THE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB of GREAT BRITAIN.

PRESS CUTTINGS.

KENT BRANCH.

THE FIRST KENT BRANCH FIXTURE.

THE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN.
(KENT BRANCH).

GRAVESEND WEST BRANCH BRAKE-VAN TRIP.

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY, 9th & 10th AUGUST.

By courtesy of British Railways, Southern Region brake-van trips have been arranged on the 19.16 freight service from Gravesend West to Swanley on Wednesday and Thursday, 9th and 10th August, 1967.

Please arrive at Gravesend West by 19.00 and if coming from London you should travel by 17.04 ex Cannon Street, or 17.41 or 18.06 ex Charing Cross to Gravesend. If travelling from the Medway Towns travel by 17.53 or 18.21 ex Gillingham. Gravesend West is only about 4 to 5 minutes walk from Gravesend station and lies behind the Maidstone and District bus garage. The freight will call specially at Swanley at 19.52 to set down the party.

A special brake-van will be attached to the train and the fare including the special brake-van charge will be 7/- per head.

For your information the regular freight services on the Branch are scheduled to cease as far as sundries traffic is concerned on and from Monday 14th August, 1967, only leaving the coal traffic and in due course the Branch will be closed completely.

A special brake-van permit has been issued for the trips and it will not be necessary to sign Indemnity Forms. I have been made responsible for the party and an Inspector will not be provided.

If you arrive before 19.00 meet in the Terminus Public House (Saloon Bar) opposite Gravesend West station.

Persons participating Wednesday:-

BURTON. M.	BROWNE. H.	ANDREWS. M.
STACEY. G.	GOFF. A.	ANDREWS. P.
COX. I.	ROWLEY. B.	PICKERING. M.
GEORGE. M.	BANKS. D.	POOLE. M.

Persons participating Thursday:-

CRAMP. J.	FUGE. W.	LONGWORTH.
FIRMINGER. C.	GOLDING. C.	JENKINS
WILLIAMS. T.	CLIFFORD	BURTON. M.
NOAKES. A.		

I trust you will have an enjoyable visit.

7th August, 1967. M. BURTON.

Chatham Observer, December 1 1967

Fans of steam trains dine

THE Kent branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain, held their inaugural dinner at the Park Hotel, Gillingham.

Proposing the toast of the club, Mr. M. J. Southgate (Operating Officer, S.E.D., Southern Region, British Railways) emphasised the happy relationship between British Rail and the club, and pointed out that, in the very near future, it would only be by the efforts of the enthusiasts' clubs that the rising generation would ever see a steam locomotive working a train.

Difficulties

Replying, Mr. J. G. Rogers, president of the L.C.C.B., touched on the difficulties brought about by the rapid extension of diesel and electric traction, of arranging future programmes of steam-hauled rail tours, but nevertheless, there would be a comprehensive list of such tours next year.

The toast of the guests and visitors was made in a witty speech by Bob Ratcliffe, chairman of the Kent branch, the response being made by Mr. A. Luke (vice-president, L.C.G.B.). While this was the first dinner held by the local branch, its success was such that no doubt this will now become a regular annual event and augment the regular monthly club evening.

Chatham Observer, November 24 1967

PRINCIPALS at the inaugural dinner of the Kent branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain, at the Park Hotel, Gillingham, on Friday. The chairman, Mr. R. Ratcliffe, presided. The nameplate is from a Battle of Britain class locomotive, the Sir Eustace Missenden. (12/425/47/67)

SOME OF THOSE THAT ATTENDED.....

COMMITTEE

[Chairman]. FREMLINS ELEPHANT ALES

(Secretary)

(Treasurer)

Menu

THE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN. KENT BRANCH

INAUGURAL DINNER 17th November, 1967

.....

Cream of Mushroom Soup

.....

Roast Sirloin of Beef & Yorkshire Pudding

Roast Potatoes
Creamed Potatoes

Brussel Sprouts
Garden Peas

.....

Fruit Salad & Cream

.....

Coffee

Mr. M. J. Southgate:

"Toasts the L.C.G.B."

"Bob" Ratcliffe:

"Toasts the Visitors"

As entertaining as ever:

Dr. P. Ransome-Wallis.

Terry keeps track of the romantic era of trains

RAILWAY enthusiast Mr. Terry Tracey, of Rowland Avenue, Gillingham, is secretary of the Kent branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain. Although the branch has only recently been formed, an active group has existed for several years.

MR. TERRY TRACEY

"We have 117 members from all over Kent which makes us the third largest branch in the country and, we are told, the most flourishing," said Mr. Tracey.

The objects of the club are to offer facilities to visit places of interest and to encourage members to take a keen interest in railway history and operation. The passing of the steam engine is lamented and one of the aims is to keep alive the memory, romance and magnificence of this era.

Mr. Tracey (20) has been interested in railways for as long as he can remember.

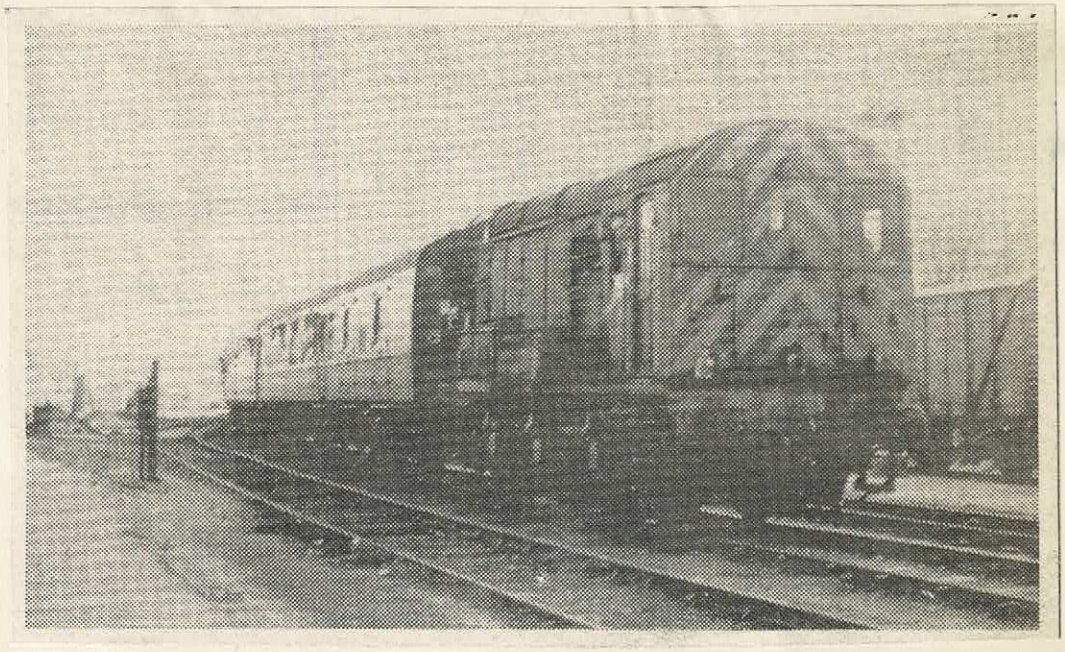
His collection includes engine and station number-plates, some very old guards' lamps, and a 1923 platform ticket machine.

At the moment he is building a model railway.

And you'll never guess—he works for British Rail at Waterloo arranging special trains.

Chatham Observer, December 1 1967

A TRAINLOAD OF TRIPPERS —BUT THEY DIDN'T ALIGHT



What's this? A PASSENGER train in Chatham Dockyard? Yes, it happened on a recent sunny Sunday in March and, no doubt, surprised not a few worthy Sunday morning workers. Special trains have carried Naval drafts to the barracks before now but even that must have been a long time ago. On board on this occasion were a full complement of members of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain among whose numbers are a few Dockyard employees. They have a hobby which must rival fishing for the benefits it brings —long hours away eating and drinking in good company! Joking apart, these men, who come from all walks of life, actually ENJOY investigating little-used branch lines and, to them, the invasion of the Dockyard was bliss itself. And they brought two restaurant cars in the six-coach train. Naturally full security had to be observed and no pictures were permitted. The passengers did not even alight.

Periscope, Friday, March 29, 1968,

'GHOST TRAIN' AT SHUT DOWN STATION

A TRAIN carrying 350 passengers pulled into Gravesend's old West Street station on Sunday — the first to do so since the station's closure to passenger traffic in August, 1953.

Eight coaches pulled by a diesel locomotive made a stop at West Street (now a British Rail goods depot) for about 15 minutes before moving on to Canterbury.

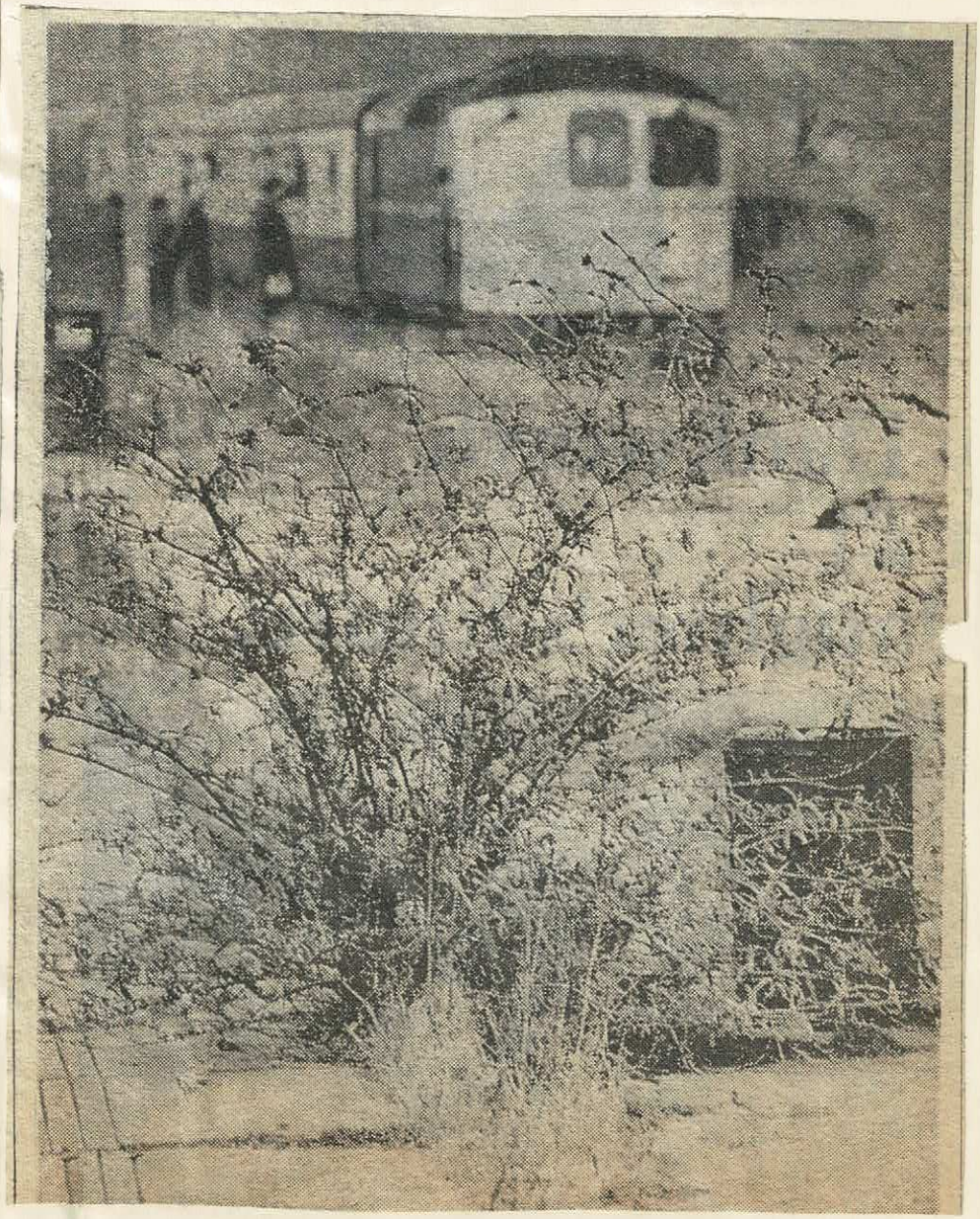
Tour

The passengers, all members of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain, were on an involved tour of railway lines in Kent.

Other surprises on the enthusiasts' schedule included a trip along the Isle of Grain line, no longer used by passenger services, and through Chatham dockyard.

A British Rail spokesman told the "Reporter" this week: "These are places of interest for travelling rail enthusiasts—the little used or disused lines."

● ABOVE: The modern diesel-engined train contrasts against rubble and overgrown weeds on the platform.



MOTIVE POWER FOR THE ROYAL TRAIN - GILLINGHAM SHEDS.

Evening Post, August 19, 1968

City rewards the daily travellers

Mr. Alan Searle

Mr. Ian Cox

Mrs. Rosemary Warren

LONDON streets may not be paved with gold — as Dick Whittington was quick to discover — but when it comes to earning our daily bread the City is still apparently the most rewarding place.

This still holds good despite the increased rail charges for season tickets which comes into force on September 1.

The average increase is 7.5 per cent, but British Rail said today details for the Medway Towns still had to be worked out.

While the majority of commuters are prepared to grumble about the increases, most of them appear willing to dig a little deeper in their pockets to bridge the gap.

As the first commuters dashed through the barrier at Chatham station last night, an Evening Post reporter and photographer asked them their views.

There were those among them who were seriously thinking of finding a job in the Medway Towns. But for every dissenting voice — there were two who still thought it worthwhile to commute to Town.

A Telex operator who didn't like the extra £1 a month she would have to pay, pointed out that she could earn twice as much in London as locally.

Like this young woman, a number of people had views, but didn't want their name put to them.

Miss Anna Verrall, a secretary, of Birchfields, Walderslade, commutes to Cannon Street. It costs her £10 11s. a month.

"We don't get a seat every morning. We spend most of the journey standing in the corridor and you can't use a first class compartment even if there is an empty seat," she said.

"But the money in London still makes it worthwhile."

Mr. Ian Cox, who works for British Rail as a booking clerk at the Continental booking office at Victoria lives in Haig Avenue, Rochester.

"Some of the commuters are despondent," he said. "But there is a deficit and money has to be found, though I think it might be better if they found it in other ways."

Mrs. Rosemary Ann Warren, of Lordswood Lane, Chatham, was waiting with her shopping for her husband to collect her.

A clerk in an insurance office in London, she said, "The trouble is you can't get a job down here with the same money."

Then she donned her crash helmet and roared off on the back of her husband's motor-cycle.

Alan Searle, of Churchill Avenue, Chatham, a clerk in the paper trade, was one of those who didn't think it would be worthwhile to continue travelling to London.

Before he started going up to town five months ago he worked in Maidstone.

The "EVENING POST" interviews - The Editor of the: L.C.G.B. BULLETIN.

BRIDGE TO BE

Start being made soon

AN odd thing about the construction of the new Rochester Bridge being built on the site of the disused railway bridge is that the ends of the bridge are about eight feet above the ground.

However, this is a calculated stage in the building of a bridge which had an unusual beginning.

Permission was given in 1965 for a new road bridge to be constructed, using the old railway bridge for temporary support

This meant that when the new bridge became self supporting, the old bridge would have to be taken away, and the new bridge would have to be lowered into position.

Mr. John Green, deputy resident engineer for the bridge's consultant engineer, Mr. J. Kenneth Anderson said lowering should start soon

"The first two piers are ready for lowering now, and the whole job should be finished in about three weeks", he said.

Work on the approach roads started earlier this month.

The railway viaducts are to be demolished. There is to be a new road on an embankment with two approach strands on the Strood side, and a road on an embankment with a retaining wall on the Rochester side.

On the Strood side there is to be a subway opposite the old railway station and on the Rochester side a subway on the line of Horsewash Lane.

Work on the bridge is expected to be finished by next July and the roads by November next year.

Total cost for the work is expected to be £526,000, of which £288,000 will be paid by the Rochester Bridge Trust.

THE END ...

of the ...

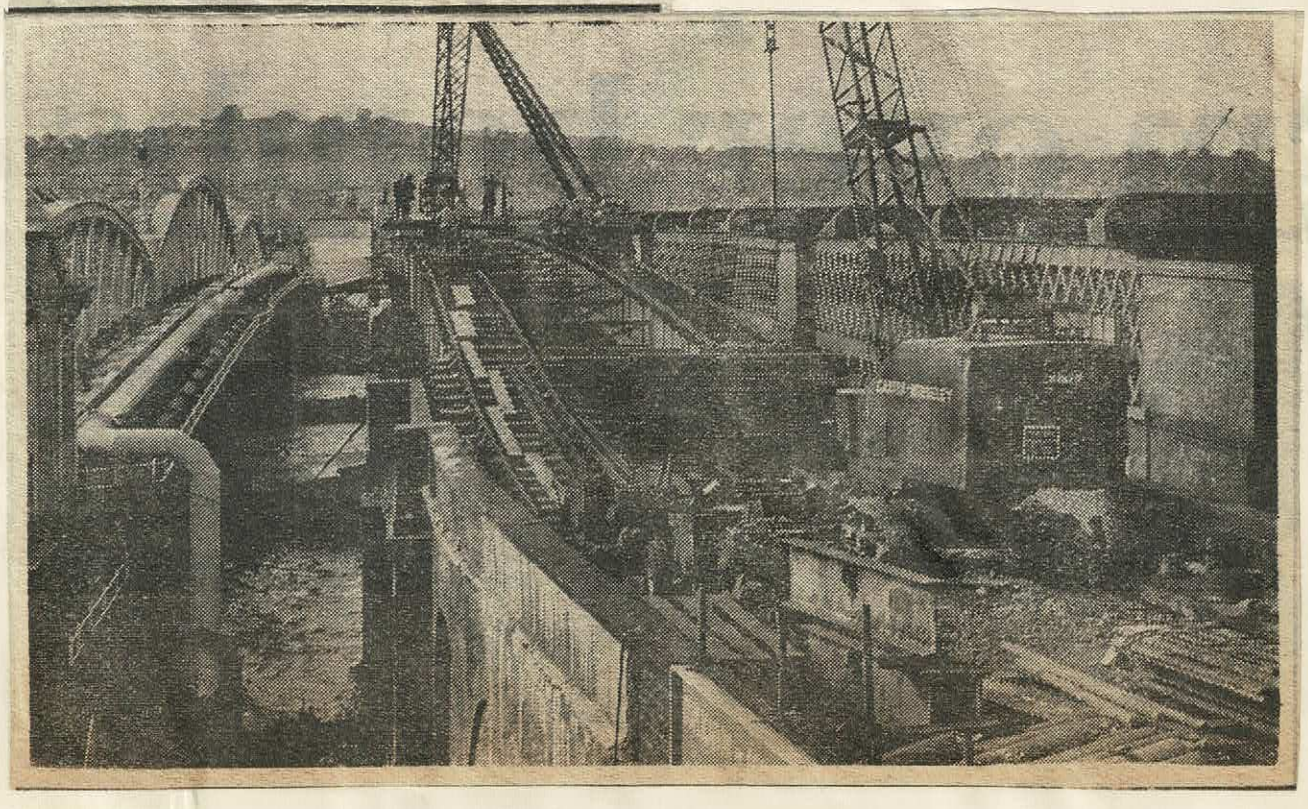
LOWERED

L.C. &. D.

ROCHESTER

BRIDGE.

Evening Post, August 20, 1968



Evening Post, August 20, 1968

On the right lines . . . for 30 years

THE grand old days of steam are over.

Last week hundreds of rail enthusiasts bought expensive tickets to ride on British Rail's last steam service from Liverpool to Carlisle and back before the iron horses leave our tracks for ever.

But to Kent people, steam - drawn trains already seem strangely quaint and old-fashioned.

The last service of that kind left the Medway Towns in 1939 when the electrification of the line between Swanley and Gillingham was completed. The suburban line had been completed many years before.

The days of steam in this area really belong to the archives of the privately owned South Eastern and Chatham Railway which was founded in 1899.

Heavy

A proud and efficient little line, it was once described as "one of the smartest, best-run and most punctual railways in the whole kingdom."

During the First World War it bore a heavy part of war-time traffic between London and the coast.

The S.E.C.R. finished in 1923 when it was incorporated into the Southern Railway created by the 1921 Railway Act.

Electrification in the south was well under way by then but work on the Gillingham line was the last to be carried out. It was planned in 1935 and electrification of 117 miles of track was completed four years later at a cost of £1,750,000.

THE "EVENING POST"

"STEAM MARATHON"

Right: How it started.

Below:

Then continued:

On the right line now?

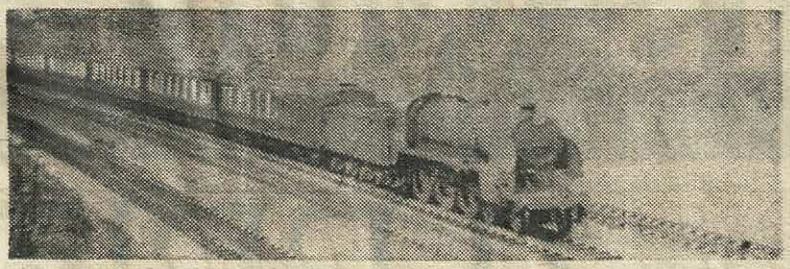
AFTER writing that Kent had been on the right lines for 30 years since electrifying its railways, an ex-train driver came into the office to tell me that steam trains could be seen in Kent up to 1957.

He tells me I'm correct in assuming that suburban lines have been electric since before the last war; but he added that he drove steam trains down to the Kent coast from Victoria every day of the week!

These engines were on loan to Southern Region while the change-over to diesel was being carried out.

Sorry about the mistake. Are we on the right track now?

Any advances on 1959?



● Doug Barrow's picture of the 'Kentish Belle,' steaming through Rainham, in 1958

THE railway saga continues. During the past week I have written two stories about the history of steam engines in Kent.

On the first story I was quickly corrected by a reader who said steam engines could be seen in Kent up to 1957 and not earlier as I had reported. We published a second story as a correction.

This subsequent piece led Mr. Doug Barrow, of Longley Road, Rochester, to come steaming into my office to point out that there were steam engines running as late as 1959.

Indeed he brought photographs which he took in 1958 The one we publish here is of the Kentish Belle of th King Arthur class steaming through Rainham on August 31, 1958.

Any more for any more? Or can we blow the whistle on this one?

Followed by:

Is this the end of the line?

STILL the saga of steam trains in Kent goes on. The Evening Post reported last week that steam trains could be seen in the country up to 1957. Another reader said 1958, and another railway enthusiast 1959.

Now Mr. Philip Tyrrels, of Carlton Avenue, Gillingham, has called into the office to say a "battle of Britain" class steam engine was seen at Rochester in November 1960.

And the last steam locomotive, he added, seen in the Medway Towns was a children's special Olympia from Strood in January 1961.

We hope this puts the record right.

Right:

A member

joins in.

Chuffers were still running in 1962

THE last steam-hauled passenger train to run on the South Eastern was on February 25, 1962 —much later than 1959 which you stated in your article on Tuesday.

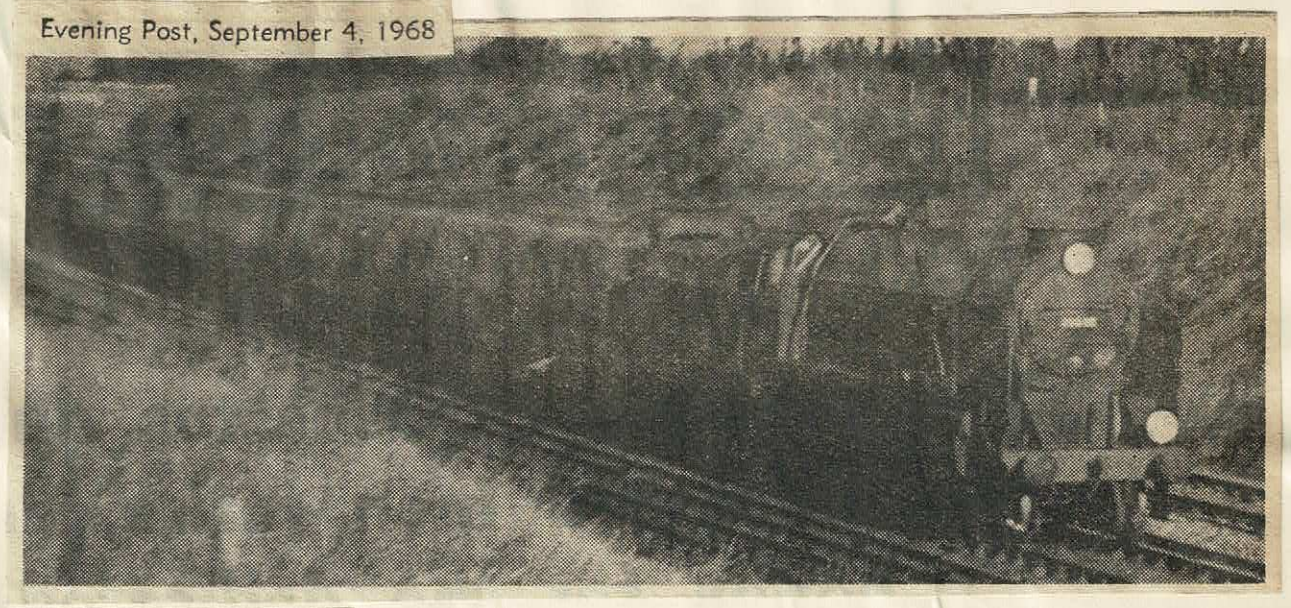
The train was an "enthusiasts' special".

It travelled a number of different routes in Kent. It started from Victoria to Dover via Chatham. The engine was a class N15 Lord Nelson 4-6-0 No. 30782 "Sir Brian".

D. H. SMITH,

26, Wykeham Street, Strood.

Evening Post, September 4, 1968



Now the true facts about steam

...Then: Another Member makes a contribution.

THE saga of the last days of steam in Kent continues!

Now we have details of the steam age from W.E. Fuge, treasurer of the Kent branch, The Locomotive Club of Great Britain.

The final day of steam traction was on Sunday, June 14 1959, and full electrified services with new Kent Coast CEP stock, started on the Monday.

Empty steam stock and light engines being worked back to London on subsequent days.

For some years before to the end of steam, Standard Class "5"s 4-6-2, "West Countries" and "Battle of Britains", and 4-4-0 "Schools" provided the backbone of the motive power, and were stabled at Stewarts Lane, London.

Other M.P.D.s ("Sheds") were at Gillingham, Faversham, Dover and Ramsgate.

A previous contributor has suggested that the service was run with "engines borrowed from other regions", but this was not so, and it was very unusual to see "foreign" motive power, although at one time two "Britannias" were used on Boat trains, and sometimes seen locally at weekends.

The picture is of a "Schools" type loco hauling what was perhaps the last train from Ramsgate to reach Victoria in daylight on the final day.

"In conclusion".

STEAM—THE END OF THE LINE

WITH reference to the recent correspondence in the Evening Post regarding the last steam trains in Kent the facts are still incorrect.

The last steam train to run over the Chatham route was in June 1959.

The official date of the termination of steam locomotion on the South Eastern line was June 1962, although electric services did run over that route prior to that date owing to engineering work being completed well ahead of schedule.

Engine number 30782 "N15" class is a King Arthur.

STEPHEN BECK (15), 5, Bankside, Chatham.

This correspondence is now closed . . . Ed.

20 September 1968

Chatham Rochester & Gillingham News

PAGING MR. DAVID HOWLETT

SOMEWHERE in Gillingham lives a Mr. David Howlett, and he is the Publicity Officer of the British Locomotive Club. Another Mr. David Howlett lives in Chester Road, Gillingham and he is anxious to trace his namesake — simply because he doesn't want any more correspondence about railways sent to him.

Recently Mr. H. Wood of Westminster Drive, London saw a letter about Railway transport in the "Daily Telegraph" from Mr. David Howlett of Gillingham. Mr. Wood, a collector of photographs of elderly steam engines, wanted to add a picture of the Flying Scot to his collection and wrote to this Mr. Howlett for assistance. The letter found Mr. Howlett at Chester Road and has so far got no further. He would like an explanation of the misake and Mr. Wood is still awaiting his Flying Scot photograph. Can any reader even perhaps the other Mr. Howlett, throw some light on this matter?

27 September 1968

'News' get their man

Chatham News at your service! At least, at the service of Mr. David G. Howlett, of Chester Road, Gillingham.

Mr. H. Wood, of London wrote to Mr. Howlett, believing him to be the publicity officer of the Locomtive Club, Great Britain, asking for photographs of the Flying Scotsman. But, by a strange coincidence, there are two David G. Howletts living in Gillingham, and Mr. Wood happened to pick the wrong one.

An article in last week's Newsman's Diary, asking where the right Mr. Howlett was, prompted Mr. Huge, local treasurer of the club, to telephone us.

He told us that the elusive publicity officer Mr. Howlett lives at Shakespeare Road, Gillingham. Perhaps that clears up a mystery for you, David, at Chester Road.

J.C. Rogers

B.T. Jennings

G. Stacey

M Burton

Z Stevens

J W Lewis

D.E. Lewis

A.M. Goldig

R Meikler

G A Meikler

A E Latchford

and Mrs A E L

D.W. Russell

David C. Hewitt

Brian G Bell

L.H. Woollard

J.L. Jones

P. M. Barnes

M. J. Evans

E. Cox

Pauline Cox

J.B. Fuller

Margaret Ratcliffe

Paul Stanley

R Ward

C. V. Cromwell

Carol Rogers

Ken Rogers

H.A.P. Browne

"Motive Power" for "Royal Train" - Gillingham Sheds.

Evening Post, Monday, November 18, 1968

GOODS TRAIN OF GOODIES

MILK train with a difference! A model of an 0-4-0 saddle tank locomotive chugs slowly round the table, watched by doting railway enthusiasts. It was an appropriate touch to the annual dinner of the Kent branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain at the Paddock Restaurant, Chatham. Watching the goods train of goodies in the front row (from left): Mr. F. Lewis (Chatham Dockyard), Mr. J. C. Rogers (club president), Mr. J. Oxley (Southern Region passenger office) and Mr. R. Ratcliffe (branch chairman).

Kent Messenger, November 22 1968

Locomotive club fans dine at Chatham

RAILWAY enthusiasts from all over Kent met at the Paddock restaurant, Chatham, on Friday, for the annual dinner of the Kent branch of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain.

Replying to a toast to the club, Mr. J. C. Rogers, president, emphasised the changing aspect of British Rail and the club. But he stressed that despite these changes, membership was keeping up and a growing interest was being shown in modern forms of traction and developments in railway running and installation. He went on to report that the Kent branch had had a most successful year, thanks to the support of local members.

Other guests at the dinner included: Mr. R. L. Ratcliffe, branch chairman; Mr. J. F. Oxley, of Southern Region, British Rail; and Mr. H. A. P. Browne, who proposed a toast to the "L.C.G.B."

"S P E E C H T I M E!" 1968 DINNER.

Hubert Browne -

"THE L.C.G.B!"

The President,
(Mr. J.C.Rogers)
Replies.

"The Ladies and Guests",

by the Kent Branch

Chairman.

The Reply was by:

Mr. J.F.Oxley,

British Rail,
Southern Region.

(Here seen on Chairman's Right)

"A F T E R D I N N E R!"

Members Get Together.

Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News, 7 Mar. 1969

Happy the bride

Pictured outside Rochester Baptist Church where they were married on Saturday are Mr. Terence Tracey, of Rowland Avenue, Gillingham, and Miss Patricia Barnes, of Weston Road, Strood.

R. 920.

Railway enthusiasts' dinner

THE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB of Great Britain were hosts to Bowaters at a special dinner at the George Hotel recently

The club gave the dinner in appreciation of the gesture of Bowaters in the handing over on 4 October of the light railway that runs between Kemsley and Sittingbourne.

This line, together with six locos and a considerable amount of rolling stock will be leased to the club for the benefit of railway enthusiasts by Bowaters.

Special guests at the dinner were Mr. T. H. Wilding, Bowaters' mill director, Mr. J. C. Rogers, Presidents of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain, Mr. Robin Leigh-Pemberton, owner of a local miniature railway, together with senior officials of the two mills and the club.

Good news for 0.4.2T lovers

Good news for locomotive enthusiasts. You'll soon be able to take a trip back into history, along the Sittingbourne to Kemsley line.

Anyone who knows the local terrain well will remember that this is a narrow gauge railway owned by Bowaters. It has served the company since 106, conveying wood pulp supply and finished paper products.

Now, however, Bowaters have decided to replace the line with modern road transport and the old curiosity is going out on lease to the Locomotive Club of Great Britain. The handing over cermony takes place tomorrow at Kemsley Mill, near Sittingbourne.

Not only is the railway to be preserved; the club eventually intends to set up a museum and locomotive workshops at Kemsley. It will operate and maintain a service for club members and other visitors, using steam engines dating from 1904 of 0.4.2T and 0.6.2T types.

The line has only recently gone out of general use. Up until two years ago it also had a 24 hour passenger service, with 13 trains a day in each direction, carrying 75,000 passengers a year.

The club intends to open it up again in April next year, using volunteer labour and controlled by Bowater and LCGB executives.

Evening Post, Friday, November 7, 1969

Steam trains puff back—on a small scale

STEAM returns to Sittingbourne next year.

For the first time since steam services were withdrawn from the main railway line through the town, the public will have the chance to travel on a steam-pulled train next Easter.

The Bowaters' Sittingbourne to Kemsley narrow gauge railway is being opened up by the Locomotive Club of Great Britain.

Every weekend, up to 50 members of the club from Southern England visit the two-mile stretch to help prepare the railway for its public opening in the spring.

RENTED

Publicity officer. Mr. T. Radcliff said: "At first we will be open every weekend."

The railway has a 2ft. 6in. gauge and five steam locomotives. One is more than 60 years old.

The line is still owned by Bowaters, but is rented to the club.

The main work of the club is concentrated on rebuilding the old pulp wagons for passenger use and building premises for a railway museum in Kemsley.

ADDITIONS TO STOCK.

CLASS.	No.	NAME.	ALLOCATED TO:	Ex. Works.
Ratcliffe.	2.	"Andrew".	York Ave., Rochester.	1st.Nov.,1967.

A M A L G A M A T I O N S.

Between.	And.	Agreement Signed.	Date.
Colin, Grimwood.	Christine, Norris.	St.Margaret's, Rainham.	20th.July.1968.