDs and videos through to the start of Santos. Come and browse and buy.

For Christmas we have all the usual excellent books and calendars as well as other stocking fillers for girls and boys, both young and old. This year's Christmas cards are of Rolvenden, Northiam and Wittersham Road the three stations we haven't featured in the last two years. At £3.50 for five of each you can complete your set. Who will be lucky enough to have received cards of all five of our stations.

Now we are planning the customary winter clean up and some re-fettling of the shop. Will it help to push our year on year increase towards double figures for next year? Please help by coming as customers and helpers.

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## **Motive Power**

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A group of Interfleet graduates worked in the Loco works and Carriage and Wagon works this year during September and have sent a very nice thank you, part of which is now quoted:

"On behalf of the graduates at Interfleet Technology, I would like to thank the Kent & East Sussex Railway for allowing us to spend our team building week working at the Carriage Works and Loco Works. I would also like to say a special thank you for all the help and advice we were given whilst working at the two sites. We really appreciate the time and effort that was put in by everyone, to give us such a worthwhile week.

"Without a doubt, all the graduates thoroughly enjoyed the experience and left with a better understanding of the challenges involved in working with steam locomotives, wagons and coaches. Feedback from the graduates emphasised how friendly and approachable the staff at each of the sites were. The footplate ride

was also noted as a highlight of the week and we all appreciate the time and planning that was undertaken to make this possible."

Interfleet are expected to send another group next year when we're sure they will continue to pull their weight. Within the Loco works they worked on 32678 for a boiler inspection, jacked up 'Charwelton' and carried out an examination on the Ruston diesel. They also spent some time carrying out a management system audit which specifically looked at how the status of an engine is assured when work might be carried out or whether it is actually available for service. Seemingly simple but there are lots of corners to be found and dealt with.

### **Steam Locomotives**

No 3 'Bodiam' (32670): Work continues mainly using volunteer labour as and when available. Pipes, valves and associated items get assembled often between other work. John Houselander has fabricated the boiler backhead cladding and





*Northiam station in bloom*

*(John Liddell)*



*Track laying in progress in the long siding beyond Bodiam, 2nd September 2004*

*(John Liddell)*



completing the repair of the dome, which will result in a significant boost to the appearance of the loco. John Arlet has set out and made up the valve actuating mechanisms and additionally fitted the new whistle face to face on the boiler. Nick Young continues with the oil box installation. Martin Weeks has nearly completed the new air governor valve.

No 8 'Knowle' (32678): In Service

No 11 'P Class' (75): In service

No 12 'Marcia': Work on extending the bunker back and fitting hand size openings in the area of the handrails is finished. Once the whole assembly is re-mounted on the buffer beam attention will turn to fitting the cab roof.

The new injector water handle assembly is finished and awaits final installation. Work on the sanding gear has been progressed as far as we can go for the moment.

The axle box bearings still require some final attention before the boxes are re-united with their journals. Grease lubrication will be applied to the horn guides.

Two small grab handles in keeping with the style of the loco are being made by John Clark. They will be sited in the smokebox area.

The water tanks are now finished and have recently been internally coated to combat corrosion.

No 14 'Charwelton': With the disappearance of Sutton, Charwelton has become the next in line for major overhaul. To this end the boiler has been extracted from the frames and the frames jacked up. A full assessment of the work required can now be made. First item is to clean the frames and motion – not an enticing prospect.

No 19 'Norwegian' (376): In service. 376 has been required routinely for footplate taster service. This is one accompanied round trip on the loco and is used as a simpler version of the steam driving experience courses. For this purpose 376 is obviously ideal with its large cab, unlike certain other engines.

No 21 'Wainwright' (DS238): A successful appearance at the York Railfest unfortunately resulted in some damage to the front coupling and draw hook, along with the cab roof lifting lug, during transit. As an interim measure the

coupling and draw hook from No 65 has been borrowed.

In the meantime the Severn Valley ended up short of a visiting engine for their autumn gala and borrowed DS238 for a weekend. Lots of publicity and goodwill were generated from this. However, as the whistle was out of gauge on the SVR, adjustment had to be made before it could run on the railway.

No 22 'Maunsell' (65): The appeal for the firebox continues and has reached around £23,000. Big bills are due to be paid by the time this is read so progress continues with restoring this engine to good health.

The worn left hand valve liners have been rebored using a specialist contractor. In the meantime painting of the frames has commenced after they were cleaned. 18 man days were required to perform this cleaning giving some idea of how dirty things really were.

No 23 'Holman F Stephens': This engine spent some time in C&W at Tenterden having the painting finished and the lining and lettering done. Now complete, the engine is in service and looking quite different in its new dark green livery.

No 24 'Rolvenden': In service

No 25 'Northiam': In service

No 26 (68078): This locomotive is owned by an independent group and is being restored at their expense at Sellindge in Kent.

The use of a 50 tonne crane in early August has enabled the boiler to be sent away to a contractor for repairs. We now have a hard standing area on which the frames are placed on sleepers. The frames are now housed inside a tent. Alongside the tent we have installed a 20' container which is used for storage of various items. Work is currently taking place on the cylinder block tops and the springs and axle boxes.

All 4 buffers have been removed and it is now clear that some spring replacement is needed. A new back cylinder casting has been obtained and machining of it should start soon.

No 30 GWR Pannier (1638): In service

### **Diesel Locomotives**

No 20 (GWR Railcar): Mid-October saw the Railcar enter the Carriage and Wagon shed for a short period. During this time, with the valuable

assistance of the C&W regular staff, a number of checks and adjustments to the bodyside frames and roof framework were successfully completed.

No 40 'Ford' (BTH): In service. Some minor problems have come to light now that it has seen greater use. There has been some arcing of the generator brush gear, which has required adjustment of the brush housing. The exhaust pipe will require replacement later this year, and if anyone has access to 6" flexible exhaust pipe to help with this it will be gratefully received. Lastly a big end bearing requires refurbishment to take up identified slack.

No 41 (Ruston): In service at Rolvenden.

No 44 'Dover Castle' (Class 08): In service

Class 33 'Ashford': In service

Class 108 DMMU: In service

#### **Cranes**

No 133 (10T Taylor-Hubbard): In service

No 145 (10T Grafton): Remains sheeted up and in storage.

No 151 (36T brakedown): In service

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## **Rolling Stock**

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This year's Working Week started on 11th July with up to 17 people attending on most days. Pullman Car Theodora was the main object of our attentions but a major highlight was the test run of the Woolwich Coach. Once again we were very pleased to welcome Dave Miller and George Meredith from the North Yorkshire Moors Railway C&W Department.

#### **Millennium Project**

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

The coach was test run to Bodiam and back on Tuesday 13th July 2004 and entered service, in the vintage train, one week later. As this vehicle was built in 1911 it does mean that we can no longer refer to the set as the Victorian Train. The official launch took place on 4th



*Interior of the refurbished first class coupé, SECR Family saloon, 7th August 2004*

*(John Liddell)*

August, Sue Kinnear of Meridian Television, who was accompanied by her family, performing the honours. Andy Duck represented the Millennium Commission and photographers Brian Stephenson and Bill Oates, together with a Meridian TV film crew were on hand to ensure we got lots of good publicity. Sue's report appeared on the local news the following Sunday and we also received coverage in the railway magazines and the local press. A degree of rivalry developed with the Bluebell Railway C&W who were on the point of completing their Stroudley four-wheeler but we think we beat them by a few days (although they might argue otherwise!). Nonetheless, congratulations to our colleagues at Horsted Keynes for their splendid job. The Woolwich Coach has been generally well received by members and visitors. Unfortunately it was not so well received by guards due to access difficulties from ground level which had not been apparent during restoration. Further small handrails have been fitted in an attempt to overcome this.

**Pullman Car 'Theodora' (K&ESR No 51)**  
Rapid progress is being made following the spirited start during Working Week. The bogies have been returned from Sellindge and, at time of writing, preparations are being made to refit them. The bar in latter stages of construction and interior and exterior panelling is well advanced. Wiring (including circuits to allow for use as a conference coach) is also progressing. New window glass is being fitted and the contract for construction of chairs about to be let. We have even located another celebrity (who, we will reveal who later) to launch the car in due course.

## Running Fleet

### **SE&CR Family Saloon (K&ESR No 84)**

This vehicle is complete, back in service and taking its place in the Vintage Train – which we can't call Victorian any longer now that the 1911 built Woolwich Coach is in service.

### **GER Brake (K&ESR No 81)**

Once the Woolwich Coach was in service we were able to withdraw the GER brake for an extensive overhaul to the bodywork. The MDF components used on the Tenterden platform side had failed badly and, as previously reported, this material will not be used again. One side is being completely stripped and, although work is progressing, other commitments mean it may be some time before this vehicle re-enters service. Thought is being given to returning the coach to Great Eastern maroon livery.

### **Shark Ballast Plough Brake Van**

**(K&ESR No 165)** The vehicle sides were re-boarded by students from Interfleet Technology during their annual visit to the Railway. This was again a very successful occasion which included a meal on the Wednesday evening Pullman to which representatives of the Department were invited. Thanks to Interfleet for preparing on our behalf a New Starters Induction Pack.

### **RXD Coach (K&ESR No 174)**

This ex-breakdown train Mark 1 riding coach, painted Malachite green earlier this year, briefly returned to the shed in October for two vandal damaged windows to be replaced.

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## Infrastructure

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### **Company Secretary's Notes**

The Annual General Meeting, held at Tenterden Town Hall on 9th October 2004, was routine and businesslike and was followed by the customary open forum. Under 100 people attended although there was a noticeable increase in the proxy (postal) votes received. The Annual Report of the Directors and Audited Accounts for 2003 were adopted and Messrs. Day Smith & Hunter appointed as Auditors to the Company. Board election results were as follows:

Graham Bridge: 253 votes for; 24 against – re-elected

Brian Janes: 239 votes for; 44 against – re-elected

David Lloyd: 181 votes for; 96 against – elected

Norman Brice was again re-elected as Chairman for a further twelve months at a subsequent meeting of the Board.

The following awards were made, although not all recipients were present.





*Northiam No 1 Cottage being restored by the Tuesday Group, 7th August 2004*

*(John Liddell)*

#### 25 Year's Service:

Paul Sayce, Alistair Forbes, Howard Wallace-Sims, David Green, Richard Large

#### Honorary Life Members:

Robin Dyce (for services as a Director and as Chairman)

Boris Perkins (for his initiative in securing the Railway's historic name for the Company's use).

#### Special Award:

Donald Wilson (for services to the Santa Specials over three decades).

#### General Manager's Award for Achievement:

Alan Feltham, Graham Hopker, David Ware, John Cobb, Keith Jones, Norman Johnson, Martin Hockley, Cathy Roberts, Veronica Hopker, Brian Martin.

#### Forestry & Conservation

The group has spent months working near Rother Bridge removing old and potentially dangerous willow trees. Over the past 5 years we have been monitoring the condition of the trees, then following a period of high winds numerous

large limbs came down, taking the telephone wires with them. We then started the arduous task of felling the willows. This has now been completed.

The group then spent six visits during April and May around Tenterden Station, and the head shunt cutting back foliage, bramble etc.

Following this we moved on to Wittersham Road clearing fallen trees on a small piece of land which we named Wittersham Triangle. Some of the large trees had fallen across a ditch and were lying on part of one of our neighbour's farmland. We had to cut the trees up then pull them out of the ditch which turned out to be very tiring. So far we have spent five visits with at least two more visits to complete the job.

On Sunday 26th September we had the pleasure of a works train working out from Bodiam. This was possible due to the Thomas Weekend running to Wittersham. A small amount of cutting back at the headshunt was carried out but the biggest job was improving site lines to occupational crossings. We then cut back and felled trees close to the line as we travelled back to Wittersham.

Our last visit was spent near Hexden Bridge after getting a lift from the first train out to Bodiam. It is always interesting to see the passengers interest in a small group of people getting off the train in the middle of what seems like nowhere with hard hats, chain saws and other working implements being off loaded as well.

Then of course, as the group prepare to return home we always stand and wonder if the train is going to stop as requested.

If you have a day to spare and you wish to join our small group of hard-working train enthusiasts please get in touch with Peter Thorogood on telephone number 0208 859 5082.

### Membership

246 new members have been enrolled for 2004 compared to 210 during the same period last year. We now have a total membership of 2238.

### Bodiam

The station gardens were included in the 'Stations in Bloom' event in August with many of the plants in the flower border specially labelled for the occasion. Pam and Sheila Stevens also mounted display boards in the goods office giving an historical account of the gardens and

showing work up to the present day. Incidentally, the garden produced a good crop of tomatoes this year.

The 'Hoppers Weekend' went well in spite of strong winds, threatened showers and a chill in the air for the Saturday evening event. On the Saturday, pupils from Homewood School, Tenterden, gave four performances of a drama based on the problems of mechanisation in the hop-gardens. The drama was written and performed by the pupils (in costume), using the cattle dock as a natural stage. On the Sunday, folk singers Allison and Peter performed at various locations on site, battling against the wind to make themselves heard.

On the Saturday evening, we were entertained by 'Elastic Band' living up to their name by having six musicians rather than the booked four! The late evening train carried only 16 people from Tenterden and we wonder whether this is worth running next year. Indeed, there are some thoughts as to whether we should cancel the evening event and just rely on the day-time public days. Readers views on this would be welcome.

Nevertheless, the ex-hoppers seemed to enjoy



*The new Crossing Keeper's hut at Northiam*

*(Eileen Martin)*

themselves and some were interviewed for a programme broadcast on BBC1 on 17th October in the South-East only. 'The Last Oast' also featured the K&ESR and Bodiam station, and will later have a network showing on a BBC channel. We also hope to show the 40 minute programme at next year's 'Hoppers Weekend' on 10 and 11 September, 2005.

Thanks are due to all those who supported this year's event, in catering, on the gate, plant stall, station staff, at the bar, and keeping the camp fire burning. Also, not forgetting those who helped in preparing the site.

The maintenance team has also been busy,

having completed the rebuild of a 'Wickham' type trailer trolley. This brings to ten the number of trollies rebuilt since 2000, the others being two four-wheeled trollies, four sack barrows, two large-wheeled trollies and one sack hoist. The winter work will include renovation of more of the platform bench seats.

A bid has been made for funds to build a retaining wall the length of the catering vehicles, alongside the platform siding. Since 2000, the yard surface has gradually eroded and crumbled away, falling onto the siding track. This looks unsightly and is becoming a hazard. Hopefully, the work may be done next year before services resume at Bodiam.

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## Permanent Way

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The headshunt at Bodiam (now known officially as 'the long siding') was completed on time and within budget. Thanks are due to the Operating Department for their very early turns. They helped move the project forward at critical times. At the time of going to press we await the use of the regulator and the tamper. Once tamped, the siding will be released to operating for the stabling of stock. Approximately 10 full coach lengths are available which will help clear the Railway of many 'future restoration projects' and make shunting easier. Beyond the current buffer stop the culvert has been replaced and 500m of trackbed installed, complete with drainage. When funds permit, the RVR will lay track. This year seems to have flown by and we have spent the majority of our time patrolling and fettling the track Saturdays and Sundays.

The addition of a fork lift truck at Wittersham Road has improved our efficiency, and has reduced the physical effort of loading wagons. Further additions to the fleet are planned which

will reduce the annual plant hire bill and help the department cope with the changing workload. Lifting wooden sleepers can be done with a team of four. However, lifting concretes is an impossible task and requires machinery. As we replace woods with concretes year by year to reduce track maintenance we must have access to plant that will move concretes for us.

The closed season will see Balfour Beatty return for another 4 weeks of free tamping. We will be running stone out before their arrival and will then concentrate on piecing together the new point for Tenterden which will be installed in March 2005, creating a longer run round loop. The point itself will be in the level crossing as at Bodiam. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funds, we cannot tackle the drainage problem that exists.

Future projects, subject to board funding, will be the replacement of the Pullman Dock at Tenterden and improvements to Orpins Curve.

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## S&T Engineering

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Work continues to establish an internal telephone link from Northiam to Bodiam. Over 12,000 metres of wire have been put up with wiring now finished from Bodiam towards Padgham's crossing and from Northiam towards Mill Ditch. The overhead line is complete for the treadle circuit so that the Bodiam Station staff can relax and be warned by treadle rather than anxiously wait in the rain or worse. It is

hoped this circuit will be in operation by Easter next year.

We now await a further delivery of wire to complete the short section from Mill Ditch to Padgham's crossing. For reasons lost in time the wire did not come in the quantities requested and there has been some wastage as a result. However a telephone circuit should be in place by Easter as well.



# Groups

## Ashford Area Group

The Ashford Group organised a very successful visit to the 10½" Birchley Railway, Biddenden at the end of July at the kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Drummond Randall. Well filled trains were running all afternoon with the newly acquired Schools Class loco among the motive power. As usual, a super tea was provided by Mrs Randall.

The group also joined with the RCTS in a visit to The Leighton Buzzard Railway for their Steam Weekend, followed by the nearby Chinnor & Princess Risborough Railway.

Our Autumn session started well with 'The Diaries of a Trainspotter' by Michael Harvey followed by more of John Liddell's fascinating archive film of South African Steam in the 70s. Our future programme is:-

Wednesday 15th December

Films from the now defunct BR Film Unit by Ken Hull

Wednesday 19th January

Australian Railways by Brian Stephenson

Wednesday 16th February

'Here, There and Everywhere' with steam & modern traction by Ian Feather

Wednesday 23rd March

The Nene Valley Railway, Then & Now by Christopher Awdry.

We meet at Ashford Rail Social Club, Beaver Road, Ashford at 7.30pm. and everyone is very welcome to come along – we just ask for a £2 donation to help defray expenses. More information from Eric Graves Tel: 01233 623687.

## Gardening Group

Having survived the hard work associated with putting as much colour as possible in the gardens along the line for the summer months, now is the time to take stock of what has been achieved and to plan for next year.

Hopefully during the winter we will be able to get Northiam gardens to a situation whereby next year they will be under control and easier to maintain. We have managed to collect a reasonable stock of perennials which will mean we will not have to find so many annuals to fill the gaps.

This summer the 'Friends of Northiam' turned up trumps and put on a superb display by filling every flower trough Robin Dyce managed to produce. Northiam was the most decorated station of all.

Bodiam, of course, was its prize winning self under the care of Pamela and Sheila Stevens. Being our heritage station it will always be special.

Tenterden is improving and we have to thank Phil Woods for his tremendous effort and support. Fortunately having Phil on site to water during the hot days saved all the tubs and hanging buckets. A great deal of work is still planned for the gardens and much of this will be carried out during the winter. The tidying up of the area around the beech tree roots will be done and also completing the borders at the Pullman end of the station. The ivy and brambles need to be removed from in front of the office buildings and no doubt the list will continue.

As this is the end of the season I would like to thank Pamela and Sheila Stevens for the encouragement and support they have given as well as all the plants; Carol Dyce for the help she gave in preparing for the 'Stations in Bloom' event; Sue and Jolyon Vickers who battled with but who were beaten by Wittersham Road and the Tuesday Group for helping with the heavy work. Next year I am sure will be easier as we get on top of things and hopefully the gardens can become a feature of the Railway which helps attract visitors.

## Tuesday Group

Most of the work carried out since the last report has been concentrated at Northiam Station. This included the completion of the Crossing Keeper's hut which is now fully operational.

Work still proceeds on No 1 Cottage following the discovery of far more rotten wood than had originally been anticipated. Upon examining the floor in the small Ladies Room it was discovered the bearers had almost disintegrated and the rot had extended into the back wall. In order to repair this, the rear of the building had to be jacked up using Acros from Carriage & Wagon.

The canopy over the entrance door has now been repaired, painted and put in place supported by two new uprights.

Primer, undercoat and top coats of paint have been applied to the front, east end and most of the rear of the building and work has now started on improving the aesthetic appearance of No 2 cottage, although apart from a dash of paint no further work is planned for this cottage at present.

On 12 September 'Nobby' and his nephew brought a digger to Northiam and we cleared displaced soil from around No 1 and No 2 cottages. They also dug out three trenches each 3 metres in length for planting privet hedging. John Miller advised that originally there had been three lines of hedging forming the garden boundaries to the cottages. During the winter these will be planted with the help of the Gardening Group.

Three new aluminium running-in boards have been erected at Northiam.

New aluminium powder coated station signs incorporating the European and Millennium logos have been erected at Bodiam, Northiam, Wittersham Road and Rolvenden.

Anyone wishing to join our group will be assured of a variety of work, pleasant and jovial company and of course a good brew! Please phone Graham Hopker 01303 862811.

### **Museum**

With just another month to go, visitor numbers to the end of September are running a little ahead of last year at about 5,600. The busiest month was August with nearly 1,500 visitors and the quietest, so far, was June with less than 700.

The Museum is currently staffed by 15 attendants, down from 17 two years ago. Owing to this, we remained closed on seven of the 159 planned opening days, plus another day following total power failure.

Since the last report there have been a number of new acquisitions to the collection. These included:-

- i) A pocket timetable dated April 1900, the first Rother Valley Railway issue, (donation).
- ii) A third-class ticket, serial number 0002, for travel to Northiam from Tenterden Town on 16 March 1903, the day Tenterden Town opened, (donation).
- iii) A pair of brass K&ESR uniform buttons, one large and one small, probably dating from the 1920s, (bought at auction).

iv) Three letters from Rudyard Kipling to Colonel Stephens, details of which are given elsewhere in this journal, (purchased).

v) A number of items from the Snailbeach District Railways have been placed on indefinite loan to the collection. Included is the heavy Snailbeach company seal in its carrying box, the leather-bound company minute book covering the period 1873 to 1949, a hard-bound copy of the original Act of Parliament authorising the building of the Snailbeach District Railways, and a number of indentures, legal agreements, plans and photographs.

The Museum closes at the end of October and re-opens next Spring. Amongst planned work is the re-organising of some of the displays and cleaning of the carpet-square flooring throughout.

### **News from the Rother Valley Railway**

~ David Felton

The two organisations have recently completed a period of co-operation which has resulted in a significant step in extending the Railway back in the direction of Robertsbridge.

The project was split into two sections of work, the laying of a long siding extending the track approx 200m from the K&ESR boundary at Bodiam station and thereafter the reinstatement of the formation across the first two fields towards Junction Road.

Following the granting of a licence by RVR to K&ESR, the first stage was the track extension from the bufferstops at Bodiam station to the end of the original formation. This area had been cleared of vegetation and the site fenced by the K&ESR Permanent Way department during the spring. This allowed a full assessment of the track bed to be undertaken for the detailed action plan to be formulated. The first job to be undertaken was the reinstatement of the culvert at the western end of the embankment, the original having been dug out when the fields were levelled off. This allowed access from the field end for plant and personnel. The site was graded through and the drain installed using a 13 tonne excavator, the opportunity being taken to increase the size of the pipe from the original. The bufferstops were then moved to the end of the site. 200m of BH rail were then brought in to the rail head and placed into the required position by the excavator. Concrete sleepers were brought to the site one wagon load at a time and as the track was laid the wagon was moved to the new rail head until the

track limit was reached and the buffers were reconnected. Movement of the materials was co-ordinated with the operating department as this work was done during open season running.

The next stage involved reconstruction of the shallow embankment from the new bufferstops over two fields (approximately 500m). This section had been flattened by the farmer about 20 years ago. Survey work was undertaken to find the best alignment without hitting the peat bog patches and details of the existing drainage were researched and recorded. The new embankment and drainage were then designed and CAD drawings produced. The first job after marking out was to remove the topsoil to avoid later settlement; this was stored on the side to be used later on the embankment bank sides. Next 2,500 tonnes of soil were imported (at no cost to the railway) and compacted at the correct level, and cross pipes installed to balance the flood water in adverse conditions. Fibre matting was laid on the clay formation and a 100mm layer of crushed concrete (400 tonnes) compacted; this is half the required amount to get a formation ready for track. The open ditches were then created and the top soil graded out to complete this stage of the job.

The works were done using volunteer labour with only the plant operator being paid. Sincere thanks are given to everyone including the volunteers who contributed and took part in the project.

Meanwhile work at Robertsbridge continues on a steady basis, as time and resources permit. Particular progress has been made with the installation of a point for a run round in the station area and the restoration of the ex-SR brake van and the ex-K&ESR 3 plank wagon. Recent arrivals have been three ex-BR banana vans, which we believe gives RVR the only rake of such vans in preservation circles. These are in good condition and will be used for storage purposes. They will be painted into full 1960s livery as soon as the weather permits.

### **News from the CFBS**

~ Philip Pacey

I spent four days, 26th-31st August, at St Valery, for the first time occupying a bed in the new attic dormitory. I was astonished to find a young lady in residence, the CFBS's first female fireperson! She had clearly become accustomed to sharing sleeping and washing facilities with assorted men

and to making sure we knew when she was in the shower.

Haine St Pierre 2-6-0T and Buffaud & Robatel 0-6-2T were working normal services, and the HSP worked an evening dining train on Friday evening, 27th August. I felt sorry for all concerned; it had begun to rain at midday, and rained and rained all afternoon and evening, the clouds descended and it grew dark prematurely. Instead of a spectacular sunset the diners would have seen nothing, and however good the food, the wooden seats must have felt less and less comfortable.

Fortunately the weather improved for the remainder of my stay. Saturday began inauspiciously, however, with the derailment of one of the diesel locos. But by the time I got back from a necessary trip to the Champion supermarket, it was back on the rails. Sunday morning saw the last of the season's diesel-hauled trains travelling empty to Noyelles to collect day-trippers off a train from Paris, departing from Noyelles at 9.45 for St Valery.

The sun shone on Monday, majestic clouds sailed over the bay, and in the course of the morning an especially high tide swiftly and silently covered the salt marshes beyond the depot. To my great delight, the Cail 2-6-0T was steamed alongside the HSP; this was the first time I had seen the Cail in steam. Late in the afternoon the Cail took the empty dining consist to pick up a party at Le Crotoy. As on Friday, I was tucked up in bed by the time the train returned.

The CFBS is enjoying another very successful season, with exceptional visitor numbers recorded during the early season, March to June inclusive. Indifferent weather probably accounts for less spectacular but still very good totals for July and August, but the final total is likely to at least come close to last year's record-breaking numbers, and without the benefit of a steam festival. In these circumstances the CFBS needs as many passenger carriages as it can lay its hands on, the length of trains being limited only by the space available in the station and on the quay at St Valery. My task was to wire brush rust from the chassis of a former 'Somme' carriage, a task which I'm proud to say I completed (it took about 20 hours in all). I've since learned with much satisfaction that the chassis was given a coat of anti-rust paint during the succession of fine days which followed my departure. Another 'Somme' coach, No 10302,



which has been virtually rebuilt from scratch during the last few years, was in the depot receiving finishing touches. In addition the CFBS has recently taken delivery of six carriages and two fourgons from the Berner Oberland Bahn, all in fairly good condition. Of these, two carriages arrived on site in September, after my visit. They are in reasonably good condition and work will be undertaken during the winter to adapt them for use on the CFBS.

New equipment in the workshop includes a 'gros tour'. Parts of the workshop are also being reorganised; when it was too wet for me to carry on wire brushing outside, I helped with the even worse task of cleaning out an inspection pit, exposing crumbling brickwork which may well survive from the original CF du Nord depot.

Some 46kg rails are being recovered from the Abbeville-Auxile le Château line and will probably be used to replace 30kg metre gauge rails on the mixed gauge section between St Valery and Noyelles. Some 4,300km of rails are available from this source. At Noyelles the former buffet (under the same roof as the SNCF station) is to be renovated to serve as a museum devoted to railways throughout the Département. I don't know when work is scheduled to start; I understand that the Département will replace the doors and windows and then hand over to the CFBS. The building was looking neglected in August, although I was glad to see that the eaves are still a popular nesting site for house martins. Also at Noyelles, it seems that the cooperative

which used the group of agricultural buildings (to the left of CFBS trains departing from Noyelles) has closed and these buildings are likely to disappear. I was interested to see that they have inspired some recent paintings by Pippa Darbyshire, the English artist who, with her husband, re-opened the 'Relais de la baie' café a couple of years ago. The new café/gallery has a very welcoming ambience; on a nice day you can sit outside and watch the trains (SNCF and CFBS), and of course English is spoken! Highly recommended.

Special events this year have included a visit from our own SNCF Society, for whom a special train was provided, on 3rd April. This was followed on 16th May by a 'mini fête de la vapeur en baie de somme' when a steam-hauled standard gauge special arrived at Noyelles carrying 380 British enthusiasts, for whom the CFBS laid on a train to St Valery – where, as we were told in the last *Terrier*, members of the InterReg committee were there to meet them. So far as forthcoming events are concerned, I note with interest that a K&ESR working visit to the CFBS was scheduled for 18th-22nd November, with a return visit from the CFBS on 4th-7th February. Trains du Père Noël are scheduled for the 4th, 5th, 18th and 19th December (more than ever before, I think). Work on rebuilding the lock at St Valery is to commence in February, 2005; a temporary bridge will be put in place so that trains can continue to run. And of course for the next fête de la vapeur we have to wait until April, 2006.

# The AGM Speech 2004

**For the benefit of those members who were unable to attend the Annual General Meeting on 9th October 2004, the following is a transcript of our Chairman, Norman Brice's speech.**

The first thing I did when preparing this address was to go back and read what I said here a year ago and ask myself the question: What has changed in the past twelve months? We have achieved a lot, both financially (of which I will speak later) but also in improving the product we offer our visitors, those kind people who pay for our hobby.

Improvements include: completing the Woolwich coach, with considerable financial support from the Millennium Commission;

completing loco 23; improvements to Tenterden site – removing the old coach, opening up access – new, improved signs at stations – much funded by a grant from InterReg and we have now placed a contract for the new food store for Tenterden. Also, Railway Experience Days and footplate tasters are proving that we can introduce and develop new niche products. Organisationally, bringing the Thomas and other events catering 'in-house' has increased revenue by no less than 26%.

But what is more interesting, and often much more challenging, is what has not changed.

We are still not profitable as a business each year we have to be rescued by our charitable status and donations/bequests. Despite a variety of marketing and event initiatives, we seem to have a plateau of around 80,000 visitors, with all that means for revenue. Managers consistently ask for more budget than we can afford – this is not a criticism but a reflection of the high fixed costs of the business and the very modest amounts we can make available for improvements. At the same time, Managers must now be congratulated on their much stricter adherence to budgets. A vital financial discipline which was less obvious in times past. As a business, our planning and control mechanisms are incomparably better.

We remain a largely volunteer organisation: this is a short term strength but, as I remarked a year ago, it is our biggest worry for the future. Changes in the nature of society seem to mean fewer people volunteer for any unpaid activities and the current volunteer force grows older. As the demand for labour increases and the available pool dwindles, there are constant calls for posts to become salaried. If the business were growing, that would not be a problem but with our relatively fixed income, it is a trend we must watch most carefully indeed.

Sometimes, the answer is not even money but the lack of skills. We cannot recruit certain mechanical skills, even if we have the money, so have gone down the alternative route of training our own apprentices. Long and expensive but ultimately more rewarding as we are ensuring the long-term existence of that skill base.

More broadly, since opening to Bodiam four years ago, we have been consolidating our financial position. With some considerable success. From being a whisker away from bankruptcy, we have repaid close to half our debt. In 2003, we made a profit around £60,000, reduced our creditors from £104,000 to £60,000 and repaid £29,000 of our long-term bank loan. As well as putting aside the first £50,000 towards the Northiam Bond redemption in 2007. For the current year, we will again turn in a modest surplus and generate more than enough cash to enable us to set sums aside for bond redemption.

Having consolidated, we now have the

opportunity to look again to the future and at the ever-evolving nature of the tourist market in which we compete. Compete we have to. Customer expectations are ever higher – what we could get away with a few years ago is no longer acceptable. There are ever more ways to spend the leisure pound.

Over the past couple of years, we have developed a number of plans and strategies: 10 year locomotive and carriage plans; an Image Policy and, more recently, a Stations Strategy. We have identified clear needs to improve the infrastructure, for the running of the Railway, as well as for improving the attractiveness of what we offer the public and to discharge our obligations as an educational charity. A few examples will suffice: the locomotive shed at Rolvenden is wholly inadequate for the joint tasks of restoring locomotives and keeping the running fleet going. We desperately need covered accommodation for the historic wooden bodied carriages. Our 'offices' are life expired and occupying a prime position on the Tenterden site, as does our Carriage and Wagon facility.

All of this will need a lot of detailed feasibility studies, planning and costing. We have all the different plans but they need to be made inter-dependent and prioritised. Then we must find sources of funding. Bearing in mind what I said a moment ago, you may well be wondering how we can afford to undertake all these expensive works. The answer, as ever, is with the best sort of money – somebody else's! Potential funding sources include InterReg and Heritage Lottery and much work will be needed to develop sound, fully costed, project plans for these bodies.

Your Board is developing a long term plan which we hope to be announcing in due course and, as ever, volunteers to help produce these would be greatly welcomed. Thereafter, we will have a period of consultation because, ultimately, everybody has an interest in how the railway develops. Balances have to be drawn between absolute historical accuracy and what will generate revenue. A difficult balance but one where we have to succeed.

The short term has been secured and now we can look forward with greater confidence thanks to the efforts of everybody who contributes to the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

# Letters to the Editor

## K&ESR ticketing arrangements

Sir - with reference to the letter from Mr Miller in the Summer Issue (No 94 - page 41), I hope the following notes may be of interest.

Edmondson tickets (note the correct spelling) were produced by the SR for this traffic as had been done by the SE&CR before them. The overall situation was complex, especially regarding through traffic originating on the K&ESR. However tickets for traffic originating on the Southern Railway, tickets were produced covering at least

- (a) Ordinary singles, (b) Monthly returns, (c) Forces Leave Tickets, (d) Hopper Traffic.

SR-titled examples in my collection include (a) singles from both London Bridge and Charing Cross to Bodiam, and Charing Cross to Tenterden. (b) HM forces Leave Single (Red L overprint) from Charing Cross to Tenterden (c) Monthly Return (vertical format with Red M overprint code) from Tunbridge Wells Central to Northiam (d) Monthly Return (vertical format) from Charing Cross to Tenterden (e) Hopper Singles from London Bridge to Bodiam.

These tickets all state that the journey is "via Robertsbridge/Headcorn and K&ESR". The significance of this note is that it distinguishes

them from a plethora of 'Posthumous SR Tickets' i.e. early post nationalisation tickets printed for the BR's 'Kent and East Sussex Line' but entitled Southern Railway pending a decision on the trading title of the newly owned entity.

The fact that rates for such traffic are quoted in the ABC timetables do not necessarily mean that tickets were produced for them. On many journeys the ticket issued was a Station of Origin to Blank ticket, manually completed as appropriate. In my collection there are indeed tickets to the K&ESR from such unlikely stations as Northwood Hills (Met. &GCR) and Leytonstone (LNER)!

There was an extensive range of fares offered in SE&CR/K&ESR days. For example I have a document of 1911 which lists nearly thirty different fare combinations from Tenterden alone. However there could have been more if availability for different days of the week were taken into account!

I have no evidence of any Rother Valley Railway arrangements i.e. RVR/SECR headed tickets. I have a suspicion that inter-ticketing only came into existence with the Headcorn Extension when the SE&CR was being at pains to promote the K&ESR as a means of fulfilling their own pledge to build the line. But no evidence!

Mr Miller may be interested to know that I am just completing a book on the Tickets of the RVR



and K&ESR 1900-1961, fully illustrated, and covering over 150 different types and variants. It is currently planned to publish it next year.

Winthorpe, Notts

Malcolm Shelmerdine

*The K&ESR became a member of the Railway Clearing House for goods and parcels traffic in 1914 but not for passengers - Ed*

### **Northiam Traffic**

Sir – Most tourist attractions have seen a drop in visitor numbers this year and I imagine the railway has not escaped this trend.

What worries me in particular is the huge drop in passenger numbers at Northiam since it ceased to be the Sussex end of the line.

In the mid nineties it attracted over 25% of the total number of passengers. Last year it was less than 5%. There is no logical reason for this.

The station is still there. The volunteers have looked after it well and it is a credit to the line. It has a large car park and a picnic site. But above all it is on the main road that comes from Camber in the East to Bexhill in the West. There is a transient population of over ten thousand every week during the season in that area.

They are still there and have been for the last five years. Why have they stopped coming to the railway by visiting Northiam?

The railway has made efforts to advertise but have used the medium of local papers. This advertising is expensive and is rarely seen by holiday visitors.

So is there another reason? I can only say that in the nineties a small band of volunteers distributed bar cards and timetables to over two hundred places in the area and provided a top up system when they ran out. That no longer happens.

In this competitive tourist area could it happen again? Special single fold timetables in one colour would be relatively cheap and certainly cheaper than newspaper advertising. Are there some volunteers out there who would distribute them? If so would the railway try this approach for 2005?

We need the income. The customers are there but have stopped coming. They need to be reminded there is a steam railway near them where they can get a good day out.

Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex                      John Bourne

### **Stations in Bloom**

Sir – As a regular K&ESR driver, I have done a number of turns over the summer and spent many days travelling from Tenterden to Bodiam,

from Bodiam to Tenterden, and back again to Bodiam.

The journey along the line this summer was considerably enlivened by the 'Station in Bloom' theme. Tenterden, Northiam and Bodiam stations really were blooming lovely, and I would like to add this letter to the general consensus of appreciation for all the planning, hard work, effort and attention to detail that so obviously went into turning out the stations to this standard. It all brought out the essence of rural charm in our little stations, and, I am sure, added much to our visitors enjoyment.

What a shame that summer is over and we are into the season of leaves on the line!

Horsted Keynes, West Sussex                      Heidi Mowforth

### **Hastings**

Sir – I am the new owner of No 15 'Hastings', as you are probably aware I removed her from Rolvenden with the assistance of the Loco department last January.

The engine is now at Mangapps Farm Museum in Essex and we are working on completing the overhaul that was started 25 years ago.

I was wondering whether any of your membership would be able to assist me with any pictures or information about 'Hastings' both on the KESR and at Sproxtton.

I am also trying to locate the brass safety valve bonnet, dome cover and cab window frames which the loco carried when she arrived on the KESR in 1963 but don't appear in any pictures I have after 1965.

Rochester, Kent    Michael Staniforth

*Would anybody who can help please contact Mr Staniforth at 452, Rochester Road, Burham, Rochester, ME1 3RH. 07989-119146 – Ed*

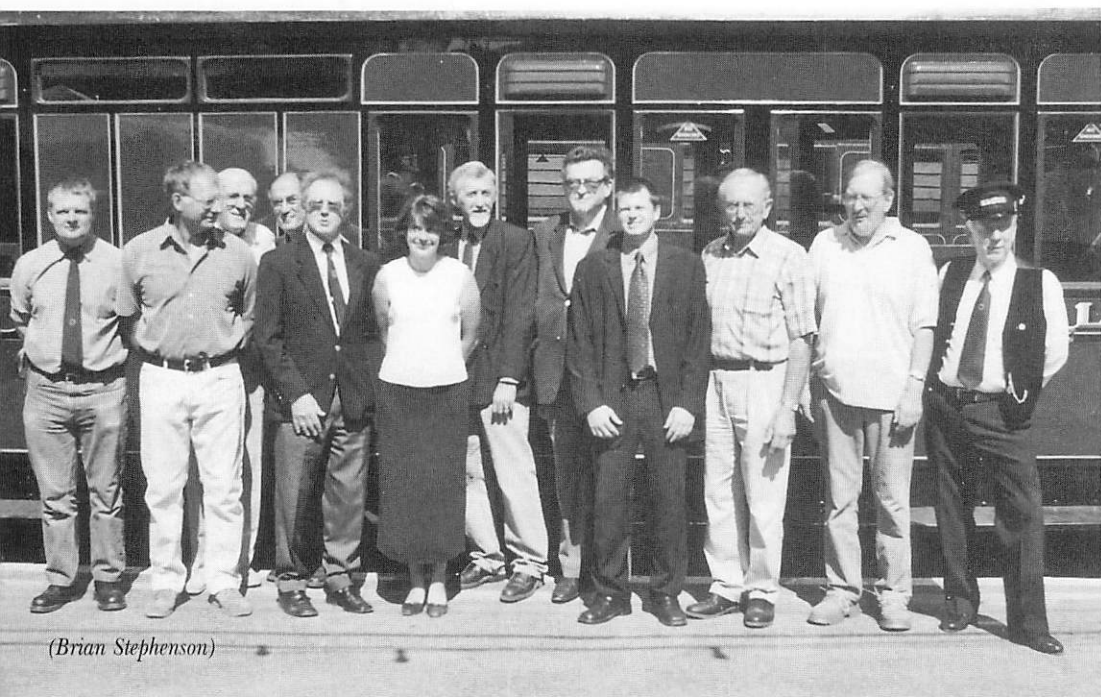
### **Railfest 2004**

Sir – I refer to the photograph of USA No DS238 at York Railfest, page 41 *Tenterden Terrier* No 94. Whilst it was most flattering to be mistaken for the K&ESR's foremost footplate ambassador I am not in fact Mr D.Slack. I suppose the onset of middle aged spread could have led to the confusion, but I am not the only person on the Railway capable of wearing collar and tie, neither have I appeared in every railway journal in the known universe surgically attached to No 32678.

C&W dept, Tenterden

Paul Sayce

# Woolwich Restored



*(Brian Stephenson)*



*(John Liddell)*



*Meridian Television's Sue Kinnear re-launching the newly restored Woolwich Coach at Tenterden Town Station, on 6th August 2004. The Millennium Commission was represented by Andy Duck and the event was hosted by Chairman, Norman Brice.*



*(Brian Stephenson)*



*(Brian Stephenson)*

# New Man at the Helm

Company Secretary, Nick Pallant, talks to our new General Manager, Graham Baldwin

The appearance of the man who walked into my office made two words spring to mind – 'Professional Manager'. Of course I knew that was what the Railway had set out to recruit but I had no real notions of what to expect. I don't use stereotypes to sum people up, I try not to judge anyone by first impressions and don't ask me to define what I mean by 'Professional Manager'. Nevertheless, after nearly 40 years working life, I would like to think I recognised those indefinable qualities which make The Boss and, in the light of this, it was interesting to hear what he had to say.

Most of Graham Baldwin's working life has been spent dealing with pubs, or probably more accurately publicans. He has been responsible for a variety of pubs, hotels and restaurants – managed, franchised and leased. Like many of us would, his friends outside the industry thought it must be fantastic dealing with pubs and beer; but, as Graham said "When you go down the local with your mate for a pint, the last thing you need is a discussion with the landlord about why the brewery has put his rent up". He then said something which struck me as being of immediate relevance to the present and future needs of the K&ESR. "As a manager of tenanted and leased pubs it was essential for me to have a thorough understanding of all business principles especially marketing and finance". He added "I have also done some estate management and managed surveyors, so I have some knowledge of building principles, and property legislation".

In a changing industry Graham has worked for public and private companies, large and small. He has also worked in radio, most of the time as a paid hobby, but once, to help a friend out, he worked full time selling, broadcasting, and writing scripts for ads. Graham was also one of the founding Directors of KFM in Tonbridge before it was sold and subsequently re-named. The same friends who thought it was fantastic managing pubs had the same idea about working in radio. "But when you turn it on you can't help but analyse its content and production. I will now enjoy listening to the radio and going to the pub!"

I asked Graham if he had known much about the K&ESR before applying for the GM's post. He replied that he had known a little but that a little



(Bill Oates)

knowledge was a dangerous thing. "As I thought about what the job would involve I decided that it would still be in the hospitality business. Looking after our paying guests and enticing them to spend more is key to the survival of the business and that is no different. We are also in the entertainment business too, as many of the volunteers are actors on a stage."

Graham had visited the railway with his wife and two daughters when they first moved into the area. "We went to see Santa and I have to say this was an excellent experience. I particularly liked the way Santa, and everyone else involved, played their part. The girls liked it so much that a few years later they became elves for a couple of years. Before applying for the job I had a good look around and enjoyed an excellent hospitality experience. There are however a few areas that I believe have a little room for improvement as the staff and members will find out in due course!"

I next asked Graham about his own hobbies and learned that his main interest is hockey. He has just retired from playing – apart from the odd game for Sutton Valence Vets – but now mainly umpires. "Some of this is in Kent, but most weeks I umpire for East of England. I officiate both men's and women's games. This has taken me to Peterborough and Dereham amongst other places. It's always good to get a Kent appointment though." He also writes the Kent Umpire's

newsletter. In the last couple of years he's managed to acquire a reasonable golf handicap and this is his summer game. His elder daughter is at college studying for a degree in Sports Management with Golf Studies and Graham enviously wonders why was this not available when he was 18. "I also enjoy listening to music of most genres but tend to avoid the extremes."

My assumption that Graham had no previous contact with heritage railways, other than as a passenger, was confirmed; his next comment came as a mild surprise. "But I do remember having a train set when I was small – and I will also admit to building a model railway in the spare bedroom not long after I got married. Strangely I can remember the name of my first model steam locomotive and I think it was a 4-6-0. That was the extent of my involvement with railways until I saw the job ad, that is of course apart from learning how to 'appreciate' the 'vintage' rolling stock in use when I had to travel from Headcorn to London and beyond on business trips! Seriously, I do appreciate heritage and history and am a member of both the National Trust & English Heritage. I enjoy visiting their sites and have some views on what makes a good tourist attraction "

I suggested that dealing with sportsmen would help him in dealing with our members as there was probably a similarity in their motivation. Graham hoped that there was. "The great thing about the human race is that we are all different. We make different decisions and obtain fulfilment in different ways. In any group of volunteers we are brought together with a mix of enjoyment (we wouldn't do it if we did not enjoy it would we?) and a desire to be successful as an individual and as a team. In this respect K&ESR should be no different to say Canterbury Hockey Club.

Everybody works together, using their individual skills, to achieve the best results. Well that's the theory! I have been a manager of volunteers before in both Hospital & Community Radio. The biggest issue there was that a number of them had enormous egos, as broadcasters. I cannot believe that K&ESR will have the same issue – unless you know different..." (I didn't comment!)

My next question addressed a touchy subject head on. What was Graham's impression of railway enthusiasts? No doubt he'd heard all the alternative comedy jokes about anoraks and train spotters. It was something of a relief when he confessed to having missed the jokes (and then wryly added that no doubt he would catch up on

them in the next few weeks) before making a particularly perceptive remark, "As with any hobby or pastime, participants get totally wrapped up in their activity. There's nothing wrong with this. The thing that strikes me about railway preservationists is that they take such pride in their hobby. They are in a different league to the train spotter who gets excited at seeing unit 207202 attached to 317732. There are not too many hobbies where so much attention to legislative detail is required, and the thinking man or woman recognises and appreciates that."

Going on from this, I wondered which of his particular skills would help him most on the K&ESR. Graham began by saying that he hoped to bring a cross section of management skills into the business and a sense of fair-play. He continued that "Marketing and retailing are critical and we have to consistently review our offer. I did some consultancy recently for a multi-channel retail company. I was astounded as to how much direct selling comes from the web, and although K&ESR has a great web-site we have to develop it as an income channel as well as a marketing tool. Recruiting and motivating self-employed licensees has often been a difficult task. A total mix of human relations skills are required and I hope mine will add something to the team. I am also hugely profit (or now surplus) orientated. It will be an interesting challenge to apply my knowledge and experience to a non-profit making charity". He would cope with the mysteries of the railway world by listening, taking advice, and then forming opinions. Over the next few months he hopes to join most of the volunteers for some practical demonstrations of their skills and asks his colleagues to be patient "until everything was revealed".

Graham concluded with the statement that it is early days and certainly too early to put down a marker. Nevertheless, "I see that we have something to be proud of – a superb representation of an early twentieth century steam railway. We have however high standards to maintain and develop. We cannot sit still as our competitors develop and compete for a greater share of the tourist pound. The most important part of my job is to manage the continued development of K&ESR. – to ensure that we can extend our offer and attract more new visitors, and getting more to come back. I look forward to working with the members and staff to achieve this".

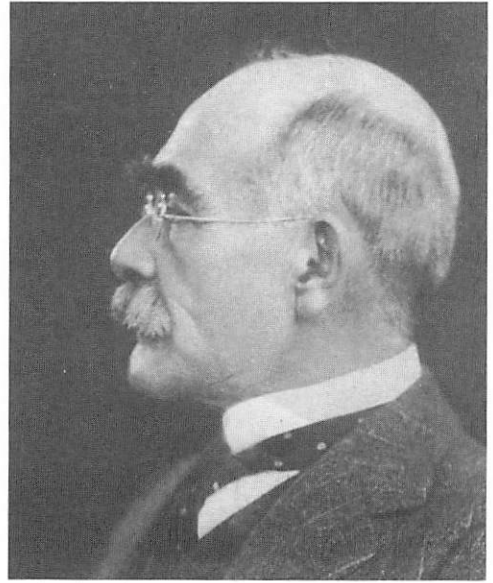
# The Kipling Connection

The Museum has recently acquired three letters written by Rudyard Kipling to H.F.Stephens. The correspondence covers a period from July 1918 to January 1929 and although there may have been other letters, it is believed that these are the only ones to have survived when the offices at Tonbridge closed in 1948.

The two typed letters are a response to the issue of unsolicited railway passes to Kipling by Stephens for use on his lines. The third letter, hand written on 10th July 1918, is more interesting in that it appears to be a response by Kipling to a request from Stephens to address a club meeting, although the precise nature of this has not been established.

Stephens initially obtained a letter of introduction to Kipling through the influence of his father, F.G.Stephens. Acknowledging receipt, he wrote to his Father on 12th February 1903 "... Many thanks for your letter and enclosed letter of introduction to Mr Kipling. Please thank Sir P Burne-Jones for me". The request would have been very much true to form. Stephens would have been aware that Kipling had moved to his country house 'Batemans' at Burwash in Sussex in 1902, which was quite close to his own centre of operations at Tonbridge and he was always willing to exploit his family background in order to increase his circle of influential friends.

Sir Philip Burne-Jones was the only son of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the painter and designer who died in 1898 and also Kipling's cousin. Kipling's maternal aunt Georgiana Macdonald (Georgie) married Edward in 1860. Edward Burne-Jones, originally destined to enter the Church, was actively encouraged by the Pre-Raphaelite artist D.G.Rossetti to pursue an artistic career and in doing so became closely linked with that movement, of which H.F.Stephens father, F.G.Stephens was one of the original members.



*Rudyard Kipling*

Kipling was very fond of his 'Uncle Ned' who he saw regularly throughout his life. As a child, he stayed with the Burne-Jones family at their house 'The Grange' in North End Road, Fulham, to which they had moved in 1866. His cousins Philip (born 1861) and Margaret (born 1865) were his contemporaries (Kipling was born in 1865). Although Kipling socialised well with Philip he had little respect for his abilities, referring to him as 'Phool Phil'. Philip Burne-Jones was over-shadowed throughout his life by the reputation of his talented father and his attempts to become an artist and writer were not successful. He died in 1921, unmarried and largely obsessed with failure.

The letters, are reproduced here, together with a transcript of the hand-written one. The typed letters written in 1925 and 1929 acknowledging receipt of the "comprehensive" and "faithful" passes appear to have been written by Kipling out of courtesy rather than gratitude. They also suggest that they had been sent to him for a

number of years. Stephens sent passes to a number of his friends and acquaintances as a matter of routine – they cost him nothing and could be perceived to have a value. As a frequent traveller himself, he also sent them to officials of other railway companies with a request for a reciprocal pass. If they didn't respond, he wrote again.

The Kent & East Sussex junction at Robertsbridge was only one stop up the line from Kipling's home station at Etchingham, but it is unlikely that he would have been tempted by Stephens' famous advertising slogan "Support the local line" should he have wished to come to Tenterden.

Throughout his life, Kipling was a keen motorist, being introduced to the motor car in 1899, when Alfred Harmsworth, the newspaper magnate, took the Kiplings for a twenty minute trip, which left them "white with dust and dizzy with noise" but "the poison worked from that hour". Soon afterwards Kipling acquired a Locomobile car and then a Lanchester, which he used for local journeys around Batemans.

Kipling's letter of 10th July 1918 is particularly interesting. His inability to find time for an additional engagement at Stephens' request is understandable. At the age of 48 in 1914, his contribution to the war effort was as a propagandist and he was inundated with requests for his time. He provided regular advice to the newly set up Ministry of Information under Lord Beaverbrook, having earlier declined a permanent post. George V, who at one time professed to dislike Kipling's style, requested his help in re-drafting his letters to bereaved families. In the month that this letter was written, Kipling was surprised to find himself on the guest list for dinner at the Palace.

The sentence in brackets in the letter is indicative of Kipling's jingoistic approach to society, in particular his dislike of "aliens". His much publicised hatred of Germans was probably influenced by the loss of his own son on active service in 1915. "... The Hun is outside any humanity we have had experience of", he wrote in 1916.

The reference to "the Ellantines" in the

letter remains a mystery. The word itself is difficult to decipher, but may be connected with the war effort. Stephens' own military service after 1915 was largely confined to territorial activities. He was Commanding Officer to the Kent Fortress Engineers, Territorial Force, based at Gillingham.

The request to Stephens at the end of the letter "come on with your grilse" undoubtedly refers to gifts of salmon, which Stephens had sent down regularly from Scotland, for distribution to his friends and acquaintances.

The letters themselves are a most valuable addition to the Museum archive and facsimiles will be displayed as soon as possible. As to the "faithful" passes, the chances are, that they were consigned to the waste paper basket soon after arrival, never to be used by their famous holder. If any do survive, we would be pleased to hear of their existence.

**Philip Shaw**

*Sources:*

*Stephens family letter dated 12th February 1903 (in the museum archives)*

*Rudyard Kipling by Andrew Lycett published by Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1999*



*Bateman's, Kipling's country house near Burwash, now owned by the National Trust.*





BATEMAN'S  
BURWASH  
SUSSEX

Jan. I/29

Dear Stephens

The faithful Pass has duly arrived, and though I am not likely to use it, I am always grateful that you remember me.

I have been working the Great North Road lately and have seen how the Railways are being killed by the Car. Of course a good deal of it was suicide on the part of the Railways and their people. But that don't make it any less sad. With all good wishes for the coming year,

Ever sincerely yours



‡ BURWASH  
~~1st~~ ETCHINGHAM

BATEMAN'S  
BURWASH  
SUSSEX

6th January 1925.

Private.

Dear Colanel Stephens,

The Comprehensive Pass for the coming year has arrived. I send you my best thanks for it, though after the last month or six weeks I have got an idea it would have been more to the point if you had given me a free seat in a motor-boat, punt or barge from Robertsbridge to Paddock Wood. I don't know whether your lines in the west survived, but coming down from the north a few days ago it seemed to me that your big brothers in the Thames Valley were being tried rather high.

With every good wish for the coming year,

Very sincerely yours,

*Rudyard Kipling*

Lt.Col. H.F.Stephens,M.I.C.E.,  
Salford Terrace,  
Tonbridge.

July 10. 1918.

Dear Stephens:

Many thanks for  
your note. I only wish you  
could see my table just  
now. It rather resembles a  
military collision in a Post  
Office. I don't see any way to  
fix any dates ahead for anything.  
I've got to go to places up & down  
the line, as I can and I don't  
see how I can fit in present  
jobs, as it is.

To please tell the Ellentines  
how sorry I am - I know  
something of the work the  
Club is doing (I wish, by the  
way, they'd pronounce against  
aliens being allowed to hold  
any sort of real estate in  
England. This will be the next  
thing to take in hand.)  
Come on with your grilse. You cannot  
'inflict' too often or too  
oppressively in that line.

Yours sincerely  
Rudyard Kipling

BATEMAN'S  
BURWASH  
SUSSEX

July 10 1918

Dear Stephens:

Many thanks for your note. I only  
wish you could see my desk just now.  
It rather resembles a military collision  
in a post office. I don't see any way  
to fix any dates ahead for anything.  
I've got to go to places up and down  
the line as I can and I don't know  
how I can fit in present jobs, as it is.

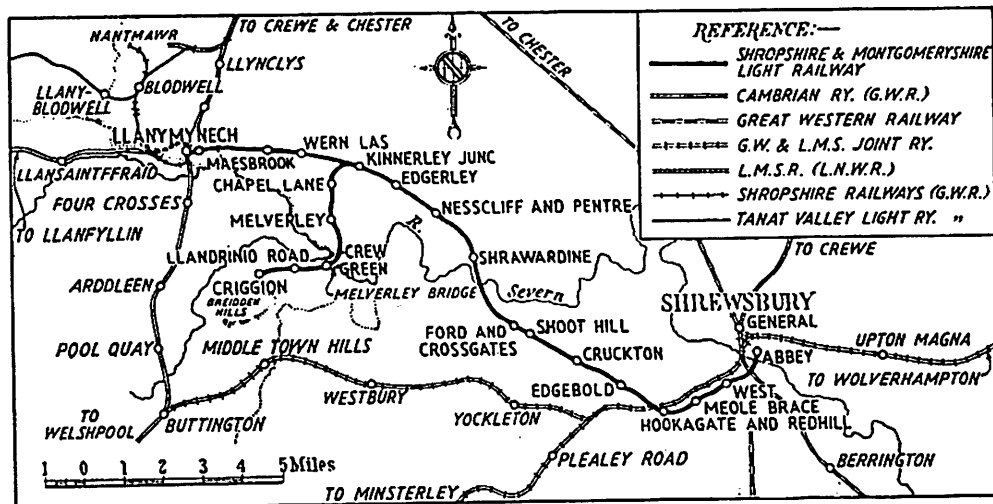
So please tell the Ellentines how sorry  
I am - I know something of the work  
the club is doing (I wish, by the way,  
they'd pronounce against aliens being  
allowed to hold any sort of real estate  
in England. This will be the next  
thing to take in hand.)

Come on with your grilse. You cannot  
'inflict' too often or too oppressively  
in that line.

Yours sincerely,  
Rudyard Kipling

# Stopped at Llanymynech

A look at the inter-railway politics that led the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway to be starved of traffic at its Western end.



When it ceased operations in 1880 the Potteries, Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway (the 'Potts')\* left a mess. Over the next thirty years its prolonged death throes left a scattering of, mostly derelict, railways, unused formations, unused construction powers and an inheritance of uncertain user rights over a large swath of border country stretching from Shrewsbury to the Berwyn Mountains. As a latecomer in this saga Holman F Stephens was able for a time to produce a useful, and for 20 years profitable, railway from much of the old track by the creation of the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway (SMR). Nevertheless the major traffic sources at the western end were to be denied him by the machinations of the much larger, if usually impecunious, Cambrian Railways.

Starting from Shrewsbury, the SMR followed the old Potts formation designed for express connection to Wales. This led through deeply rural countryside and when the new line opened in September 1911 it ended at the apparently inconspicuous and remote country junction of Llanymynech on the Cambrian Railways' Oswestry to Welshpool line. This

station and the village from which it was named was in fact a prosperous place of 1000 souls and was only six miles from the larger market and engineering town of Oswestry. West of Llanymynech station and the Cambrian line was an area rich in stone, lime and minerals that had been a principal destination of the Ellesmere (later Shropshire Union) Canal promoted in the late 18th century.

So how was it that Stephens never managed to tap this traffic source and the SMR had to make do with the pittance that a junction with the Cambrian Railways offered? Well it was not for want of trying, but the depths of the mess left by the old Potts and the combative attitude of the Cambrian Railways simply defeated the smaller and weaker railway.

When built the Potts had an interchange station at Llanymynech and then crossed the main Oswestry to Welshpool line of the Cambrian on a double flat crossing (at some point between 1877 and 1888 converted to a double junction) with a single connection in the south-westerly direction. The old main line then proceeded towards the Tanat Valley and the mountains, throwing off a branch to

large quarries at Nantmawr owned by the Lilleshall Coal and Iron Co. This short (three mile) extension probably generated more traffic than the whole of the rest of the railway, and in fact was to remain open after all other railways in the area were closed. Surrounded by hostile lines and deprived of its through-line status the Potts had struggled from its opening in 1866 and by 1870 ended its services from Shrewsbury at Llanyblodwell on the Nantmawr branch, with a through service to Oswestry on Market days. By 1880 it had got into a very decrepit state and it was closed on safety grounds by the Board of Trade. Fatally for the prosperity of companies that attempted to reopen it the Potts asked the Cambrian to take over the Nantmawr quarry traffic for two years. This they did, continuing to work it on a seemingly informal basis until a formal agreement on rates was finally reached on 1 May 1900.

Uniquely amongst British railways the Potts main line then lay derelict awaiting its re-awakening by Stephens. In 1888 another company, the Shropshire Railways, had obtained take-over powers. These included reciprocal running powers with the Cambrian to balance the powers that company had to run to Shrewsbury and enabled the smaller company to reach Oswestry. This attempt to resurrect the line failed as they ran out of money before they could do anything useful.

The Cambrian had meanwhile exploited the weakness of the Shropshire to consolidate its hold on the area. Anxious to improve its access from Llanymynech Station to its Llanfylllyn Branch (which had to be reached by a back shunt east of Llanymynech to pass over the Ellesmere Canal) and to secure the Nantmawr Quarry traffic it made some astute moves. In 1894 it negotiated full running rights on the Nantmawr Branch to a new junction, authorised by the Shropshire Railways Act 1891, with its Llanfylllyn Branch. It then signalled and interlocked the Nantmawr part of Llanymynech's double junction for its own use. Further in 1895/6 despite opposition in writing from Ullmer, the Shropshire's secretary, Aslett, the Cambrian manager, citing Board of Trade requirements, severed the Potts junction line and rebuilt Llanymynech station platforms over the original junction. To add insult to injury the

Cambrian also built their junction signal box on Shropshire Railways land.

In the mid to late 1890s the Tanat Valley Light Railway (independent but soon to be worked and later absorbed by the Cambrian) had been formed to supplant the old Potts' and Shropshire Railways 1891 lapsed powers to build a line up the Tanat Valley. But, with the active participation of its solicitor Joseph Parry-Jones (who was quite co-incidentally Oswestry's town clerk and a little later the Cambrian's Solicitor) and a substantial bribe of free running powers over the Cambrian into Oswestry, it had decided by 1898 not to use the line to Llanymynech. Instead it was to thrust east to join an older Cambrian mineral line (at Porthywaen) giving a direct railway to Oswestry.

This caused an unholy and prolonged row with Shropshire Railways. Viscount Newport (later to be Lord Bradford, a Shropshire Railways director and later one of Stephens founding co-directors on the SMR) had, as a local landowner, tried to block the Tanat's Porthywaen connection in favour of the earlier line. In this he was assisted by that company's solicitor, F C Matthews, later to be a long time associate of Stephens and indeed co-contractor in the SMR rebuilding. These men realised that mineral traffic was essential to Shropshire Railways revival for, as Matthews told the Cambrian, it would 'take out the eye' of the concern. In protracted and disputatious negotiations they caused the Tanat to join the Nantmawr line. It did this for a short distance at Llanyblodwell (renamed Blodwell Junction) station with an east facing junction, using it for only a few yards then leaving to join the Porthywaen line. Their pressure also ensured that a direct west-facing junction (known contemporaneously as Lord Bradford's loop) was authorised.

Into this devil's cauldron of conflicting rights stepped Stephens with the SMR Light Railway Order. This railway was authorised to reconstruct and operate Shropshire Railways and thus acquired most of the rights, including running powers of that company although Shropshire Railways continued to own the trackbed etc and had a legal existence and financial structure. After an initial and unsuccessful attempt to interest the essentially hostile LNWR and GWR in jointly running



the authorised line, Stephens was forced to adopt his customary independence. With characteristic energy he rebuilt the SMR with new sleepers (brought in via Aberdovey Harbour and the Cambrian) and stock, and re-opened to Llanymynech in March 1911. Although already in dispute over running trains further west he cheerfully refurbished the double junction installed during the railway's dark ages. An open and clubbish character Stephens was, in Matthew's stated judgement, someone who did not excel as a negotiator, and in late 1911 he belatedly wrote to the Cambrian in an almost naive fashion to discuss in particular running powers:

- 1 over the Tanat Valley Light Railway;
- 2 to Nantmawr;
- 3 to Oswestry via Blodwell Junction;
- 4 for goods to Ellesmere and interchange with the Great Central Railway. (Stephens had earlier written to the Cambrian in connection with the Light Railway Order 'In view of the fact that you have running powers over 18 miles of our line and in return ...we have only 6 [over yours] we are of the opinion that we [should have more]').

Well the Cambrian didn't mind the occasional market or even regular passenger trains to Oswestry but they were not going to allow anyone else access to the lucrative Nantmawr Quarries or the Tanat Valley, let alone allow Stephens' trains to run further.

The Cambrian losing out in the negotiations over Lord Bradford's loop had then ensured that it was not built. Furious though this made the good Lord he had only been able to secure in its place, as a temporary two year measure, a through coach connection from Llanymynech to the Tanat Valley - Oswestry trains at Blodwell Junction. Provided by the Cambrian one coach trundled, thrice, later twice, daily, on the back of the local goods. Year-on-year they stalled so as not to build the loop to enable a direct connection into the Tanat. Consequently the service carried very little traffic and it was eventually to peter out in wartime conditions in January 1917. In all this the Cambrian had proved thoroughly obstructive to the Shropshire interest and now proceeded to do all in its power to bottle up the infant SMR. They used in particular their

formal and informal agreements with the Shropshire to suggest that as they had running rights on the Nantmawr branch no one else (the SMR) could have as well.

After characteristically pithy Stephens' correspondence with the Chairman and General Managers of the Cambrian, there were over the next few years prolonged discussion and disputes. These culminated in legal cases that finally went to the High Court. Desperate to protect the £2000 (£125K in 2004 values) they were pulling in each year the Cambrian, was, by this time deliberately stalling to disadvantage the weaker company. It changed its stance by arguing that running powers could only be exercised over the original junction that they had unilaterally removed! To bring matters to a head Stephens, on behalf of the Shropshire companies gave notice on 19th June 1913 that he wished to work one goods and two passenger trains over the Nantmawr line and on 7th July served formal legal notice that such services would be implemented.

Sixty years earlier railway politics conducted like this had several times ended with trains trying to force the junction only to be blocked by locomotives chained to the rails.

Unfortunately for our entertainment but continuingly fortunate for lawyers pockets matters had progressed to less physical methods. Not surprisingly, given the specific provisions of the LRO and the Cambrian's high-handed unilateral decision in 1895 to remove the original junction, the SMR finally won in court, on appeal, on 27 October. 1913.

Had David finally slain Goliath? Regrettably not. As we know the SMR never terminated its passenger services in Oswestry nor got its happy ending tapping the lucrative mineral traffic opened up by its progenitors. The Cambrian's Counsel after its High Court defeat had written to W Kendrick Minshall (the Company's Solicitor) '...keep them [the SMR] busy over something else'. This Machiavellian approach seems to have worked. At one stage they even stooped to informing the Earl of Powis, a powerful force in the Welsh Borders, one of their directors and a debenture holder in the SMR, of likely irregularities in SMR reporting of Debenture interest. An honourable man, he seems to have taken no action.

Earlier in 1913 in an attempt to end the dispute to forestall more legal costs the SMR had appointed, with Cambrian acquiescence, a special negotiator. This was Sir Charles Owens, the recently retired General Manager of the LSWR, a director of that company and a debenture holder in the SMR. Stephens was obviously by now disgusted at the whole thing and told the Cambrian directly in early 1916 that he was leaving it to Owens. The court case had concentrated minds but the Cambrian still dragged it out and War came. Eventually on 19th December 1916 a formal agreement was drawn up by Sir Charles and agreed. This provided, amongst other things

1 The Cambrian, regardless of whether Nantmawr quarry traffic went via Porthywaen or Llanymynech, would pay tolls to the Shropshire.

2 Lord Bradford's Loop need not be built but access would be provided to the Tanat.

3 If traffic from the Lilleshall company to its works at Hollinswood (near Wellington) was consigned via the SMR then the Cambrian would receive a sum equal to the rate it would have received [for Nantmawr-Oswestry] out of the through rate paid. [This effectively reduced the SMR's take, probably to unremunerative levels, and the Cambrian knew that the GWR would also be obstructive, as they too would be losers].

4 The Cambrian could keep its signal box and other structures on Shropshire land at Llanymynech and would remove the fence and move the shelter obstructing SMR passengers access to its station platforms.

5 The Cambrian would render correct accounts and pay dues promptly (a bone of contention for at least 30 years).

As can be seen this agreement was of little or no direct benefit to the SMR/Shropshire interests. However given Cambrian attitudes, Sir Charles Owens was unable to negotiate more. At least it bought some peace and reduced legal fees.

With the railways under wartime controls none of this counted anyway. The Cambrian continued in general to be unremittingly hostile. The SMR did not help when in 1919 it attempted to gain an outlet to Potteries markets and the friendly North Staffordshire

Railway with its resurrected Market Drayton extension, a move that directly threatened Cambrian traffics. The Cambrian merger with the Great Western brought no relief as the whole route of Lilleshall's traffic was now in their hands. And anyway the GWR, unlike the Southern that was run by many of Stephens' friends, was by inclination hostile to any surviving small company in its territory.

Llanymynech became literally and metaphorically the end of the line. With precious little to gain financially, thanks to the 1916 agreement, the SMR gave up on quarry traffic and after a few more years passenger traffic gave up on them. The Llanymynech - Blodwell Junction line was finally closed as a through route in 1925.

Nantmawr quarry traffic, one of the principal movers in the Potts, Shropshire and SMR promotions continued to enrich others until the line closed in 1992, the last of the railway lines in the area.

**Brian Janes**

*\*First promoted as the West Midlands, Shrewsbury and Coast of Wales heading for the chimera of an Irish packet port on the Llyn Peninsular. This failed but the more modest West Shropshire Mineral railway was then promoted as a line to connect the Nantmawr and Criggion area quarries to the Welshpool - Shrewsbury line. This in turn rapidly evolved through amendment and amalgamation into the modest potential main line the Potteries, Shrewsbury and North Wales, a line from Market Drayton via Shrewsbury and the Berwyns. It nearly became a creature of the Great Northern Railway, no less, during that railway's great competitive expansionist period. At this early stage the Potts was very friendly with the Cambrian and its predecessors. This changed when the Cambrian got its hands on the Quarry traffic.*

Sources:

*Cambrian Records at the Public Record Office, in particular RAIL 1057/1922.1924-26, 1928 and 741.*

*The Tanat Valley, W J Wren, D&C, 1968*

*Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain Volume 11 North & Mid-Wales, P E Baughan, D&C, 1980.*

# New Boy

I am a new boy to the Kent & East Sussex Railway. I have just had my third magazine. I am probably not entitled to form an opinion yet, let alone voice one. However, if I say what I think then if I am wrong the powers that be can put me right and at the same time address any misunderstandings that exist.

It is only recently that I have become interested in trains although I have a lifetime of involvement with a voluntary organisation (over forty years of adult service to the Scout Association), it may be that I have become more interested in the practicalities of running a heritage railway than the actual trains themselves.

I am impressed by the way employed personnel and volunteers work well together, in other organisations this could be a source of friction. I like the way that the K&ESR offers value to its members. I am full of admiration of the workmanship that comes out of the carriage & wagon shed and when I get the chance I feel sure that I will be similarly excited by the activities in the Rolvenden workshops.

As I became aware of the number of people it required to run an 'old fashioned railway' (especially without 'A' block) I realised that they were doomed to failure as soon as a Dr Beeching type mind started to apply logic to the working procedures. So many disciplines, so many skills just to run the simplest of services from the customer's point of view. Today the K&ESR is trying to reproduce the old fashioned, uneconomic railway of fifty years ago but this time with volunteers filling all those skills & disciplines. If logic were to be applied then our railway would look more like the Docklands Light Railway with a ticket machine instead of a booking Clerk, no station staff, no driver, automatic signals, lifting barriers and so on but before you

start throwing things at me or bursting blood vessels I know that that is not what is wanted by members of the railway or the public. You might at this point expect me to exclaim that this is a commercial and I am really a very good driver but no, stick with me a little bit longer, my point will be made.

The letter to the editor (Summer 2004) that started "only a blackbird" whilst being very poetic in its opening paragraph, did manage to disturb & upset me. I am sure that the writers critical analysis has much to commend it but more than that it makes me aware that there are two camps (possibly more) and our members may feel obliged to align themselves either behind the purists or the realists. It must be a real challenge for the management team to draw together all the feelings of both staff and volunteers and members to produce what is both a working, living museum and a tourist attraction that can hold its own financially. If one sticks rigidly to the purist attitude and stops me from using a roller when painting railway buildings because Colonel Stephens did not use a roller, then one risks losing support and patrons. Of course the same applies if you sacrifice historical facts in favour of revenue. There must be a happy medium that will satisfy all parties.

Since joining in February I have taken an interest in other heritage railways at the Isle of Wight, Embsay, Elsecar and Kirklees. None of these offered the range of interest that K&ESR does although the Isle of Wight was very nice. I find it attractive to see engines and carriages painted in the old company liveries but as I explained at the beginning I am a new boy and have not yet earned the right to an opinion.

**Stan Kemp**

*(Stan Kemp is a member of the Tuesday Group)*

# Book Reviews

*The New Romney branch line, by Peter A. Harding, published by the author price £3.50. Card covers, 32 pages with more than 50 photographs and diagrams. ISBN 0 9523458 8 9*

There is something about the British coastline that aroused unwarranted optimism in railway promoters. Branch lines were built across marshland and shingle to reach the sea where a tumbledown pier or a forlorn cluster of buildings marked the burial place of ambitions for some great new port or holiday resort.

The South Eastern Railway's branch from Appledore to New Romney and Dungeness was just such a line, and its history is outlined in this completely revised and updated edition of a booklet first published in 1983 and out of print for many years. History, track layout and operation are capably summarised, and there is an interesting selection of photographs, a few of them well known but many less familiar (particularly those from the F.G. Ramsden collection).

The groups of staff at the various stations gain greatly in interest from Peter Harding's observation that the junior porter seen in two photographs at Lydd in the early 1900s rose steadily through the ranks during the following forty years to become the general manager of the Southern Railway, and, as Sir Eustace Missenden, the first chairman of the Railway Executive after nationalisation. This was a particularly impressive achievement for someone who started in the uniform grades on the South Eastern & Chatham with no more than a Board School education, as even in those days that company tended to recruit young men from the universities for promotion to management positions. Incidentally, Missenden's father, James Missenden, was station master at New Romney at around this period, and may well be the character with the impressive moustache in the centre of the group at that station.

The search for a more direct route from Appledore to London occupied many years, and some of the unfulfilled projects had an impact on the history of the K&ESR and its planned extensions. Indeed, the withdrawal of SE&CR support for Colonel Dampier Palmer's South Kent Railway scheme (Headcorn – Tenterden – Appledore) led to their financial involvement in

the Headcorn extension of the K&ESR.

The line is still open as far as the former Romney Junction for nuclear flask traffic from Dungeness Power Station, and its story is brought up to date by a series of photographs taken in 2003. Like a number of others in the book, these would benefit greatly from being reproduced at a larger size, although this is perhaps a lot to expect in such a modestly priced booklet. **TGB**

*Portrait of a rural railway: the Kent & East Sussex then and now, published by the Kent & East Sussex Railway Co. Ltd. price £3.00. Card covers, size A4, 28 pages with numerous illustrations*

There are three reasons why you might buy a guide book to a place of interest: to inform your visit by explaining what you are seeing, as a well-informed companion might; as a souvenir of your visit when you have returned home; and to give you general information, perhaps helping you to plan a future visit. This long-awaited and completely new guide to the Kent & East Sussex Railway succeeds admirably in all three and sets a standard for other heritage railways to emulate.

The designer (undeservedly anonymous) has made good use of the large (A4) page size and full-colour printing throughout to integrate text, photographs and maps. The pictures are what will first catch the eye, and include historical material (most but not all in monochrome) from the Colonel Stephens Historical Archive and preservation-era views in colour from the cameras of John Liddell, Bill Oates, Geoff Silcock, Gerald Siviour and Brian Stephenson, whose work will be well known to most readers of the Tenterden Terrier. A few photographs have been reproduced at full page size, or even spread across two pages. The photographs are not confined to the traditional three-quarter front views of steam engines – though there are plenty of these, and good ones – but also take in some interesting corners of the railway, volunteers at work, and the places, scenery and wildlife to be seen along the line from Tenterden Town to Bodiam. Pedants will perhaps criticise the complete absence of detailed captions, but the more visual approach adopted certainly makes for a much more interesting impression than the more traditional layout, where illustrations appear somewhat of an afterthought.

John Miller's text outlines the history of the K&ESR under independent ownership from 1900 to 1948, and as part of the nationalised British

Railways from 1948 until final closure to goods traffic in 1961. The independent railway's two managing directors, Colonel Stephens and W H Austen, are introduced, and the K&ESR is placed in the context of the 'invention' of the rural light railway in late Victorian times. The history of the preservation era is indicated rather briefly (given that preservationists have now been running the line for more than twice as long as British Railways managed), but it should be pointed out that many aspects of restoration are referred to at appropriate points in the second half of the guide. This explains what there is to see on a journey from Tenterden Town to Bodiam, at the stations along the route and in the surrounding country. Sections of Ordnance Survey Landranger maps show the complete route, with features of interest marked.

Finally, there is a page of photographs of some of the locomotives and carriages now used on the K&ESR, with more or less brief technical and historical details. Full coverage of this aspect perhaps awaits a companion guide to ancient and modern K&ESR rolling stock.

In general, the text is a model of its kind; informative, but not assuming too great a depth of technical knowledge on the part of the average reader. Those who consider themselves more expert should find it pleasingly free of egregious errors and will quite possibly learn something new.

There are few criticisms, and those minor. No publication date is quoted, and while one can understand the commercial reasons for this, the quality of this production is such that many copies will be kept by their purchasers and not discarded once their visit is finished. The map on page 9 would benefit from being drawn in a less diagrammatic style and could usefully be more detailed. It could also mark the proposed Headcorn to Maidstone line as one of the extensions projected but not built.

At its very reasonable price, this guide will no doubt sell well to visitors to the railway, but is also well worth while as an addition to the shelves of the railway enthusiast looking for a compact outline of the history and present situation of the K&ESR.

TGB

# THE K&ESR 300 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

## HAVE YOU JOINED THE 300 CLUB YET?

### May 2004 Pullman

1st	Mr J R Crawford	(171)	£60.00
2nd	Wilf Watters	(605)	£45.00
3rd	Glen Roothhooft	(402)	£35.00
4th	R D Brown	(612)	£25.00
5th	Brian Remnant	(245)	£20.00
6th	Chris McNaughton	(286)	£10.00
7th	I G Head	(461)	£5.00

### July 2004 Pullman

1st	Frank Kent	(022)	£60.00
2nd	Paul Hutchinson	(496)	£45.00
3rd	Keith Jones	(553)	£35.00
4th	Florence Livick	(199)	£25.00
5th	Di Sivyver	(109)	£20.00
6th	Tom Featherstone	(033)	£10.00
7th	R M Flanagan	(225)	£5.00

### June 2004 Pullman

1st	Terry Gibbons	(306)	£80.00
2nd	Mrs M Colwell	(045)	£60.00
3rd	R M Flanagan	(225)	£50.00
4th	Margaret Remnant	(248)	£30.00
5th	B J West	(548)	£20.00
6th	Neil Rose	(307)	£15.00
7th	D K L Morgan	(099)	£10.00
8th	Mr R Dunn	(460)	£5.00

### August 2004 Wealden Pullman

1st	Wilf Watters	(600)	£60.00
2nd	Philip Mackay	(569)	£45.00
3rd	Derek Drage	(538)	£35.00
4th	John Debling	(104)	£25.00
5th	Mrs M L Bates	(330)	£20.00
6th	P S Jarvis	(451)	£10.00
7th	P R H Alexander	(430)	£5.00

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

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# Summer Outing to Shepherdswell

Ralph Gillam recalls the visit of  
the Norbury and South London  
Transport Club to the  
East Kent Light Railway on  
24 July 1948.

As part of our visit to the EKR, we decided to fill in the time before the Saturday evening EKR train departure by using our permit to go round Dover engine sheds.

This entailed a return trip to Dover behind newly renumbered DI class 4-4-0 31487 hauling its three green birdcage coach set. The shed had some interesting examples of Southern motive power including a withdrawn B4 tank No 90, O1 class 31065 now preserved on the Bluebell Railway, ex LBSCR tank engines 2108 class E2 and 2359 class D1. This veteran, then some 62 years old was relegated to supplying steam duties and was to do this for a further three years, becoming the last of it's class in steam on the Southern Region of BR, a couple of WD

2-8-0s Nos 78705 and 79199 simmered gently on a siding, a tranquil scene when you realise that only a little over three years before, long range guns shelling from the French coast had made the area a front line location.

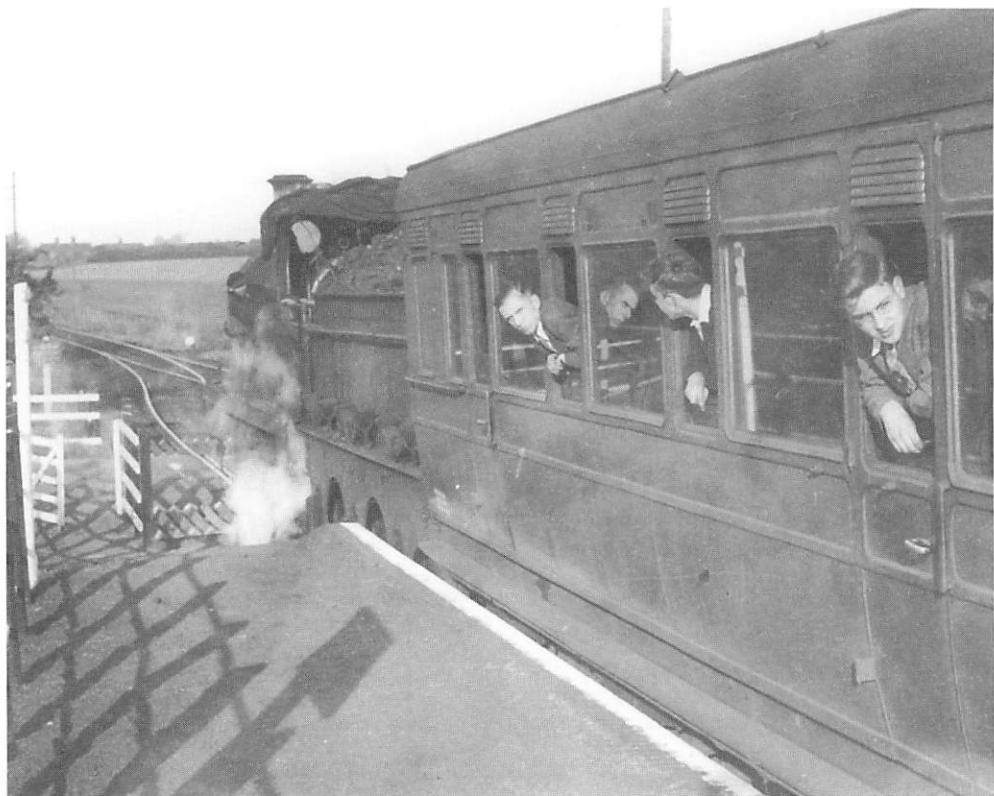
Returning to Shepherdswell we retraced our steps to the tiny terminus platform where our friendly Guard Cordingley was busy unlocking the doors of an old L&SWR corridor coach in a faded olive green livery. He smiled and motioned us towards the coach, it must have been very unusual to have eight passengers for the Saturday evening trip out to Wingham. Proudly lettered East Kent Railway and Numbered 5, formerly SR No 3126, built in 1911, sported commode style handles. Even the toilet bowl itself proclaimed its pre-grouping origins in blue LSWR lettering. Attached also was a rickety LSWR type of old brake van No 54873, branded with the legend "for use on the East Kent section only". This brought up the rear, together with a single open goods truck which made up our train. Headed by ex-Southern Railway O1 class with dust covered lettering and numbers that had once been white, giving them a faint orange

tinge. The crew consisted of Driver Clements, an employee since 1926 and now 60 years old and his Fireman Charles Houde, a lad of 16.

Climbing aboard our coach we became aware of an air of faded Edwardian elegance but with it something unique to a Colonel Stephens Railway, that elusive quiet charm that enveloped one, a timelessness that distanced oneself from the austerity of the world outside. Without ceremony or a signal being lowered or even a whistle being blown that could have broken the spell we were underway as under our train gently eased its way out onto the main line at precisely three minutes past six on a fine July evening in 1948.

On board eight members of the Norbury and South London Transport Club, including John L Smith soon to be better known throughout the transport enthusiast world as 'Lens of Sutton'. Our friendly guard, sporting his guards cap with the initials EKR embroidered in red on it, made his way along the corridor, with an OXO tin acting as a money box and a pad of Southern Railway paper tickets to collect our fares. One shilling and two and a half old pence what a bargain, even in old money! Driver Clements was on 119/- a week in 1947 and the guard got 100/-.

Very soon we were to hear what was to become a familiar sound during our journey, the prolonged whistle before every, and they were all ungated, level crossing. With speed restrictions of 5 or 10 miles per hour for these crossings, and there were 17 of them, the overall line speed was restricted to 25 mph. The track from Shepherdswell to Eythorne had been progressively upgraded during the war years with bullhead chaired track as indeed was the branch to Tilmanstone colliery. But the remainder mainly consisted of flat bottom spiked lengths while often the curves consisted of short straight lengths that the



*Staple station on the return journey, 24th July 1948. In coach No 5 l-r; Cecil Chapman, Ralph Gillam, A N Other*

*(J L Smith)*

engine travelled around in a series of jerks less noticeable in a bogie coach. These rails were spiked to a motley collection of sleepers some merely tree trunks split lengthways laid flat side downwards, two grooves cut into the rounded side allowed the flat base of the rails to be accommodated. The width of these wartime expedients varied considerably. Could they have been meant for pit props? They certainly looked very makeshift, the ballast on the section from Eythorne consisted of clinkered ash obscured by foot high weeds and grass. The track when viewed ahead of the train appeared as two rusty rails running through a verdant swathe, bent in the direction of the previous trains passage.

Back on the train the scene of adventure, a journey into the unknown through unfamiliar countryside in a very special almost private mode of transport had us up out of our seats

and at the corridor windows. It did feel very private, no other passengers joined or left during the entire journey. Visiting the Shepherdswell Co-op earlier in the afternoon the shop manager was surprised to hear of our intention to travel on the evening train. "I've never been on it myself" he said but we do advertise it and he produced a faded pink timetable hanging on a piece of string. It was captioned EAST KENT RAILWAY, 'Support the local line, Travel on British Steel not Imported Rubber'. A very Col Stephens slogan incorporating patriotism with his train times.

Soon after the first road crossing the train entered a long chalk faced cutting, a long blast on the whistle heralded the approach to Golgotha tunnel, its double track entrance abruptly narrowing to a single line by virtue of a solid block of unexcavated chalk left in situ

to be removed if ever traffic demanded a second track through the tunnel. For our passage the coach lights came on dimly as the compartments slowly filled with smoke from the labouring engine via windows unaccustomed to being left open en route. Emerging into the summer evening air the lights flickered for a moment and went out, we rumbled on at a steady pace round a bend and into Eythorne station. Here the main line branched left away from the track up to the Tilmanstone colliery.

A whistle for the road and we forged ahead over flat bottomed rails through wooded surroundings then more frantic whistling as the train emerged unexpectedly to cross, thankfully, an empty road only to plunge again past saplings that made you duck your head inside smartly. We soon became accustomed to the rhythmic jolting around straight curves as we looked out upon the pit winding gear over to our right, the mainstay of the lines traffic. Rushing past the short empty platform at Elvington on through fields to begin the climb past Knowlton halt, the little old lady, the only

regular passenger to use the halt in its later years, was nowhere to be seen. Beyond here the engine began to labour as it ploughed its way through a deep cutting eventually to emerge at yet another blind approach road crossing, more strong arm tactics with the whistle chain and Eastry South was passed.

Some of the halts had their fencing painted white and name boards smartened up no doubt in an attempt to impress the visiting Southern Region officers on their inspection tour in April. Each length of track at the halts had been weeded in stark contrast to the rest of the tracks either side of it. A broad shallow cutting brought the train to Eastry, junction for Richborough a branch that promised so much and gave so little in return. Still open for freight as far as Richborough Castle sidings, but the rails had been wisely removed from the unstable bridges over the SR main line and the river Stour, robbing the potential of through coal traffic to Richborough and pit props in return that had been carried during the early war years.

The guard pointed out in the distance the



Wingham Canterbury Road, 24th July 1948, the train is about to be pushed across road into the platform.  
Dick Harffrey stands in the station

(J L Smith)

remains of Poison Cross halt and the branch could be seen climping away into the distance. "Would you like to ride on the van?" he asked and several of us joined him there to lean on the rear rail of his swinging creaking vehicle as far as Staple where we changed back into the coach again.

With the road set for Woodnesborough and Wingham the train crossed the only road over bridge on the line slowly rounding the long curve the scene of several derailments over the years. Woodnesborough a source of traffic for the line and a watering hole for it's thirsty locomotives was passed with the customary whistling for road traffic of which in those austere times there was very little and then mostly commercial in nature. Another long curve found us below the hamlet of Ash served by the EKR with a short platformed halt. Ash like every other halt had no passengers waiting for us and we sailed on past flat fields towards Staple.

Staple had been a busy place during the war years. The station agent and his assistant working long hours keeping the traffic moving. It had also provided, in the inter war years, the inspiration for the screen success of 'Oh Mr Porter', with a couple of resident Irish porters providing a knock-about comedy routine in the course of their work there. Mr Bob Epps, the station porter, was travelling with our guard in the brake van and would leave us on the trains return from Wingham.

Shortly after passing alongside more fields and approaching Dambridge farm on our right we came upon a scene that was like something out of 'The Darling Buds of May'.

Viewed from the corridor window the high July evening sky was turning from bright yellow to a softer gold and at Dambridge farm a little grove of trees provided a verdant backdrop to a scene which the 6.03 from Shepherdswell would suddenly burst upon unexpectedly. In this lineside glade stood a tiny East Kent Roadcar Co coach of elderly vintage in bright maroon and cream livery, its driver leaning against his coach doorway puffing a cigarette, arms folded and with an increasing frown focussing upon the sight that

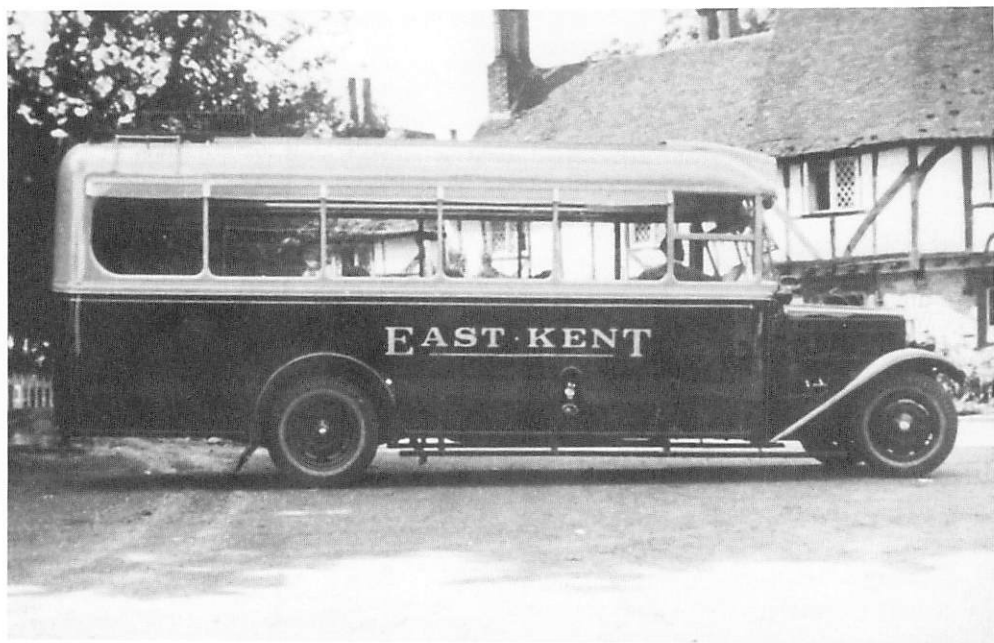
was now being paraded before him.

In a semi-circle in front of him sat a surprised picnic party, their startled looks quickly changing to ones of merriment. Smiles beamed across faces, hands waved half eaten sandwiches and tea cups in the air as they rocked back and forward in an effort to get to their feet to better witness the phenomenon of a grimy grey coated locomotive, its tender lurching before it, sending an eddy of swirling coal dust back across the footplate.

Driver Clements, hat pulled well down, eyes screwed up against the flying coal dust raised a blackened hand in acknowledgement, his brief glance quickly returning to the rails ahead. From my corridor window I returned the look of surprise that initially greeted us from the members of the picnic group and then felt the warmth of their smiles that supplanted it, and waved back to them. For the briefest of moments the two EAST KENT Companies faced each other along a line of rustic railway fence .

On the footplate the regulator was eased back and smoke drifted across the coach and through the open windows to flavour our senses, hanging in the air of the corridor where sunlight highlighted its changing patterns. A final glance at the picnickers saw the happily waving group fade into the distance to be lost to view in a fine haze of smoke that trailed in our wake as the whistle sounded for the Dambridge crossing by Wingham Colliery Halt. The 5mph speed limit observed we crossed the high embankment to Wingham Town just passed Wingham Engineering premises proud possessors of their very own siding into the Works.

Curving right through a slight cutting the train slowed and came to a stop and we caught our first glimpse of this legendary light railway terminus – Wingham Canterbury Road. Wingham a town blessed with three railway stations! Each on the same line a route that had come to serve no one, for the passenger figures averaged just one per train as BR had discovered. Time was running out for The Local Line and rumours of a September



*East Kent Road Car Company coach similar to the one observed by the group near Dambridge Farm  
(M&D and East Kent Bus Club)*

withdrawal of passenger services had prompted our visit.

We were now to take part in a sequence of shunting operations at this remote outpost of the Col Stephens empire that could be said to be the essence of Light Railway Practice. The engine had stopped on a falling gradient just short of the points leading to the single siding on the right. Here the points were unlocked and set for the siding, the engine uncoupled and eased forward into the siding. After which the points were reset for the main line, the guard invited me into his van to witness the next move of the operation. Seated in the Duckett seat opposite him I had a clear view fore and aft as he carefully released the coach handbrake, allowing it and the goods wagon and brakevan to roll forward of the points. Once clear he applied the brake and the fireman operated the points to allow the engine back onto the main line behind us, a further change of points saw the engine draw up behind us and the truck and brake taken off. After further changes of points the truck and brake van were deposited in the siding and the engine reunited with our coach.

Guard Cordingly told me that usually there were not enough passengers to justify taking the coach across the road and into the platform, but as we were a large group by East Kent standards and possibly the only organised group to visit the line post-war, they would shunt the train into the platform for us. The few regular users of the line had to make do with a pair of steps and a helping hand from the guard to board or leave the carriage so we felt very privileged to complete the journey to Wingham terminus across the road by rail.

As soon as the engine was attached the station agent Dick Harffrey, who had been with the EKR since 1923 looked up and down the Canterbury Road. "All clear", a wave of the arm and an acknowledging whistle, release of the handbrake and our triumphal arrival was complete. A few minutes could be spent inspecting the tiny shed like building that served as a waiting room and office and the War Department extension track continuation beyond the station. The remote restfulness of the location, it's adjacent orchard, bizarre track layout either side of a main road, a signal that

was more ornamental than useful, billboards that nobody read and the unfulfilled promise of progress beyond to who knows where?

It was a terminus like no other!

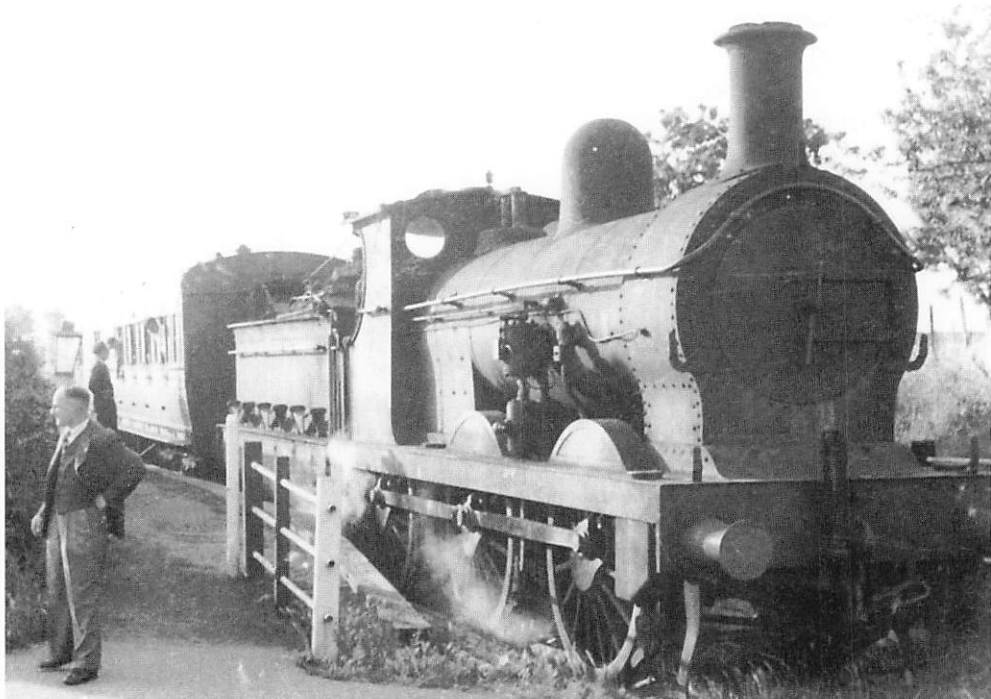
All too soon it was time to negotiate the Canterbury Road crossing and to leave for ever this bucolic idyll, slowly the engine began to drag our coach up the gradient giving us one last chance to look back as Dick Harffrey locked up his little station for the weekend. He would be back on Monday, we never would.

Returning to the scene of the picnic party I leaned on the lowered window as we approached the spot, the shadows from the trees cast themselves a little further across a now empty and silent swathe of grass which had so recently been a place of such merriment and charm. In a matter of seconds we had passed and were beyond the scene which would remain only as a fragment of memory carried down the years by a

dwindling few who had witnessed this brief but magical moment on a golden July evening.

Porter Bob Epps waved us off from his station at Staple where two old coach bodies served as an office and living accommodation. A little beyond here a new piece of track over a culvert seemed to lift the engine and coach in turn as we passed over it like a ship riding over a wave. Arriving back at Shepherdswell EKR No 2 paused just before the points to the platform uncoupled and ran forward then back via the loop to be put away for the night on shed. Once again the guard took control and with the points set for the platform we rolled silently to a halt on the handbrake. Clutching the OXO tin with the takings he locked the doors and was off, the East Kent had closed for the week.

*(The passenger service on the East Kent Light Railway was withdrawn by British Railways on 30th October 1948 – Ed)*



*Class 01 No 2 at Wingham Canterbury Road, 24th July 1948. Guard Cordingley on the platform, as Station Agent Dick Harffrey watches the road*

*(J L Smith)*



