

19/1/1990

THE Kent and East Sussex Railway is celebrating its fifth successive record-breaking year — but it will also make a loss of around £20,000.

Director of commercial operations and marketing, Mark Toynbee, said: "The railway was closed in 1954 for losing less money than we lost last year!"

The line was axed 36 years ago due to increasing deficits and falling passenger numbers. This time the loss is due to investment in extending the line to Northiam and interest rates.

But business on the steam railway that runs from Tenterden Town station is booming.

Last year the trains carried 91,694 passengers, an increase of 4.4 per cent over the previous 12 months.

But Mr Toynbee said at one stage the passenger figures were "worryingly down."

This was largely due to the effect of the Education Reform Act on school visits, reducing the number of pupils carried from nearly 8,000 a year earlier, to 6,500 early last summer.

The hot weather also created problems, with holidaymakers preferring days on the beach.

by JENNI BALOW

But in September the visitors returned and with the Santa Specials carrying 14,100 passengers in 10 days, the year ended on a high.

Mr Toynbee said: "There was concern over interest rates squeezing family budgets, but our recovery came when interest rates were at their highest."

The effects of the drought summer are still being felt.

"For the first time in our history we have received complaints about carriage cleaning, but the hosepipe ban has continued since June," Mr Toynbee said.

The signal box installed at Rolvenden over three years at a cost of £120,000 was completed in the nick of time for the

Santa Specials.

The signalling will be essential for the extension to Northiam, which is due to open on May 19.

An army of volunteers are working on the project every weekend.

Anyone interested in helping should write to volunteers organiser Cathy Roberts at Tenterden Station.

Trains will run on Sundays through to March for the first time in 16 years.

The Pullman cars will run from March and a full-time catering manager is being sought.

The KESR and the White Lion Hotel in Tenterden High Street have arranged a Pullman package, with accommodation available at the hotel at a reduced rate.

15/2/1990

Talks on housing threat to trees

A SITE meeting to look at trees threatened by housing development on the former Cedar Works site off Tenterden High Street is being arranged with the borough landscape officer.

Tenterden town councillors fear that trees may have to be removed because development is taking place so close to them.

Landscape officer Peter Runciman said on Tuesday that the developer had consulted him about removal of additional trees in the past, including a willow which was found to be rotten.

1/2/1990

Family efforts to save trees

FAMILIES have taken swift action to try to prevent tree clearance and intensive grubbing out on a seven acre area close to Tenterden town centre.

It has been a haven for wildlife and on Tuesday, at an emergency site meeting, landowner David Masters agreed trees that should not be felled behind Bells Lane, should be marked by borough landscape officer Peter Runciman, after consultation with the mayor, councillors and residents.

But nothing could stop the clearance of fruit trees and 17 years of undergrowth.

The alarm was raised by Janet Russell of Bridewell Lane, Alan Bates of Six Fields, and residents of Bells Lane, when a mechanical digger started pulling up saplings.

Mr Runciman was called in after appeals to borough councillor Cathy Rosson and the mayor, Cllr Henry Edwards, to try to halt the destruction.

Acquired

Mr Masters said: "What we have done is completely legal and all proper trees have been retained with the exception of one small ash, which was lost during the intensive grubbing."

He said the land, acquired in 1973, had been virtually untouched since then: "But if we had left it any longer, we wouldn't have been able to get near the site to clear it at all."

He is fencing the area and grassing it.

He said some people said they were delighted to see it being cleared — there had been dumping.

26/1/1990

THE OWL and the Pussycat went to sea... but only a small number went to see the first two evening performances of this enchanting musical play at Tenterden town hall.

The auditorium was less than half full for Saturday evening's show, although the youngsters who did see it more than made up for lack of numbers with spirited hisses and boos whenever the villain of the piece, the Plum Pudding

to full houses this weekend.

The real star of this production must be wardrobe mistress Francis Sharp and her assistant Suzanne Bermingham who devised a colourful array of costumes.

Ann Bothway as Spoon was a picture as a faint-hearted flapper in peach and glittering silver.

Ian Klemen sniffed his inimitable way through as the Dong and Brenda Hedley gave

the sweet-voiced Heather Leslie as Pussycat.

Brian Fagg as Flea, hopped and quivered, leered and peered and extracted maximum venom.

Maurice Clarke was spot on as Professor Bosh and Pauline Chalk was delightful in her cameo role as the scatterbrain Turkey who lived on the hill.

Bob Sharp and director Barbara Hilder took it in turns to play Pig and Jo Arnold.

26/1/1990

School has special event to welcome new head teacher

A GETTING-to-know-you evening at Tenterden junior school for new head teacher Helen Tweedle was almost held by candle and torchlight.

Power supplies were restored just before the meeting, after repairs to lines brought down by the storm.

All pupils entered a lookalike painting competition and the head judged the work of Sara Holmes, Beth Hukins, Christina Lawrence, Sarah Darling, Kelly Bourne, Elizabeth Gilpin, Victoria Day and Samantha Foste to be closest to her likeness.

Storyteller Rob Parkinson entertained the packed family assembly.

The new head is pictured above with some of her new pupils.