

**Press Release
27 August 2010**



10th Anniversary Celebrations at the Kent & East Sussex Railway's Hoppers Weekend

On the 11 and 12 September, visitors to Bodiam station can enjoy a whole weekend of "opping nostalgia" as the Kent & East Sussex Railway hosts its tenth annual **Hop Pickers Weekend**.

Bodiam was an important area for hop picking and the weekend re-lives the days when Londoners came 'dahn 'opping' for a summer break.

Each summer hop pickers used to arrive in specially timetabled trains from London and this year the railway is celebrating 52 years since the last Hop Pickers Special arrived in Bodiam station.

For hop pickers from the East End of London this was their annual holiday where they could enjoy time in the fresh countryside air.

In memory and recognition of this important tradition, every year the railway personally invites all the hop pickers from across the country to join in the celebrations and re unite with old friends.

Over the weekend former hop pickers re live memories whilst visitors experience the hop picking way of life first hand in the recreated hop garden and hopper's hut where typically pickers would have stayed, sometimes for as long as six weeks. These huts were often given a "homely" feel with wallpaper and pictures added to brighten them up!

Visitors will have the opportunity to try their hand at the testing skill of hop stripping, something which was either very easy or very difficult depending on the weather and the state of the vine.

There will also be memorabilia on display at the station together with period tractors and steam driven road vehicles. An open top heritage double-decker bus will be making frequent trips between the station and Bodiam Castle.

Live entertainment throughout the weekend, including Morris Dancers, will create a fitting atmosphere, especially on Saturday night when visitors are invited to join the hop pickers in a sing along around the camp fire.

Everyone on the hopping weekend can purchase delicious food from the BBQ or enjoy a variety of beverages including fine local ales available from the bar. There will also be a tea tent.

The event is open from 10.30am to 6:00pm each day. Saturday's evening entertainment is free to enter and the beer tent and BBQ will be open.

Tickets including return train travel to Bodiam are - Adult £12.80, Senior Citizen £11.80, Child (3 - 15 years inc.) £7.80 and Family (2 adults + up to 3 children or 1 adult and up to 4 children) £34.00. Advance tickets can be obtained by telephoning: 01580 765155. Visitors are advised to book tickets in advance to avoid disappointment.

Please see the website for train times. www.kesr.org.uk

Tenterden and Northiam stations have free parking and visitors are advised to park and ride from these stations.. Bodiam station has no public parking however; visitors wishing to start their journey there can park at the castle for £2 all day. The castle's post code is: TN32 5UA and their phone number: 01580 831322. Bodiam station is a short walk from the Castle.

For more information please visit www.kesr.org.uk

For images contact Caroline Edmunds on 01892616647 or caroline@penningtonpr.com