



JOURNAL OF THE KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY

# Tenterden Terrier

Summer 2023

Number 151



**Robertsbridge Go-Ahead**  
**Where Next for the Wealden Pullman?**  
**Geoff Colvin - A Winner for the K&ESR**  
**K&ESR Walks**  
**Frittenden Road Station Agents**

ISSUE NUMBER 151  
SUMMER 2023

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

ISSN 0306-2449

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Railway Company Limited 2023

Printed by  
Wealden Print  
Cowden Close  
Horns Road  
Hawkhurst  
TN18 4QT

FRONT COVER

*The largest loco ever seen on  
the K&ESR – Battle of Britain  
class No.34072 257 Squadron  
on 1st May.*

*(Phil Edwards)*

BACK COVER

*Visiting loco Swiftsure by the  
home signal on Tenterden Bank  
on 29th April.*

*(Ian Scarlett)*

JOURNAL OF THE KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY



*Marcia (100 years old this year) kept the crowds at Tenterden Town entertained during the May Steam Up event. She is seen here on Saturday 27th.*

*(Robin Coombes)*

# Tenterden Terrier

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# Editorial

## A Day of Significance

There are many dates over the past 129 years which plot the course of history on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. These have now been joined by 9th May 2023, the day on which our Rother Valley Railway colleagues learned that there would be an Order under the Transport Works Act authorising something that at one time seemed impossible: the restoration of the line from Bodiam to Robertsbridge.

As someone who joined the Preservation Society nearly 62 years ago, I am only too well aware of

those early optimistic hopes: the intention to operate goods traffic and a local passenger service. These aspirations were followed by the twists and turns and changes of policy that have brought us to where we are today. Times, attitudes and priorities have indeed changed since those long-ago decisions which only allowed us to run as far as Bodiam. Who can say what the future may hold?

One thing is certain: the Robertsbridge extension will have a more profound effect on our railway than any of its predecessors. In the meantime we congratulate our RVR friends on this achievement and look forward to another significant date – the day when trains again run between Tenterden and the national network at Robertsbridge.

*Nick Pallant*



*As traditional as the K&ESR can get: No.15 Hastings with a one-coach train on 24th March.*

*(Robin Coombes)*

## FROM THE CHAIR

The big news is, of course, that on 9th May our friends at the Rother Valley Railway received the news that the Secretary of State for Transport had decided to make the Order, under the Transport and Works Act 1992, to enable completion of the railway between Bodiam and Robertsbridge. This represents a significant achievement on their part and is the result of years of dogged determination, in the true style of Colonel Stephens. It will mean the realisation of the dream of the early preservationists more than 60 years ago.

For us, the hard work starts now. We will need to work closely with the RVR to ensure that, when the new section of line is complete, we can operate it safely and in a way which brings the maximum benefit to the Kent & East Sussex Railway. It will be far more than just a matter of bolting an additional three miles onto our existing 10.5.

The implications will be huge. We will have a significantly larger railway, with all that that entails. And what we have come to consider as the very rural far end of our line will no longer

be so. It may be the far end now, and for many of us it feels pretty remote from our current centres of gravity at Tenterden and Rolvenden, but in a few years that is going to change. Bodiam will no longer be a terminus, and in the future many of our passengers will come from the other direction, from Robertsbridge and the national rail network beyond, journeying down the valley and on into Kent. We will have a whole new hinterland which will require a whole new way of looking at our railway.

The immediate task is to further develop our profile in East Sussex and forge the same kind of local links as those we already have in Kent.

There will of course be challenges as the new stretch of line takes shape, but I am sure we will rise to them.

Among the benefits of the announcement is the fact that we now have a firm base on which to plan and develop our strategy to 2030 and beyond. Work on this is getting under way, and it is driven by the need to position ourselves so we can survive



*"Next stop Robertsbridge!" The buffer stops at Junction Road.*

*(Robin Coombes)*

and thrive in a changing world in which traditional steam railways are but a fading memory.

Already several things are clear. Our business model, whereby we seek to generate a small profit from operations leaving major expenditure to be funded from other sources, is rapidly becoming unsustainable, even with ongoing paring-back of costs. We are running faster and faster simply to stand still.

We will need to focus more on varied and higher-end ‘experiences’ – ideally low-cost ones making maximum use of our existing assets including of course our people – and less on running a classic train service for the casual visitor.

We will need to make more of other things that we can offer. We can, for example, highlight the environment through which our railway runs. We must not only preserve and where possible enhance it, and its flora and fauna, but also work with other individuals and bodies to make the most of this precious asset. There are other things we can do, too. In short, we must increasingly look outwards to see how we can better anchor ourselves in the community and the wider world.

We are also a place of wellbeing and belonging, and the preservation of historic artefacts and skills. Perhaps we should make more of these elements, and of the social and other benefits we can offer to our increasingly diverse range of volunteers and regular visitors.

We are after all a charity, not a commercial business, and perhaps this fact isn’t sufficiently appreciated. Charities rely on donor and grant funding as much as – perhaps more than – operational revenue. Railways are increasingly expensive to run. We could be less inhibited in asking people to contribute more to keep alive something rather wonderful.

Moving in this direction isn’t only right in itself; it will bring us tangible benefits in the years to come, in new grant funding opportunities and greater long-term sustainability.

In the meantime we have the 2023 season to navigate. It has started reasonably well. We have a high profile, we are experimenting with what we offer, we are creative in our marketing, and visitor numbers are so far holding up. But we are having to work ever harder to stand still, and the importance of active cash management has never been higher.

In particular we need more revenue, so do please encourage your friends, family and colleagues to visit us. And if anyone in our membership has any influence in getting organised groups – social clubs, workplace outings, schools or absolutely anything else – to come to our railway please get in touch with the office. We could do with the business.

Thank you for your continued support in these challenging but exciting times.

*Simon Marsh*  
*Chairman*

## FROM THE OFFICE

This report reflects on the events of the past month. The period under review featured our highly successful 1940s event, the enlightening Schools Evacuation Day, the vibrant Coronation Weekend which commemorated the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, and the Steam Up gala. These events showcased our commitment to preserving history, providing educational experiences, and offering enjoyable railway travel opportunities.

The 1940s event, aptly named the ‘Fabulous Forties’, celebrated the style, glamour and music of that era, while also acknowledging the victory over tyranny and the dawning of a new technological and social age. It provided our visitors with an immersive experience, featuring vintage vehicles, music performances, captivating

cooking demonstrations, and the presence of two locomotives that perfectly captured the essence of the event: Sapper in War Department livery and 257 *Squadron*, a Bulleid Battle of Britain class locomotive on loan from the Spa Valley. The event witnessed a good turnout, with the sun shining brightly and attendees thoroughly enjoying themselves.

The Schools Evacuation Day, held on the following Monday, created a different atmosphere and sought to impart a glimpse into the experiences of children evacuated from the south east of England during the Second World War. The event aimed to educate young participants about the courage and determination displayed by their forefathers in the face of adversity. By doing so we sought to instil an appreciation for





Marcia 'dragging' 257 Squadron up to Tenterden.

(Jon Edwards)

the bravery and resilience exhibited by those who lived through the harrowing days of the war. The Schools Evacuation Day successfully achieved its objective, providing valuable insights to the attending children.

The Coronation Weekend marked a significant moment in our history as we celebrated the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. We offered a diverse range of railway travel experiences, featuring steam and diesel locomotives, DMMUs, 'A' Set, Pullman and Victorian Set coaches that spanned different eras from the 1880s to the 1960s. The event also incorporated classic cars and vehicles, such as Minis, a Rolls-Royce, a traction engine and a vintage lorry, which added to the festive atmosphere. With nearly 900 passengers carried, about 400 cream teas served, and numerous positive comments received from visitors, the event was a resounding success. The efforts put in at Rolvenden to make the locomotives available were greatly appreciated, and we must acknowledge the outstanding work of our volunteers in restoring historic vehicles and contributing to surprise birthday treats and anniversary celebrations.

During the Coronation celebrations we had the honour of hosting a Deputy Lieutenant of East Sussex, Major General John Moore-Bick CBE DL, who participated in a symbolic act of planting an oak tree at Bodiam station. This act, made possible through the support of Paul Davies from

the forestry team and the supply of a feathered oak by Coppice Wood, represents part of our commitment to ecological sustainability. We have already planted more than 3,000 trees on our land and plan to continue expanding our efforts in the future. In line with our ecological initiatives we have collaborated with Tenterden & District Wildlife, the Kent Wildlife Trust Consultancy and the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust to conduct a comprehensive survey. This has already yielded valuable results, identifying 77 bird species, including ten of the highest conservation concern, as well as at least one rare bee.

The Gala was a resounding success, marked again by clear skies, enthusiastic crowds, and generally on-time train operations. We offered passengers a unique opportunity to travel to Junction Road, providing them with a taste of what is to come with the future extension to Robertsbridge. One of the notable attractions during the Gala was the special 'little and large' pairing, featuring the locomotives *257 Squadron* and *Marcia*. This pairing allowed visitors to witness engines that are rarely seen as they are normally stored securely. In addition we organised 'behind-the-scenes' visits, allowing guests to gain insight into the inner workings of our railway operations.

The feedback we received from Gala attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with everyone expressing their enjoyment of and appreciation

for the event. One particular message of thanks highlighted the exceptional care provided by our staff to a lady in a wheelchair at Northiam, showcasing our commitment to inclusivity and exceptional customer service.

From a commercial standpoint, we achieved our target visitor figures, further enhancing the success of the Gala. This success can be attributed to the collective efforts of our hardworking volunteers and staff members. Their unwavering commitment and willingness to go above and beyond have been instrumental in making the Gala an outstanding event. I extend my personal gratitude to each and every individual involved, as their contributions have truly made a difference.

In addition to the events, the important news of the month was that the Rother Valley Railway received news that the Secretary of State for Transport has made an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to enable the completion of the railway between Bodiam and Robertsbridge.

Looking ahead, the Board have initiated the process of shaping the vision for the K&ESR in 2030. The initial meeting, which I was invited to attend, was highly productive; there was a commitment to engaging and consulting with a wider audience to tap into the wealth of talent, experience and creativity among our stakeholders. As a charity with charitable objectives, the Board recognised the importance of embracing its legacy and fostering innovation



*Wartime re-enactors recreating the seconds before parting.*  
(Caroline Warne)

and collaboration to address evolving social, economic and environmental challenges.

Finally, I must express my utmost appreciation to the dedicated volunteers and staff members who made these events possible. Their hard work, tireless efforts, and willingness to go above and beyond have been instrumental in ensuring the success of these occasions. I would like to extend my personal gratitude to all those involved.

*Robin Coombes*  
General Manager

## MOTIVE POWER

### Rolvenden MPD

Little progress has been made on moving overhauls forward since the last *Terrier*. Liam and his ever-decreasing team have worked miracles in keeping the engines that we do have going, but this means that there has been no time to progress the overhaul of **30065**. Unless new volunteers come forward, there is little prospect of this situation changing in the near future.

Much time has been spent recently on keeping *Swiftsure* and *Sapper* running. Both have proved reliable, and a credit to their owner, but *Sapper* unfortunately ran a hot box in the week before the May Steam Up. *Swiftsure* stood in for the event, and the team at Rolvenden had *Sapper* out on a test run by the end of the following week.

*Marcia* had some work done on its injector

during the run up to the Steam Up event, and then had a starring role each morning, 'hauling' our guest engine to Tenterden. Sadly, as reported elsewhere, *Marcia's* owner Richard 'Dick' Beckett passed away recently. This has left an uncertain situation with regard to *Marcia's* future, and we will report any further developments.

Sadly there is no progress to report on either of the *Terriers*. Both engines have been out on display in Rolvenden yard, together with **300** and the **Ford diesel 1638** still languishes at Leaky Finders, waiting for further funding before the repair work can progress.

We are pleased to be able to report that Class 33 **33202** has returned to us on loan. This gives us much-needed 'Thunderbird' cover, as well as an engine that can work the service in times of high fire risk. 33202 and *Hastings* ran a shuttle service



*Engines being moved to Rolvenden yard for display at the Steam Up.*

*(Robin Coombes)*

from Northiam to Junction Road during the Steam Up, and the former is also seeing service on the evening Fish & Chip trains.

*Hastings* has been performing well, and has had further work undertaken at Rolvenden. The 4253 team made front steps for *Hastings* prior to its trip to the Bluebell Railway, and it has since had a brick arch fitted. Very favourable reports were received of *Hastings*' performances at the Bluebell, and it would appear that Mike Hart has turned out an extremely good engine.

That's everything, isn't it? There hasn't been anything else going on lately... Oh, hang on...

It will hardly have escaped the notice of anyone with social media or who has attended the railway recently, but we have been enjoying the presence of *257 Squadron*, courtesy of Southern



*Mike Hart (left) pays 4253's Charlie Masterson for extra coal for Hastings!*

*(Alan Crotty)*

Locomotives Limited. When this loan was first announced, there were doom-mongers on forums claiming that it would be far too heavy for our bridges, and would wreck our track. We are sorry to have to report (to them) that there have been no such problems. Instead, 257 has handled our services with ease and, judging by the smiles on the faces of the loco crews, has been very popular, too. 257 hauled the A set every weekend, apart from one, when it was stopped for a washout. The engine has certainly thrown some challenges at us, not least a broken spring. Several short-notice trips were needed to get spare parts, including a trip to Swanage for the replacement spring.

Its last weekend in service for us was 3/4 June. It is fair to say that our profile as a railway has been raised by its presence, and we have also proved that we can use big engines – albeit with certain limitations, and a lot of forward planning! Our thanks go to Southern Locos for allowing the engine to come to us in the first place, to the Guest Engine Club for paying half the steaming fees, to the Spa Valley Railway for supplying conductors to work with our own crews, to the staff at Rolvenden for solving problems on an unfamiliar locomotive, and to Jake Lewis in our Operating office for all his efforts to make this deal come to fruition. A special mention must go to Jonathan Marsh, who repeatedly came running when there was a problem, and without whom it is highly likely that 257 *Squadron* would have missed more than one day in traffic.



## **Locomotive 25 *Northiam*** – *David Brailsford*

Since January locomotive 25 has been out of service to allow a build-up of deferred maintenance tasks to be carried out. These included a piston and valve exam, which showed that front end lubrication has not been what it should be. New valves have been fitted and the cylinders and piston rings have had scoring removed. Improved lubrication will be fitted to the cylinder block before the loco is returned to traffic.

The motion blocks have been white metallised to cut out the play that had developed following intensive use.

The wheels have been reprofiled, and for this we have to thank Great Western Railway Ltd at Bristol for their expertise. The loco left Wittersham Road on 31st March on S.A. Smith's low loader, and arrived at St Philip's Marsh depot on 3rd April. The wheels were turned on the same day and *Northiam* arrived back at Wittersham Road on the 4th. A very smooth operation by all concerned!

The motion and side rods are being re-installed, and the opportunity has been taken to repaint the wheelsets before No.25 enters its last four



*No.25 having its wheels turned on GWR's lathe.*  
(Martyn Pearce)

years of use. The boiler inspection has also become due, so this will be carried out, as will a small number of essential repairs and additions.

RSE Ltd (25's owners) would like to thank all of those who have contributed towards the work on *Northiam*. The effort put in will help to ensure that the locomotive remains available for use.

## **4253 Locomotive Company** – *Kelvin Williams*

It has been a while since we posted an update on the progress of locomotive 4253. This is mainly because all our attention has been on the boiler repairs being carried out in Liverpool by HBSS. The progress there has been slower than we would have wished – due, primarily, to rising costs in materials and delays in the delivery of some of the items.

We have not been idle, however. We have been assisting the engineering shed staff at Rolvenden with various repairs, modifications, painting etc. on several locomotives.

Now that 4253 has been stripped of her water tanks and cab, in readiness for the return and fitting of the boiler, many hands are involved in rubbing down and repainting everything. Others are involved in building the crinoline cage that holds the boiler's insulation in place.



*Bob Haslam with the newly repaired bench.*  
(Alan Crotty))

We have also taken the time to inspect the memorial bench for Dave (Rivet) Dee, and discovered that the paint and wood did not look as good as we'd hoped, so new hard wood was purchased. The legs were taken back to bare metal and repainted, and the new wood received a coating of oil. Although several people contributed towards the refurbishment, Bob Haslam did the final assemble. He is seen enjoying the fruits of his labours in the accompanying photo.

## **GWR Railcar W20W – *Chris Mileman/Neil Edwards***

When the *Spring Terrier* article was penned, the railcar was back in the CSS while essential vehicle maintenance work was being undertaken in C&W. The team was delighted when, after a



*The Railcar's luggage compartment with the replacement Buffalo Board under-flooring in place. (Neil Edwards)*

great deal of co-operation, some long hours and a major effort by Alan Brice and everyone in the C&W team, the work on the RU was completed to allow W20W to re-enter the shed at Tenterden on Saturday 4th March. This allowed the team time to prepare for the contractors to begin fitting the new heating system during the week of March 6th as planned.

The installation over the following week was very successful, with the contractors finishing most of the work. All the copper and flexible pipe runs were completed and the diesel burner units mounted in the luggage compartment. The heater units have taken up the position where the original steam heat boiler was located, and the existing cabinet is being refitted to house the new units. With the heaters being located in the luggage compartment and the pipe runs following the exact layout of the original steam heat pipes, the installation will replicate, as near as possible, the displaced steam heat system, without having the issues of boiler certification.

Meanwhile the team set about the servicing of the six prop shafts. Once the correct high-tensile bolts were delivered w prop shafts were fitted with the approval of Steve Beck, our Independent Competent Person (ICP).

Preparations were also made for the new wooden base layer flooring to be laid in the luggage compartment, to enable the heating installation to be completed. The team opted to use sheets of Buffalo Board in place of the tongue and groove flooring. Buffalo Board is a fully approved material for use in rail passenger vehicles and is easier and cheaper to lay. Its use will provide a longer-lasting floor and will be undetectable once the insulation board and lino has been fitted. This was approved by the ICP.

With the floor laid in the luggage area, the heating engineers returned on schedule on 24/25th April to complete the connections for the

heating system and to enable the exhaust system and air intake to be properly fitted and sealed prior to testing. The system was commissioned successfully and proved to be as effective as we had hoped. The passengers, and even the driver and guard, are going to be very snug!

More Buffalo Board was delivered during May to allow the sub-flooring to be laid in the large saloon and vestibules, thus completing the base layer flooring throughout the vehicle. It all looks very smart.

It is worth noting that the team intend to restore the railcar to as close to its GWR or BR condition as possible. However, W20W will be a working vehicle, not a museum piece, and with a view to longevity and practicality in future service, some 'improvements' will be incorporated. So far this includes laminated glass, base-layer flooring material (see above), heating system and ceiling insulation and sheeting. The luggage area will have a smooth surface (rather than slatted wood) to allow easier wheelchair and buggy access, foam will replace springs in the seating (as current C&W standard), replica LED lighting will be installed and a fire-detection/extinguishing system will be fitted. The team work closely with the K&ESR management team, as well as the ICP, to ensure that all modifications are acceptable in advance of any changes being made.

It was intended to refit the original wooden boiler housing in the luggage area to preserve the original appearance, but when it came to stripping and repainting the woodwork it was found to have an asbestos lining sheet incorporated. Arrangements were made to have this removed by a specialist contractor and the woodwork was quickly returned, old paintwork stripped and the housing reinstalled in its original place. The wood has been fire-proofed and primed, and will be scumbled; the original, refurbished (but non-operating) control equipment will be refitted. The heater water tank enclosure, to the right of the compartment door, will also be refitted now that the flooring is down.

The materials and design for the seating have been approved by the ICP and the moquette has been ordered. This is to the original 1940 GWR 'Green Shell' pattern, the looms for which are now owned by Camira Fabrics and located in Lithuania! The material should be delivered in June, whereupon the railway's regular upholsterer will be asked to commence the restoration of the seats.

The ceiling installation commenced in March, having also received ICP approval. This is now virtually complete throughout the vehicle, and it looks very appealing in its ivory finish.

The two generators, having been overhauled many years ago, are being re-assessed and tested off the vehicle, before being re-fitted ready for service.

The saloon light fittings have been stripped, refurbished and painted to match the ceiling, and compliant replacement wiring has been installed within electrical trunking for protection. (The trunking will be capped with a wooden cover, as per original.) The refurbished lamp fittings have been installed and are working within the passenger and luggage areas. The LED bulbs

have been fitted and tested; they have exactly the same colour as the original incandescent ones, and look superb. The difference is that all these bulbs only draw 1.1 amps – as opposed to the original lamp load, as indicated on the vehicle's wiring diagram, of 42 amps!

All 16 of the vehicle's internal ceiling ventilators have been fully restored and fitted.

So, great progress has been made; but there is still lots more to do to have it finished by next summer. If anyone has the time and skills to come and assist, even for just the next 12 months, please contact Neil Edwards on [neil.t.edwards@gmail.com](mailto:neil.t.edwards@gmail.com) to make arrangements to come along any Wednesday or Thursday.

## ROLLING STOCK

### **Carriage & Wagon – David Brailsford**

We are pleased to report that **RU 1987** finally entered service in time for its first train on Mother's Day. This vehicle is now in its running-in period and appears to be performing well, with only a few minor problems requiring attention. A big thank you to all those who have worked on this project for what seems like an eternity.

**Accessible coach Petros:** This vehicle is the main focus of the workshop's attention at the moment. Both bogies have been cleaned manually, lubrication has been carried out on all areas requiring it, and the Headcorn-end bogie has received exchange wheelsets due to a problem with the diameter of those that were originally installed. One vacuum cylinder has been overhauled as it was defective. This vehicle will be fitted with the same brake system modifications as RU 1987; this means that the hand brake will have to be off before the brake

can be created by the locomotive. The toilet tank has been refitted into the roof space following repairs to three holes. The Headcorn-end vestibule wooden flooring has had to be replaced due to accelerated rot. One guards compartment door has had to be reframed as the old one had broken. All of the former three jobs were unexpected, but due to the age of the vehicle not entirely surprising. Rewiring of the lighting circuits continues, as does the seemingly never-ending job of replacing the roof lining. The coach will be outshopped in Blood and Custard livery, and it is already beginning to look very smart. Many thanks to all staff and volunteers who have made such an effort with the overhaul of this coach.

**Mk1 86** has received an 18-month exam.

**Pullman Car Barbara:** New external doors are being prepared prior to the planned period of this vehicle's 18-month exam in mid- to late-June.



*Petros looking stunning after overhaul.*

*(Robin Coombes)*



18-month exams have been carried out on four vintage coaches – the Great Eastern six-wheeler, Woolwich, SECR 3062 and District 100. Unfortunately the SECR Birdcage is out of service for the foreseeable future as all of the wheelsets are very much undersize. New tyres are needed – or if anybody knows of the whereabouts of four good Maunsell wheelsets at a reasonable price, we will be happy to investigate!

**LMS Box Van:** Owner John Colwell spent two weeks working on this wagon at the beginning of May. He has refreshed the bodyside paintwork and numerals, and the workshop staff have painted the frame. Various items from the workshop are being stored in this van as we are so short of local storage space.

**SR Ling:** Currently in the shed, where attention is being given to the axleboxes and wheelsets.

Repainting of the frames and bodyside steelwork is progressing. We have been fortunate to obtain at a very advantageous price most of the pine timber required for re-planking this wagon. The internet auction following the closure of Morgan & Co in Rochester has also provided us with a good quantity of sapele timber as well. This is usually used for coach restoration.

Various housekeeping jobs have been undertaken to keep the workshop safe and tidy, particularly as we were showing visitors around over the spring bank holiday weekend. Many thanks to Paul Rand for providing the department with a good quantity of pipe fittings and valves; the arrival of this equipment prompted a good sort out of the storage bins.

Congratulations go to Cliff Webb, who has passed out as a C&W two-month examiner.

## OPERATING

### Signalling – Tony Ramsey

Although the calendar year starts relatively quietly as far as operating passenger trains is concerned, there always seems to be plenty of activity behind the scenes in the Signalling Department. First, there was the challenge of trying to draw up rosters without any HOPS calendar available. Secondly, just as we had started the 2023 Signaller Training Course, two trainees unfortunately had to withdraw for health reasons, although almost immediately they were replaced by two new volunteers wishing to pursue Signalling. So, we still have six trainees on the course, plus two trainee Crossing Keepers.

Meanwhile the Railway Rules Working Group continues to consider changes to the Rules, Regulations and Instructions. The Group also undertakes regular reviews of the Incident Manual.

We welcome two new volunteers who have recently passed out as Crossing Keepers: Rick Collins at Cranbrook Road and Nick Hurman at Northiam gates. We also congratulate Kai Bass on passing out at Northiam Gates, his second crossing.

In the early spring we received news we had long been dreading: Richard Smith announced his intention to retire as our Roster Clerk after more than 15 years in post, and Clive Norman

announced his intention to retire as Signalling Inspector after over 40 years. There will be separate opportunities to pay full tribute to their contribution to the Department, but they will be difficult acts to follow.

Finally, we were sorry to learn of the death of former Tenterden Signaller Andy Stokes. After retiring to Norfolk he continued to volunteer on the North Norfolk Railway. We extend our sympathy to his family.



*Keeping it in the family – Heidi and Henry Mowforth crewing Swiftsure. (Robin Coombes)*

## Guards Department – *Pete Spratling*

Firstly I would like to say thank you to everyone who has helped cover turns since the start of the season. At the time of writing this we had run the Steam Up weekend over the Bank Holiday, and I would like to say thank you to all the guards who covered turns, and of course everyone behind the scenes who organised it.

On a sad note I must sadly report that Jim Williams has passed away. Jim had been a guard for about 20 years and had devoted many hours to helping numerous trainees. He was also a roster clerk, and was involved in volunteer recruitment.

Training Officer Mick Leech has announced that he is retiring from the role, as he is moving away to Australia. I would like to thank Mick for all his involvement with training, and of course for covering turns. I wish him all the best.

Following Mick's retirement we advertised for an Assistant Guards Training Officer. I'm pleased to advise that Colin Ingram has been appointed, and I wish him well in the role.

We will be introducing the role of DMMU-only Guard, which will also include the GWR Railcar.

I would like to welcome the following trainees to the department: Julie and Tim Wilkinson, Allan Richards, Daniel Davies and Albert Kynaston. I have to thank the Volunteer Committee for their hard work in recruiting new members.

We have a few trainees who are progressing well, and should be passing out soon. We may consider running a second training course towards the end of the season: dates will be announced as soon as possible.

## Station Masters – *Geoff Colvin*

This is written in haste at the end of an extremely busy period on the platforms. The procession of Bank Holidays and special events, not least Steam Up (which will no doubt be well recorded by other contributors), have made significant demands upon our team. The impression I am left with is that our visitors have mostly gone away content – in no small measure thanks to us all going 'above and beyond', as usual.

As is the case every season, there is a gentle change in the composition of our team, as some find that changes to their circumstances require them to change the level of their volunteering, or sometimes move on completely. To all of



*Sapper paying tribute to Jim Williams.*

*(Graham Williams)*

those my thanks for your time, for your efforts and for being part of the K&ESR family.

Fortunately each year also brings a steady stream of recruits keen to learn and practice the mantra of 'Safety, Visitor Care and, of course, empty the bins'. We welcome you all to the platform.

I believe that all of us who are regularly asked "When are you going to Robertsbridge then?" are thrilled at now being able to answer in a positive way, rather than the well-worn "It depends on what the Minister decides." It's an exciting prospect, but one which will no doubt bring about changes to the way we operate. Some serious project planning lies ahead.

Finally, 2023 has been somewhat unusual for me personally with a little competition taking place. My thanks go to those who had the idea and supported me through the process, as well as to all who voted. We have together raised the profile of our railway in places it might not otherwise have reached. The prize belongs to all of us.



*Geoff Colvin.*

*(via Robin Coombes)*

## Travelling Ticket Inspectors

– Murray Motley

Blink and you missed it... half term came and went in a whirl, and the trains weren't even being hauled by 257 Squadron! The quiet weeks before and after gave a chance for reflection and catching up on paperwork ahead of our team meeting in March – possibly the largest gathering of TTIs in one room since before Covid.

We had a great morning with lots of ideas being discussed, views being aired and a considerable number of doughnuts being eaten. Subsequently we've been putting some of our ideas into practice, and unsurprisingly this has proved challenging at times. There's plenty to think about as a team. This year we will be considering areas where we can enhance what we do – even if it's only making sure we have jam doughnuts, rather than the custard variety, at our next team meeting.

We enter the new season bidding a grateful farewell to some of our cohort who, for various reasons, no longer wish to be TTIs. You know who you are, and a big thank-you for all that you've done. Of course, we don't only say goodbye, it's hello as well; our first new recruit of the year, David Sanders, has now earned his clippers having been trained by our very own Roy Cooper. It was great to pass out David, my first as Chief TTI, and we look forward to working with him. Others are lined up and I'll be introducing them to you in the coming months.



David Sanders (centre), having just passed his TTI exam, with trainer Roy Cooper (left) and assessor Murray Motley (right). (via Murray Motley)

The K&ESR goes from strength to strength, and the TTI team have been pleased to help with the new contract with Fox & Edwards Events – a great company (see [foxandedwards.com](http://foxandedwards.com)) which is doing its best to feed passengers our way. This has involved both platform and TTI staff working together to provide our usual great visitor experience. We look forward to seeing this business develop over the course of the year.

Finally, it's worth saying again how much our customers enjoy coming to the railway. One of the great things about being a TTI is not only answering their questions but also receiving their praise for a wonderful day out – praise that is due to all who work on our railway, and who make it all so special.

## Booking Office – Peter Morgan

With seemingly endless Bank Holiday Mondays and two high-profile special events it's been a busy time in our booking offices.

A large proportion of our visitors now book online in advance (taking advantage of the discount on their fares that this facilitates). When we process these bookings, the ticket machine shows their names and addresses. The variety of surnames in an average list of bookings is surprising, and they come to us from all corners of Britain. It is also pleasing to see that the number of visitors from our European neighbours is beginning to revive.

From whichever side of the Channel they come to visit our railway, a British holiday is expensive, and one way to cut costs is to hire self-catering accommodation – such as our camping coach at Bodiam – or by sleeping in a tent on a site like that at Newenden. We are encouraging such visitors to use our railway during their stay by promoting 'Any 2 in 7 days' bargain rover tickets.

Most of our visitors come by car: however we like to encourage green alternatives, and we are regularly asked for guidance in visiting the railway by public transport. To them we usually suggest travel via Headcorn or Ashford, and advise avoiding Sundays. However from mid-May a new transport alternative has come into being. At a time when many local authority-supported buses have been axed or reduced, East Sussex County Council has divided the county up into a series of zones, within each of which



journeys can be booked, 7am to 7pm (Sundays excepted), and from 30 minutes up to a week in advance, by Flexibus.

The name conjures up those big bendy buses favoured in European cities, but it is actually a small silver minibus. You cannot book for journeys outside East Sussex, such as Tenterden or where there are bus routes, such as from Hastings, but it is now possible to book trips from Robertsbridge or Rye stations to and from our

stations at Bodiam or Northiam. Fares are reasonable, can be paid on board or online, and there is a joint bus/flexibus ticket available. Book by telephoning 01273 078203 or by downloading the 'Ride Pingo' app.

In a few years' time we hope that services such as this will be unnecessary, as we will have our own direct rail link to the main line at Robertsbridge. But in the meantime, if you live in East Sussex, give it a try!

## WAY AND WORKS

### Permanent Way – Paul Jessett

Following the major works at Northiam, the team have continued with the tidy up. Unfortunately, P.Way tidying up involves engineers' trains with the ability to lift things, and the continued limited availability of the K&ESR loco fleet has involved us using the mighty Ruston that is normally confined to the yard at Rolvenden. Clive Lowe's Road Railer is needed for the lifting element – three wagon-loads of scrap and recyclable materials were loaded and transported back to Rolvenden for sorting. An opportunity to give steam engine *Marcia* a run out on P.Way trains was taken up when she was on running-in duties; *Marcia* was coupled to the Ruston and became the star of the show for the day, with many people coming out to witness the event.

We installed a recycled 'Bowmac' concrete level crossing system at the signal box end of Northiam Platform, to replace the life-expired wooden barrow crossing. In true Colonel



*33202 with the Junction Road works train.*

*(Paul Jessett)*

Stephens fashion, this had been donated to the railway rather than going to landfill.

During this period the middle walkway was installed on Rother Bridge. This job had been held over until we could get out to site with an engineers' train, and again the site was cleared of redundant materials. The new lateral restraining system, designed by Graham Bessant, was adjusted to its final position and makes the ride over the bridge very smooth. The walkway reduces the risk of anyone crossing the bridge falling into the river.

The area between the user-worked crossings at Mill Ditch, between Bodiam and Northiam, has been dug out and infilled with redundant spent ballast. The route is used by the local landowner, and there was a risk of him getting bogged down close to the track. This has proved to be very successful, and will be repeated on the south side.

In order to get the Bodiam to Junction Road section up to standard for Steam Up Weekend,



*The new walkway on Rother Bridge. (Paul Jessett)*

we attended to this section, along with the Forestry team, to clear the gauge. RVR supplied a rail-mounted flail for us to use, and this was also employed on sections of the existing K&ESR line. As the operator was not familiar with our railway he needed to be conducted.

This turned out to be a very pleasant way to spend a day, as the cab was fitted with two seats and gave a bird's-eye view of the railway. The user-worked crossing gates on the Junction Road section have been reinstated, and the required 'Trespass' signage restored, as well as the flangeways being dug out and inspected. All the fishplates were inspected and serviced.

## Forestry & Conservation

– Steve McMurdo

The land alongside the line finally started drying out following the welcome arrival of spring, and we have been out cutting back at numerous locations as part of our preparations for the resumption of regular trains.

A rail mounted flail plus operator was hired in for a week; it visited most of the line, accompanied and directed by our manager Paul Davies. The primary intention was to cut back brambles, smaller branches and other undergrowth alongside the line, enabling visibility to be enhanced, and for us to be able to efficiently access and manage the landscape. This type of clearance is a labour-intensive and time-consuming task if tackled with hand tools, as any member of F&C will grimly tell you, so this method will greatly assist us going forward.

Used indiscriminately flails can cause wholesale



*Paul Davies directing the flail driver:*

*(Steve McMurdo)*

destruction, but this has not occurred here and consideration was given to the continued preservation of wildlife habitats wherever possible.

An immediate benefit of the flail has been to speed up work at our project along Dexter Straight, between Northiam and Bodiam. Here, we are opening up the view from the train across grazing land, and beyond towards the River Rother. This involves the tidying up and exposing of a lengthy avenue of impressive mature oaks, which had become surrounded by undergrowth, smaller trees and shrubs. We are also reducing the numerous hawthorn trees along the boundary to match the height of the adjacent fence, and this should go on to produce a hedge in due course. The hawthorns will be supplemented by the planting of some new trees in the gaps.



*Maj. Gen. John Moore-Bick, Deputy Lieutenant of East Sussex (holding the spade), having planted the new oak tree.*  
*(Pat King)*

Additional trees, donated to us by various organisations, were planted at Rolvenden field and behind the platform at Wittersham Road in late March. It is encouraging to see that most of the initial batches at these spots have survived in the couple of years since planting. We always place tree guards and canes around the young trees, which in most cases encourages growth and prevents wildlife damage. Paul Davies supplied and planted the Coronation Oak at a special ceremony at Bodiam Station.

A notable first for the Group took place in May when we were asked to assist with some clearance work on the Bodiam to Junction Road section in connection with the Steam Up event (see P.Way report).

## GROUPS AND ASSOCIATES

### Bodiam – *Malcolm Burgess*

As with many other departments, the wet weather in March curtailed activities; but with some warmer, brighter days the grounds and gardens began to receive some attention. The tractor mower was back in action and the hop poles were re-strung. A freshen-up of the paintwork on the PMV paint store/workshop vehicle has been completed, and new clip-frame advertising panels have been put up to allow promotion of future events. As reported elsewhere, an oak tree sapling was formally planted in the middle of May by a Deputy Lieutenant for East Sussex to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III.

The new timetable allowed us a few more train-free Tuesdays and, at last, some dry(ish) weather allowed us to get stuck into the maintenance of the grounds and some exterior paintwork, to smarten up the station for the busy season. The crossing gates have been refreshed with a pressure wash and a coat of white paint, and other gates and platform benches have also had the ravages of winter attended to.



*The level crossing gates at Bodiam getting a clean-up.*

*(Pat King)*

The platform store has been transformed into a stock room for the shop, being lined with insulation and having the power points relocated. Warmth on top of much moisture means that grass cutting is now a weekly necessity, with hedge trimming and brush cutting to follow when nesting has finished. The development of

the proposed wildlife area has had to be postponed but we are leaving more areas uncut to encourage wildlife, especially bees from the Bodiam hives.

The late spring gales brought down an old oak tree on the neighbouring farmland, and it lay right across the culvert draining both the fields and our site. The Forestry team has kindly reduced the substantial part that fell on to railway land.

The plastic covering on the corrugated tin roof of one elevation of the waiting room/museum has been peeling off since last year, and needs stripping before re-coating with a suitable paint. It looks unsightly, but can't be completely treated until the last of the plastic film has detached. We will make it as presentable as we can until a complete repaint is possible.

Some ash has been distributed around the yard to level out dips and holes, but more work will be necessary.

### Gardening Group – *Veronica Hopker*

**Rolvenden:** Following the request for help to tidy up Rolvenden prior to opening the station for passengers to visit and observe the work carried out on site, the tubs on the platform have been planted up with small shrubs and annual petunias. The shrubs will now, hopefully, survive permanently and each year new bedding plants can be added around them to try and keep the station looking tidy and bright.

**Northiam:** Elizabeth Brown is still working hard to keep the picnic and platform areas of the station tidy, and has planted up the flower pots on the platform which add a cheerful welcome for our visitors. The Tuesday Group helped by cutting the grass and the long hedge the length of the platform.

The very wet weather we had over the winter months flooded the Memorial Garden and what will be our adjoining arboretum. It is planned to plant a few more trees in this area, although the wet conditions in the winter months will have a bearing on what we can plant.

At the moment we have two horse chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) – one is growing well but the other on the wetter side is struggling; a cherry tree which is growing very slowly; and a





*Swiftsure pauses at Bodiam.*

*(Ian Scarlett)*

Liquidambar styraciflua Worplesdon tree – which Doug Ramsden planted for its autumn colour – is growing well and last autumn it gave a wonderful display of colourful leaves. We also have our Tuesday Tree (mentioned in an earlier report) – to commemorate the Tuesday Group which originally started under the guidance of the late Peter Davis (Member No.1 of the K&ESR).

We are also planning to add wild flowers to the open spaces within the station. We have obtained some seed from a local farm which is selling seed from the local area. It had been planned to sow the seed earlier but was delayed due to the work being carried out on the track at Northiam. We hope the slightly warmer weather will help the germination!

### **Tuesday Group – Graham Hopker**

We returned at the end of February after our usual winter break. Unfortunately the weather did not play ball, and it was mid-March before we were really able to work outside.

Two railway sleepers were put in the Memorial

Garden to contain an area of garden which will feature wild flowers.

A new electric cable for use with the refurbished Pullman Kitchen Car was buried at the back of Platform 2.

Wood has been prepared, primed and under-coated to replace the very rotten eaves on the station building. Some repainting in the station buffet was carried out on a very wet day and, hopefully we will be able to repaint this room entirely during next winter months.

A start has been made on a total refurbishment and repaint of the whole of the outside of the Northiam station building. Unfortunately this, as usual, dependent on the weather and the use of the Infrastructure Department's 'cherry picker' for ease and safety of working at height!

On the last two Tuesdays in May, just before the bank holiday Steam Up Gala, a few of the Tuesday Group spent time at Rolvenden helping Liam Head tidy up the site, for safe and easy access for visitors during the event.

## Museum Notes – Brian Janes

With the present somewhat different train service and different operating days, our visitor pattern has changed again. No longer do we have ‘early birds’ in the Museum – they are too concerned to catch the, even earlier, first train. Nevertheless we get the occasional visitor who missed that train and wants to while away the time before the next steam service. Despite these changes and the unfortunate cessation of tours of the next-door brewery (by no means all of our visitors are here for the trains) visitor numbers are climbing strongly towards pre-Covid levels.

Sales of books, including the ongoing invaluable £1 book offer, are excellent. Sales of model railway donations have been exceptional. There is good demand out there if you have anything like this you can donate.

Although our main sales card machine works well, it still suffers from poor internet connection, as does the phone – and also the touch-card donation machine, which has had to be abandoned (temporarily we hope).

With the arrival of the Bulleid Pacific, and with photographers about, we lent the South Eastern Limited ‘Last Train’ headboard from 1961 for a few of its trial runs; it had an outing for first time in many a year. We have the 1954 ‘Last Train’

board ready for the Robertsbridge re-opening...

The Selsey Tramway exhibit in the museum has now been graced by the model of Chichester station donated last year, painstakingly restored by Laurie Cooksey. Also, through good contacts amongst friends and volunteers, we have been able to secure some very nice mementos of locomotives that worked on hire on the K&ESR. Three Terrier works plates were offered, one clearly marked for No.2655 *Stepney*, provided they are on display in the Museum; the Terrier Trust kindly secured them and loaned them for long-term display.

Recent volunteer Jonathan Ramsden has smartened the Museum up considerably with improved signage in the entrance yard and some internal areas, after the wear and tear and lack of resources of recent years. Our free-standing information post for the railmotor, which was ordered and delivered prior to Covid, has finally been installed. You can now press a button and hear the sound of the Model T railmotor running. Would that we could run the real thing on the rails here.

Other works plates came up for auction and we were able to secure one from O1 class No.1426, the first of that type to run on the K&ESR (it also ran briefly on the East Kent), using private funds. We were, however, unable to secure the number plates from the ex-LSWR Adams goods



*The refurbished Chichester railway model.*

*(Brian Janes)*



*Terrier Trust chairman Tom White (left) presents the Terrier works plates to Brian Janes.  
(via Brian Janes)*

No.3440 which was on the line for much of the 1940s, and these have now disappeared into a private collection; if anybody knows where they are now we would love to know.

On a broader front we have had donated, through the good offices of John Scott-Morgan, a Victorian P&SWJR point chair, retrieved from that railway many years ago. The original RVR lever frame overhaul has now been completed

by Matt Stubbs, with plenty of help from others, and an Annetts lock and fittings courtesy of Nick Wellington. Nick also gave into our care a train staff prominently marked 'Kent and East Sussex Railway' which certainly dates from early preservation days.

Interesting papers and photos continue to trickle in for the Archive. Amongst the most illuminating, donated by our friends at the Bluebell, is a K&ESR 1939 timetable with the guards' roster written on it. This clearly shows that a couple of ordinary loco-worked services on the Headcorn extension were operated *without* a guard – probably illicit, and a first even for a Stephens railway.

The Cavell Van survived its enforced winter in the open very well, though more satisfactory shelter arrangements are surely needed. It is still attracting interest even though important anniversaries are now past; in May one group travelled specially from Plymouth to visit it. Such interest makes our tasks all the more rewarding.

A small number of volunteers have recently come forward to help in the Museum, both in front-of-house and backroom roles, but we could always do with more help. Do get in touch if you would like to get involved with this rewarding aspect of the railway.



*Matt Fisher (left) and Jonathan Marsh with 257 Squadron at Bodiam.*

*(via Matt Fisher)*



## **K&ESR Guest Engine Club**

Would **YOU** like the opportunity to help **YOUR** railway by funding visiting locomotives on a regular basis?

Visiting guest engines are an important feature of the Kent & East Sussex Railway. They provide added interest for members and volunteers, and they help to enhance the visitor experience by allowing repeat visitors to see something different each time they visit us.

We have set up a fund which will be held independently from K&ESR finances to sponsor visiting locomotives and we are inviting **YOU** to contribute, so helping **YOUR** railway. We aim to raise sufficient funds to sponsor transport and steaming days for a visiting locomotive for the Kent & East Sussex Railway on a regular basis. This will provide visiting locomotives which are as different from the K&ESR home fleet as practicable – subject to them being able to satisfy the technical requirements and commercial considerations of our railway.

### **As a contributor to the fund you will:**

- be kept updated throughout the year by regular newsletters concerning the fund and possible choices of engine
- help decide the choice of engine(s) by offering suggestions and views as well as voting for the engine(s) of your choice
- be able to obtain a priority footplate pass, subject to availability, for a trip out on the engine(s)
- be invited to attend a special event and ride on a special train using the guest engine(s)
- be invited to attend photo charters using the guest engine

But we need **YOUR** help to make this happen!

A monthly standing order to the K&ESR Guest Engine Club will make this happen. All we ask is for a subscription from a minimum of £5 per month – though of course subscriptions for more, or one-off payments will be gratefully received!

When we have an idea of funds available we will go and see what locomotives could be available. Once we've narrowed it down to a shortlist of feasible candidates we'll email you to give you the opportunity to vote on the candidate locomotives.

We'll also send out email updates to keep you updated on fundraising progress and other news.

To join this club, please e-mail us at [kesrguestengineclub@gmail.com](mailto:kesrguestengineclub@gmail.com) or see one of those below.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact any one of us.

Jamie Douglas	07977 404 544	Charlie Masterson	07747 545 720
Christopher Stuchbury	07753 423 868	Bryan Atkins	07866 308 389

# KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY 300 CLUB

## PRIZE WINNERS

### January 2023

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 Blewitt	No. 916	£40

### February 2023

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

### March 2023

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

### April 2023

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 and Colin Avey at  
[kesr.300club@yahoo.com](mailto:kesr.300club@yahoo.com)



A happy crew! L to R: Paul Beale, Matt Dives of Spa Valley Railway, George Harman and Pete Roberts who looks as if he has just had a good run up from Exeter.

(Phil Edwards)



*K&ESR No.15 Hastings approaches Rolvenden with a Mk1, a Maunsell and a four-wheeler on 7th April.  
(Alan Crotty)*

*Hastings at Northiam on 27th May with the Junction Road shuttle during the Steam Up event.  
(Phil Edwards)*





*A new take on a classic K&ESR panorama: 34072 257 Squadron  
with the A set on 3rd April.*  
(Phil Edwards)





257 Squadron looks majestic at Bodiam on 3rd April.

(Phil Edwards)

On the same day, powering into Orpins Curve ready for the climb to Tenterden Town.

(Robin Coombes)





# PEOPLE IN PROFILE:

## Geoff Colvin – *Superstar!*

*For those who may not have heard, earlier this year Chief Station Master Geoff Colvin was nominated for the annual Tourism Superstar Award run by VisitEngland in partnership with the Daily Mirror. The winner was decided by public vote during February and March.*



Geoff Colvin. (via Robin Coombes)

In 2019 Geoff moved to Tenterden from Dorset with his wife Jayne as they wished to be closer to family. He trained in social work in Birmingham during the 1970s, then relocated to the south-west in the early 1980s, mainly managing services for adults, and continued in practice until 2019, when he finally retired. Before getting round to the all-important matter of the award, interviewer Chris Fautley asked Geoff, now aged 70, how he came to be involved with the Kent & East Sussex Railway.

**Chris Fautley:** *What attracted you to the role of Chief Station Master?*

Probably more than anything else the opportunity to continue to use the skills acquired during my career for the benefit of the railway and thus the community I am now part of. Practising and managing social work comes with the given that no two days are alike, and that all that is predictable is the unexpected.

My assumption was that the Chief Station Master's life would be a bit like that. I have not been disappointed.

**CF:** *Tell us a little about the role.*

Essentially it is about making sure that the team can deliver our priorities of a safe day for all; an experience memorable for all the right reasons by our visitors; and an environment that we would be prepared to bring our families to.

Quite a lot of time is spent encouraging newcomers to the railway to consider joining the platform team and then encouraging their development into platform assistants, travelling ticket inspectors and station masters. We must expect some of our team to reduce their commitments or leave us during the year, so bringing the next wave on is essential for the future.

Aside from that there is usually planning of events to be undertaken and, of course, station master turns to be done.

**CF:** *Which part of the job do you enjoy most?*

Seeing newcomers developing their knowledge, and becoming confident representatives of the railway and helping our visitors have memorable days out.

**CF:** *...and the least?*

The territory sometimes involves difficult conversation with colleagues and difficult decisions. Not enjoyable, but required if we are to remain a safe place for everyone.

I don't believe there is a single member of the team who particularly enjoys the round of toilets and bins but, again, necessary.

**CF:** *Any amusing experiences you'd like to share with us?*

There was the day when as TTI I managed to get left at Northiam by the last train. There have been other incidents, but out of respect to my colleagues involved my lips are sealed.



**CF:** *Have you done any other jobs on the railway?*

I joined with a view to becoming a travelling ticket inspector, but because of the changes to our services due to Covid many of my early days were spent as a platform assistant. Undertaking turns there was important in developing a knowledge of the railway, its history and an understanding of our visitors' needs. Seeing the forecourt grass looking a bit unkempt led me to the Wednesday Working Group and a summer pushing the mower, and then on to training as a TTI.

Then the penny dropped that being a station master might be quite interesting as well. I've done the odd turn pouring tea and serving cake, and co-ordinating Rail Experience Days. So really a fairly eclectic CV, which is very much the case for so many of us. The more flexible we can be the better our railway will thrive.

**CF:** *You've only been a volunteer for a few years. To what do you attribute your meteoric rise through the ranks?*

It is frequently said that volunteering is a way for individuals to acquire skills and experience that will be of benefit to them. Just as important, but perhaps less well championed, is the opportunity that volunteering provides for people to use their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm for the benefit of their community.

I have only been with the K&ESR a relatively short time, but I think I have come with a range of experiences that are well suited to my role. I believe that any organisation benefits from a balance of those who have been there since day one and others approaching with a new pair of eyes.

**CF:** *You've had that notable success recently flying the flag for the railway. Tell us about that.*

It started with a conversation of the "How would you feel if we nominated you, there's only a small chance it will get beyond that" type. That was followed by a "Gosh, you've made it to the final ten – but you mustn't tell anybody."

The rest of the process was somewhat surreal: a filming day in early January – fortunately sunny, so that the shirt-sleeved waving and smiling had a summer aura (thank goodness for the thermals!) Early alarm for a Radio Kent interview; posters cropping up everywhere, including 'Vote for Geoff'; posters in so many locations – the booking hall, on the platform and

remarkably in the gents' toilets (not quite so sure about that one to be truthful!).

Lots of fun on the platform when trains were running, talking to visitors and of course touting for votes. There was a trip to Bodiam in the Family Saloon with Huw Merriman MP, and a great return trip with an impromptu tea party for a group of local visitors having a day out, Pullman Manager Meg's scones the favourite choice.

Regular updates on the race appeared on the *Daily Mirror* Twitter feed... initially in the lead, then in second place for the next three weeks... creeping back into first place on the Friday, with just the weekend voting to go. Then a week wondering. The result was a shock: no advance warning, so a trip to the corner shop to purchase the paper before breakfast to find out. The outcome – first place with 33% of the votes cast!

A fabulous team effort with work by many to get the competition into the consciousness of so many people – and hopefully increase the number of people aware of the railway and planning to visit. It is absolutely the case that this is an award for all of us at the K&ESR.

**CF:** *Was there any sort of award ceremony?*

Yes, it was at the beginning of June at the Warner Bros. Studio Tour London, home to Harry Potter World. Harry Potter has rather passed me by, but a number of grandchildren (and some of their parents) have been turning a rather fetching shade of green in envy. We were treated to drinks and dinner, as well as a private viewing of the attraction, which was hugely impressive even for those of us who weren't familiar with the Harry Potter stories. The presentations were held on Platform 9¾ with Alex Polizzi acting as compere.

**CF:** *Does the Chief Station Master have a secret wish-list?*

Not really. I think if you keep things secret they are far less likely to happen than if they are talked about. In the Winter 2022 *Terrier* I wrote about my concerns that we would struggle to find station masters for Northiam again this year. Since then five of our team have added it to their repertoire, which has made the position so much better.

Sometimes things one wishes for can't be achieved for good reason. A healthy discussion to understand is so much better than muttering "Why don't they just?"

**CF:** *If money was no object, which one thing would you change on the railway?*

I would love to see more of an attraction made of some of our out-of-use gems. It is probably not realistic to expect to see *Norwegian* and others in steam any time soon, but they could be on display where they are safe and dry and help tell the story of our railway. The Severn Valley Railway's Engine House provides a bit of inspiration. Could there be a Colonel Stephens version, perhaps even to make Northiam a more used station?

**CF:** *Failing that, is there one simple thing you believe could be changed immediately?*

My working life involved a continual search for efficiency and better ways of doing things in the face of reducing resources and rising demand. Looking for small improvements becomes a habit, and ideas – a bit like secrets – need to be shared if they are to be considered. I suspect I have gained a bit of a reputation for rather too many 'bright ideas'.

**CF:** *Does anything in particular annoy you?*

It always saddens me to see visitors who fail to respect the hard work and love that goes into restoring and maintaining our stock and facilities. In particular, feet or dogs on seats will prompt a lecture!

**CF:** *Do you have any other hobbies or interests?*

Eclectic tastes in music, with leanings towards folk/rock. First saw Fairport Convention in 1970 and at least once a year since. Before we moved to Kent we had season tickets for the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra season in Poole. Thanks to Covid their concerts are often live streamed, and we can now watch from the comfort of our settee. I had an allotment for several years but now content myself with a couple of raised beds and a greenhouse at home.



*Geoff proudly displays his award.*

*(via Robin Coombes)*

**CF:** *And finally, a few quick-fire questions.*

*Fine wine or a pint?*

A pint, especially in good company on a Wednesday after the Wednesday Working Group.

*Fish & chips or Michelin star?*

A nice pie would be my choice.

*Terrier or Mallard?*

Terrier, of course.

*Double-headed or topped and tailed?*

Double-headed.

*Nothing makes me more happy than...*

Waking up to another morning!

# Where next for the Wealden Pullman?

We now have a magnificent new kitchen car to sustain the Wealden Pullman's reputation for culinary excellence far into the 21st century. It really is worth seeing: a kitchen where the stainless steel stretches into the far distance and with extractor fans to keep the hottest chef below boiling point; washing-up facilities from the present century, not the 19th; a guard's compartment so that in future Pullman car *Aries* can be restored as all-passenger accommodation. Those who have been involved are to be congratulated. Without the 'Leader Fund' grant from Kent County Council the project would not have been started, and without the skilled input of our own Carriage & Wagon Department it would not have been finished. The travelling public have been enjoying the benefits of the new arrangements for some months now.

It is particularly pleasing that Car 1987 has been produced by 'rescuing' the ex-British Railways 'Restaurant Unclassified' coach purchased so long ago. Car 1987 came to us after a spell as an HST barrier vehicle and some time lurking on the Bluebell Railway, who decided (fortunately for us) that it was not for them. Regular K&ESR visitors will remember a faded blue coach apparently permanently resident in the siding at the Bodiam end of Northiam station.

Kitchen car *Diana*, our faithful servant of over 40 years, has not been forgotten. Her fate is not to be abandoned up some weedy siding but rather she is already out on service trains supporting the catering offer to non-Pullman passengers. Where Meg's cream of vegetable soup was hitherto prepared, tea and scones are more commonly to be found. On today's heritage railway the books don't balance by ticket sales alone.

Planning is under way for how we expand our catering offer in 2024 to reflect this investment – but without lowering the standards that we have achieved on the Wealden Pullman over the past many years.

But what next for the Wealden Pullman? When the K&ESR Board gave the go-ahead for the kitchen car project we recognised that there were four projects needing to be tackled to give the Pullman a long-term sustainable future: the kitchen car; weather protection for the siding at Tenterden; the missing marquetry panels in *Theodora*; and Pullman car *Aries* to replace the Southern Railway boat-train brake. Given that we can place a big 'tick' against the first, what to tackle next?

We now do things in a rather more organised way than we did four years ago when the kitchen car



On 12th March the newly restored Kitchen Car takes its place in the Pullman set.

(Phil Edwards)





*Pullman Chef Meg Gooch with Gregg Wallace of BBC TV MasterChef fame in the newly rebuilt kitchen. Gregg and his wife, who are local residents, were dining guests of the General Manager. (Alison Miles)*

project started. The Project Assessment Committee was consulted, and it recommended that 'weather protection' should be next as it would protect the existing assets and provide ready shelter for when the last two items come to the head of the queue. The fundraising group were consulted and they duly considered possibilities for this new project that would not conflict with other priorities. Following on from that, the Board approved the 'weather protection' project at its March meeting.

How far has thinking and planning got? Last year some sketches were produced, based on Southern Railway platform canopies. These were helpful in deciding that such an approach was too 'heavy' and 'dominant' for that part of the site. Commercial Manager André Freeman is also keen that the Pullman remains visible to visitors to the Tenterden site. That rather rules out a Colonel Stephens style black weatherboard 'shed'. Carriages do better in

structures where they are protected from weather and UV light but can dry out by airflow when brought in from the rain. Readers may be surprised to hear that it does rain in Kent occasionally!

Current thinking leans towards a cantilever structure open on the platform side but with a glass wall on the buffet side. We would hope that architectural involvement will result in something both elegant and, perhaps, modern. The next steps are to engage an architect for the design and to obtain a budgetary costing. Then we will have the material to properly launch a funding appeal.

When construction starts, it may be that the building could be tackled in stages, as funds allow: foundations; steel structure; roof; cladding. And then we can get back to the excitements of car *Theodora's* marquetry and restoring Pullman car *Aries*...

*Robin White*



*Road to the future. The limit of operation at Junction Road seen from the cab of 33202. (Robin Coombes)*

# K&ESR Walks

## 1: Tenterden Circular via St Michaels



*Tenterden viewed from the ascent towards Silcock's Farm.*

*(David Bailey)*

The K&ESR is blessed with the ability to run trains along ten miles of track from which passengers can experience some of the finest scenery, flora and fauna to be found in this part of the country. Indeed, the line runs through the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the line itself has been described as a 'linear green corridor'. Whenever you have scenery of this magnitude, a wealth of good public footpaths is never far away.

This article is the first of a series that will highlight a number of walks that can be enjoyed around the railway. Some are circular, starting and finishing at one of the two termini; others are linear, linking station to station; and for those with the stamina and proven reserves of energy, it is perfectly possible to walk all the way from Tenterden to Bodiam in one fell swoop – although an early start, good weather and a bit of advanced planning is required to ensure that you do not miss the last train back!

Most of the featured walks can be easily downloaded from the K&ESR website (Home Page > Your Visit > Make the Most of Your Visit > Railway Walks); I am not going to repeat walk descriptions that are already well written and easy to follow. Instead here I give extra information: this can be anything from a change in the route, a missing gate or stile or other feature not mentioned in the notes, to adding extra information pertaining to the history or features of the landscape.

This first offering is Railway Walk 3 – Tenterden to St Michaels (circular). It is three and a half miles, and K&ESR enthusiasts will appreciate the railway history at St Michaels. This could be a great evening walk for anyone staying in Tenterden, or provide an excellent prelude or conclusion to a day visit to the K&ESR. The walk description includes historical images and some information about St Michaels Halt and its surrounds.





*St Michaels Halt as it once was...*

(CSRM)

From the word go, you are in for a treat; the good, clear path leading away from Tenterden Town Station car park is easy to follow and not too steep. As well as looking forwards, remember to stop and look behind you for impressive views of the station, the town and the towering and imposing landmark of St Mildred's church tower. The Grade 1 listed church dates from the 12th century, and its tower – 130ft in height – was constructed in 1461.

When you reach the road, you will find Silcock's Farm directly opposite. There is a rather pleasant café here. If you haven't already refuelled at the station tea room at Tenterden Town station, this welcoming dog- and family-friendly establishment could be a good option. It can be accessed by continuing in the direction of travel, up Readers Bridge Road, and turning almost immediately right. Be aware that there are no facilities of any kind between here and your route back to Tenterden.

Turning right along the road will quickly lead you into Tenterden's 'suburb' of St Michaels. Head for the crossroads, just before the row of cottages on the left, and Orchard Road. Note your return route on your right. St Michaels Halt was on the far side to the right, with level crossing gates protecting the track from the road. As can be seen from the then and now images, almost nothing remains of this little halt today.

If you turn left and walk up Orchard Road you come to a T-junction. Peer through the dense foliage on the other side of the road to pick out the remains of the former railway towards Headcorn, now almost obliterated by trees. Where

you are standing is where the railway line emerged from a short tunnel – it's hard to believe that now!

Return to the crossroads. If you wish to visit St Michael's church (recommended) turn left along Grange Road and first left into Marshalls Land. Where the road ends take the narrow footpath between plots and you will arrive in the churchyard. The entrance is on the far side. St Michael's church was consecrated on 1st August 1863, although its towering steeple was not completed until 12 years later. The church was instrumental in the development of St

Michaels – previously known from Saxon times as Boars Island – which provided traffic for the railway.

Return to the crossroads. You can't fail to notice the impressive and historic St Michaels Terrace, dating from 1870. This would have been clearly visible from the former St Michaels Halt, and comprises 17 individual dwellings. The building is Grade 2 listed.

The return to Tenterden is mostly on the level; be prepared for company on this leg of the route from fellow walkers, cyclists and mobility scooters! Once the former railway route comes to an end, quiet residential roads lead the walker back to the town and station. On the way take note of the elevated view of the Tenterden station headshunt.

*David Bailey*

(Any feedback or observations about these walks would be welcome: [david16bailey@gmail.com](mailto:david16bailey@gmail.com))



*... and the site of the Halt today.*

*(David Bailey)*

# Letters to the Editor

## Visit of 257 Squadron

Sir – I am a long-time fan of O.V.S. Bulleid's engines. As a schoolboy I used to 'spot' the pacifics from the end of the platform at Waterloo in the 1960s. But a Bulleid light pacific is not, and never will be, a K&ESR engine. I am distressed that the imminent arrival of 257 Squadron should be celebrated in the Terrier; doubtless it is seen as a commercial opportunity. Yet it is one more step along the path away from a Colonel Stephens light railway and towards a closed Southern Railway branch line, which it never was.

The K&ESR is not the Bluebell Railway and should not aspire to be so. Over the years there have been various initiatives that have leant away from preserving something unique and making the K&ESR something it never was. I may or may not be the only dissenting voice to the hiring of a Bulleid pacific, but dissent I do.

*Dr Stephen K. Donovan  
Life Member  
by e-mail*

*Geoff Crouch, Deputy Chairman and Chair of the Finance Committee, comments:*

*Historically, the Kent & East Sussex Railway relied on agricultural traffic and the very busy hop picking season in particular. In addition, the 'image' some people have of the railway dates from a period in the 1930s when the old company was effectively bankrupt and being propped up by the Southern Railway. If we try to preserve today's K&ESR as it once was, it will close fairly quickly.*

*Santa, '40s weekends, 'Beer and Gin' trains, our first class Pullman and visiting locomotives give us the money to comply with current legislation, maintain our infrastructure and pay sufficient staff. We are nonetheless well aware of, and proud of, our heritage – visit the Museum, travel on the Vintage Train, visit the Cavell Van. We try to be 20th century on the outside and 21st century on the inside.*

*All members should be aware of the current realities of running our railway, as a business, with all the safety, charity and legal regulations with which we and all other heritage railways are today obliged to comply. Maybe if we had a millionaire backer, like many other railways, who was prepared*

*to fund day-to-day running we could change direction, run two trains a day, have no special events and scrap the Pullman. I doubt, however, if such a successful individual would think much of that as a business plan.*

*Lastly, it is worth mentioning that when 257 Squadron was on the K&ESR everyone involved in doing the work of running the railway was overwhelmingly supportive, understood the reasons for the visit, and actually liked having the locomotive present.*

## Privilege tickets

Sir – One of the advantages (and privileges) of membership of the K&ESR is the free ticket allowance as shown on the reverse of the membership card. On a recent visit to Tenterden, when purchasing my ticket I was asked if I wished to use one of the free allowance. I thought for a moment, and replied that I would pay as I felt that the railway needed all the revenue that it could get at the moment. Might I suggest that other members could consider forgoing their free tickets, if their circumstances allow? This would be an easy way for visiting members to give extra support at a time when it is sorely needed.

*Michael Boyd  
by e-mail*

## Junction Road

Sir – While browsing a book of Betjeman poems I noticed a rather disjointed one titled *Suicide at Junction Road Station*. Reading on I found it not to be our Junction Road but one on the North London line near Gospel Oak. The victim had been to church and was worried about his sins. The station did not do quite as well as our Junction Road halt as it closed six years earlier, in 1948.

*Anthony Pritchett  
by e-mail*

*We note that the Downham Estate in South East London has a 'Wittersham Road'. It may even have once had a rail 'freight service'; the London County Council's contractors put in a temporary railway network following at least some of the street pattern and which was connected to the Southern Railway between Hither Green and Grove Park.*

# BOOK REVIEW

## Steam Heritage 1972–1985 A Pictorial Tribute

**David Knapman**

*128 pages, hard cover, with extensive colour illustrations. Published by Pen & Sword Transport. ISBN 978 1526 79 2532. £28.*

This is the first time that I have reviewed a book without actually handling it. Rather than send us the book, the publisher e-mailed the editor a very large PDF, which is quite hard to read and assess on the computer screen. Call me old fashioned but reading in this manner is very tiring, and I am not sure that one gets a true flavour.

The book is a very personal collection of the author's photos taken during the relevant years. They include many rail tours, visits to preserved railways and Shildon 1975. Each page – I am uncertain of their size – contains a picture of an engine with brief details of when and where taken, when the engine was built, withdrawn,

restored and its current site and whether in service, stored or awaiting overhaul. The information given is already becoming out of date. And because the details are so sketchy and largely identical they soon become very repetitive.

The pictures themselves are of moderate quality, nearly all three-quarters head-on. In almost every case we have seen similar ones before. The choice is very individual, and dependent on the author's domestic situation at the time. He includes this and most readers will, like me, feel the information is irrelevant. Did we really need to know that he took few pictures in the early years of his marriage?

Sadly I cannot recommend this book. For the author it's a wonderful review of his life and railway activities during these years; but for the enthusiast there are many better and more relevant books.

*MSW*



*Bulleid Firth Brown middle driving wheel on 257 Squadron.*

*(Robin Coombes)*



## Richard Hal Beckett 1943–2023



*Dick Beckett in Marcia's cab. (Alan Crotty)*

It is with much sadness that we have to report the passing of one of the most respected figures of the K&ESR's heritage era. Dick Beckett was born on 26th March 1943 and grew up in Dorking before going to boarding school, which he is said to have hated.

Following school, Dick joined British Railways as an engineering apprentice at the beginning of the 1960s. He became friends with fellow apprentice Derek Dunlavey, training at Ashford Works and then at Eastleigh. After his apprenticeship he worked for a while in Eastleigh Works drawing office.

During their training Derek and Dick became interested in the emerging preservation movement and tried volunteering at the Bluebell Railway. After finding themselves allocated to dishwashing in the buffet they left and on the off-chance called in to the Kent & East Sussex Railway on their way back to Ashford on Dick's motor bike.

This was indeed fortuitous; they made their visit to Tenterden a week before our first locomotives, the Sentinels *Gervase* and *Dom*, arrived. Both Dick and Derek instantly joined what was then the K&ESR Preservation Society and founded the Locomotive Department. After much hard work led by these pioneering friends, *Gervase* was restored to steam.

Peckett 0-4-0T *Marcia* was then offered to the K&ESR by Manchester company Hardman and Holden. Dick went up to view the loco on his BSA 650, and having gained his approval *Marcia* arrived in 1962. In 1968 Dick was also instrumental in bringing the USAs *Wainwright* and *Maunsell*, both then languishing at Tonbridge, to the K&ESR.

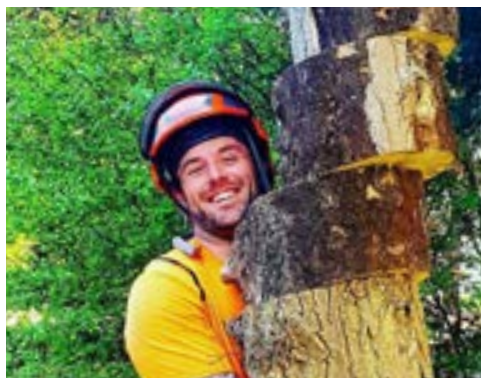
Dick resigned from BR in 1967 to work for the Limmer & Trinidad Lake Asphalt Company, and then English Electric testing Napier Deltic engines at Acton. He then moved to the oil industry, both overseas and in the North Sea. It was through this that he met his Dutch wife Marianne. His last job before retirement was in charge of production in the Northern North Sea Gryphon field.

Having been based in Aberdeen for some years, the Becketts moved to Tenterden after Dick retired. He was an avid collector of railwayana and a major donor to the K&ESR. Quite early on he bought *Marcia* from the preservation project when the railway was in need of money, but maintained a paternal interest in the little Peckett thereafter. Dick was much involved with the loco and financed the overhaul prior to its return to traffic in 2011, and again in recent years when boiler repairs became necessary.

Dick was a Trustee of the K&ESR from 2007 to 2013 and a Director of 4253 Locomotive Company Ltd. He was one of the instigators of that project, and also a shareholder in 6619. He had in recent years suffered ill health but lived to see *Marcia* in service again. He died at home on 12th March 2023, shortly before his 80th birthday. He is survived by his wife, their daughter Martine and two granddaughters.

*NP, with thanks to CRM and AJC*

# Jon Grimwood 1986–2023



*(via the Grimwood family)*

As briefly reported in the March *Tenterden Terrier*, an immense shock was felt by everyone at the railway following the death in February of K&ESR employee Jon Grimwood at the tragically early age of 37 years.

Jonathon Michael Grimwood was born on 10th February 1986 at Maidstone Hospital to parents Michael and Yvonne, joining older sister Deborah. He had a great love of life and of fun, starting in boyhood with the Beavers and in later years the Cadets, where he developed an interest in firearms and the armed services. He was never one to sit still, always wanting to be outdoors. He loved running, mountain biking, shooting, kayaking and golf. As soon as he was old enough he took his motorbike test and became a keen rider, enjoying track days at Brands Hatch with his friends. He energetically raised money for charity, cycling the London to Brighton run for the British Heart Foundation and fundraising for the Heart of Kent Hospice, which had cared for his mum during her final illness.

From an early age Jon took an interest in how things worked and was always seen with a saw, hammer or screwdriver in his hands. He shared his interest in engineering with his dad Mike, one of the stalwarts of the Kent & East Sussex Railway; they were always tinkering with some machinery or other. His working career started with an apprenticeship at Balfour Beatty Rail where he was able to build on his fascination with engineering. This moved on to lawn mower and tractor repairs, and finally to his ideal job as a diesel fitter at the Kent & East Sussex Railway. Alongside this and ever energetic he started up his own business, Kent and Sussex Tree Care, in

which he established an excellent reputation for himself and once again got to enjoy the outdoors.

In 2007 he became a father to William. He loved having a son with whom he could share his passions and pass on his skills.

On Christmas Eve 2012 he met Dannielle and they soon discovered that they shared many interests, including motorbikes and the country pursuit of shooting. The relationship moved fairly quickly and they decided to start saving for a house together. In April 2014 they got engaged and in November they bought their own home. The wedding was booked for May 2016 but this was brought forward to July 2015 when Jon's mum Yvonne became very ill. Jon naturally wanted her to be a part of the day, so they married on 17th July with a handful of friends and family and had a blessing in May 2016, on what was supposed to be their original wedding date. August 2018 saw the arrival of daughter Lexi.

Although Jon enjoyed all things fast and dangerous, he mellowed a great deal and enjoyed nothing more than a BBQ and a few drinks with friends in the garden. Unbeknown to many of his friends, he was partial to a garden centre and enjoyed wandering around finding new plants to enjoy in his own flower beds. One Saturday afternoon he and Danni were at a garden centre when Jon noticed an egg-shaped chair on display. He went to try it out, then moved over to one side so Danni could join him; but the chair de-railed from its overhead stand and rolled backwards, trapping Jon inside. In a hilarious scene of 'human skittles' Jon and chair then crashed through a whole room of bird tables, leaving a trail of destruction behind them. Jon jumped out of the 'egg', his hair looking like he had been caught in a tornado, and ran towards the door muttering "Why didn't you try to help me? We are leaving." Danni loved to tell this story but could never actually finish it before collapsing in hysterical laughter... much to Jon's embarrassment about recalling the occasion.

Jon was such an easy-going and charismatic person that he always made friends wherever he went. Never one to hold a grudge, he had so many friends that he had made through the years whether it was from school, through work or socially. With a heart of gold he always wanted to help people. He loved Staplehurst village, where he grew up, and decided that he wanted

to do more for the community – so he became a parish councillor.

Jon suffered a heart attack while he was at home on 11th February and despite strenuous efforts, including by his father and Kent Air Ambulance, he could not be resuscitated. Both K&ESR locomotives operating in February carried a wreath in his memory, and his funeral was held

at All Saints Church, Staplehurst on 16th March, with many K&ESR members in attendance. The subsequent collection was donated to the British Heart Foundation and Kent Air Ambulance. The heartfelt condolences of our railway family go to Danielle, Lexi, William, Deborah and Mike. We will ensure Jon's legacy is never forgotten.

*NP, with thanks to the Grimwood family*

## Alan Samson 1941–2023

Alan Samson died on Monday 1st May. We understand that his death was due to a massive heart attack.

Alan had worked for very many years in the S&T department at the railway, mainly specialising in the maintenance and erection of the overhead telegraph wires which carry the block instrument signals and telephone circuits between our sites, carrying out repairs and undertaking new installations over the whole railway between Tenterden and Bodiam. This involved working

up poles, running and tensioning wires, and repairing faults. He also carried out some internal telephone wiring work, putting the knowledge and skill he had gained during his employment with BT to good use in his retirement.

We will all miss him, in particular his long-term railway colleague Chris Lowry with whom he spent most of his working time. We extend our condolences to his wife, Pam.

*PNW*

## Jim Williams 1950–2022

It is with great sadness that we at the K&ESR learned on Thursday 3rd November 2022 of the untimely passing of our very popular volunteer member Jim Williams, aged just 72.

James Williams was born on 14th February 1950 in North London, and after leaving school worked as a mechanic at John Brittens. It quickly became apparent that Jim was good with his hands, learning metalwork while mending cars and damaged vehicles. He would use these skills later in life, when he would become a model railway enthusiast. After meeting his wife Jean, Jim embarked on a career as a London taxi driver and continued in that role until only a few years ago.

With his outward, happy-go-lucky, humorous, friendly approach, Jim was a natural cabbie and he brought those personable skills to the K&ESR, which he joined in 2001. Living in Eastbourne, he spent many a day on the Guards roster making friends and was as a result approached to become Volunteer Recruitment Manager. He accepted and was without doubt responsible for recruiting many of today's volunteers. He went on to work as lead for 'Behind the Scenes' tours. He was popular and in his element promoting the K&ESR, telling anecdotes and using his vast knowledge to keep people interested. If you met Jim, you wouldn't easily forget him.



*Jim Williams on guard duty. (via Peter Salmon)*

Apart from his family, his interest in model railways was passionate and he was very quick, and quite correct, to point out that it wasn't a 'train set' but a 'layout'! He owned a few layouts and made a number himself, his popularity extending to the local model railway scene.

Throughout his life Jim battled with Crohn's disease. The way Jim looked upon this was that he would have a flare-up but soon be back fighting fit. He will be greatly missed by all his friends, both at the K&ESR and in the wider world, but none more so than by his wife Jean, son Michael, daughter Samantha and grandchildren Katie and Thomas.

*PNS*



# THE NEXT GENERATION:

## Kai Bass



*Kai Bass exchanging tokens at Wittersham Road.*

*(Alan Crotty)*

It is always interesting to hear the reason why someone decided to volunteer with us rather than, say, another heritage railway. Most of the people I have interviewed for this series of articles have indicated they had some prior knowledge of the Kent & East Sussex: either they had a friend or relative who already volunteered here, or they had visited us as a child. Kai Bass, however, proved different.

Although he has always had a love of steam railways, and as a child owned a model railway and visited other heritage railways, he had no prior experience of the K&ESR. He searched the internet for local heritage railways, applied to them all, and ours was the first to respond. He attended an Introductory Day and was so interested in Clive Norman's explanation of Rolvenden signal box that he immediately decided to pursue signalling, feeling sure he would enjoy it.

I ask him whether that has proved to be true.

“Definitely,” he asserts. “Although the Signalling Course has only just started, I have already enjoyed learning both Cranbrook Road and Northiam Crossings, and the sight of a steam train in that beautiful countryside is just fantastic. I love the engineering behind the locos, and to be close to them when they are working hard is simply amazing. Everyone I have met has been so friendly. I had assumed that all the other volunteers would be geriatric, so it's great to find so many young people involved!”

“I wasn't entirely sure what to expect on my first day – e.g. were the gates worked manually or electronically? – but what surprised me most of all was when a bag of roast potatoes was thrown to me as the Wealden Pullman went by: they were absolutely delicious! I'm now learning Wittersham Road signal box and looking forward to having responsibility for the safe running of trains. I'm also looking forward to just enjoying the railway, without having to worry about

dealing with the public.” In the longer term, Kai would be interested in exploring other roles, as he is keen to be as useful as possible.

Next, I ask Kai if there’s anything he dislikes about the role. “Not much,” he responds. “The worst aspect is the journey. My home is in Littlehampton, so it takes between one and a half and two hours to get here; and I worry that, if there is a hold-up somewhere, I will arrive late. But, overall, I enjoy it very much, and the railway has exceeded my expectations.”

Away from the railway, Kai works as a Fire Alarm Commissioning Engineer for Siemens, based in London. Having studied A levels in Electronics, Engineering and Computer Science, as well as AS levels in Maths and Physics, at Worthing College, he decided to seek an apprenticeship rather than go to university. He enjoys his job, but he aims to switch to robotics if possible. He would also like to move to North Kent so he could be closer both to work and to the railway. He used to play rugby regularly, but lack of time means he can only watch it now:

nothing keeps him away from the Six Nations!

As usual, I enquire whether he can reveal any amusing or embarrassing anecdotes. (These are usually K&ESR related but this one is from Kai’s work.) “I remember working on the fire alarm system in a large building in Canary Wharf,” he recalls. “I must have got something wrong because, when I switched the system back on, it set off all the alarms over several floors! Fortunately, it was at night, so the main people affected were the security guards.” Worth remembering when you think of all the alarms there are around the railway!

Finally, I invite Kai to sum up his experience for the benefit of anyone else thinking of becoming a volunteer. “Go for it,” he urges, “but don’t necessarily rush into the first role you think of. My initial plan was to be on the footplate, but I am now certain I prefer signalling. So, take time to explore the different roles. You can always ask questions of anyone, because this is definitely one of the friendliest railways in the country.”

*Tony Ramsey*

## **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*

## **Tenterden Terrier Online**

Members of the Kent & East Sussex Railway can receive the *Tenterden Terrier* in electronic (PDF) format. Help us to 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.

# K&ESR No.19 Norwegian – A Tribute to David Barham

David Barham – owner of Hole Park Estate, which includes land around Wittersham Road station – passed away in June 2022 at the age of 94 years. In his long life he had many roles including farmer, industrialist and member of Kent County Council. He had also been a long-term supporter

of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, his membership of the company and its predecessors going back to the early stages of the preservation project. In this respect we owe Mr Barham a considerable debt of gratitude; it is thanks to him that we have K&ESR No.19 *Norwegian*.

**NORGES STATSBAKER**  
HOVEDADMINISTRASJONEN — OSLO 1

Direction Générale des Chemins  
de fer de l'Etat: Norvège  
Norwegian State Railways  
Executive Offices  
Generaldirektion der Norwegischen  
Staatseisenbahnen

CONFIDENTIAL

£10,000k  
£580

The Kent & East Sussex Railway  
Tenterden Tower Station, Kent

TENTERDEN 2943

Antenne(0)  
Exp.  
Anlagen(0)

Votre référence  
Your Reference  
Mrs Leichen  
23.4.71

Votre référence  
Your reference  
Ursene Leichen  
1726/9 M/EBn

Don  
25 MAY 1971

Objet  
Subject  
Train

NSB LOCOMOTIV NO 376 TYPE 21

Referring to Your letter mentioned above we beg to inform  
You that locomotiv No. 376 is still in service but is supposed  
to be taken out of service and scrapped this year.

The locomotiv can then be left to You on the same conditions  
as when locomotiv 377 was sold to Mr. Pagano. We suppose that  
export licence shall be granted.

Two old coaches built of wood, one common coach and one with  
a small compartment for luggage and guard, will be available dur-  
ing the autumn.

Awaiting Your further remarks.

NORWEGIAN STATE RAILWAYS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICES

*H. Brumche*

*Almy*

The initial reply from NSB.

(Barham Family Archive)





*The Norwegian Mogul in Tenterden High Street. Note the now-demolished fire station at the top of Station Road.*

*(Barham Family Archive)*

The late Neil Rose wrote a comprehensive account of the locomotive's history up to 1995 for *Tenterden Terrier* issues 66 and 67, both of which are available online at [kesr.org.uk/terrier](http://kesr.org.uk/terrier). Briefly, this outside cylindered 2-6-0 was built for the Merakerbanen (the Meraker Railway) by the Swedish company Nydquist & Holm in 1919, later becoming Norge Statsbaner (NSB – Norwegian State Railways) class 21c No.376. It was one the last four NSB steam locomotives and was withdrawn at Dombaas on 22nd June 1971.

An aspect of this story which has previously received little attention is how *Norwegian* came to be acquired for the K&ESR in the first place. Documents relating to this may exist in the Company's records (presently held off site) but if they do I have yet to see them. We are however fortunate that the Barham family do have copies of some of the correspondence from 1971, and have kindly made these available. It is from these copies, plus some details from a pamphlet that was produced for the locomotive's centenary in 2019, that it is possible to deduce the course of events.

Fellow class 21c member No.377 had, in 1969, been purchased for preservation in the UK by Gerald Pagano. After appearing at various locations it found a home at Bressingham where it remains, in non-operational condition. The late Peter Davis (Chairman of the then Kent & East Sussex Railway Association) had been in contact with Mr Pagano and it was through him that the K&ESR became aware of No.376. It should be remembered that in 1971 the infrastructure improvements which today allow larger locos to run on the line had yet to be made. Finding suitable motive power was a necessity, and class 21c's light axle loading made it a very attractive proposition for our railway.

On 23rd April 1971 the Association sent an initial letter of enquiry to NSB's Executive Offices in Oslo. No copy of this is available, but it is referred to in NSB's reply of 25th April. As can be seen in the accompanying illustration, it was No.376 that was specifically referred to rather than the surviving Class 21c locomotives in general. The handwritten note at the top right indicates that the "same conditions" as No.377



*David Barham (centre) with his son William (left) and K&ESR Secretary Roger Crawford with the locomotive in Rolvenden Yard. (Barham Family Archive)*

involved a purchase price of 10,000 Norwegian kroner, £580, which is about £6,800 in 2023 – a very reasonable price by present-day standards.

Company Secretary Roger Crawford answered on 28th May accepting NSB's offer, making it clear that it was known how much Mr Pagano had paid and asking how much was wanted by way of a deposit. This was five days after Tenterden Railway Company (the previous name of the present company) had taken over from the Association. This change was because of a legal technicality, and – contrary to what has sometimes been believed – effectively the same organisation and the same people.

It was at this stage that David Barham became involved with the purchase of No.376. This development is recorded in a TRC letter dated 7th July 1971 and held in the Barham family records. In this Roger Crawford explained that the K&ESR had been outbid for a third Hunslet Austerity (the others being No.24 and *Errol Lonsdale*, neither of which are now on our railway) and stated "This makes the purchase of the Norwegian [engine] even more desirable."

This clearly implies that David Barham was already aware of No.376 and it is a reasonable surmise that he was to have funded the Austerity. The letter concluded that Peter Davis (who was intending to visit Oslo) "will try to find out from (NSB officer) Mr Bennneche "if there are any other steam locomotives available in Norway (in addition to No.376) and as soon as he returns we hope to have the pleasure of discussing his findings with you". In other words can we please ask you to buy this loco for us instead!

On 6th July 1971 NSB wrote formally offering the locomotive to Tenterden Railway Company for 10,000 kroner. Roger Crawford wrote accepting the offer on 14th July, sending David Barham a copy at the same time. In his covering letter he added: "It will come as a great encouragement to our members to know that you have bought this locomotive."

Crawford's next letter to David Barham was dated 6th August and after a short paragraph about payment details continued with the following passage: "Mr Pagano who purchased a similar locomotive, of which I showed you a

photograph, is hand in glove with Norwegian State Railways. Our locomotive is in excellent condition and would have been offered to us but for his intervention as some Norwegian engineers wanted to buy it and keep it in Norway.”

From that it would appear that Gerald Pagano was an unseen hand in this whole matter; the exact details of his dealings with NSB, David Barham and K&ESR are, pending further information coming to light, unknown.

Transport arrangements from Norway were mentioned in TRC's letter of 6th August and again on 17th of the same month. In contrast to the 'can do' movement-by-road hauliers of the 21st century, Anglia Heavy Haulage were the only firm then prepared to undertake this international task. They had previously brought No.377 to the UK and efforts by Roger Crawford to find a second quotation had proved unsuccessful. Transport costs were £1,100 (twice the cost of the loco!) bringing the total expenditure to £1,680; close to £20,000 in 2023. TRC was not in a position to find the necessary sum, all available monies being needed for the purchase of the line from BR, which was reaching a critical stage. Given the circumstances David Barham's generosity in enabling the acquisition of the locomotive cannot be underestimated.

No.376 travelled under its own power from Dombaas to Oslo, where it was loaded onto two low-loaders. There then followed a rough four-day crossing to Felixstowe in a force 10 gale onboard a Seaways ferry. The journey finally finished at Rolvenden on 25th October 1971,

No.376 then assuming its K&ESR identity as No.19 (although the NSB number has mostly been used over the years). The final letter in the Barham family papers is dated 29th October and mentions a subject familiar to all loco owners and many K&ESR officers ever since – the need for a Hire Agreement.

Following use in the early years after K&ESR services re-commenced, No.376 was withdrawn for overhaul in early 1977. The loco became TRC property in 1983, with ownership transferred to the Norwegian Locomotive Trust in 1984. This overhaul took until 1995, No.376 being recommissioned on 5th March 1995 by the Norwegian Ambassador, an agreement being reached at the same time that the locomotive should be named. A further overhaul was carried out between October 2006 and the spring of 2013, after which No.376 was in service until major work to the cylinders and boiler became necessary in 2019. It is presently in store awaiting overhaul.

Although ownership of No.376 had long passed to the company and then to the Trust, David Barham maintained an interest in both *Norwegian* and the Kent & East Sussex Railway until the end of his days. The Barham family's interest also continues; all three of David's sons are long-term K&ESR members, and Hole Park Estate and K&ESR maintain good neighbourly relations.

*Nick Pallant*

*Thanks are due to Robert Barham and Kevin Blakiston of the Norwegian Locomotive Trust for their help in producing this item.*

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## Frittenden Road's Young Edwardian Station Agents

*Brian Janes looks further at some of our railway's past employees.*

We at the Museum are always browsing through archives to find out more about the railway and its people. Tom Burnham started this particular hare running after finding the following snippet from *Pearson's Weekly* for Thursday 28th February 1907:

TRAVELLER tells me that while making a journey recently on the Kent and East Sussex Railway, he was informed that the station-master of the Frittenden Road Station was only sixteen years of age. Can any reader of P.W. tell me of a younger station-master?

Tom started the team looking. Who was this?

We found the accompanying photograph in the museum archive attributed as a 'Mr Bearsley'. This was not a name associated with any known records, but as trails were followed it emerged that there were not one but two young candidates.

The 1911 Census had a 15-year-old Frederick George Brisley (born 21st September 1895) listed as 'Station agent railway' and living with his parents (Frederick and Phoebe Brisley) at Ibornden Cottages, Biddenden, next to



Frittenden Road station. However, aged 11, he was highly unlikely to have been station agent when 'TRAVELLER' made his journey in 1907. Nevertheless he obviously did well as a boy employee, for a memo dated 28th October 1914 from Holman Stephens to Mr Palmer the Agent at Biddenden read "ref. Fritt. Rd. Acknowledged memo from Palmer to report if Brisley is suitable & what wages agreed." So he may have been appointed, under Palmer, as agent at Frittenden as a 19 year old.

However enquiries did not stop there. A second candidate emerged from a 1969 obituary in the Kentish Express reporting that a George Pope had become, at 16, the youngest station master. George was born in Frittenden around 1890 and, living locally, he might well have been in charge of Frittenden Road by 1907, so is most likely the person noted by 'TRAVELLER'. By the time of the 1911 Census he's a 'railway clerk' at Pavement Gates, Ford, Shropshire near Ford & Crossgates station on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire railway, having presumably transferred from the K&ESR when the SMR opened. Such a move followed Stephens' favoured method of using Kent men to man his new railway. He may well have been replaced at Frittenden Road by Frederick Brisley, whose employment in 1911 we have noted. Pope

however returned to the K&ESR by 1917, but we are not sure in what capacity.

So there we have it. Frittenden Road had not one but two teenage station agents. The station was a very quiet one, but nevertheless the two must have been most reliable and self-reliant individuals. Indeed this is demonstrated by their subsequent lives. They did not stay in the poorly paid light railway jobs. George Pope married a Sussex girl in 1918, became a gardener by 1921 and worked for Post Office Telephones for 33 years from 1923. On retirement he was awarded the Imperial Service Medal for long and meritorious service. Frederick Brisley married in 1920 and served in the Royal Navy for virtually the whole period between the World Wars, rising to Chief Petty Officer. He was probably an armaments lecturer at shore establishments, predominantly Chatham, and may have served in both wars. He emigrated to Melbourne, Australia in 1959 after living at Sheerness.

The only question is, who is the individual in our photo? It might be Frederick Brisley, but if it was taken at the time of 'TRAVELLER's note it would have been George Pope. Still more investigation needed... 🚂

*Research by Tom Burnham, assisted by Bob Clifford and Don Philips in the Museum Archive.*



*Frederick Brisley or George Pope? Does anyone have any knowledge of this chap's true identity? (CSRM)*

## Notes for contributors

Our printers are set up to receive largely digital text, and this is an advantage to us as it keeps the cost down. This is increasingly important, so please try to follow the guidelines set out below.

### 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.

Typewritten copy can be scanned to extract the words for printing, so can be accepted; but the Editor's task will be easier if you ask a friend to turn it into digital form. Please do not embed photos within text – submit photos separately.

### Photos

Prints, negatives and transparencies can always be accepted, but generally speaking negatives and transparencies need to be of particular interest or quality to justify the necessary work.

For news and current events digital is preferred, especially if the picture is as least as good as more traditional formats. Unless used to accompany an article, a low-resolution jpeg copy of the original is initially requested. Typically the longest dimension should be no greater than 900 pixels, or resized as a copy for the web. We will request a full-size image if for possible future use, but please bear in mind that the image/file needs to be typically suitable for cropping to a minimum of 1,800 pixels (longest dimension) for A6/half a page or 2,700 pixels for A5/full page.

We can also accept pictures saved to DVD, CD or USB memory stick.

Our request for a full-sized image does not guarantee inclusion in the next or any future edition of the *Tenterden Terrier*.

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