



JOURNAL OF THE KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY

Tenterden Terrier

Spring 2023

Number 150



Visitor Numbers 2022

Marcia on the Middy

The K&ESR: 'Picturesque and Remarkable'

Moods of a Terrier

Return to the Somme

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FRONT COVER

*No.25 approaches Orpins
Crossing with a Santa Special
on 10th December.*
(Robin Coombes)

BACK COVER

*Sapper ready to work the
Pullman on 10th December.*
(Ian Scarlett)

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*Closed season scene. Our Ruston shunter with a works train
at Rolvenden on 30th January.*
(Robin Coombes)

Tenterden Terrier

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Editorial

Notable Occasions

Readers may have already noticed that this is the 150th issue of the *Tenterden Terrier*. Can it really be 17 years since No.100 was published and Philip Shaw retired from his 32-year stint in the Editor's chair? Brian Janes took over for a year before standing down; and then it was my turn. This seems a good opportunity to thank post-Summer 2007 members of the all-volunteer editorial team for their hard work, advice and assistance. In addition, I must not forget the Membership Secretaries and other volunteers who organise distribution of this journal nor overlook the contributors of both the written content and the photographs.

Brian Janes revamped the style and appearance

of the *Terrier*, and the evolution of that process has continued. To use a marketing buzz-word, all products need 'refreshing'; and that is as true of the Kent & East Sussex Railway's 'offering' as it has been of its in-house magazine. In that connection we are pleased to welcome Battle of Britain Class 34072 *257 Squadron*, which will be with us during April and May. That this will be the largest locomotive ever seen on a line long associated with small tank engines has given some people pause for thought.

But let's remember that it is only for a couple of months, and that this is a tribute to the improvements which have strengthened the infrastructure of the railway while retaining its essential character. There is a mystique about Oliver Bulleid's 'Spamcans' which appeals to many, and which for those of us of a certain age conjures up a number-filled notebook full of memories.

Nick Pallant



257 Squadron near Quarr Farm crossing on the Swanage Railway.

(David Ensor)

FROM THE CHAIR

Despite the buffeting from the outside world, and the inevitable problems caused by the fact that we will never have enough money or people-power to do everything we need to do, the Kent & East Sussex Railway is still very much in business.

2022 was a year of challenges, but we were able to accelerate the pace of change and conclude it with the delivery of a very successful Santa season – although many will know just what a close-run thing the latter was. 2023 is already bringing still more challenges, and we shall overcome these too. There will be fewer trains, hopefully better filled, and the year will finally see the long-awaited commissioning of our new kitchen car and the reintroduction of on-train catering.

As a railway we are more agile than we once were; but we must go further. Nor can the agility be taken for granted; we will always need to work for it. Friction (in the proper sense of the word) is inevitable in an organisation with so many moving parts; it slows things down and will always need attention. Nothing is ever simple, and most things take longer than anticipated.

Like other heritage railways, we need to keep an eye on the longer-term future as well as the immediate future and the present. We must

continue to broaden our volunteer base, and we must develop more ways of attracting customers and donors who might not automatically think of steam trains as something they want to support. Again, we are doing both of these – and in respect of the former I think our approach to diversity is among the best in the business – but there is more that we can and should do.

This applies across the piece, but I'd particularly like to say something about the directors of the company, who are also the trustees of the charity. There are some misconceptions about what the Board is and does. First and foremost, we are all volunteers who freely give our time, skills, and energy to the railway. We are also only human; we do what we can, but we realise that we can never do enough.

Our basic task – which sounds simple but believe me it isn't – is (to quote the relevant document) to make policy, ensure that we comply with legislation and regulatory requirements, provide resources to ensure the safe and successful operation of the business, and discharge our charitable obligations. We operate through monthly formal meetings, and there are several sub-committees, one of which meets weekly to ensure oversight of current business.



One in, one out. Marcia, left, waits while Sapper shunts at Wittersham.

(Alan Crotty)

Individual Board members are expected to – and do – contribute in many other ways too.

The principle is that we do not micro-manage the railway or take tactical decisions, even quite major ones; organising and running the business in all its aspects is for the General Manager and his team. We do not set ourselves up as experts. The Board is there to set the strategy, to challenge, to provide support and guidance, and to ensure the systems are in place.

Although we are (rightly) elected by the membership, as individuals our primary accountability is *for* the railway, and *to* the law and the various regulatory bodies. Basically we exist to lead, guide and be responsible for a very complex organisation in a world with increasing restrictions and challenges. The railway is a fully fledged business, and its governance must reflect that.

Why am I saying all this? Because any successful Board will always need refreshing with new insights and energy. Continuity is important, and I do believe that the current K&ESR Board has been successful in navigating the railway through

recent tribulations, but we welcome new inputs. And, dare I say it, most of us are of a certain age and demographic, and we won't be around for ever.

A good Board is a blend of personality types, skills, and experience. In our particular case, as well as a passion for our railway and an absence of a personal agenda, the basic requirements are a capacity for hard and sometimes thankless work, an ability to see the wood for the trees, and to get results through other people.

If, having read this, you think you could have something to contribute in this respect, I, the Company Secretary (also a volunteer, and currently without an assistant) or the General Manager would love to hear from you for an exploratory discussion.

But in the meantime, the 2023 season is about to get under way in earnest. It will be a bit of a rollercoaster, but I'm confident that if we can all pull together as we have in the past, we shall end it in good shape.

*Simon Marsh
Chairman*

FROM THE OFFICE

This was my first experience of the K&ESR's Santa Specials. The headlines are:

- We carried 16,988 passengers
- Income was £535,615
- We ran 70 services
- There were 788 rostered volunteer turns, excluding the Pullmans.

Behind these basic facts are many stories. This was what I wrote in the December Newsletter:

"This month the gods have certainly tested our railway. I am sat writing this on Wednesday 21st December. So far we have safely and successfully run 45 Santa Trains, two Yuletide Expresses and three Saturday Pullmans. Quite how we ran them all I am not quite sure. We have 23 more to run: 22nd, 23rd and Christmas Eve. So fingers, toes and everything else crossed that we can deliver a full service. Events have conspired to throw everything at us: deep snow; freezing temperatures down to minus nine with ice, fog, bright sunshine; then heavy rain; and then even more rain with balmy temperatures. We had snow in the points, frozen points, lineside telegraph wires down, frozen pipes everywhere, a burst water column, two failed locos (one repaired), power failures,

serious electrical problems, cars stuck in the car park in snow, cars stuck in the car park in slush and mud, a medical emergency, broken carriage windows, lots of people having to cry off with colds and flu, and a host of other problems."

Then, on 22 December, events combined to completely foul up the last train of the day; it ended up arriving back around three hours late. There was not one cause but several, and quite simply we had taken our eye off the ball. However, when we realised it was all going horribly pear-shaped, the collective spirit kicked in and we rescued the situation by being honest and upfront, and offering passengers a full refund. This approach resulted in one family buying some of the volunteers a round of drinks later for our good customer service in the face of adversity. We had, in total, 25 complaints, so 0.147% of those that travelled. This means that 99.98% were delighted or found nothing wrong.

In conclusion, we delivered an amazingly complicated service. We sometimes struggled, but we got there in the end; every problem thrown at us was overcome. The conditions tested everyone, physically, mentally and emotionally.



Santa in the snow.

(Robin Coombes)

All I can do is thank everyone for their perseverance and professionalism in the face of such adversity, and doing it with grace and good humour. Many lessons have been learned, which we discussed at the Santa wash-up meeting, and will be incorporated into future events.

Next year we will of course be doing it all again. Santa 2023 is already on sale, with £40,000 taken in less than 24 hours.

So, what of the New Year? By the time you read this the new timetable will be on HOPS. There are changes: these are not whims but are based on detailed data from previous years. There are more 'held days' which can be released to the public if traffic holds up. I know communication has not always been as timely and complete as it would be in a perfect world, but we must appreciate, as in all respects, much of the 'heavy lifting' of all our systems and delivery rely on the goodwill and long hours of a number of dedicated volunteers. We are building up our events. The team has been burning the midnight oil as well as making some very early morning starts, building the best offer we can for the year ahead. There will be a Railway Open Weekend, 'Forties' and Steampunk events, and much else – from Hop Picking to a bus rally.

What does our research tell us? It tells us that unique, unmissable experiences are more important than ever, that Covid has left a legacy

of broken habits and more considered decision making. The wellness trend is gaining momentum, premium experiences could balance the books and 'empty nesters' have the most time and money. We will be using all this information to refine our offer and better target our audience.

The budget has been signed off and has received an independent 'sense check'. We are doing everything possible to plan for all eventualities, and to do the very best we can with the resources we have available. If we had more, we could do more. We know that 'failing to plan is planning to fail'. The budget is based on achieving 69,000 passengers. There are few further cost-savings we can make without degrading our ability to earn the income we need. We will, of course, be very closely monitoring all spending decisions to manage the cash flow during the period we are closed to the public before ticket revenues return. We will be forward selling as many products as possible, such as the Pullman, and we ran a special Early Bird offer on Santa 2023.

There will be a push on improving secondary spend, and the good news is that by replacing kitchen car *Diana* in the Pullman set with the newly refurbished RU1987 we will be able to move *Diana* into the A set to dramatically improve the catering offer.

Key to managing our business will be the availability of good real-time data to highlight

the earliest possible warning signs of the budget going off track.

All heritage railways are watching what happens with the Severn Valley Railway which has announced the prospect of a 'deep cost-cutting exercise'. When a major railway such as the SVR sneezes, other railways catch a cold; each has its own internal challenges. As I stated at the AGM, it may not be readily appreciated, but the K&ESR is very fortunate in having a single unified Board that takes its responsibilities of leadership and governance seriously. As an example, the Board reviewed its own performance in a formal way using the ORR's recommended procedures. This approach will be cascaded through the management team and then on to each department.

Why is this important? It is because that is how our Regulator will assess our ability to safely operate our railway. If we do not satisfy the Regulator at an inspection then we can be served an improvement notice, or ultimately a notice to cease running. On 12 January the K&ESR hosted an HRA/ORR workshop for heritage railways as part a series of such seminars throughout the UK.

Our sector, like all heritage businesses, is facing significant challenges, and it is important that the legacy the K&ESR has built up over 60 years is never lost. It is an opportunity to reappraise what we do and be relevant to a new generation.

To do so we must be honest with ourselves and communicate transparently the brutal realities of where we are, in order to build consensus and grasp the opportunities that I believe are out there.

A team is not just people who volunteer at the same time in the same place. A real team is a group of very different individuals who enjoy coming together to help their organisation achieve its purpose in whatever way they can. If you are wondering "Could I do more?" this is the year we need everyone who can to come forward. Increasingly the railway is reliant on key individuals. These people are already at their maximum, going beyond what could ever be asked. We need more to share their load and help where they can. If you can do an extra turn please do. If you can persuade a friend, relation, neighbour or colleague to become a volunteer, please do. If you can donate more, we need it. If you have an expertise,

we would love to know. Much of the help we need can be done at home or remotely. If every member gave the price of two pints of beer every week, we would raise a million pounds in a year. Now just imagine the effect of investing one million into the railway to improve our offer. Is it too much to ask?

Sadly we have to report the death, at home, of Jon Grimwood. Jon, who was only in his mid 30s, was a much-valued employee of the K&ESR, responsible for keeping our diesel fleet in good order. In the six short months I have known him I found a lovely, helpful man always with a smile, a welcome greeting, and passionate about the railway and diesels. Everyone is devastated by the news, coming as it did as a great shock. Our thoughts are with his wife Danielle, their daughter Lexi, Jon's son William, and Jon's father Mike, one of the great stalwarts of this railway. This is a time for our Railway Family to come together to support Jon's family and his many friends and ensure his legacy is never forgotten.

What will see us through is the K&ESR spirit where we all work so effectively together – everyone playing their part, supporting each other and the railway and our railway family. We go into the New Year with a strong heart, and will be raising steam soon.

*Robin Coombes
General Manager*



Jon Grimwood, left, with his father Mike.

(via Mike Grimwood)

Rolvenden MPD

There have been major changes at Rolvenden since the last edition of the *Terrier*. Firstly, David Brenchley has taken well-earned retirement, as have our two machinists, Peter Cloake and Graham Adams, who we wish all the best and a happy retirement. Sadly Dan Dickson, Jamie Clapp and Angus Entwistle have moved on to pastures new, which in Dan's case means Tallinn in Estonia! We hope to see them back soon as volunteers. Meanwhile Liam Head has taken over as Running Engineering Foreman. Congratulations on your promotion, Liam! Due to the reduction in the numbers of paid staff, Liam could really do with more volunteer assistance, so if you can spare some time to help out, please do.

Recent times have been very trying for our steam fleet. At the time of writing, the home fleet is down to two working steam engines, one of which is *Marcia*! *Swiftsure* remains on hire to us, and continues to perform well when called on. Needing more steam engines for the Santa season, *Swiftsure*'s stable mate *Sapper* arrived on hire, together with the 18" Hunslet *Jessie* from the Pontypool & Blaenavon Railway. However she was right at the end of her ten-year ticket, and failed with a damaged blast pipe; as a result

Jessie returned to Wales in early December.

At the same time as *Sapper* arrived, *Marcia* left to go on loan to the Mid-Suffolk Railway. *Marcia* has proved to be very popular there, hauling two wooden-bodied coaches on their relatively short line.

Overhaul work continues on both **30065** and *Charwelton*. It is anticipated that 30065 will be in service later on this year, but much later than expected, given current circumstances.

Sadly there is no progress on either of the *Terriers* or **1638** at present. It is hoped that 1638 will return to us later in the year, and that work will commence on one of the *Terriers* later this year.

D9526, the Class 14 diesel that was on hire from the West Somerset Railway, has returned to them. Our thanks go to the WSR for letting us borrow the loco, and also to the volunteers who cleaned the loco so well before it went back!

Finally some good news. We are delighted to be able to report that, having failed while on running-in trials at the K&ESR, Mike Hart's *Hastings* has returned to steam at Quainton Road. She is due to run on the K&ESR in April and May, either side of a guest appearance at the Bluebell Railway.



Shades of the 1980s: Rolvenden in the early morning sun.

(Jake Lewis)

4253 Locomotive Company – Kelvin Williams

On Saturday 14th January shareholders in 4253 Locomotive Company attended their AGM, held in the buffet at Tenterden. The Board was able to give a detailed report on the engineering progress of the boiler at HBSS in Liverpool, together with a report on the work still to be carried out on 4253 itself before it will be ready to operate.

The Financial Director explained that the shortfall for completing the project was £21,000. This was a result of needing to replace a final section of the boiler's crown sheet (the corrosion caused by the dripping whistle was deemed too severe to repair) together with the big increase in both material costs and labour rates experienced during 2022.

A general call for donations was made to those attending and to our other current shareholders. Anyone interested in becoming a shareholder is encouraged to visit www.4253.co.uk

Meanwhile 4253 volunteers are assisting the Rolvenden Workshop in the preparation of *Charwelton* and USA 30065.



Many hands making light work of turning Charwelton's buffer beam. (Charles Masterson)

GWR Railcar W20W – Chris Mileman

I'm sure you will have read the article about the Railcar in the previous *Tenterden Terrier*. The news of our £20k grant from the Association for Industrial Archaeology and the matching £20k from the K&ESR, plus the opportunity to raise an extra £20k or more from the '20 for 20' appeal breathed life into the project... and the team! How great to finally have the money, support

from the Board... and a deadline to get the job finished!

The team immediately dusted off the plan and the budget, and realised that the stretching target of getting W20W running in time for the 50th anniversary of it operating the K&ESR's first public train on 3rd February 2024 was, in theory, achievable. With the encouragement of our new General Manager, the Railcar was brought back to the Carriage & Wagon shed at Tenterden in September and, with the help of Alan Brice and his team, the Lobo staging was quickly constructed to give the team safe access to the roof. The team is now attending on Wednesdays and Thursdays to ensure that the project progresses as rapidly as possible. Work is also being carried out by members of the team at home, to prepare items ready for fitting on site.

So far, excellent progress has been made. The roof has been fixed down, for the first time since the mid '90s, holes cut and the refurbished ventilators fitted. The side guttering was welded and fitted and the roof and guttering rubbed down, de-greased and primed, and has had two coats of undercoat applied. Internally, the ceiling has been fully insulated, with the ventilator drip trays restored as necessary and replaced. Most of the large and small saloon side windows, top-lights and surrounds have now been fitted by our two carpenters, Dave Stubbs and Rodney Packham – a lot of the preparatory work on the surrounds having been carried out by Dave as a home-working task during the months awaiting W20W's return to Tenterden.

The gearboxes had been overhauled 11 years ago, but an assessment in 2020 revealed some internal rusting had occurred in the meantime. Both gearboxes have now been checked and refreshed by our contractor, and have been re-fitted by our team. All the old heavy-duty wiring and conduits have been removed from under the vehicle in readiness for the re-wiring to be undertaken. The roof domes and remaining cab end panels are being fettled and fitted, utilising the services of an external sheet metal-working contractor, to ensure a precise fit and authentic appearance.

Following some negative, and erroneous, observations made at the 2020 internal inspection, the railway has appointed Steve Beck of Cambrian Rail as its Independent Competent Person (ICP) for this project; he will be fully involved at all stages of the restoration. His



The Railcar interior taking shape.

(Ian Scarlett)

assessment of the work already carried out and the ongoing plans has been very positive. Steve will give the eventual approval to run when all the work has been completed.

As originally built, the Railcar was fitted with a Vapor Clarkson steam generator, which would have steam heated the vehicle itself; it could have also been used to heat a coupled trailing coach. The steam generator, removed from the vehicle over 25 years ago, is beyond further serviceable use. If it is refitted to the vehicle it would only be as a non-functioning unit, purely there to be seen as the original fitment. Thus a new, bespoke diesel-fired heating system has been designed by S.E. Auto Electrical, using an Eberspacher system. This will emulate the original steam heat system as closely as possible, with hot water pipes following the runs of the redundant steam pipes.

Three fan coil units are also included: one for heating the guard's accommodation and two to provide the cabs with heat and to supply the screen de-mist function. (Note: The system will not be capable of heating a trailing coach.) The supply and design of the heating system has been

approved by both the Board and the ICP, and it has now been ordered. The complete heating system will be installed by a fully accredited S.E. Auto Electrical Engineer during the week commencing 6th March, as a 'turnkey' project.

So, it was all very positive as the team headed into 2023 and looked towards their February 2024 launch date...

...then the team were informed that, as of 19th January, the railcar was to be sent back to the Carriage Storage Shed at Rolvenden while essential maintenance is carried out on the DMMU, *Theodora* and other stock in C&W, plus completing the Class 14 restoration and progressing *Petros* and the RU.

This was very disappointing news for the team, as it will disrupt the Railcar restoration plan. However, the team recognises the commercial benefits of progressing the essential maintenance and overhauls, etc. They will turn their hands to assisting with general C&W duties to hasten the return of W20W, while carrying out any refurbishment of Railcar parts that can be continued remotely from the railway in order to

minimise the slippage to the completion date. It is essential that W20W returns to C&W before 6th March in time for the installation of the heating system, as contractually agreed.

In the meantime, don't forget to seek out '20 for 20': The GWR Diesel Railcar Restoration and Conservation Appeal – in Memory of Andrew Webb. Please use the leaflets or donate via the K&ESR website to support the project financially. Many people have already been very generous, but we hope to exceed the £20k target to ensure that money is available to complete the restoration and ongoing conservation, necessary to provide for the long-term operational availability of the vehicle on the K&ESR.

When work recommences there is still much to do. Please, if you have any skills that could support the team, do come forward and help out, if only for a short period. We are after electrical and mechanical skills, fitters, pipe workers and metal workers as well as 'general skills'. The team will be on site most Wednesdays and Thursdays from March, but C&W will help coordinate assistance on other days. Please contact Project Manager Neil Edwards at neil.t.edwards@gmail.com to discuss what you may be able to offer. Contact prior to attending is preferred, to ensure we are able to accommodate you.

Any support that you can offer will be greatly appreciated!

ROLLING STOCK

Carriage & Wagon – *David Brailsford*

The Santa Specials saw C&W provide 14 bogie coaches for the railway's many passengers. Not all of them were ours though; we had to hire in two Mk1s from our friends at the Bluebell and another from the Great Central at Loughborough. All three vehicles have now returned to their home lines.

Unfortunately the exceedingly cold weather in mid-December caused some frozen and burst pipes in a few of the home fleet vehicles. These faults have now been rectified. On the whole, however, availability of the fleet was maintained despite the very low temperatures – which were something that we have not had to contend with for a number of years.

Many thanks to all members of staff who gave time last year to keep the various projects progressing. C&W couldn't achieve the things we do without you all.

We would like to welcome three new volunteers to the department: Paul Alford, Tim Parry and Paul Callaghan. There is always plenty to do, and 2023 will be no exception!

Mk1 CK 63: All the ceiling replacement work was finished prior to the Santas and the vehicle was repainted in BR Green. We have discovered that there are flats on the Robertsbridge end bogie, so reprofiling will be required – which could mean a short period of inactivity.

Mk1 RU 1987: All four wheelsets have been reprofiled for us by South Eastern Ltd on their

wheel lathe in Ashford. The stability and ride height of this kitchen car are very important. Shelving has been installed in the kitchen area and more kitchen equipment is in place. The guard's compartment now has an emergency cupboard, and the steam heat system has been satisfactorily completed. The four propane gas cupboards have been fixed in their correct positions. By the time this article goes live it is hoped that the myriad small jobs required to finish this vehicle will be but a memory for everybody.

Pullman Car Barbara has had a water pump replaced and an 18-month exam. Replacement of all the external doors and a roof repaint are scheduled for June.

Pullman Car Theodora will receive an 18-month exam and four new external doors, plus a roof repaint, before mid-March.

Mk1 Accessible Coach Petros: Currently in the shed for work to the internal ceilings, which have been damaged by water getting in under the roof vents. Ceilings in the guard's area and the accessible toilet are being replaced with a hygienic plastic cover. The old wiring in the passenger compartment has been replaced with modern cable. The roof has been repainted and the body sides have been refreshed. This new coat of paint involved removing the windows, which has allowed us to deal with a small amount of corrosion in a couple of places. One door frame and skin has been replaced at the Headcorn end of the coach. We also discovered that the toilet tank had a leak, so this has had



Petros receiving much-needed attention.

(Robin White)

to be removed from the roof so a patch can be welded in. It is hoped that this coach will be available for use by June.

The **SECR Birdcage** and **Mk1 CK 86** are scheduled to receive 18-month exams before the end of March.

Vintage coaches **SECR 2947**, **District 100**, **Great Eastern 81** and **Woolwich 67** will all require examinations before coming into use by the end of April.

On the wagon front it is possible that the privately owned **SR Ling** will be at Tenterden in April for new woodwork to be installed. A full repaint will be undertaken once the carpenters have finished their work. It is also hoped that the roof of **SR Brake Van 11934** will be dealt with at some time during this year; however, all of this depends, of course, on the availability of funds and labour.

OPERATING

Station Masters – Geoff Colvin

Much will have been written about the challenges thrown at us during the Santa services and the heroics to keep the wheels turning. No need to repeat that here.

For the Station Master and Platform Assistant team at Tenterden the task extended from welcoming our visitors at the front gate to getting them safely into the right coach on the right train. All straightforward, once the passers-by with the ‘can we have a quick look round, we don’t have a ticket’ question were gently sent on their way, groups separated by traffic and roadworks were reunited, photos taken of whole families at the ‘selfie opportunity’ spots and directions given to every activity and facility on the site. Add to that checking that passengers, elves and Santa were all present and correct before getting the train under way – and, of course, waving and smiling.

An honourable mention must also be made of the Station Masters who chose, or in some cases were chosen, to carry out the role at Northiam with an additional responsibility of topping up the loco crews with tea.

Some of the most positive feedback received from the team concerned the new staff shelter:

“I must comment on the new refuge cabin on the platform: this was a great asset and, although we had very short periods of use individually, it was enough.”

“The new rest room on the platform was well used and was a real godsend yesterday with temperatures dropping to –6°C.”

Its purchase was enabled by a sizeable donation from the 300 Club. Thanks go to them from us all, along with an exhortation to sign up, if you haven’t already of course.

All pretty hard work but nonetheless rewarding. This comments from one of the Platform Assistants sums up why many of us keep coming back:

“The best thing was all the positive feedback from our visitors. Even in the cold at the end of a long day, happy smiling faces makes the whole thing worthwhile.”

And so onwards to 2023 services. Did someone say trains passing at Northiam...?



Scarlett and Archie Garman, with grandfather Chris, view the new staff shelter, surrounded by platform staff.
(Pete Stone)

Signalling Department – *Tony Ramsey*

The 2022 Santa season proved to be particularly challenging for us, not only because of the extreme weather conditions but also as a result of multiple equipment failures. Heartfelt thanks are due to all those who undertook turns in these difficult circumstances and found ever more ingenious ways of improvising in order to keep the service going. We trust the 2023 season will be a little less dramatic.

We congratulate Martin Skinner on passing out at Wittersham Road (his third box) and Kieran Wildman on passing out at Rolvenden (his second). We welcome new volunteer Kai Bass, who has successfully qualified as a Crossing Keeper at

Cranbrook Road; he will be joining the next Signaller Training Course in March, together with four other new volunteers. We also congratulate Caleb Eagles on passing out at Northiam Gates (his second crossing) and Philip Noakes on passing out at Rolvenden Gates (his third).

Finally, along with many others we were very sorry to learn of the death of Jim Williams. In addition to his various other roles, he did occasional turns as a Crossing Keeper, but he was especially helpful to the Signalling Department during his time as Volunteer Recruitment Manager, when he cheerfully and efficiently processed many applications from those interested in signalling and/or level crossings. We shall miss him.



Swindon, circa...? D9526 (left) and D9504 in C&W at Tenterden.

(Robin White)

COMMERCIAL

Booking Office – *Peter Morgan*

I would like to begin by thanking my predecessor, Chris Baker, for his many years of dedicated service as Chief Booking Clerk. In that time he established an approach to the task that I can only emulate. My own experience of heritage railways goes back for around 30 years, beginning with involvement in the attempt to start a railway centre at Southall in West London in the early 1990s. Since then I have served as guard, blockman, stationmaster and ticket office clerk (and also in retail and catering) on various heritage lines – in fact almost every role except working a lever frame 'box or working on the footplate of a steam engine.

Now that I am well over on the sunset side of 60

and my health is inevitably beginning to restrict what I can do, the place I feel that I can best serve the Kent and East Sussex Railway for as long as possible into the future is in the Booking Office. However, you will still also see me around the line from time to time as Stationmaster!

In all of my 30 years with heritage railways I do not think that the outlook for the movement (outside of the period of the pandemic) has been more gloomy than for the coming year. Most 2023 adult fares have increased significantly to cover our mounting costs. We have to persuade the general public, who already have tightened belts and empty wallets, to give up some of the money that they may have set aside for necessities for a day out with us. It is not enough to say that almost all heritage railways, and other

tourist attractions, are in the same position. Families do not have to visit us; and when they do, their secondary spend on food and other items will certainly be increasingly restrained.

The Booking Office is in the front line in this task. Our clerk may be the first staff member encountered, and the friendliness of the exchange that follows is vital. We have all, I am sure, walked out of a shop, pub or café where we felt ignored or where we sensed an unwelcoming atmosphere. Our customers need to feel special and that the experience that we are selling them is, more than ever, also special and worth the money. The booking clerk needs to know their product – what can be done on the railway, and the associated facilities and attractions. The most basic aspect – when the trains depart and return – is complicated this year by the most radical changes in the timetable for several years, with subtly different times in midweek from weekends, including the time of the last train; the clerk must be fully familiar with all these details.

I would welcome enquiries from anyone who might be interested in joining our friendly team of keen and able booking clerks. You will be given full instruction in all the duties. Come in out of the cold!

Travelling Ticket Inspectors – *Murray Motley*

I joined the K&ESR as a volunteer from the ‘big railway’ in March 2022 with the firm intention of not getting too involved, while having a lot of fun. A massive failure on the first intention, and a big success on the second! On 2nd January I took up the reins as Chief TTI from Barry Lee – to whom many thanks for his hard work over the past few years, and for being so supportive as I step into the role. Thank you as well to my colleagues, who have welcomed me into the job and are proving to be great friends and co-volunteers.

After one season I’ve learnt that a major part of the role is to make sure our passengers have a really great, memorable day out and want to

come back for more. It’s the best part of the job, and leads to some good stories. Here are a few...

Once on the train passengers have time to ask complicated questions. Such as “Why is the engine making that chuff, chuff noise?” The questioner wanted a full answer which, about ten minutes later, he had. Much easier to explain how the Diesel Observation Train changes gear; there’s a really helpful diagram in the brake van with which to entertain the budding epicyclic gearbox engineer! Questions about alligators and sharks between Northiam and Bodiam are best left to the long-standing expert in this matter, who always brings so much extra fun to the train. There’s also “How old is this carriage?” “Almost as old as me, madam!”

Old hands warned that the Santa Special season would be very hard work. They were not wrong! It was also a great deal of fun, working alongside elves, Santa himself and all the other departments whose tremendous efforts created such a wonderful time for our passengers. Checking Santa letters on the train brought moments of joy with youngsters barely able to contain their excitement, especially if a glance along the aisle or corridor brought a glimpse of Santa and his elves making their way toward them!

Oh yes, we check tickets and sell first class supplements too. Would you imagine that having an unusual ticket clipper punch such as a crown or perhaps a loco could generate so much conversation or entertainment, especially for our younger customers? All done with apologies to those who have to vacuum up the clippings...

In March we’ll be holding a team meeting and I’m really looking forward to meeting the rest of my new colleagues, working with them on new ideas and fixing problems to make things work better. I look forward to reporting back in the next edition of *The Terrier*.

And finally, if the thought of becoming a TTI appeals – and it really is great fun – do please get in touch, we’d love to welcome you on board.

WAY AND WORKS

Permanent Way – Paul Jessett

The big one for the PWay Department since the last *Lineside News* was the Permanent Way Institution (PWI) Challenge. We were asked if we would participate in this more than 12 months

ago. To be blunt, we would have been silly to turn it down, despite a lot of work and some expense to the railway just to get it off the ground. The object of the exercise is to allow railway professionals who would not normally get out to a big project onto a real site, to have a go ‘on the



*The Permanent Way Institution works at Northiam.
(Paul Jesssett)*

tools' and to see how a work site operates. Normally, due to time constraints, a weekend closure of a main line would not allow for this.

The date coincided with a national event to attract younger and more diverse groups to consider engineering as a career, hence we received very good publicity. The site was divided into three main areas: Rother Bridge, Northiam Station and nos.5 & 6 points at Northiam. But before any of the work could start, there was a lot of work in planning and getting materials to sites. Most of the planning involving the K&ESR was completed via Zoom meetings, but the delivery of track panels and other components was left to us.

Our friends at Coussens Cranes were again called on to assist as the panels were delivered in twelve 60ft lengths, directly from Hoo Junction. These were craned into place adjacent to the work site at Northiam using a monster 100-ton crane. This was made to look very easy! Boxes of base plates, nuts, bolts, sleepers and crossing timbers were loaded onto works trains, delivered to site, and placed adjacent to where they would be needed.

The job at Rother Bridge was to install concrete bearers on the approach to the bridge, change out the hardwood timbers, install 40 new composite recycled fibreglass sleepers (with resilient base plates) and refurbish the breather switches. These works will cut down the vibration on the bridge, giving a smoother ride and better shock protection to the structure. The sleepers all required pre-drilling to save time during the possession, so were all laid out on one of our Sturgeon wagons.

The Northiam site was a straightforward ballasted track replacement (BTR) – rip out the old track, remove the rubbish ballast, level the site, slew the new panels into position, drill, plate up and reinstate to the new design to ease the curve into the loop platform – easy when you say it quickly! To be fair to all involved, we would have achieved this, but for one thing... the weather! I think the only time it stopped raining was when the TV cameras arrived to cover the event. This was a real shame, as we were unable to complete the refurbishment of no.5 points at Northiam; but we have the components, and we will complete this later in the year.

The BTR was completed but, due to the weather, a lot more care was needed with inexperienced people on the site. At least they got to see how trying it can be when the weather is not on your side! Following the event, the K&ESR team drilled and plated all the joints. The tampers were put to work reinstating the formation to the new design.

A couple of Fridays have been spent loading all the redundant materials on to works trains, and these have been worked back to Rolvenden,



The new crossing at Northiam. (Paul Jesssett)

where the redundant panels have been stripped for recycling. We have also installed a recycled 'Bowmac' concrete foot crossing to replace the worn out wooden one by the signal box.

The railway benefited tremendously by participating in this event; we gained a lot of publicity and TV coverage, and a huge amount of materials donated by the many PWI corporate members. If anyone would like to read the full PWI write up from their journal, please contact me and I will forward it.

Forestry & Conservation

– Steve McMurdo

As usual it's been a busy few months since our last report, although our work plans were challenged by the extremes of weather – heat being followed by sub-zero temperatures. Lack of rain produced tinder-dry lineside conditions, only to eventually be replaced by incessant precipitation and flooding.

Despite these challenges our happy band has continued enthusiastically working along the line managing trees and other vegetation. While we've kept busy as always, the winter rains and flooding of surrounding land have meant a temporary suspension of ongoing non-safety-critical work at several spots. That said, immediate response to any situation which compromises safety at any location along the line has continued.

At the time of writing we are devoting our efforts to the stretch of line around Padghams Crossing, near Bodiam, which we can reach by using a track across private farm land. There are two user-worked crossings close together on a short stretch of line here. One enables Environment Agency vehicles to cross our line to access a pumping station; the other is seldom used but still potentially available to adjacent land occupiers. A sharp curve particularly restricts visibility from the footplate at these crossings. Our works involve the clearance of undergrowth and management of trees to

improve this situation, so that the current speed restriction here can hopefully be lifted.

F&C don't just cut trees down! In recent years we have planted large numbers of new ones at Rolvenden and Wittersham Road, and this will be very much continuing in 2023.

We are pleased to have developed our relationship with the railway's sustainability working group and the plan is to work closely with them going forward. As a direct result of this coordinated inter-group approach the railway has already sourced a significant number of trees from various contributors. F&C will be planting these in the coming weeks at carefully chosen locations along the line.

Our manager Paul was part of the K&ESR team attending the recent meeting at Tenterden Town Hall with various landowners, charities and trusts. Among other topics the meeting included discussion of the railway's role in improving biodiversity along the line. It is encouraging to see our groups working together for mutual benefit – a good example of the “One Railway” concept in action.

Several of our team took part in manning the car park at Tenterden in the days leading up to Christmas for the Santa specials, and also for the weekend of the Tenterden Christmas Fair. In the latter case, no trains were operating on those days; this meant our car park could be opened for visitors to the event at a modest charge, enabling over £1,200 to be raised for the railway.

GROUPS AND ASSOCIATES

Museum Notes – Brian Janes

1st January marked the 100th anniversary of a major achievement by Colonel Stephens and the Kent & East Sussex Railway – it kept its independence in the teeth of the government's intention to group railways into four big companies! How this remarkable feat was achieved is a complex tale outlined in ‘Keeping an Independent Voice’, page 34–41 of the *Tenterden Terrier* issue 97 (Summer 2005). To read this article go to <https://kesr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/97-Summer-2005.pdf>

The winter closed season is a time for refurbishment and reflection in the Museum. As an educational charity and centre of research

we continue not only to build and catalogue the collection but also to advise, both within the railway and without. So, of course, we must continue the work of improving public exhibits. This year, such work was particularly delayed by National Railway Museum requirements for their loan items. In particular there was lengthy and disruptive asbestos remediation work on *Gazelle*.

Work eventually got under way in the freezing and damp conditions thrown up this winter; humidity rose to the high 90s in non-controlled areas of the Museum for the first time ever. However we now have completed a much-improved K&ESR exhibits area, with a rather



The new nameplate display. (Brian Janes)

spectacular display of locomotive nameplates from our past. Come and see it.

Carpet replacement has again been delayed by the need for economy and shortage of time, but this essential job must be tackled before too much longer.

Much of our time is taken up collecting and sorting donations, which we must sell to keep going. By default this also includes accepting quantities of photos and other archive material relating to the preservation era of the railway. In particular the late John Liddell's house, courtesy of his family, yielded rich and copious amounts for the Company, rather than the Museum, archive.

Recently we have successfully used HOPS to inform volunteers about some of the harder-to-

display sale items. These include framed pictures and posters, railway uniforms and other clothing items. Any interested members not on HOPS can contact us for a copy of our latest illustrated list(s) by e-mailing museum@kesr.org.uk. Needless to say, there will be much to offer in the Museum itself by way of new and very reasonably priced books and models for the new season. Just look in.

The Cavell Van served as a very successful venue for pupils from Staplecross School on Armistice Day, gaining 15 seconds of fame on the local TV news. Regrettably, despite the best efforts of all concerned, the van then became stranded at Bodiam by P.Way work and a chronic shortage of locomotives; consequently it was left exposed to the elements during one of the wettest winters on record. Longer-term storage and display solutions are needed for this national icon.

As with the heritage railway movement as a whole, questions of succession loom large. Will this generation be able to find those willing to take on the baton? The Museum team is also more than aware that there is an untouched mountain of post-1961 documents and photos out there. This is our 60-year history and needs conserving. Who is willing to step forward, give the time and learn the necessary skills to run the existing Museum and Archive, or step in with a new team to organise and find accommodation for the Company records? Gaps are yawning and it needs a new generation of dedication if past achievements are not to fade.



The Armistice Day service in front of the Cavell Van at Bodiam.

(Brian Janes)

Gardening Group – Veronica Hopker

We now have six ladies looking after the gardens at Tenterden. Carol Usher has taken charge and all I can say is “Watch this space.” Last year John Weller (Carriage & Wagon) kindly presented the railway with 15 potted plants which have been distributed around the gardens at Tenterden. Carol will tell you more in her report. I have moved to Northiam to concentrate on the Memorial Garden and to create a wildflower area. I will also be able to give more time to the pots on the platform at Rolvenden Station.

At Northiam we are looking at the possibility of creating a small wildflower garden to attract more bees, moths, butterflies and other insects. Being on the edge of farmland with a section of land beside the station we are already fairly wildlife friendly – particularly with the burrowing animals living around us, behind Platform 2, and all the birds that visit the flooded fields alongside the railway line on the opposite side of the road. During the summer months a variety of insects visited us including the fascinating humming bird hawk moth.

At present work is being planned on the railway line at Northiam, which may affect the progress of the new garden. This will be started during the coming weeks.

Liz Brown has continued to look after the picnic area and lineside garden at Northiam as well as the piece of garden on the platform next to the station building. As well as battling against the weeds, at times the rabbits have caused her problems, but she continues to battle on.



*Putting the work in early: gardening at Tenterden.
(Robin Coombes)*

Gardening Group – Carol Usher

Hello! My name is Carol and I live in Ashford.

After becoming a volunteer in the Gardening Group last summer I was asked by Veronica to take the lead at Tenterden station, and I agreed to do this after talking to the other members of the Group. There are six of us and we all get on very well together.

When I took over it was during the very hot weather which made it very difficult to make progress; the ground was solid, the plants were very thirsty (as were we while working) and we had to try and stay in the shade when possible. This was very difficult at Tenterden, as there is not much cover, but we plodded through it and achieved all that we set out to do. We had plants kindly donated to us which I kept at my house during the hot spell so they could be watered, and once the rain started I took them back to Tenterden where the team found homes for them and they are thriving. More donations of plants will be gratefully received!

We also had a large bag of over 300 purple crocus bulbs donated from the Rotary Club, which were given to them by the Tenterden Wildlife Group. They are all poking their heads up so very soon will be in flower. Thank you to everyone who donated last year.

By the time you read this the conifer by the Pullman dock will hopefully have been removed. This tree is causing considerable damage to the Pullman coach that is directly next to it, and also damage to other plants below and around it, so the decision was made to have it removed. We will be replacing the tree with something more ornamental at a later date.

During November/December the Gardening Group helped out with everything Christmassy. We hope to resume our normal activities during February, weather permitting.

Tuesday Group – Graham Hopker

Before the long hot dry summer of 2022 came to an end – with heavy rain then snow and ice – we almost managed to complete the repainting of the lamp-posts on both platforms at Northiam. Brian Richards came along on a couple of Tuesdays with the railway's cherry picker; that certainly made things easier and safer when working at height.



Winter wonderland at Northiam.

(Graham Hopker)

The station cesspit seemed to be filling faster than passengers were arriving (if you see what I mean!) so investigation was required. On closer inspection it was discovered that in the distant past the down pipes from the roof of the station building were discharging into the cess. All the rain water pipes have now been re-routed to connect to the proper drainage, and during November really heavy rain tested the revised system to good effect. We missed working on a couple of Tuesdays due to the heavy rain.

The Christmas lights were put up on the station building and along platform 1. The Christmas tree was erected, decorated and attached securely to make sure that, in a strong wind, it didn't end up in Newenden!

We had our Tuesday Group Christmas lunch at The Rose & Crown in Beckley again, organised by our two Steves – Carter and Bunn – and a splendid occasion it was, including seasonal snow and ice on the road and in the car park!

Over the weekend of 10/11th December the Tuesday Group staffed all trains for the Santa Specials on both days, covering the on-train catering. We encountered the full onslaught of arctic conditions on the Sunday!

Wednesday Working Group – John Holland

In the last issue of the *Terrier* I spoke of nights drawing in and weather restrictions. We certainly had those, and the group did extraordinarily well in helping to get the station ready for Santa, and also assisting in the running of the Specials, through some of the unexpected weather that tested the volunteers' resolve.

It's a new year now, and we can hopefully look forward to better days for the group, and try to reach more goals for the betterment of the K&ESR. I was astounded when we had our first Wednesday in January, which was extremely cold – and all the Group turned out! We dismantled the Christmas decorations and stowed them away in as many nooks and crannies as we could find. We moved all the wood from Wonderland to dry places. This was a temporary step until the Santa store had the coach decorations stored inside, which then meant another day of shifting all stored wood and station decorations to the Santa store. It's no fun having to keep moving things from A to B to C to D and then back again.

With so much rain and snow/frost it was inevitable that something would give. The coping stones on Tenterden's platform started to lift, and we now have a major job in repairing the distressed brickwork under the platform edge. There is no cheap fix to this, and it is expected to take time – possibly into the running season. This could not have happened at a worse time for our railway, with finances under the cosh. Our friends who run the 300 Club have given us a cash gift to get the project under way, and some materials have been purchased with their support. Our



Repairing the platform edge at Tenterden.

(Robin Coombes)



Clearing the way – Bodiam level crossing.
(John Holland)

thanks go to them. Perhaps we could have a fundraiser to acquire all the materials by asking members to contribute something?

We have looked at how we can make our carriage stock more pleasing to the eye. Rather than washing the sides down, we have begun the mission of washing the roofs down on the B set and the Pullman, with care. This is time-consuming for the Group and involves using our cherry picker. We are having some success.

Other jobs that we are looking at which we could not finish last year include refurbishing Cranbrook Road crossing, finishing signals at Wittersham Road and Northiam, and putting in drainage at Northiam. These are smaller jobs that do not get noticed, but make such a difference to the wellbeing of the K&ESR. We as a Group are fully aware of the costs to the railway and we all have our ideas on how to make things better at

a lower cost. Sometimes however cheap does not work; we have noticed this particularly with paint. From the land of milk and honey we have gone to the land of locusts, but we will achieve a huge amount again this year. We wish all readers a happier year in 2023.

We now also have a working day on most Saturdays. If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch with Brian Richards on infrastructure@kesr.org.uk

Bodiam – Malcolm Burgess

After the regular services ceased until mid-February the Group has had the opportunity to undertake tasks not easily done when passengers are around. With the help of Brian Richards and a small digger, Bruce Sharpe, Frank Wenham and I laid a cable for a power supply to the grounded van body. As soon as the trench was dug it immediately filled with water from the cattle dock; so, in frequent pouring rain, the cable was held down and the trench backfilled with the necessary warning material layered in. Now we can connect to the distribution board in the toilet block before final signing off.

The exercise flagged up another problem: the sleeper retaining wall to the cattle dock has deteriorated badly, and will need extensive work to replace it within the next few years.

Brian was going to use the digger to re-profile the spoil from the culvert works last year, prior to creating the wildlife area, but the wet weather meant that this wasn't possible. Hopefully this can be carried out in time for seeding and planting next spring.



Digging the cable trench. (Malcolm Burgess)



The new rail gate being fitted.

(Malcolm Burgess)

As reported last time, the protecting gate from the main line into the sidings was built from scratch in oak by a previous member some years ago. Jim Barnes set about undertaking some necessary repairs. Unfortunately, when we weren't there, someone attempted to open the gate while it was awaiting some new ironwork and the whole thing collapsed. Brian obtained a new softwood gate at short notice to maintain safe protection and Graham Holden, Chris Wady and Bruce installed it the following week. Now we just need a longish dry spell to allow us to paint it white!

In association with Brian Janes, Angela Hubbard and Jill Jempson the Group prepared the Cavell Van and the station for an Armistice Day service

involving children from Staplecross Methodist Primary School. The weather was kind and the children laid wreaths at the altar in the van. The service was very moving and was featured on BBC South East. The restricted availability of locomotive power has meant that the Van has had to stay at Bodiam this winter; hopefully regular ventilating and checking will mean that it does not deteriorate through being outside.

The S&T team have modernised the railway's telephone system with, hopefully, more reliable Wi-Fi in the booking office. Graham Holden is building a bespoke cupboard in a suitably sympathetic design in the office to house (and protect) the new equipment.

Tenterden Terrier Online

Members of the Kent & East Sussex Railway can receive the *Tenterden Terrier* in electronic (PDF) format. Help save money and volunteer time by registering at **<http://kesr.org.uk/tenterden-terrier-online>**

You can, if you wish, still receive a printed copy; but the more people requesting PDF copies only the greater the saving in both printing and postage.

A Date For Your Diary

The K&ESR Annual General Meeting and those of associated companies including 6619 Ltd, Colonel Stephens Railway Enterprises Ltd, Robertsbridge 2020 Ltd and Tenterden Railway Company Ltd will be held on Saturday 4th November 2023 in Saint Mildred's Church, Tenterden. As in previous years the AGM of Kent & East Sussex Railway Limited will be held at 1.30pm and the other meetings will be held during the morning, at times to be confirmed, from 10.30am onwards. Formal notifications of these meetings together with abbreviated accounts should be despatched in July. Complete sets of accounts will be available upon request.

John Cobbett
Company Secretary

KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY 300 CLUB PRIZE WINNERS

September 2022

1st	Steve Rann	No. 1267	£100
2nd	Lionel Marchant	No. 371	£90
3rd	Paul Mineham	No. 826	£85
4th	Mike Dawes	No. 685	£80
5th	Ken George	No. 133	£75
6th	Lynda Shepherd	No. 183	£70
7th	Mr M R Clay	No. 522	£65
8th	Ernest C King	No. 214	£55
9th	Dr A R Mohr	No. 1135	£50
10th	Mrs Sylvia Furney	No. 635	£45
11th	Mrs Ann Blewitt	No. 916	£40
12th	Helen Waller	No. 855	£35
13th	Jean Hickey	No. 172	£30
14th	Tom Webb	No. 411	£25
15th	R & S Jaques Bartlett	No. 774	£20
16th	Keith Howell	No. 537	£15
17th	F T Kent	No. 801	£10

November 2022

1st	James Veitch	No. 512	£100
2nd	David Hitchcock	No. 599	£80
3rd	Mrs Doreen R Cave	No. 937	£75
4th	CE & MA Turner	No. 1197	£70
5th	Paul B Harrison	No. 654	£60
6th	Janet Bridger	No. 262	£50
7th	Daniel Snowden	No. 153	£45
8th	Lionel Marchant	No. 1033	£40
9th	Patrick Bretney	No. 726	£35
10th	Paul Mineham	No. 825	£30
11th	Alan Tanner	No. 765	£25
12th	Patrick Bretney	No. 727	£20
13th	Paul H Wilson	No. 042	£15
14th	P R Kynaston	No. 453	£10
15th	David Bowden	No. 097	£10

October 2022

1st	Trevor Meadows	No. 1110	£100
2nd	Colin Avey	No. 983	£80
3rd	Simon Furey	No. 093	£75
4th	Lionel Marchant	No. 1033	£70
5th	Peter Bennion	No. 697	£60
6th	H I G Davidson	No. 695	£50
7th	Ian Malaugh	No. 291	£45
8th	Dave Felton	No. 312	£40
9th	Martin Tomsett	No. 1006	£35
10th	Adrian G Wright	No. 1244	£30
11th	Graham Lusted	No. 307	£25
12th	P & B Tanton Brown	No. 1062	£20
13th	Matt Hyner	No. 810	£15
14th	Peter Landon	No. 323	£10

December 2022

1st	Matt Hyner	No. 810	£250
2nd	Colin Avey	No. 466	£200
3rd	Simon Furey	No. 093	£175
4th	Christopher John	No. 760	£150
5th	D Benn	No. 501	£125
6th	Mrs Erica Martin	No. 1073	£100
7th	Patrick Nairne	No. 638	£90
8th	Mrs J Tollerfield	No. 297	£80
9th	Roger Parsons	No. 1156	£70
10th	Lionel Marchant	No. 303	£60
11th	John T Turner	No. 893	£50
12th	Mrs W G Furey	No. 259	£40
13th	Paul Chandler	No. 1323	£30
14th	Mr J Bignell	No. 582	£20

To join the 300 Club or for more information contact Chris Garman or Colin Avey
e-mail: kesr.300club@yahoo.com



Visiting locomotive Jessie, Hunslet Works No.1873 of 1937, at Northiam on 3rd December 2022.

(Phil Edwards)

Jessie with a Santa Special on 3rd December – a week before the snow arrived.

(Phil Edwards)



*No.25 ascending Tenterden Bank during the beautiful winter morning of 10th December.
(Robin Coombes)*





Heavy snow at Tenterden Town; 6.39pm on 11th December.

(Robin Coombes)

The glow from Swiftsure's fire brightens the evening of a very wintry 11th December.

(Robin Coombes)



VISITOR NUMBERS 2019 & 2022

Since the introduction of the MERAC computer program in 2014, volunteer Booking Clerk Edward John Harding has developed a series of spreadsheets to summarise statistics based on data from the MERAC tills. These have provided the basis for previous Terrier articles and, during the running season, he has also discussed the results with the successive General Managers. The current GM, Robin Coombes, has decided to take 'corporate possession' of the spreadsheets and paid staff will in future assemble the results weekly for management.

Previous reviews of our passenger numbers have made comparisons of the current year with the immediate preceding year. In view of the Covid pandemic, the operating years 2020 and 2021 are non-representative and would provide meaningless comparisons. It seems therefore

appropriate to compare 2022 with the last year of 'normal' operation, namely 2019, as shown in the following table.

Results for 2022, as in previous years, are derived from the MERAC tills installed at Tenterden,

Visitor Numbers 2019						
Month	Operating days	Regular passengers	Santa specials	Thomas events	Pullman trains	Total numbers
January	1	390				390
February	7	2,250				2,250
March	6	360		3,690	60	4,110
April	22	8,050			390	8,440
May	27	9,090			230	9,320
June	23	7,250			370	7,620
July	25	7,310		3,820	340	11,470
August	31	12,130			520	12,650
September	22	6,820		3,000	310	10,130
October	12	3,200			480	3,680
November		50				50
December	13	1,020	13,860		220	15,100
Totals	189	57,920	13,860	10,510	2,920	85,210
Platform tickets						2,300
Total visitors						87,510

Visitor Numbers 2022						
Month	Operating days	Regular passengers	Santa specials	Thomas events	Pullman trains	Total numbers
February	7	700				700
March	1	209			32	241
April	21	5,000			156	5,156
May	24	5,222			425	5,647
June	26	6,050			284	6,334
July	24	5,771			424	6,195
August	31	9,110			442	9,552
September	21	4,699			421	5,120
October	22	4,018			560	4,578
November						
December	11	889	13,759		226	14,874
January 2023	2	1,015				1,015
Totals	190	42,683	13,759		2,970	59,412
Platform tickets						1,516
Total visitors						60,928

Northiam and Bodiam stations. Overall the results show a reasonable recovery but below the visitor numbers for 2019.

First a note on the structural changes to the presentation of results. In 2022 the operating year runs from February 2022 to January 2023. This better reflects our actual operating year: namely from the half-term week in February to the first two days of the New Year. The first two days of 2020 were included in December 2019.

Considering the 2022 results, the regular train traffic was slow to recover with all months February to September showing lower numbers of passengers than the corresponding months in 2019. An external factor that may have contributed to this decline was the slow 'getting back to normal' from the pandemic. August 2022 was a particularly disappointing month, with regular traffic down by 25% compared with 2019. A further contributing factor in this case was the exceptionally dry weather requiring us to run all-diesel services to avoid lineside fires.

By October we showed an improvement with regular traffic up by 20% in that month and by 70% over the New Year operating days. It is very encouraging to note that the Santas and Pullmans were both similar to the corresponding passenger

numbers in 2019. By mid-September the Santa bookings were well ahead of the same period in 2019, indicating that a recovery was on the way. By mid-November we had sold every seat and generated over £500,000 of revenue. Throughout December we delivered a high level of service and received many compliments from passengers both in person and in subsequent e-mails.

In 2019 we staged three Thomas events attracting 10,500 passengers. This was a useful contribution to passenger numbers, but it has to be set against the costs of staging the events, not least the payment to the franchise and the costs of transporting the locomotive to our railway. In 2020 we had planned a nine-day Thomas event over the Easter Bank Holiday which would have reduced the impact of the transport costs. As we all now know, it was not to be. With recovering from the pandemic the management has not been able to plan as many events as in 2019, and Thomas is one of those that has been shelved.

Although the results for the regular traffic for most of the year were considerably lower than the corresponding period in 2019, the later months – including the Santas and Pullmans – showed encouraging recovery. We should go forward with optimism in 2023. 🚂



Sapper in an appropriately festive landscape with a Santa Special on 17th December.

(Phil Edwards)

'Picturesque and Remarkable'

Imagine what the landscape looked like when Colonel Stephens built his railway through the Rother Valley in 1900. How remote and tranquil it must have been! Even 35 years later it was described in an article in *The Railway Magazine* for February 1935:

...much rich pasture land; and large areas are given over to the cultivation of fruit and hops. The population is rather sparse and the villages scattered.

The article later describes the route after the Rother bridge:

A long stretch of straight track follows, bordered on either hand by tall poplars and willows. In spring and summer the vista down this long avenue is at once picturesque and remarkable.

60 years after that was written I produced a piece for the *Tenterden Terrier* (Summer 1997) about a walk from Northiam to Wittersham Road describing its remoteness: the sighting of a reed bunting and a stoat, the sound of skylarks, the 'long vista down the track' and fields which are 'wide and open as on Romney Marshes'. And it is still like this in 2023.

The line runs entirely through the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Dark Sky area. We produce a colourful hand-out – *What To See From The Train* – and a travelling RSPB member has helped passengers identify commonly seen birds such as swans, herons, egrets, mallards, rooks, crows, gulls, kestrels, buzzards and sparrow hawks. How many have you seen? There are others including lapwings. But what about the wild flowers along the trackside? The reedbeds and bulrushes? And butterflies if you look carefully out of the window.

At the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, which

I visited in October to meet their Lineside & Environmental Officer – who gave a presentation at the 2021 Heritage Railways Association conference – I learned about how they encourage their passengers to appreciate the landscape through which the line runs. They also look after special lineside habitats, for example protecting adders and the rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly.

On a national scale, Network Rail has pledged no net loss for biodiversity by 2024. But we can be very proud of what we are doing, too: in our Newsletters we have described the work of the Gardening Groups, tree-planting by Forestry & Conservation, and the creation of hibernacula for slow-worms and lizards. There is more that we can do.

Our ten-mile line is a linear green corridor, a 'mosaic of habitats' to quote a phrase used by the NYMR. It equates to around 237 acres of land – perhaps more. 'Green tourism' did not exist when the Colonel constructed the line; it was not built for tourists. But as people become increasingly nature conscious and aware of its severe depletion in the past 50 years, we should see it as a vital part of our Heritage.

Keith Barron
Sustainability Group



View from Hexden Bridge looking towards Wittersham Road
on 26th February 2021.

(Paul Vidler)

Marcia at the Middy

The K&ESR's diminutive Peckett 0-4-0T has been working on the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway recently. Neil Instrall visited that fascinating line at New Year.



Marcia at Brockford Station on 1st January.

(Neil Instrall)



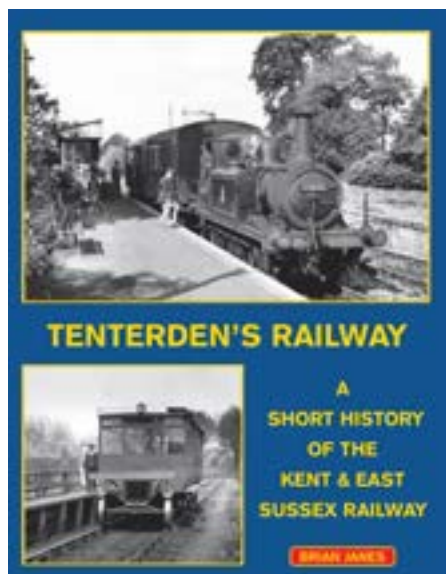
Marcia with vintage carriages in pastoral scenery. It all seems strangely familiar!

(Neil Intrall)



Classic rural byway, with perhaps an echo of Suffolk's 3ft gauge Southwold Railway.

(Neil Intrall)



Tenterden's Railway **A Short History of the Kent & East Sussex Railway**

Brian Janes

64 pages, paperback. Extensive monochrome illustrations. Published by Lightmore Press. ISBN 9781 915069 16 0. £12.

Brian Janes acknowledges that in telling the story of the Kent & East Sussex Railway he is following in the footsteps of, among others, the late Stephen Garrett. Unfortunately, Stephen's book (Oakwood Press Locomotion Papers No.56, third edition) is unlikely to be reprinted and, given this gap in the market, the present author – who is the Curator of the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden – was motivated to write a new short history of the K&ESR.

This retelling naturally includes all the well-known facts but, crucially, is no simple repetition of old material. Brian Janes has made thorough use of the research carried out in recent decades and the archive material held by the Colonel Stephens Museum as

well as at the NRM and the National Archives. The result is accessible, well written and full of interesting detail not found in the previous short accounts of the line's past. The book's title is apt; the K&ESR is forever associated with Tenterden in the minds both of enthusiasts and the general public, despite the original impetus to provide the railway having originated in the Northiam area.

The first seven chapters record events from the 19th century schemes for railways in the area, through the independent era to nationalisation and final closure in 1961. The eighth chapter describes the line and the ninth its operation including a commendable section about people – the staff, our predecessors. To finish there is a short appendix which summarises the growth of affection for the K&ESR and the subsequent heritage era. The monochrome photographic content is comprehensive.

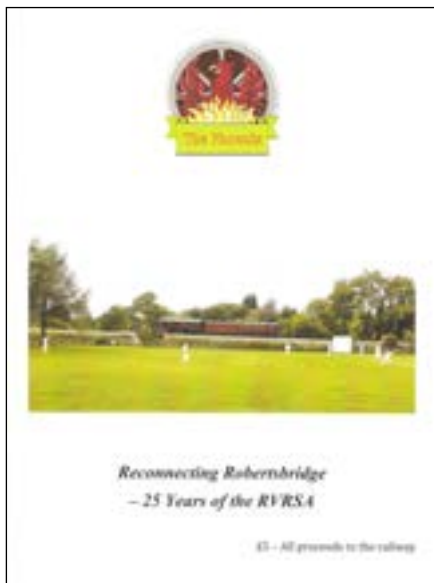
In this reviewer's opinion *Tenterden's Railway* has a broad enough appeal to be sold alongside the K&ESR's guide book, and not be regarded as an elitist publication for an enthusiast minority.

NP

Reconnecting Robertsbridge **25 years of the RVRSA**

24 pages, A4. Published by Rother Valley Railway Supporters Association. No ISBN number. Available from RVRSA, e-mail griffithss@rvr.org.uk. £5 plus P&P.

Most readers will be aware of the protracted struggle of more than 50 years ago to preserve the Kent & East Sussex Railway, and that hopes of saving the Bodiam–Robertsbridge section had to be abandoned to secure the section presently in operation. Trains started to run again in 1974 but it was April 2000 before Bodiam



Station finally reopened. Revival did not however stop there; even before reaching Bodiam work was under way in an attempt to reach Robertsbridge. The RVR project, formed in 1991, quickly managed to lease former British Railways land beside the main line station car park, and the official supporters' association was formed in 1997. RVR developed a two-pronged plan – extending from Robertsbridge towards Bodiam, and from Bodiam towards Robertsbridge.

The 25 years since then have seen many obstacles overcome, and this booklet looks at what has been achieved by RVR, its supporters and volunteers. There is a chronological survey with maps and a complete rolling stock list, and photographs show the achievements to date which include track reinstated at both ends of the route, vital bridges rebuilt, a new station with platform constructed at Robertsbridge (Robertsbridge Junction) and more recently the ex-Hither Green turntable installed. The outcome of a public inquiry into RVR's application for a Transport and Works Order was awaited at the time of writing this item. All proceeds from the booklet go towards the Robertsbridge project.

The Hornby Book of Trains **The First One Hundred Years**

Pat Hammond

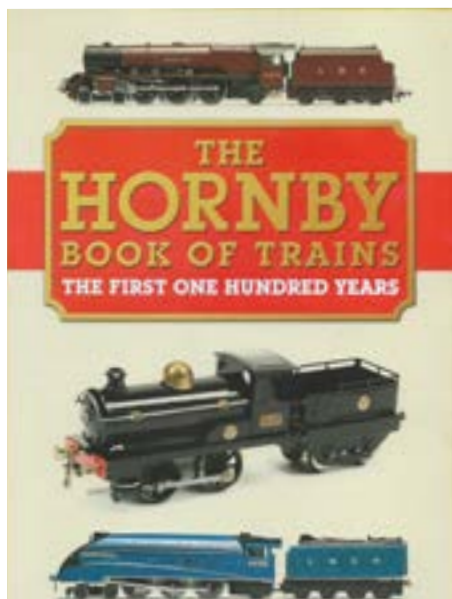
448 pages, hard cover. Extensive colour illustrations plus index. Published by Key Books. ISBN 978 1 913215 21 9. £25.

Although published on behalf of the Hornby company in 2020, this interesting book has only recently come to our attention. The title, doubtless chosen for its traditional ring, however fails to convey that this is in many ways a reasonably thorough history of British ready-to-run model railways.

The core narrative is the convoluted corporate history of the present-day Hornby company, its predecessors and their vast range of products over the past century. The story is related one year at a time from 1920 to 2019, with the evolution of the models featuring prominently. The creative tension between the toy market and accurate modelling, now largely resolved in favour of the latter, is a key dynamic. Maybe I should not have needed reminding but the move to more detailed and accurate models began, in 7mm scale, as long ago as the 1930s.

Hornby history is put in context by reference to the activities of its competitors, from Bassett-Lowke to Bachmann by way of Trix and not least Rovex–Tri-ang. The post-war 4mm scale rivalry between Hornby and Tri-ang now seems almost as much part of British railway heritage as anything from the national network, and led to the 1964 amalgamation-cum-takeover from which the present organisation descends. The arrival of the 3mm and 2mm scales receives due mention. The sections of the book covering the 1950s, 60s and 70s are 100% nostalgia and for many will revive memories of those weekends of train spotting and model trains that preceded the serious study of railway history and heritage line volunteering.

There is a degree of 'warts and all' in this volume, the belated decision to abandon the three-rail system being one example. There is also some coverage of non-railway products from companies now in the Hornby group. This is not surprising in view of who the book is 'on behalf of', but this reviewer would have preferred something about the way the kit trade, whether garage or factory based, has filled in the gaps left by R-to-R manufacturers and subsequently spurred them on to greater achievements.



Kay Dickson 1964–2022



Patricia Kay Edwards made her entrance into the world on 17th March 1964 in Zelah, a small village in Cornwall. The younger of Margaret and William Edwards' two children, Kay, as she became known, joined her elder brother Alex and completed the family.

When Kay was still a youngster the Edwards family moved from Cornwall to East Sussex. Kay was a pupil at Beckley Primary School, and finished her education at Thomas Peacocke's in Rye. Over her working life she had many and varied jobs including waitress, housekeeper, kitchen assistant (*I particularly remember the lovely cakes she made when we worked together –LS*), lollipop lady and cleaner.

Kay met Dick on New Year's Eve 1983 through their shared passion for trains; they were married on 5th July 1986 in Northiam. Dick commented that this was their last day of independence, being the day after US Independence Day!

The couple remained in Northiam and were delighted to have two children, Daniel and Abbey – who made her appearance unexpectedly early. Dick arrived at hospital to visit Kay, who was taking monitored bed rest, and was shocked to find himself dad to a tiny new daughter!

The family continued to grow with the arrival of Dan's daughter Katie. Kay was utterly thrilled to become a grandmother and, in return, Katie adored her nanny Kay.

As well as her family Kay had a lifelong love of animals, and the family home was always a welcoming place for furry or feathered friends. Amongst several other species the family kept cats, dogs, chickens, ducks and guinea pigs.

Although Kay and Dick sadly split up in 2009, they continued to co-parent their children and remained good friends.

Kay's love of the Kent & East Sussex Railway went back to her earliest days in the area and she has volunteered at the K&ESR for many years. She assisted during the big track laying project in 1990, and helped out generally in several areas including loco cleaning and catering.

A strong and affectionate camaraderie built up between the K&ESR and the North Norfolk Railway following a pump trolley race some years ago. Exchanges between the two railways followed and Kay and Dick, amongst others, spent some time with the North Norfolk group.

Kay enjoyed horse riding, ice skating and dancing, including line dancing and LeRoc. She was also a brilliant artist and a highly creative crafter. Kay made some wonderful art over the years, some of which she gifted to her family and friends. (*I've got one of her pictures on my wall –LS*)

Kay was kind, funny and thoughtful, and a loyal and devoted friend; but unfortunately she was diagnosed with cancer in 2021. She fought her illness with stoicism, courage and dignity, but passed away at The Pilgrims Hospice on 4th December 2022.

Kay will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Her funeral took place at Vintners Park Crematorium, Maidstone, on 5th January and was followed by a wake at Tenterden Town Station. About 60 K&ESR members attended.

*By Independent Celebrant Claire Richardson
with Abbey, Dan and Dick Dickson and
additions by Lucy Sayce*

David Earl 1939–2022

We were saddened to hear of the recent passing of David Earl, one of our former volunteers, at the age of 83.

David always had an interest in steam trains, which probably started as a boy living close to the railway line in Erith. Over the years he would travel on various heritage railways, including the K&ESR, and when David celebrated his 60th birthday the family treated him to a driving experience at Tenterden. He had a very enjoyable and successful day, and was told that if he had been younger he would have been capable of training to become a train driver on the railway.

David decided to become a volunteer with us, and enjoyed various roles including working in the ticket office at Tenterden, as a ticket inspector on the trains, and finally working at Bodiam – which he particularly enjoyed, as gate keeper and Station Master. He loved working at the K&ESR as he enjoyed the company of the other volunteers and helping the visitors to the railway.

David reluctantly ‘retired’ when he was no longer able to drive, but always maintained his interest in the railway through the *Terrier* and via friends who still volunteer.



David and his wife Christine about to board the Pullman on Sunday 17th May 2017. (via the Earl family)

THE NEXT GENERATION:

Kyle Siwek

Kyle Siwek was first brought to the railway for a treat on his eighth birthday. He remembers being very impressed by the guard on his train, who not only roped him in to help with the duties but also encouraged him to return when he was 18 and old enough to undertake the role himself. He vowed to do so then and has never wavered since! He was, in fact, able to return at the age of 16 when, as part of a Department of Education scheme, he spent six months in Catering, assisting with the trolley service; but it remained his aspiration to become a guard and, after the inevitable Covid-related delay, he finally started training at the age of 19.

I ask Kyle what it has been like. “My first day was very daunting. I was introduced to so many new subjects (such as how brakes work, the Rules, the need to learn the route) that I suffered from information overload! But Graham Williams was a great tutor, giving me just the right amount of space and encouragement, and made the day so much fun. At the end of it I was sure it was the right role for me. Since then, I have discovered it is a lot more procedural than I was expecting – as a visitor, you have no idea how much is involved, especially the safety-critical aspects

and thinking about the consequences of all your actions! But there is a good balance between technical tasks and interaction with the customers, and I particularly like prepping the train and working the level crossings. I am thoroughly enjoying it and have been made to feel most welcome. Everyone is different, but without exception they are all keen to help.”



Changing that pesky tail lamp!

(Tony Ramsey)



The part of the guard's job that everyone thinks of.

(Matt Saunders)

Are there any negatives? Kyle pauses before answering. "Not really. I struggle a bit to remember the names of all the landmarks, even though I recognise them visually. It is physically more strenuous than I was expecting, so I really admire those over 70 who are still in the role. Although I have now covered most of the practical side of the training, it is going to be a challenge to fit in the theory sessions while I am at university, especially as these are not available online.

As usual, I ask about any embarrassing incidents. "Nothing serious, fortunately," he laughs. "When I started shunting, I kept saying 'back set' instead of 'set back'. I once offered to change the tail lamp but then forgot to, so I ended up walking the full length of the platform several times. And, during the Santas, there was such a long queue for the toilets I nearly got left behind!"

Kyle lives in Hollingbourne with his parents, sister and cat. Having studied A-level Politics, Music and Geography at Valley Park School, Maidstone, he is currently in the third year of a

Politics degree course at the University of York and plans to go on to do a Master's (also in Politics) at the University of Durham. He has been involved in student representation and this year is President of his college. He's a percussionist, and both plays in and conducts the university orchestra, but his principal love is choral music: during term-time he sings evensong every day as part of a choral scholarship at York Minster, and during the holidays he is a Deputy Lay Clerk at Rochester Cathedral.

Throughout our talk Kyle demonstrates that he is passionate about all he does, whether it is politics, music or railways, so I conclude by asking him what advice he would offer to prospective volunteers. "As a young person, it can be very daunting going into an environment full of older people who have been involved for a long time, and it's easy to fear you won't fit in. But if you persevere you will find they actually welcome you, and you will become 'part of the furniture' sooner than you think!"

Tony Ramsey

It Seems To Me... by Sequitur

We recently met in one of Tenterden's up-market cafés, me and someone from the *Terrier's* past. My companion was 'Gricer', this journal's former columnist who, from 2010 to 2018, either delighted or infuriated people. These days his volunteering is, much like your Editor's, 'at arm's length'. I was not quite certain what to expect, but it soon became apparent that Gricer's 'sage observations' would keep my 'grey matter' fully engaged.

"What do you think of offering a discount to visitors who book in advance?" he enquired. "Or rather, penalising people who choose to turn up on the day." Suppressing the urge to thump the table, I took a deep breath and pointed out that the benefits of pre-booking had been highlighted during the pandemic; the ability to match service provision to demand had been vital. This remained important – how often have you heard the criticism that we were wasting fuel and money hauling round a half-empty train? The railway has an ongoing need to be cautious with its finances as business recovers, and remember there are energy and cost of living crises. Surely pre-booking and discounts benefit both K&ESR and its visitors.

Continuing to wear his devil's advocate hat, Gricer countered: "Then, in the cold light of day, we charge you more if you do not book via our preferred method. Anyway, shouldn't we really be considering what is best for our customers, not the railway?"

I considered repeating the arguments in favour of pre-booking but decided against. Instead, I pointed out that many people, probably most, check the website before deciding to visit; they would see that there is a discount for pre-booking. There have always been people, usually from somewhere distant, who have not even bothered to find out if trains are running. I recalled a family who once turned up in the middle of January only to find the P.Way Department dismantling Tenterden platform road. "Oh, you're closed!" they exclaimed.

In an effort to remain civil, we turned the conversation to the climate, meteorological rather than economic. "And don't you find this baffling," asked Gricer, "that in the heat of any

summer, not just the exceptional one of 2022, our visitors are expected to sit in a stifling carriage for two hours and slowly roast? Why on earth would you pay to do that?"

I had to point out that windows can be lowered and that if we were going to take that view why were we bothering with a heritage railway? "Do you have an answer, then?" I asked.

"Of sorts," he replied. "We need to find a way of getting visitors on site and spending without using the train. How about free parking for all, whether they go on the train or not? Nobody likes paying to park, and the railway car park is only a few minutes from the High Street. That will incentivise people to get to the railway."

"Close to the railway," I pointed out. "But your plan has at least three flaws. What happens on special event days when the car park is full to capacity? How does offering free parking get people to spend money?" And the Council won't like us syphoning off all that parking income when they are also strapped for cash. Gricer agreed that special event days could be an issue, but that was for minds greater than his. And as for people who have parked for free, he has an idea on how we can get them to spend money.

At this stage the conversation paused as a waitress brought two more coffees. Gricer gestured towards his. "There's your answer – coffee. I read your piece in last July's *Terrier* in which you suggested that the gift shop might in future become a coffee bar. I don't think it's that far fetched an idea." (I pointed out that it had been a slightly cynical joke.) "Why not have a decent coffee shop selling really good coffee and cakes at really good prices? A destination in its own right. Never mind taking the train: something that will draw people to the site, and perhaps encourage them to go for a ride in the future. At the very least, it will make them aware of what the railway has to offer. We need another string to our bow. In a perfect world the coffee shop would need to be near the site entrance."

I paused for a moment before attempting to address this piece of off-the-wall lateral thinking. "Tenterden already has a number of establishments of the kind you are suggesting; we are sitting in one of them, and the Refreshment



No doubt Gricer would approve of these Maidstone & District vehicles at Tenterden Town on 21st August 2022. Leyland PD2 on the right. (Ah, memories.)

(Robin Coombes)

Rooms (Buffet), and of course the Pullman, already have a fine reputation. Also we have the 'secondary catering outlet'. OK, that's a take-away facility, but it seems daft adding another outlet only a few yards away. At that rate K&ESR might as well stand for 'Kent & East Sussex Restaurants'. Then there is the cost of fitting it out. Where would the money for that come from? Anyway, all this assumes that throwing open the car park to all and sundry doesn't end up with the Council getting a compulsory purchase order for the land, taking over and charging. And if we want to add strings to our bow and help the local community, surely the 'pop-up' cinema scheme already does that rather well."

Gricer pulled a vintage watch from his waistcoat pocket. "Well, thanks for the chat. Good to see

you. I haven't enjoyed a discussion as much since I spent two hours in a mess room arguing about loco policy. We never reached a conclusion on that occasion either. My bus to Headcorn is in ten minutes. Pity it's one of Arriva's blue boxes and not a Maidstone & District Leyland PD2; and I'd rather be travelling behind steam once I get to the main line."

I was astounded. Here was someone whose blue skies thinking had been heading into orbit. Now he was wallowing in nostalgia for the world of over 60 years ago. Perhaps it provided a clue as to why, after he had caused a furore on Facebook, I was asked to take his column over and 'look on the bright side'. Ah well, it takes all sorts, particularly in the world of heritage railways. 🚂

Moods of a Terrier

All photos by John Wickham.



IMPERIOUS – The historic duo at Cricket Bat Wood crossing, heading for Northiam with the Pullman on 6th September 2015.



IMPATIENT – Waiting to start the day on 17th February 2016.



IMPRESSIVE – No.32670 climbs past Haystacks with her safety valves sizzling on 4th June 2016.



IMPETUOUS – A brief slip when starting away from Wittersham Road on 5th June 2016.

Twinning News – A Return to the Somme

In 1996 the Kent & East Sussex Railway twinned with the metre gauge Baie de Somme Railway (CFBS) in Northern France. The twinning enabled the two railways to apply for funding from the European Union Interreg project, which had been set up to encourage and develop tourism and cooperation from countries that shared a common border, in this case the English Channel. Two successful funding applications were jointly made by the twinned railways.

Since the twinning ceremony in 1996, K&ESR has been represented at all of CFBS's *Fêtes de la Vapeur* (steam festivals) and one of our engines has been present, to operate over the dual-gauge track between Noyelles and St Valery Port: in 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2013 and 2016. Over the same period several working visits have been made by volunteers on both sides of the Channel. These have not only been a way of exchanging technical expertise but have formed a closer relationship between CFBS and K&ESR. Over the past decade the working visits have been made roughly every 18 months, alternating between England and France.

In October 2019 we welcomed our CFBS friends

to Tenterden where various work projects were undertaken, primarily in the carriage shed; it was therefore our turn to travel to France in 2021. The event would have been held on the same weekend as the 11th steam festival, on 3/4 July, which also celebrated the 50th anniversary of CFBS's first public service and 25 years of the twinning between the two railways. However there was uncertainty caused by the Covid pandemic and travel restrictions were still in place, so it was not possible for us to attend. Two further abortive attempts were made before we were finally able to arrange a visit for the weekend of 22/23 October 2022.

On a lovely sunny Saturday morning a group of ten K&ESR volunteers, three fewer than originally anticipated, assembled at CFBS's St Valery Canal depot to meet up with about 20 of our French counterparts. After the habitual greetings of handshaking – and exchanging *les bises* with the ladies present – we were offered a choice of tasks, and dispersed to the various work sites. With some of the CFBS volunteers being English speakers, by varying degrees, and similarly some French speakers on our side, there were no real communication problems.



The CFBS and K&ESR work group assembled in front of loco 3714.

(CFBS)



Jean, Carol and Kevin hard at work cleaning brake rigging.

(Michael Bunn)

For the first time on these joint working weekends we were joined by several younger volunteers from both railways. The feedback from them after the weekend was most encouraging and was a good sign that they might become the next generation of the twinning process.

During the day a whole range of tasks were undertaken including painting of the coal bunkers of CFBS locomotives Nos.1 and 15, sanding and cleaning brake rigging from one of the ex-Berner Oberland Bahn coaches, maintenance of point levers, stacking logs for lighting up locos into dry storage at Le Crottoy and St Valéry, and lighting up loco 3714 at the depot. Elliott Waters, in K&ESR uniform, joined one of CFBS's train *contrôleurs* on board a service train for the day.

Lunch was taken in the *carré des benevoles*, a new volunteers' building which provides a large dining/ meeting room, kitchen (with draft Leffe beer on tap), stores and locker room. The building, which was donated to CFBS, was formerly used as an office building at a chemical factory at Compiègne and was delivered to St

Valéry in three large Portakabin-type sections. The building was put back together – with new roofing, flooring, electrical and water supply – by CFBS volunteers.

After an extended lunch break (this is France after all) a group photo was taken and we returned to work, albeit at a slightly slower pace, before finishing in the late afternoon. A couple of hours later we all met at the CFBS building at Noyelles for an *apéro* to celebrate the 40th birthday of one of CFBS's volunteers. The building, which was formerly part of the SNCF station, was handed over to CFBS a number of years ago. It has a ground floor exhibition space, named the *Salle Jean-Marc Page* (after CFBS's late Chairman), an upper floor meeting room, and the CFBS archive in the loft, which a few of us were shown by current Chairman Maurice Testu.

The day concluded back at the St Valéry volunteers building, where short speeches of thanks were made before the 30 or so present enjoyed an excellent cold dinner provided by CFBS's caterers.



The CFBS volunteers' special lunch train at Noyelles.

(Michael Bunn)

A later start on the Sunday morning saw about 95 people, including the K&ESR group, meet up at St Valery depot to take the 'End of season train' which CFBS lays on for its volunteers to thank them for their work during the year. This included lunch on the train, and CFBS had kindly invited us to join them. Before everyone got on board they assembled in the concrete carriage shed where M Testu outlined all the various projects that had been completed during the year, including the extensive work that had been undertaken on the new dining train, which should be in service in 2023. This new train, which has been superbly restored and repainted by CFBS volunteers, will bring a new level of comfort and luxury compared with the 1920 *Managé 'Somme'* coaches currently used.

Maurice also confirmed that 2022 should end up as a record-breaking year for passenger numbers carried. The record has subsequently been confirmed at 214,288.

At 12:00 everyone boarded the train, formed of the Buffaud & Robatel 0-6-2 locomotive No.3714 hauling four Somme coaches and two *fourgons*

(baggage vans). One of these vans – an ex-Berner Oberland Bahn bogie vehicle – is fitted out as a kitchen, from where, remarkably, the caterers served the meals for the 95 people on board. Incidentally K&ESR volunteers worked on the ex-BOB van during the 2007 joint working weekend.

The dining train came to a halt at PK 3, roughly midway between St Valery and Noyelles, where there are excellent views over the Baie de Somme. After an *apéro* a superb three-course lunch was served by the catering team. Following the first two courses the train proceeded to Noyelles, to clear the line for the service trains. There was a layover of about 45 minutes at Noyelles, providing the opportunity of seeing three trains in service in the station at the same time. Back on board the dessert and coffee was served and we were soon back at St Valery, thus bringing to an end a most enjoyable and convivial weekend of *l'entente cordiale*.

Our thanks go to everyone at CFBS for making us so welcome; we look forward to seeing them at Tenterden many times in the future.

Michael Bunn

125 Years of the Selsey Tramway – Now the 'Tram Way'

David Pearce outlines the history of a particularly quirky Colonel Stephens line, and the walking trail which now recalls its memory.

The Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway ran its first public service on 27 August 1897 and, 125 years to the day, the new Selsey Tram Way walking trail was launched. The Selsey Tramway, as the line was generally known, was in fact a (very) light 7.5 mile railway, constructed in only four months under the supervision of engineer Holman F Stephens. It was not built to any existing railway regulations, hence its description as a tramway. This meant it could run trams (actually trains) without signals or gated crossings, on a permanent way that seemed anything but.

The Tramway was originally equipped with a brand-new steam locomotive *Selsey*, a Peckett 2-4-2T. However it was not ready for the opening service, which was hauled by *Chichester*, a 50-year old ex-GWR 0-4-2T built by the Longbottom Railway Foundry in Barnsley. The formation consisted of three brand-new 37ft bogie carriages built by the Falcon Engine Co. of Loughborough.

The locomotive had been transferred from Chichester to Selsey by road, due to a canal bridge – constructed by Chichester City Council – not being complete. It was in fact towed by 8hp Burrell steam traction engine *Queen of the South* with rails which were laid on their sides in front of the loco and transferred from the rear as it progressed.

As a taste of the future of the line, the assembled dignitaries at the Chichester terminus were kept waiting for an hour because *Chichester* needed to run down to Selsey to collect local residents for the opening. The line became notorious for slow, uncomfortable and unreliable services, acquiring a number of strange nicknames such as the 'Bumpety-Bump', the 'Sidlesham Snail' and the 'Blackberry' or 'Hedgerow Line' (it was said it ran so slowly you could pick blackberries along the way!) In fact speeds were limited to 15mph because of the tight radius of some of the curves.

The line suffered from a number of unfortunate occurrences, including a disastrous flood in



Waymarker disc.

(via David Pearce)

December 1910. This made part of the line impassable and led to what may have been the first rail replacement service to be provided by horse-drawn stagecoach. Following the flood the Pagham Harbour embankment had to be raised by 8ft and Sidlesham station had to be rebuilt.

Railmotors were introduced on the Tramway in the early 1920s, the first Stephens line to have them, and were involved in a number of accidents at the ungated road crossings at Stockbridge and Ferry. The crossing at Ferry was particularly dangerous because road vehicles travelling south could not see it, due to a bend and houses obscuring the view. These collisions often resulted in railcars being derailed and blocking the road.

Steam locomotives were also prone to collisions and a regulation had to be introduced requiring trains to stop before crossings while the fireman or guard alighted and guided the train across the road. Locomotives were also liable to derailling along the line, which was so lightly engineered that the rails tended to move. So common was this occurrence that jacks were carried to aid re-railing.

A more serious accident, causing the only fatality



Members of the Colonel Stephens Society pictured at Chalder in 2022. (via David Pearce)

on the line, happened in September 1923. The first service of the day from Selsey Town to Chichester derailed between Golf Club Halt and Ferry station, plunging down the bank into a ditch. The leading carriage buffer pushed the coal bunker of the locomotive *Wembley* forwards, crushing the fireman against the boiler. The driver escaped with scalds. Colonel Stephens was called upon to give evidence at the inquest. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, but expressed the opinion that Stephens, as engineer, was indirectly to blame because there was evidence of neglect in maintaining the track.

Despite all these problems, in 1913 the company proposed to build an extension from Hunston to Birdham, Itchenor and the Witterings. However, while the Selsey line had been made possible by private land deals, compulsory purchases would be needed for the extension, and this meant application for a Light Railway Order. An inquiry was held at which Colonel Stephens gave evidence, describing the proposed route of the line, the five stations and the intention to build a 200ft concrete jetty at Itchenor to facilitate seaborne traffic. Not only was the Order granted, it was extended to cover the existing line as well!

Unfortunately, due to delays caused by World War 1, the Order lapsed in 1920 and the proposal was eventually abandoned. However in 1924 application was made under the little-used 1864 Railway Construction Facilities Act to legalise the line as a railway, and this was approved. The Tramway then changed its name to the rather grand West Sussex Railway.

This change of status did not enhance its fortunes however, and with little or no money with which to maintain the line, it closed for

good in 1935. A few traces of it still exist and the Selsey Tram Way takes walkers to those locations, albeit by a rather longer distance due to most of the trackbed having returned to private ownership.

‘Walk the Selsey Tram Way’ is a project by Dr Bill Martin and myself to improve the existing trail, which was launched in 1997. The project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group (MWHG) and, indeed, there is much wildlife to be seen along the route. There is a leaflet describing the 11.8 mile trail from Chichester main line station to East Beach, Selsey, which can be shortened by catching a bus back to Chichester at one of three points along the route. This is accompanied by more information on the MWHG website (www.mwhg.org.uk), where there is also a downloadable interactive map. The trail is waymarked by small orange signs, and information boards will be erected at or near the sites of all 11 stations plus a few more at significant locations. Obtaining landholder permissions and local authority licences for these has proved to be the most difficult part of the project, along with the dry weather delaying installation due to the extremely hard ground.

The most significant artefact remaining is the platform at Chalder station in Sidlesham, not far from The Anchor Inn. The platform has been cleared of undergrowth by MWHG volunteers, to whom we are extremely grateful. Some 30 or more walkers enjoyed the re-launch of the trail, with quite a few completing the full route on the day. The trail was visited by members of the Colonel Stephens Society in May 2022. We are indebted to our sponsors, including the Colonel Stephens Society, for their contributions to this project. We hope that K&ESR members will be able to visit and walk all or part of the trail – the best way to appreciate the quirky nature of this unique Stephens line. 🚂

Acknowledgements and suggestions for further reading:

E. Griffith: ‘The Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway’ – Herald Press 1968

V. Mitchell & K. Smith: ‘Branch Line to Selsey’ – Middleton Press 1983

D. Bathurst: ‘The Selsey Tram’ – Phillimore 1992

L. Cooksey: ‘The Selsey Tramway’ – Wild Swan 2006

Notes for contributors

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Content

The *Tenterden Terrier* majors on K&ESR news, features on the railway past and present, and historical articles on other railways, particularly in the South East.

There is only one criterion here: any written or photographic contribution must be interesting to the reader, not just to the writer. It should only exceed 2,500 words if you trust the Editor to do his worst to shorten it – or put in a special plea for a two-parter.

Text

Copy should be sent in electronic form in word-processor format (Word is best). No need to worry about the typeface or size, but please keep it simple and do not include page numbers. Sending by e-mail attachment is the simplest method, but you can send by CD, if carefully packed.

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