

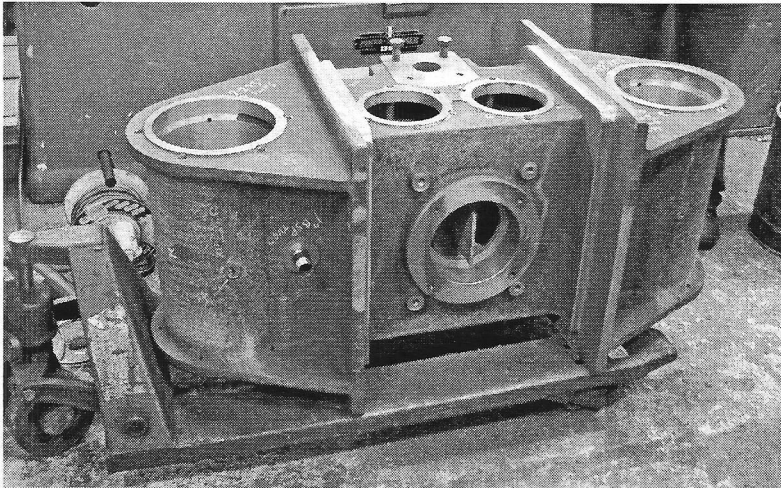


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THE COLONEL

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Winter 2010



THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY
*for enthusiasts of the light and narrow gauge railways of
Colonel Holman F. Stephens*

Staff Officers

CHAIRMAN

Les Darbyshire

74 Red Rose, Binfield, Bracknell RG42 5LD
Tel: 01344 420791 Email: lesdar74@aol.com

SECRETARY

Kerry Baylis

80 Alexandra Road
Kingston upon Hull HU5 2NT
Tel: 01482 342506
Email: kerry@thetrackside.karoo.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

David Powell

Gateways, Bledlow Road, Saunderton,
Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 9NG
Tel: 01844 343377
Email: david.powell@waitrose.com

WEB MANAGER

Bruce Hunt

Email: webmaster@colonelstephensociety.co.uk

TREASURER

Nigel Bird

Bryn Hir, Llanio Road, Llwyn-y-Groes,
Tregaron, Ceredigion SY25 6PY
Tel: 01974 821281
Email: nigelbird.books@virgin.net

ARCHIVIST

Stuart Marshall

53 Peasland Road, Saffron Walden,
Essex CB11 3ED Tel: 01799 500528
Email: stuart.j.marshall@ntlworld.com

EDITOR & PUBLICITY OFFICER

Ross Shimmon

7 Nobel Court
Faversham, Kent ME13 7SD
Tel: 01795 533137
Email: pandrshimmon@btinternet.com

Subscriptions *The Colonel* is distributed to members of the Colonel Stephens Society only. Membership of the Society costs £7 annually in the UK. Joint membership for two people, one *Colonel*, same address, is £9. Overseas membership is £12. Applications to our Membership Secretary (address above).

An Index to *The Colonel* issues 1-100 is available on our website (see below).

Back numbers of *The Colonel* from 2 to the latest issue are all in stock. They are available from our Secretary (address above). Price to members is £1 per issue, including UK postage. Discounts for large orders: 21-40 issues 90p each, 41 and more 80p each. Excess postage for overseas orders will be charged at cost. Issue 1 was a single sheet. It can be supplied on request free of charge with any other order, or separately on receipt of an A5-size stamped addressed envelope.

Binders You can order binders direct from the suppliers, Modern Bookbinders Ltd, Pringle St, Blackburn BB1 1SA Tel: 01254 59371. You will need 210x150mm size. Website: home.btclick.com/binders/enquiries

Badges Chic Colonel Stephens Society badges may be purchased from our Membership Secretary (address above) at £4.25 including postage.

Greetings Cards Attractive all-the-year round cards, complete with envelopes, depicting S&MR *Gazelle* are available from our Treasurer (address above) at 5 for £6, including post and packing. Great for birthdays, invitations, thank you notes.

Cheques In all cases please make out cheques to "The Colonel Stephens Society".

Discussion Group Enrol for the Colonel Stephens e-Discussion Group by opening a Yahoo account with a user name and password. After logging on to the Yahoo Groups.com link (*not* .co.uk), log on with same details if asked, search for ColonelHFStephens and follow the prompts to register.

Website Visit our constantly updated website www.colonelstephensociety.co.uk

Editorial: Donations: a conundrum

Membership Secretary, David Powell, reports elsewhere in this issue, that our members are, once again, showing their generosity in making donations to our funds to support preservation and conservation projects along with their subscription renewals. We have of course made good use of this fund in recent years, having supported such diverse projects as the conservation of the Festiniog Archives, the restoration of Russell, Colin Shutt's work to recreate a Ford rail lorry as once used on the SMR and the Selsey Tramway, and contributed the purchase of an EKR hand lamp for the Colonel Stephens Museum, to mention just a few. We published a full list

of the donations made up to December 1998 in Colonel 93. We plan to upload it on our website and to keep it up to date. We know that there are many worthwhile projects on railways associated with the Colonel. However, despite sending press releases announcing the availability of small grants, we rarely if ever get an application. So if you know of a worthy cause, prompt those in charge to get in touch. As a step to increase publicity we are investigating the cost of having plaques made to present to recipients of our grants. More on this later.

Ross Shimmon

Front cover: What's this? The cylinders and valve chest of FR Double Fairlie in Boston Lodge Works (see page 19).

PHOTO: Leslie Darbyshire.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please try to keep these important dates free in your diary for 2011:

- ▶ Saturday and Sunday, 14th and 15th May: Members' Weekend, based at the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway (Saturday) and the Rother Valley Railway (Sunday).
- ▶ Saturday and Sunday, 23rd and 24th July: Camrail model railway exhibition with a strong Colonel Stephens theme at St Margaret's Hall, St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1DE.

More details of both these unmissable events will appear in the next issue of *The Colonel*, on our website and our Yahoo Group. •

WITTERSHAM ROAD AT WORK

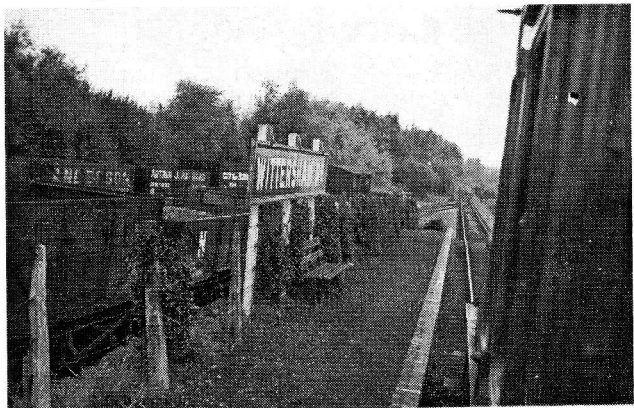
BOB MILLUM, brought up on a farm near Wittersham in Kent, recalls how the KESR served the farming community in the 1940s

The Millum farm was Lowden Farm and was situated about half a mile down a long two track drive from the road. It was a mainly dairy farm with a mixed herd. They raised their own replacement heifers and bull calves were sold at market. Further income was generated by fattening pigs from weaners to bacon weight. Each year, at about Easter, day-old chicks were bought to be raised as fattening cockerels, which were caponized for the Christmas markets. Granddad would sit for several days in the big barn, up to his knees in feathers as he killed and then plucked the birds. Once he had done about half a dozen he would take them in to Granny in the kitchen. They were then hung in the cellar for two or three days before she dressed and trussed them. Trussing was an art and the trick was to pull the legs in tightly to the sides. This forced the breast up and widened them to make the breast look even more attractive - rather like the modern "Wonder Bra". They had a large number of private customers for these birds and the rest went to hotels in London. They killed out at about fourteen pounds and having been reared free range before finishing on wheat and barley meal they were superb eating.

The chicks arrive

The chicks would arrive by train at Wittersham Road station on the Rother Valley line. This line is still preserved today with its unique small, long chimneyed engines. The chicks were in octagonal boxes that had a lid which could be rotated for ventilation. The breeder would telephone when the chicks were put on the train to let us know the time of arrival. They would be put in the guard's van

and the guard would look after them. Often when we picked them up with the horse and cart they would have been unloaded and put in the shade. When we got back to the farm they were unpacked in the kitchen. Any that were a bit the worse for wear were put in the warm oven of the kitchen range to recover and mostly they did. Each box was a dozen chicks but always contained thirteen to cover for losses in transit. It was seen as a considerable bonus if these could be saved. A large garden and an orchard adjoined the house and in the orchard granddad would have placed the coops each containing a broody hen - cluck hen as we knew them because of the distinct clucking noise they made when broody. The hens were from the laying hens kept by granny. They would soon take to the chicks and after a couple of days the chicks were allowed out but the hens were kept in by bars that the chicks could get through and the hens could reach out to the board on which was placed food and water. To start



with the chicks did not stray far and instinctively knew that any shadow overhead could be a predator and would run to mum for cover.

Alarm call

If mum wasn't happy she would cluck an alarm call and they would immediately go to her. At night the chicks would go in naturally and we went round and put the boards up onto the front of the coops where they were secured by a wooden latch. Later when the chicks were older the mothers would be let out with them to further their education. Once they had started to feather, the hens were removed and the young poult left

only. We were issued with gas masks at this time - probably a bit late but then we had never had a gas attack. We all went to the Methodist hall in the village to get them and be shown how to use them. This hall was used by the ministry regularly to issue the concentrated orange juice, cod liver oil and dried milk powder for families with children and small babies. The gas masks issued were in a small square cardboard box with a ribbon to go round your neck. My sister who was still very small had a canister one which

BOTH PHOTOS:

Courtesy of the Colonel Stephens Museum, Tenterden



alone. Sometimes it was quite a bit of sport to get them to go in at night. This was a time when the cloth cap would come in handy either by waving it about or throwing it at an outlier.

Sheep dog from Wales

The guards on the trains were country men and quite used to carrying small live and dead stock. When a sheep dog was bought from Wales it arrived via London in a crate. On the journey and whilst being transferred in London the guards and porters at various stages of the journey would have checked and given it a drink.

Evacuation

The Germans had begun to attack the south of England with V2 rockets. It was decided to evacuate all the children from our area. If you had relatives in the north, the family could go, if not it was the children

you could put her completely inside. The man who showed us how to put them on had one with large Mickey Mouse ears on. This was designed to make us think of them as fun. Imagine the disappointment when got ours out with no ears.

Relations in the north

We had relations in the north, my mother's aunt and uncle on her father's side. They lived in Walkden, a district of Manchester. We would go up and stay with them. I don't remember much about the packing or arrangements, all I knew was that I had to leave Hettey, Henny and Cockle Benny [*the family's bantams*] and my beloved tractor [*an old tricycle*] and go "up north". I was allowed to take Ted. He was a very special teddy bear who had lost all his hair and somebody had cleverly knitted him a

continued on next page ►

WITTERSHAM ROAD

► *continued from previous page*

complete new outside from dark green khaki wool. He had an embroidered nose and button eyes. Mum had made him little short trousers with braces and a jacket, both from an old pair of corduroy trousers that I had outgrown. The packing was done and I had my own small case and of course my cardboard box gas mask. The case and I were both labelled with a card parcel label which was attached with white string to my coat and the handle of the case. As far as I know they had my name age and destination on them.

Separation

Now the nightmare began! British government at its stupid best. We went to Wittersham Road Station and caught a Rother Valley train to Robertsbridge. Here we were to take a train to London before transferring to a train for Manchester. At this point we were separated as the government had decreed that mothers and children should not travel in the same part of the train together going to London due to the bombing threat. I was dragged kicking and screaming away. I was very good at having a real howler of a tantrum as I had had several rehearsals when not getting my own way. I was now put with a whole heap of other weepy kids, some with parents at the other end of the platform and some labelled and travelling alone. The train when it came was very big and noisy I had only been used to Puffing Billy on the Rother Valley line. I remember the smoke from the engine was very gritty and got in my eyes. The rest of the journey is a blur. We were reunited in London and got the train to Manchester. We were given cups of tea on a station in London. During the war in any place where there were troops or people such as the ARP [Air Raid Precautions] there was always a Salvation Army or other organization's stall or van producing tea and sometimes buns known as a "char and wad". We must eventually have got to Walkden and I remember the tall dark old house with a big front door.

Back home

At last the war in Europe ended and we returned home. I started my school career and for the next eight or nine years I would spend most of my school holidays at Lowden. I would have left school at any time if I could and gone to live and help out on the farm. I reckon I knew every blade of grass and every nook and cranny. Each holiday coincided with a different season on the farm which in turn produced a varied set of activities and tasks. The dairy herd was the single most dominant factor in deciding what had to be done. First and foremost they had to be milked twice a day three hundred and sixty five days of the year and always at the same time. The morning milking time was governed by the time of arrival of the milk lorry to collect the churns. The lorry collected the churns from the road side and from a specially constructed stand. This had to be big enough to take all the churns and of such a height that the driver would be able to put them on the lorry without having to lift them. As you moved around the countryside it was interesting to note the variety of ways in which the stands were made. Some were wood, some metal and others brick and concrete. Ours was made of railway sleepers, no doubt due to our proximity to the railway and sidings at Wittersham Road station. It might seem strange to have so many sidings at a small rural station but apparently they were built to put Big Bertha on. She was a railway gun that fired a big shell and the range was capable of shooting into France. When the gun was fired, the recoil was such that it ran back on the rails. The rest of the sidings were mainly for ammunition trucks. ●

These fascinating glimpses of life in Kent in the 1940s are edited extracts from the draft of The Life of a Country Publican by Bob Millum. We will include full publication details in a future issue when we have them.

MODELLING THOSE 'TOUGH LITTLE BEASTS'

ANGUS WATKINS *concludes his description of his model of the Portmadoc, Beddgelert and South Snowdon Railway with the construction of the Ganz 3-phase electric locomotives*

The general shape and appearance of the locos is fairly certain, as some drawings by Ganz survive. A reconstruction by Trevor Polding and Mike Swift for the Narrow Gauge Railway Society was reproduced in *NG & IRM Review 57* and from this I drew up a simple 4mm scale CAD drawing (Fig 1) and a development drawing (Fig 2). Ends and base were cut from 20thou Plasti-card.

A cut-out was made in the base to enable it to fit over an Avalon Models 0-4-0 chassis

Boiling water is poured into the can, then poured out and the can cooled under the cold tap. This gives a roof with approximately the right curvature.

There were now two questions to be dealt with:

1) "What about the steam?"

Why on earth should an electric locomotive produce steam? Well, 3-phase electric motors are essentially synchronous motors which run at an almost constant speed, irrespective of load. Most can be arranged to run

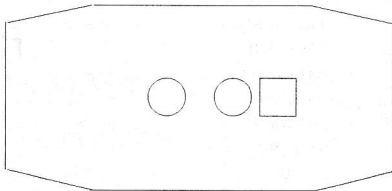
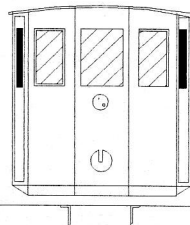
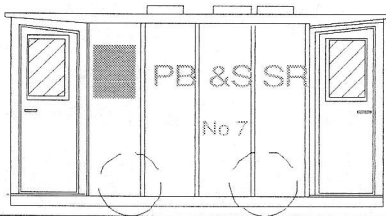


Fig 1 Locomotive

Based on the the drawing by Trevor Polding and Mike Swift published in NG&IRM Review 57



which has the correct wheel-base. The roof was made by my usual method of cutting it out from Plasticard, then strapping it tightly to an empty beer-can with masking tape.

at two or three set speeds. To accelerate between speeds a big variable resistor is used. This was invariably a liquid resistor –

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► *Continued from previous page*
 a tank of conducting liquid, eg a salt solution, into which electrodes could be lowered or raised. Under heavy current, the liquid would boil. 3-phase locomotives were used in Northern Italy until the 1970s and photographs show them producing clouds of steam from chimneys mounted over the resistors. The photographs also showed grilles, louvres, or rows of holes to ventilate and cool the resistors. So I fitted a smoke unit, a short chimney above it and a grill in the side of the vehicle.

2) "What sort of electrical pick-up was used?"

This has been debated in several articles. Current was to be supplied from two overhead wires (the third phase being supplied from the track) so did Bruce Peebles intend to use a pair of trolley poles or a bow collector carrying a pair of contacts? Other models, and Edward Paget-Tomlinson's evoca-

an existing photograph showing part of the roof of one of the locos. Insulators were represented by slices of green insulation, and the bow collector was mounted on a slightly modified David Voice model tram pole mounting.

The livery [*cream upper, brown lower with a white roof*] is entirely fictional and was chosen to be different from any other North Wales railway of the time, while using standard Humbrol colours. ●

Photo opposite: *The model on Patrick Collins's "Wintoncester Water Works", showing the roof-top gear and the two contact areas on the cross-bar of the bow collector.*

PHOTO courtesy of John Ardern-Smith. The September 2010 issue of The Railway Modeller has an extended article with colour photographs of Angus's layout 'Beddgelert 1910'.

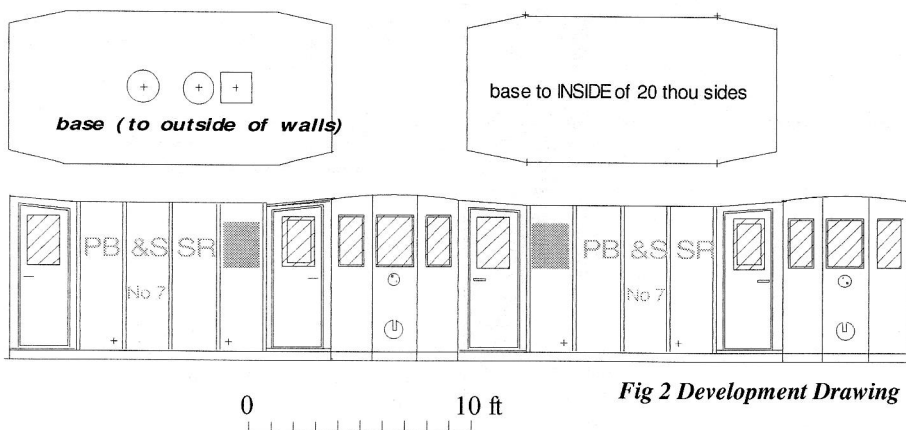


Fig 2 Development Drawing

tive painting of a PBSSR train, have chosen trolley poles. However, a study of photographs of the locomotives Ganz designed and built for the Simplon tunnel and for the Valtellina line clearly showed their preference for a simple, rectangular bow collectors at this time, and so this option was chosen.

The rest of the roof-top gear on the locomotive was designed to resemble that on other 3-phase machines and to conform with

Deadlines for 2011

Copy for *The Colonel* should be submitted to the Editor by the following dates:

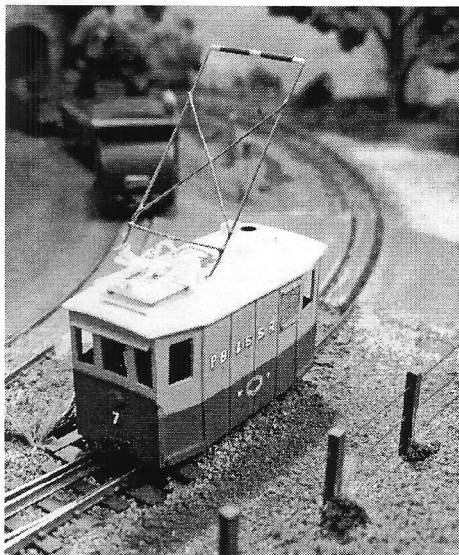
102: Spring 2011: 15th February

103: Summer 2011: 15th May

104: Autumn 2011: 15th August

105: winter 2011: 15th November

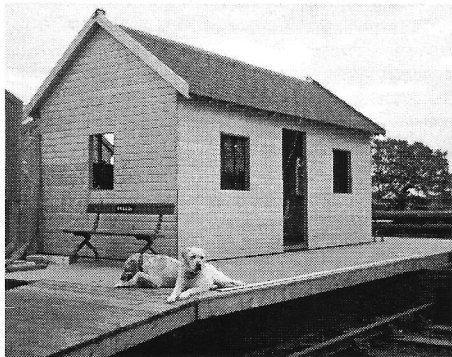
These are final dates, but we much prefer earlier receipt if at all possible. ●



NEWS IN BRIEF

► Devotees of the **Sheppey Light Rly** will be pleased to learn that Electrifying Trains www.electrifyingtrains.co.uk are producing 7mm models of the SR 2-coach sets converted by the SR from ex-SECR steam railmotors, including the articulated versions. You need to be on very good terms with Santa, however, if you'd like a set for Christmas. They are priced at £925.

► Members who visited **Colin Shutt** as part of this year's Members' Weekend will be delighted to see how much progress he has made with his station on the East Wressle & Brind Railway (*below*). Note the two passengers patiently waiting!



► The **KESR** carriage shed extension is well under way. Last time we visited, the roof was on. Once completed it will enable more restoration work to be done under cover. If you would like to contribute to the appeal contact: enquiries@kesr.org.uk

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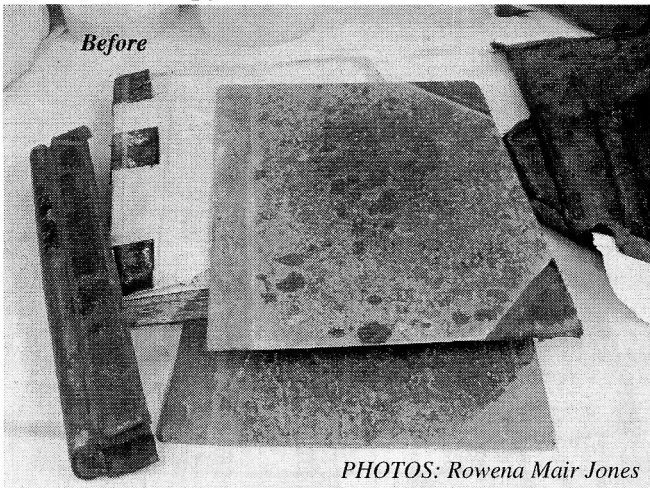
CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Documents complement artefacts and aid understanding argues
ROWENA MAIR JONES *of the Gwynedd Archive Service, citing an*
example from Boston Lodge

The Pfestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways archive, which covers the period from 1832 to the re-opening of the line in the 1950s, contains many documents that build up a picture of what day-to-day life was like on a working railway.

For the past 15 years Gwynedd Archive Service Conservation unit has been involved in the preservation and conservation of many such items from the collection, allowing access to documents that would otherwise lie unseen.

Spring back copy book



PHOTOS: Rowena Mair Jones

A fine example is a 'spring back' copy book (Reference number: XD 97 302015) that came to our conservation studio in a sorry state with its spine detached, it was obvious that it could not be used as a volume without causing further damage to the text block so a condition report and treatment

options were drawn up. It is a copy letter book of 'Robat' Williams, Locomotive Superintendent at Boston Lodge. It covers the period 1912 to 1914 and consists of letters, reports, memos on technical, financial and staffing matters.

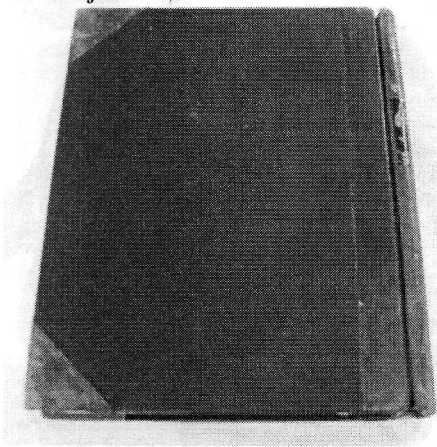
The initial condition of the text block, spine and the attached-boards of the volume was good and it seems that the original adhesive had simply dried and lost its strength, resulting in the covering materials detaching.

In this case the treatment option was to re-attach the original spine and leather corners, with the exception of one which was missing and which would have to be replaced.

So the work began with the lining of the spine with 'book cloth', this cloth is very strong and flexible, ideal for lining the spines of books. The original endpapers were fine except that the adhesive holding them together had dried and detached resulting in new linings adhering to the original. Finally before the original spine was re-attached, the spring that gives the volume its characteristics was re-attached. The spring is a device within the spine that varies in material from folded card to a rounded metal device. This gives the volume its strength and ability to lie flat when open, giving the user the ability to write all the way along the page and when you open the volume it springs open which gives it its name 'spring back'.

The original boards were re-attached using wheat starch paste and the original leather was prepared to be re-adhered by being hydrated using de-ionized water and

After



applying two layers of wheat starch paste to the reverse, as the leather will absorb much of the moisture from the paste. It was then simply placed over the spine and moulded into shape along the joint, head and tail. The same method of leather preparation was used to re-attach the leather corners.

As the original cloth cover was faded and had lost its mechanical strength, a new cover of book cloth was selected that was similar in colour and material to the original. The endpapers were pasted on to the boards and, once dry, the volume was once again fit for production.

The volume is now housed in a specially made box as a preservation measure and is stored under environmental conditions according to British Standards 4545 2000. Once again this item is fit for production for all to see, use and enjoy. ●

The conservation unit accepts external commissions for conservation of volumes, paper, parchment, seals, maps and plans. For more information contact The Gwynedd Archive Service Conservation unit, Victoria Dock, Caernarfon, LL55 1SH. 01286 679096.

More News in Brief

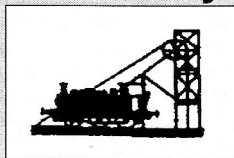
► On Saturday 19th February 2011 the first public train service will run between Porthmadog and Caernarfon on the **Welsh Highland**. This will be the first time the public will be able to buy a ticket to do the complete journey.

Demand is expected to be high and premium fares will apply. Half the proceeds from these trains will go towards the rebuild of vehicle 2090 to enable both WHR sets to have a proper guard's van and catering facilities. The WHRS has also offered money for this project which should begin to show results in early 2011. There will be a further eight days when the full route service will run. Paying customers will be given preference on the inaugural day. Both Caernarfon and Porthmadog booking offices have a long list of people who are waiting for this opportunity and they will be offered tickets first.

Third class return tickets are priced at £50.00 and First Class at £100.00 - including morning coffee & biscuits on the outward journey and a cream tea on the return. All travellers will receive a special commemorative ticket to celebrate the occasion. Trains depart from Caernarfon at 1100 and 1430.

As previously reported, the CS Society plans to hold its Members' Weekend in Porthmadog in 2012, including a trip on the entire route. ●

The East Kent Railway



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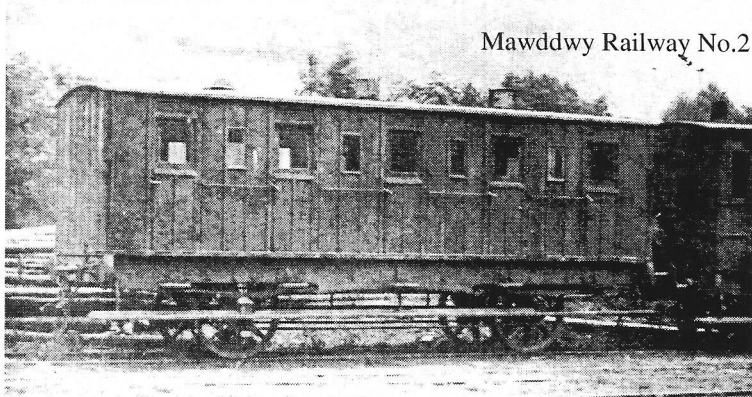
Booking office: 01304 832042

www.eastkentrailway.com

CURIOUS CONNECTIONS

BRIAN JANES *ponders the true origins of a grounded carriage body once used as a goods shed at Nesscliffe on the SMR*

Researchers get strange leads and connections. But this lead came from the inestimable *Colonel*; a reference in 'Blasts from the Past' in issue 99 to an HMRS article by Roger Kidner (Vol 14 No.11), thanks to the magazine cuttings sent in by Ian Dack, which did indeed turn up a curious connection.



Mawddwy Railway No.2

Goods shed at Nesscliffe

My particular interest was a reference to the coach body grounded as a goods shed at Nesscliffe on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire. Now the origins of this coach have had me puzzled for some time. I had hypothesized that it might have been an original Potts coach that had been left behind as a body, but I could find no hard evidence one way or the other. But, strangely, in a round about sort of way, I may have been right. Now Roger Kidner's article simply says 'the MS&L sold a four-wheeled third brake at some early date to the Mawddwy Railway (No 2); the body was for many years at the S&MLR station at Nesscliffe'. Odd, I thought, how would a Mawddwy Railway carriage end up there.

£10 each

Roger Kidner was not, however, a man

to put something down in which he didn't believe. So some more checking was called for. *Great Western Railway Journal* No 59 (Summer 2006) has an excellent, definitive, article by Glyn Williams on the Mawddwy. There is a photo of No 2 and it is virtually identical with the Nesscliffe coach, indeed the only change is the alteration of the

guard's door to a double to help with access. Even the grab rails to help the guard pass along outside from compartment to compartment are there (Stephens was by no means the first to promote this dangerous practice). Glyn

Williams then says that after the Mawddwy was closed for the first time in 1907, the Cambrian Railway took over in 1909 and the five surviving carriages (valued at £10 each) were moved to Oswestry works by July 1910. Williams could only trace the subsequent careers of the two that stayed in use as vans on the Cambrian, but now we have a probable connection with Nesscliffe. Stephens, with his usual eye for a bargain, must have enquired about an old body for use as a goods shed and found one at Oswestry, only 6 miles from Llanymynech.

The Potts connection

The Potts connection? Well Roger Kidner in his informative 1978 Oakwood Press book *Carriage Stock of Minor Standard Gauge Railways* was unable to give the origin of Coach No 2, so I am not sure from where and when his MS&L provenance

A WILD, WET, WELSH WEEKEND

STEVE PARR, LES DARBYSHIRE and NIGEL BIRD report on the Society's informal visit to Porthmadog in September

After an impromptu get together in the Ffestiniog Railway's own food and real ale bar, *Spooners*, on Friday evening, twelve CSS members and three 'soon -we hope- to be members' met up at the **Welsh Highland Heritage Railway Station** in Porthmadog on a sunny Saturday morning for a stroll round and a welcome cuppa. There was time to enjoy the 50 minute trip and so your reporter, Dave Hiscocks, Mike and Richard took a ride on the 'Heritage' line. For those who haven't visited the WHHR this is what, until recently, was known as the 'Welsh Highland Railway (1964) Co'. Their 2-foot gauge running line is not on the formation of the original Welsh Highland Railway, but runs alongside the Cambrian main line and is built on the track bed of a former standard gauge interchange siding that ran out from Porthmadog main (Cambrian) line Station.

The running line is short and, after passing the railway's works at Gelert's Farm, terminates some half a mile from the start at a junction with the original and now rebuilt (by the Ffestiniog Railway) **Welsh Highland Railway** at Pen y mount. Here is a delightfully 'Colonelesque' station building of corrugated iron over a wooden frame incorporating a small booking office and waiting shelter.

Here the engine runs around, stopping short of the junction where the two railways coincide. The return train stops at Gelert's Farm where passengers are greeted by staff, immaculately turned out in WHHR maroon waistcoats and white shirts. You are then escorted to the excellent new museum (and I choose this term carefully having been to our last AGM at The NRM in York).

Unless you have been to the WHHR in the last 12-18 months you need to go again to see this. The quality and variety of dis-

plays, interpretative and bilingual information, lighting and the uncluttered layout are all superb. The museum itself migrates subtly from displays to rolling stock on tracks and finally into the running shed and is so cleverly done you don't notice the transition. I marvelled at the quality of the rebuilt WHR buffet carriage that is rolled out on high days and holidays to become part of the afternoon service providing Welsh cream teas. An impressive display of steam and diesel locos including the massive Romanian built 'Polish' diesel that made its debut on the line as recently as 31st August last, rounds off the area. If that wasn't enough you also get, in the ticket price, the chance to ride on a super 7¼" gauge line that winds its way around the sheds and through the shrubbery, including a mock tunnel and a timber trestle over a small stream. The carriages are a delight carrying two sitting face to face under canopy roofs.

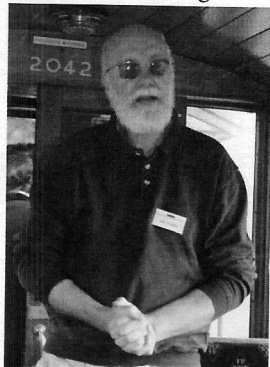
What this railway lacks in running line it makes up in its additional attractions. Let's hope it isn't too long before we see *Russell* plus heritage carriages and wagons travelling from here through to the Aberglaslyn Pass to provide an enhanced experience for visitors and enthusiasts alike!



Pont Croesor

Those of us who had travelled met up

with the rest of the group who had been sampling the delights of the excellent WHHR bookshop and cafe and we all moved on in convoy to Pont Croesor station to await our **Welsh Highland** train to Caernarfon. The train arrived bang on time and what a sight it made, crossing Pont Croesor. Whilst the engine (Garratt 87) ran around the train, we all admired the recently commis-



sioned Boston Lodge-built Pullman observation car and made a mental note to grab seats at Caernarfon for the run back to Pont Croesor when the engine would be at the opposite end of the train. Shortly after we set off, our host and unofficial tour guide, Iain Fraser (*pictured*),

commenced his very informative narration of the journey. Catering staff with trolley also duly arrived (yes, they have corridor stock!) and took orders for hot rolls. The question was asked of the staff would the rolls be ready before Caernarfon to which the speedy reply was "I hope so, I get off at Dinas"! The rolls duly arrived hot and nice quality too, with local bread and sausage. Just a pity they'd run out of the advertised eggs. Was that a coincidence or did I detect the ghost of Colonel Stephens at work, conspiring with the caterer to gain this economy?

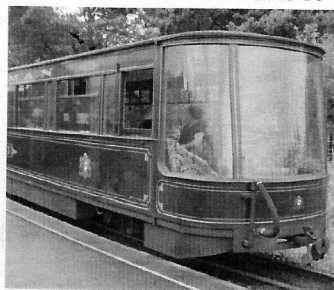
By the time the rolls arrived we had threaded our way through the Nantmor tunnel and along the spectacular Aberglaslyn pass. This was the first time I had travelled this section by train and I thereby ticked another 'must do' off my list. It really is as good as the old photos show and the scenery appears to have changed very little. Sadly by the time we had left Beddgelert and were pounding up through the forestry to Rhydd Ddu, the Welsh rain had come down to greet us. Ah well - I'll just have to do it again to get the full glory of the Snowdonia scenery

in sunshine!

Return on the Observation Car

Following a short stop in Caernarfon where we bagged our seats in the observation car (*pictured below*), whilst noting the old De Winton foundry opposite the station, we settled down to enjoy the view from the rear of the train and the prospect of a Welsh cream tea with scone and jam delivered to our seats. We got as far as Rhydd Ddu and waited for the train to Caernarfon to pass. We waited and waited, then an announcement came from the guard that the station water supply at Beddgelert had failed and the loco from the northbound train would be coming

up light engine to take water at Rhydd Ddu, leaving its train at Beddgelert. It would then couple



to the back of our train to return to Beddgelert. Now the Colonel's ghost was really working his magic!

The red Garratt (138) duly arrived, took water and coupled up to us for the short trip down to Beddgelert, although having the loco at the end of the train obscured our view, it was a novelty to have Garratts topping and tailing our train.

A final throw of the Colonel's dice that day meant that my cream tea arrived minus scone, but with Welsh cake substituted - no doubt also a Colonelesque economy!

Those of us with nothing better to do (or nowhere more welcoming than a damp tent in a seemingly never ending downpour) then headed to the *Unicorn*, followed by the *Golden Fleece* in Tremadog for sustenance of hot food and real ale. The evening was rounded off in *Spooner's* - of course - before we retired to our various billets to rest, reflect and look forward to Sunday.....

Steve Parr

Continued on page 18 ►



PHOTOS by: Steve Parr, Leslie Darbyshire, Nigel Bird and Ross Shimmon. More photos on our website www.colonelstephens.co.uk

A Wild, Wet, Welsh Weekend in Colour

1: WTHR toast rack; 2: Pen-y-Mount station WTHR; 3: Caernarfon train leaving Pont Croesor; 4: Yes, it was wet! View from the observation car as WTHR Garratt tagged on the back to Beddgelert; 5: Inside the WTHR museum at Gelert's Farm; 6: Typical WTHR infrastructure; 7: Members inspect *Busta* and Spooner's Boat inside Boston Lodge; 8: Enjoying a ride in the FR's observation car (No.100); 9: Trains passing at Minfordd, FR; 10: Almost new-build 'Bug Box' under construction at Boston Lodge; 11: Too late for the last issue, FR observation car; 12: *Welsh Pony* awaiting its fate.

A WILD, WET WELSH WEEKEND

► *Continued from page 15*

Boston Lodge

On Sunday morning as thirteen of us assembled at the lay-by at the end of The Cob in Porthmadoc, in true Welsh tradition it started to rain! Crossing the road, we ascended the steep stone steps in the retaining wall to emerge at track level – and my mind was immediately taken back over half a century to my first visit to the Festiniog Railway in 1953, when I was on a cycling trip around Wales. How different it was then, before any preservation had started! The track was overgrown, with quite substantial saplings sprouting from it. The Works was closed off by a stone wall and corrugated iron fencing pierced by iron gates that were securely locked, but within could be seen the forlorn sight of derelict stock mouldering away. Over to the right were long lines of rusting slate wagons. The dilapidated loco shed off to the left was also securely locked, but through a gap in the doors could be glimpsed the ghostly shapes of locos. Having read my *Narrow Gauge Rails to Porthmadoc*, I knew that one was the **North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway's** Single Fairlie *Moel Tryfan*, sadly not with us today having been broken up in the early days of preservation.

Back to 2010, and what a different picture! Track in first class condition, the Works much more open, with no boundary fence or gates, and all stock visible looking very smart. There were still lines of slate and other wagons off to the right, but not much rust to be seen!

The Loco Shed

The loco shed was still there but no longer dilapidated, recently having been beautifully restored. It was locked as before, but this time our guide for the first part of the visit, Iain Fraser, was there to open it for us. This was very welcome, not only because it enabled us to inspect the contents

but also because by now it was raining really hard! The sound of a whistle made us move outside briefly, despite the wet, to see *Earl of Merioneth* pass with the first up train of the day.

Inside again, we were shown a collection of locos and stock including *Lilla* from the **Penrhyn Railway**, an original **Festiniog 0-4-0 Palmerston** built by George England in London in 1864 and its slightly larger sibling *Welsh Pony* of 1867 which it is hoped to restore to working order by 2013 for the 150th anniversary of the first use of steam on the line. Among the rolling stock were some restorations of original vehicles and some new-build replicas of long-scrapped ones. Notable among the latter were the “curly roof” van (a replica of an 1873 Brown, Marshall vehicle), and an open “Bug Box” four-wheeler with a leather folding roof erected by a complex lever system, and leather aprons to preserve the modesty of the Victorian ladies who would have travelled in it.

The Works

Having seen everything in the shed, we then crossed the running line to Boston Lodge Works proper. It is divided into two parts, one containing the machine shop and erecting shop where the locomotives are maintained (and indeed built) and the other the carriage shop and paint shop. In the first part, activities were largely concerned with metal and in the second part with wood, though there was some overlap. Here we

were introduced to our very knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide, Norman Bond, who was in charge of the carriage shop. Norman showed us some of the work that was currently in hand, including a closed “Bug Box” that was virtually all new-build but included a few original fittings.

We were all most impressed by the very high standard of workmanship and by the authenticity of the materials used - no cutting cor-

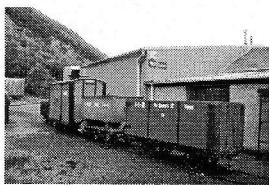


ners here! We were shown a display of photographs of some of the work done over the past few years, including vehicles for other railways and for private buyers, as well as those for use on the home railways.

One really strange item hiding at the back of the carriage shop was a replica of "Spooner's Boat". This was an odd four-wheeled vehicle that was indeed boat shaped, and moreover was propelled by a sail! The replica had been built from very sparse information; contemporary descriptions and an old print, but as accurate as possible. It actually worked too, and could get up to a good speed with a favourable wind! Near to the Boat was a small diesel powered platelayers' trolley named *Busta*. This was of American origin dating from WW1, and had been used on the **Welsh Highland** in the Colonel's time.

The Paint Shop

In the paint shop was a recently painted Hudson coach – the finish on this was superb, far better than most people achieve in domestic painting! Close by were *Blanche*, another **Penrhyn** loco, and the Single Fairlie *Taliesin*. The latter was built at Boston Lodge in 1999 using a few parts from the original of 1876 that was scrapped in 1935.



Boston Lodge in 1992, and is the most modern Double Fairlie in the world.

In the main erecting shop, a boiler from one of the **Welsh Highland** Garratts was being slowly manoeuvred into position by the diesel *Moely-Gest*. A Garratt boiler is a very large beast when seen close to! At the other end of the scale was a power bogie from *David Lloyd George*, a masterpiece of compact design, but one that it is



hoped to improve further. Currently the cylinders and valve chests are all separate castings, but we were shown a prototype casting that combined these into a single unit [pictured on the cover - Ed]. Piston valves will be fitted rather than the present slide valves, and there should be substantial savings in both the manufacturing and running costs. There were no locomotives being built at the moment, the replica **Lynton & Barnstaple** Manning Wardle *Lyd* having recently been completed, but maintenance of the Ffestiniog's own stock is of course an on-going activity.

The machine shop brought on another bout of nostalgia, as it had the characteristic smell of cutting oil that took me back to apprenticeship days! The shop contained the usual collection of lathes, mills, borers etc, some quite elderly but with digital read-out equipment added to them to bring them into the 21st century. There was even a Myford lathe that made me feel at home as I have a similar (but even older!) machine in my own workshop.

Three centuries

It was pointed out that Boston Lodge could boast of building locomotives in three centuries – the 19th, 20th and 21st – and in recent times has been doing work for other countries including India and China. Not all of this work is railway-oriented either – the Works will turn its hand to anything within its capability that can make a profit!

It was a most enjoyable and enlightening visit, and our heartfelt thanks must go to our guides Iain and Norman for giving up their Sunday morning for our benefit.

Leslie Darbyshire

To Blaenau and Back

As if organising the WHR/FR "event" wasn't enough strain for me the Editor wanted several of us to write about it, including me! Luckily I got the Sunday afternoon, which was simple as most of us (some had gone home to dry out) had a trip on the **Ffestiniog Railway** from Porthmadog to Blaenau Ffestiniog and back, complete with wonderful atmospheric Welsh liquid sunshine! The 13.35 departure was on time, and

Continued on next page ►

► *From previous page*
 was hauled by one of the delightfully eccentric Fairlie double engines (very Colonel-like I always think; pay for one engine - get two). The start of the run over The Cob is always impressive, the tide was out and the sand was dotted with wading birds. Past Boston Lodge the climb begins (and never stops); effortless for *Earl of Merioneth*, recently converted to coal firing, the smell was just fantastic, so much better than oil. The leaves were just starting to take on their autumnal colours - another few weeks and they would be spectacular, as we headed onwards, through Minfordd and Penrhyn to Tan-y-Bwlch, a delightful stopping point. Our loco took on water (plenty of that falling from the sky, too!). Still climbing, we plunged through Garnedd tunnel and onto Dduallt, how odd to pass through the station then, via the spiral (the deviation), pass over the same station just a few moments later - surreal but it enables the railway to gain the height it requires to avoid the flooded section of track lost to a reservoir way back in the 1956. Through Moelwyn tunnel and into Tanygrisiau, the normally placid waterfalls were just cascades of white after almost two days of heavy rain. Finally, arrival at Blaenau was met with even more rain but Blaenau in the sun would not be the same, the grey slate waste somehow looks right with the mist hanging low over the tops.

Another Observation Car

A quick dash to the other end of the train into the comfort of the observation car, just as *The Earl* backed (or was it the front?) on. "Windscreen wipers needed" was the cry. There were none and Pat Shimmon had forgotten to bring her squeegee to do the job, so the view down hill was through rain-spotted glass. Afternoon tea, cake and chit chat was the order on the return trip as the day came to a close. Arrival back at Porthmadog was right time. Farewells were said and the weekend was over. Very enjoyable it was too. Roll on May 2012 and the members' weekend, which will be based in Porthmadog. The **WHR** should be fully open then, so make sure you get it in your diaries as soon as the date is agreed. ●

Nigel Bird

Nigel's dreams (well, two of them) come true

Nigel Bird reports on one of the first WHR through trains to Porthmadog

We all have dreams. Some of mine are unlikely to happen, such as a major lottery win (especially as I don't buy tickets), a month's holiday in Darjeeling, riding the narrow gauge, and a date with Julia Bradbury as she does one of her railway walks.

Bucket List

Then there is my "bucket list" of things to do before I shuffle off to the great marshalling yard in the sky. These are the realistic things that I can afford to do, both in time and money. Two were achieved in late 2010. In late September my wife and I rode the historic Blackpool trams (the tramway is being modernised with new trams coming in from Easter 2012). With decent weather, and lots of the old fleet in action, we managed to travel extensively in one of the open boat trams, and balloon double-deckers, and see the illuminations for the first time in over 30 years. All for £6 per day - a bargain.

The second event was to travel from Caernarfon to Porthmadog by train, on the newly completed **Welsh Highland Railway**. Well, on 30th October I did it; the whole journey.

Sponsors' Trains

Two sponsors' trains ran on that day, I was on the second, which departed Caernarfon at 11 a.m. With other Society members and friends, I travelled the section from Pont Croesor (some 3 or 4 miles north of Porthmadog) to Caernarfon and back in September. So the only section that was new to me was from Pont Croesor south, through the town of Porthmadog and into Harbour station, home of the **Ffestiniog Railway**.

I saw little of the journey south to Beddgelert as I was helping a pal, and FR/WHR employee, to sell raffle tickets on the train, helping raise money to finish the line off, (well all the nice bits - like buildings at stations, toilets, more carriages, etc.). We raised almost £700 in about an hour and a half and

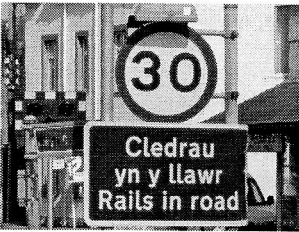
had lots of fun, especially in the open carriage in the rail!

After Beddgelert I was able to sit back in the staff carriage and enjoy the trip. South of Pont Croesor the train passes through a very flat area (that was once the sea, before the opening of The Cob, in 1810) but the distant views of the Snowdon Mountain range are impressive. As we approached the town section, we passed the **Welsh Highland Heritage Line** on our right, this is Geletrs Farm, and has a mile or so of operational track, it is the home of *Russell* amongst other interesting rolling stock, but they have no access to the newly rebuilt Welsh Highland at this time. (Don't ask).

The Flat Crossing

Just after passing the WHHR, the real highlight, a flat crossing of the Cambrian Coast Line; yes, the narrow gauge WHR crosses the standard gauge Cambrian on a new flat crossing. It's hard to believe that this is allowed in 2010, but it is. To look out of the WHR carriage towards Porthmadog main line station was weird. Fortunately no train was coming! This is unique in the UK, with narrow gauge crossing the standard gauge.

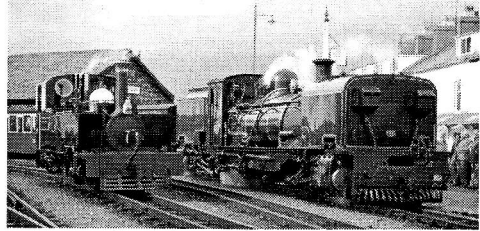
Sneaking around the back of the town, the train crossed Snowdon Street, and skirted the main car park, passing within a few feet of parked cars and



Wilkinson's store. People were out in their hundreds waving and, in many cases, looking very perplexed!

A halt was called for here as the crew waited a clear passage over Britannia Bridge and into Harbour Station, a cacophony of sound greeted us, the piercing 'wig-wag' warning sound of the road traffic lights, holding back cars on this busy road junction, mixed with the excited voices of hundreds of spectators. This was what it was all about. Snaking over the bridge, we crept into Harbour station confines, and out onto The Cob, from where the recently completed **Lynton & Barnstaple**

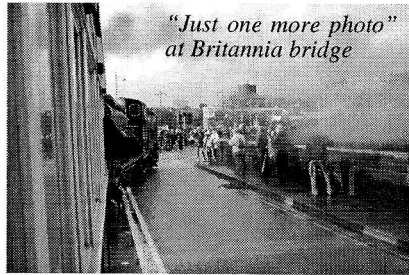
replica locomotive *Lyd* dragged the train back into the platform, only just audible was an announcement, "please stand clear of the train



now arriving from Caernarfon"; a piece of history in itself.

We stayed an hour or so, as the train was marshalled ready for the return journey. A super photographic opportunity was taken to get Garratt 87 and *Lyd* together in the station throat - another historic moment [see above].

All too soon it was time to return, and still



the crowds gathered on Britannia Bridge for just one more photo, and why not - it's a scene that many

thousands of enthusiasts have waited decades to see.

Go travel on the line

All I can say is go see it, go travel on the line, you will not be disappointed. A limited number of trains will run the full line length in 2011, (If you wish to travel I suggest you ring the railway (on 01766 516000) to ascertain times, and seat availability as many trains are already heavily booked, even as I write this in November 2010. There is still much to do and money is still needed to complete the railway fully. Hopefully by May 2012, when The Colonel Stephens Society has its members' weekend based in Porthmadog, things will have settled down and we will all be able to enjoy a full round trip-well worth the wait, and another to do ticked off my list! Now does anyone have Julia's phone number? ●

PHOTOS: Left: Ross Shimmon, above: Nigel Bird.

CRIGGION BRANCH WAGON WORKINGS

MIKE RHODES *analyses ordinary traffic on the branch during 1942*

In 'Dispatches' in Colonel 99 (p.24), with a small correction in No.100 (p.28), Mike Rhodes described the operating methods on the Criggion Branch using data from the wagon register. He takes up the story with this impression of civilian traffic in 1942.

Note that not all wagon numbers are recorded in the register with an owner's prefix (eg LMS or PO).

5 Jan 98078 poles to Criggion from Ellesmere Port, loaded out for McAlpine.

15 Jan Included 1507 coal from Ifron Colliery, 40697 oil from Manchester and 202145 lime from Chipping Sodbury, all for BQC.

28 April PO wagons 544, 7013, 0137 and 6049 loaded with sleepers for S&M, all out empty 6 May.

6 May NE55260 Chipping Sodbury, limestone for BQC, empty out 14 May.

21 May LMS15102 rails to Melverley for S&M, unloaded and out same day.

1 June Delays to engine because of changing rails and also cattle on line. Military engine took 1 hour 35 minutes for the trip.

As an example of quarry traffic; during **June**, 141 BQC wagons, plus 28 common user wagons were loaded out, the latter purloined from incoming traffic.

13 July 7 loaded stone returned to quarry.

16 July NE213818 Ellesmere Port, oil to BQC loaded out 23 July. LMS43866 and 194270 brought sleepers in.

8 October Military engine delayed 45 minutes for unloading of rails by Mansell (was he the permanent way ganger?) included in the train was PO188 Rhydwaenwyn(?) to Llandrinio Road for Jas Williams, empty out 14 October.

14 October Loaded wagons out include 811 to Oxford, 289 and 273 to Godalming,

359 to Mansfield, 358 to Cambridge and 127 to Stoke-on-Trent.

27 October 7215 Birmingham to quarry, coke, loaded out 10 November.

9 November PO445 lime to Llandrinio Road, loaded out 17 November

23 November Bogie GW7080 for rails, loaded out from Bridge to Cradley Heath 26 November.

5 December Bogie 84935 to Chapel Lane to load rails, out 8 December.

8 December taking 4 timber wagons and 1 empty to Melverley station to load rails.

9 December NE14642 and 228538 rails out and LMS 476314 fishplates out.

28 December GW30962 Machynlleth to Quarry with sleepers, loaded out 1 January. ●

Mike Rhodes will be providing more extracts from the Criggion wagon register in future issues.

Happy Christmas from Monty!

Monty Baker, the last surviving employee of the pre-closure Kent & East Sussex Railway, posted this message on the Society's Yahoo discussion list recently:

"The Christmas Card of the Colonel Stephens Society showing Tenterden Station and No2 *Northiam* in the platform, is unique. I started as office boy in that Station, 10/- (50p) a week and later fired and drove the loco on its last run in service; 48/- (£2.40p a week), plus rabbits, game, and mushrooms from the Rother fields.

Kind Regards to all.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year,

'Monty' Baker, Frinton".

And every good wish to you Monty - Ed. ●

SOCIETY NEWS

Members' Weekend 2011

Next year's Members' Weekend is planned to start at New Romney Station on the **Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway** at 10.30 on **Saturday 14th May**, followed by a trip on the line, lunch at Dungeness and a tour of the workshops at New Romney. We have invited Monty Baker, who was employed on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. After service in WW2, he was a driver on the RH&DR, where he famously entertained Laurel & Hardy. Perhaps we can re-enact the occasion? Monty certainly hopes to be there if he is fit enough.

On **Sunday 15th May**, we are planning a tour of the route of the **Rother Valley Railway**, including the works to restore the link between Robertsbridge and Bodiam. More details of all this in the next issue of *The Colonel*, on our website and our Yahoo Discussion Group (addresses on page 2).

All, in all, it promises to be an occasion not to be missed! If you intend to be there, please fill in the slip enclosed with this issue, so that we can estimate the numbers coming. ●

Camrail 2011

As reported in 'Modelling News', next year's Camrail model railway exhibition at Bradford-on-Avon on **Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th July** will have a strong Colonel Stephens theme. Apart from the opportunity to see several layouts at one show based on the Colonel's lines, including Andrew Ulyott's 'Weston Terminus', there will be the opportunity to meet other Society members, buy back numbers of *The Colonel*, the famous drawings by our chairman, Leslie Darbyshire and, we hope, a new edition, or at least a supplement to, *The Colonel's Guide*' (more details in the next column). It is also hoped that members will bring along some of their individual models for display and that our secretary will hold demonstrations of modelling stock owned by railways in the Stephens empire. ●

The Colonel's Guide

In 1997, Jon Clarke prepared the first edition of the very useful *The Colonel's Guide*. Described as 'A source guide to books, magazines, models, videos and films of Colonel Stephens's standard gauge light railways', it was very popular. A revised edition was prepared in 2002 and such was the demand, it was reprinted without amendment in 2006.

It is, of course, now very out of date and an edition including the narrow gauge railways has never been produced. Albyn Austin has now offered to work on an updated edition of the original *Guide*. At the time of writing, we are not sure whether it will amount to new edition, or a supplement to the 2002 edition. Either way, we hope that something of the kind will be available at Camrail in July.

We also hope to have on sale the excellent booklet prepared by Brian Janes *Colonel Stephens - a celebration*, published by the KESR in 2006. ●

Donations & Membership

David Powell writes: "We would like to thank members for their kind, generous and in, several cases very generous, donations sent with this year's subscription renewals. Collectively, these enable the Society to contribute to projects where our assistance does make a real difference. If you are aware of a Stephens-related project involving a heritage railway or similar group, please encourage them to submit their bids to our Secretary".

Renewing members will have found their 2010-11 **membership card** included with this issue of *The Colonel*. This year's card colour is in honour of the 11th Hussars, the Cherry Pickers. It is also the result of a Stephens-style deal. Our membership secretary David Powell has our cards printed and professionally cut to size for a very reasonable price in return for his local printer having an opportunity to use up card stock left over from another job! ●

TO THE WITTERINGS BY RAIL

KEITH SMITH describes unfulfilled plans for a light railway to East Wittering

In August 1897, the Hundred of Manhood & Selsey Tramway (HMST) opened for business, transporting passengers between Chichester and Selsey at speeds previously unheard of! Steadily the tramway increased its business and a notice in the *Sussex Daily News* of 23 May 1913 was the first indication to the general public that the tramway had ideas of expansion.

Passenger numbers had been increasing - in fact at the AGM in August 1913 it was shown that the line had carried a record number of passengers; in excess of 89,000 in one year.

The public notice said that the West Sussex Light Railway, under the Light Railways Act of 1896, had made an application for an extension to Itchenor and the Witterings. It set out the route in three parts. The first, **Railway No.1**, to commence in the parish of Hunston via a junction with the HMST at a point just south of the canal bridge crossing. It was to run in a westerly direction, following the southern bank of the canal, crossing the Birdham/Chichester road, then swinging towards Shipton Green. It would then continue towards West Wittering, where St.Peter's Catholic Church is now. The total length of the proposed railway was approximately seven miles.

Railway No.2 simply related to the forked junction which would link Railway No.1 to the existing Chichester to Selsey line, allowing access onto the new line from either Chichester or Selsey.

Railway No.3 was to commence at Shipston Green and run in a northerly direction, terminating just west of the custom house at

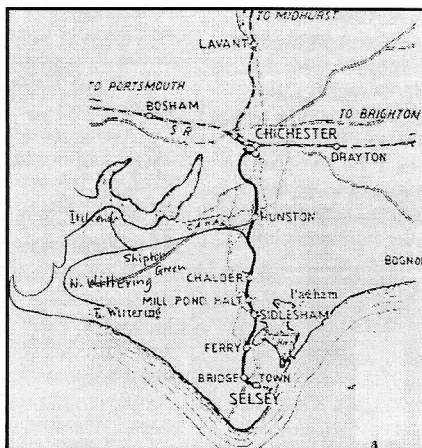
Itchenor. Here it was intended to build a 200ft long reinforced concrete jetty where any vessel coming up the harbour could unload its cargo.

The total cost of building this new railway was estimated at just over £80,000 and a special meeting of West Wittering Parish Council was called on 12 June 1913 to discuss the project. The council unanimously agreed that the idea of connecting the village to the rest of the world would be a great boon. Mr W V Wray suggested that a railway would bring *an out of the way village*

such as West Wittering into the world and benefit the village educationally. The place ranks amongst the most beautiful seaside resorts in Sussex, he continued, but it is little known and a railway will make it known. A result of the construction of a light railway would be an increase in the number of visitors, more houses would be built and the place would be livelier. It has been

stated that it would be better to keep the place select, but I fail to see why our excellent front and fresh sea air should be the monopoly of the select. Let's look forward to seeing our beach in the near future with thousands enjoying the municipal blessings now enjoyed by other resorts in the county, including a West Wittering Municipal Band.

Following this meeting, a public enquiry was held in Chichester on 4 November 1913. It was well attended, with the promoters making much of the benefits that the railway would bring, especially to East Wittering, which was expected to develop into a sea-

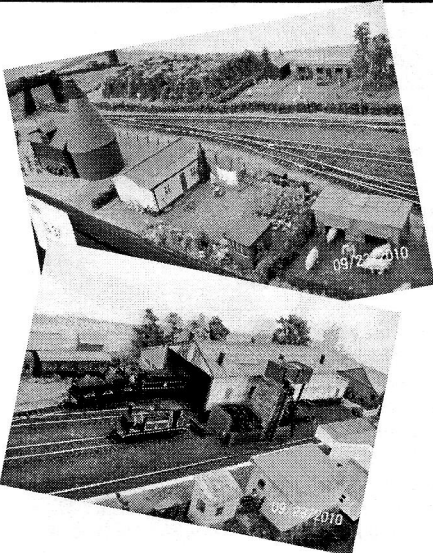


side resort. There were some objectors but, after sitting for 2½ hours listening to the evidence, the Commissioners were prepared to grant the Light Railway Order and they hoped it would benefit the district.

With the coming of the war in 1914, government departments were very stretched and there was an inevitable delay in the order being sealed. Unfortunately this did not happen until early the following year and, by then, public attention was directed towards the war and, despite rising passenger numbers on the HMST, there seemed little enthusiasm for raising the necessary capital for the proposed new venture.

After the end of the war in 1918 much work was required on the original Selsey line. Money was short and the cost of living had increased dramatically. There were constant locomotive failures and unrest among the Board of Directors. To top it all competition had arisen in the form of motor transport which proved to be quicker, cheaper and more reliable than the railway. Within a very short time, any enthusiasm for a railway to the Witterings had disappeared and the Selsey Tramway descended into terminal decline, finally closing in 1935.

Would the Wittering branch have made a difference? Who knows? ●



Modelling News

It has been a long-held ambition for many of us to see a model railway exhibition with a strong Colonel Stephens theme. There are several superb candidate layouts and it is believed that they would have much greater impact if they were part of a themed event. Well, it looks as if it is all coming true. Simon Castens, who organises the annual **Camrail** exhibition at Bradford-on-Avon, has confirmed that the 2011 show will have a Colonel Stephens theme, with the Colonel Stephens Society in attendance and several layouts depicting his light railways making special appearances. It will be held on **Saturday and Sunday, 23rd and 24th July at St Margaret's Hall, St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1DE**. The show will open from 11am to 5.30pm each day.

The show has been running since 1996 and has tended to concentrate on branch lines. It has a reputation for friendly and informal atmosphere. Among the layouts scheduled to be there are Andrew Ullyot's superb model of the **WC&PR** terminus at Weston-super-Mare in 4mm and Robin Fielding's Grove Ferry Junction, based on a proposed extension to the **EKR** in S Scale. Put the dates in your diary and do you all you to attend. You are unlikely to be disappointed! ●

Robin and Pat French of the Chelmsford & District MRC report that they have a 4mm layout, **'War & Peace Rolvenden'** (pictured left) available for exhibitions. Said to be a faithful representation of the 840ft station yard in the 1940s, the layout is 16ft x 2ft. plus a 6inch rope barrier at the front (making it 2ft.6ins. wide) The Scenic section is 2ft. wide x 11ft long with a fiddle yard at each end 2ft. wide x 2ft.6ins. Long. It even includes a scratch-built model of the rail gun stationed there during WW2

Next year it is due to attend shows at Leytonstone on 21st May, the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich on 4th & 5th June and Romford on 12th November. ●

FROM THE WEB

TRACK WORK has been the hot topic on our Yahoo Group lately. **Robert Kosmider** started it all off: *In the pre-grouping period, and possibly later, sleeper widths on British standard gauge railways were 10" and timbers on crossings were 12". There was also a difference in thickness (5" and 6" respectively). Is it known if the CS railways, when first built, adhered to this policy? I recall photos of the Selsey Tramway which showed half-round sleepers in places.* **Albyn Austin** comments: *I haven't got any detailed information, but I also recall Stephens using half-round sleepers and assume he'd use undersized ones as cheaper, with his very light rails on most lines.*

Brian Janes chips in: *The original RVR permanent way was specified in the Board of Trade report: 'Permanent way. The rail employed is flat bottom steel rail of the Vignoles section, weighing 58½ lbs per yard (the minimum weight of rail authorised by the Order being 56 lbs) in lengths of 30ft. The fish plates weigh 20½ lbs per pair and are held by four ¾" bolts. The sleepers are half round in section and 8ft in length. They are spaced 2' 9" apart, and each rail is secured to the sleepers by 5 fang bolts and 17 dog spikes. The ballast consists of a layer of sandstone, with a covering of shingle'. The full report can be found on pages 24-27 of Brian Hart's K&ESR book. Unlike the Selsey, the K&ESR mainline was completely re-laid in the Edwardian era. We have what we are sure is an original sleeper in the Colonel Stephens Museum, but some original rail was inadvertently scrapped in the 1990s.*

Tom Burnham responds: *As I understand it, the original RVR was re-laid by William Rigby (contractor) using second-hand SE&CR material at about the time the Headcorn extension was built. The extension had bullhead rail and chairs to start with. A number of the sidings on the RVR section retained the original very light Vignoles rail – including one at Bodiam which I recall helping to uncover in the*

1990s. Presumably that was some of the rail scrapped by mistake?

The inspecting officer's report for the Sheppey Light Railway (for which the engineer was HFS, although it was always worked by the SECR) says that half-round, adzed, creosoted sleepers, 9' x 10" x 5" were used, spaced at 3' (2 ft 10" at joints). Ballast comprised about 9" of clinker topped with about 4" of local shingle. Part worn SECR rails, fishplates, chairs and fastenings were used - no rail less than 70 lb/yd. Rails were in lengths of between 24 and 30 feet. It's not suggested in the report that this type of permanent way was particularly unusual or objectionable, given the traffic expected. However, after the SECR bought the railway they had to do quite a lot of work to bring it up to what they regarded as the minimum standard.

Brian Janes takes up the story again: *The official inspection of the Headcorn extension says: 'Permanent Way. Part worn steel single head rails, weighing not less than 70lbs per yard, in length of 21 and 30 feet, are laid on cast iron chairs of a weight of 30lbs apiece. These rest on half-round Baltic pine for creosoted adzed sleepers measuring 8' x 10" x 5" laid at an average central interval of 2' 9".' Again Brian Hart's book has the report in full on pages 68-69 I believe the scrapped rail was the Bodiam rail you uncovered Tom.*

The discussion now morphs into **double headed rail and tallow**, thanks to the memory of **Monty Baker**:

The rail on the Headcorn Section was double sided, and well worn. The gangers at Tenterden and Biddenden occasionally turned some rails to their opposite side when they decided it was too worn on one side. The noise when we ran over it was terrific and frightening, as the rail had indentations on it from the chairs below, impressed in them. Young Holly, as we called Bill Austin's son, and Jack Masters put a yard section on the station platform scales at Tenterden in the mid 30s to weigh; it scaled 55lb. It was very well worn when first laid, and I

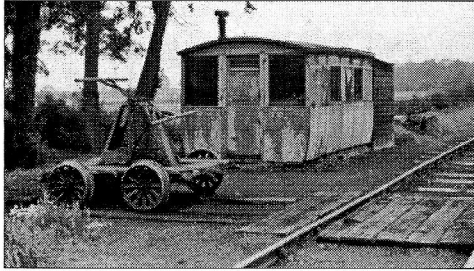
would seriously doubt it was 70lb when it was laid on the **Headcorn Section**. During the War it was replaced with SR second hand 80lb bullhead in stages. I missed that as I had then gone to the East Kent to drive an extra coal train. At that time Kerr Stuart No 4 had black Smokebox, tallowed each day, black cab roof, green (yellow lined) boiler and wheels, with red buffer beams. Do they still use tallow today at Rolvenden Brian?

Brian Janes can't resist responding:

I am afraid that our present volunteers at Rolvenden would look askance at tallow, putting it in the same category as tallow dips and flare lamps. Our mineral oil based society seems squeamish about rendered animal fats and although tallow products are still available they seem little used. Indeed, I recently read that a huge quality of tallow left over from the Foot and Mouth outbreak had to be burnt in a power station. And they had to get a permit for

that! What a shame though that our Heritage movement has yet to get the urge to replicate all those lovely tallow patterns our poorly-paid ancestors so lovingly

bestowed on their charges when they were cleaned. We can now only view their efforts with wonder in ancient photos. Interesting that the Headcorn rail was probably double headed rather than bull headed. Even the South Eastern or the Chatham must have given up laying such obsolete rail by 1870 at the latest. The corrugations you describe (called, I think, rail gall) is the precise reason why double headed was discarded; another 'good' idea that didn't work. Still, I remember as an occasional volunteer on the **Festiniog** in the 1960s that much of their double headed rail remained and probably still lingers in odd corners, two generations of rail later.



A tribute to Victorian wrought iron even though it was regarded as easily worn and 'soft' compared to present mild steel. Returning briefly to the original **RVR** sleepers, I can say from measuring our survivor that it is 8' x 9" x 5" (centre height) which, allowing for wear and shrinkage (it is now as dry and it ever will have been) seems to confirm official reports.

Roy Cunningham joins in:

Double head rails were certainly obsolete by the time the **Headcorn extension** was built but I suspect that they were being rolled a bit later than the 1870. I am fairly certain that the "**Potts**" was laid with double head (1866) and that most of it survived until the army re-laid the main line and most of the sidings when they requisitioned it in WWII. However, the requisition did not include the **Criggion Branch**, although the army provided the motive power for the civilian goods traffic. As a result, I believe that the double head rail survived until closure.

I have uploaded two photographs to the photos section [one of which, taken on 9 September 1956 near Kinnerley Junction, is reproduced here] showing what I am fairly sure is the last double head track in use on what by then had become an isolated part of the BR system. It is, of

course, perfectly possible to use both faces of bullhead rails in turn to even the wear and I suspect that this is what was done on the **Headcorn extension** and elsewhere. I have also experienced the double head on the **Festiniog**, but would doubt if any of it remains now.

Adrian Gray, correcting an earlier post in which he said that **FR** still had a stock of double headed rail said: *There is FR double head rail on the platform line at Harbour Station, but none remains elsewhere. Relaying of chaired track at Minffordd will be in bullhead rail.* •

Brian Hart's book referred to by Brian Janes is: **The Kent & East Sussex Railway**. Wild Swan, 2009. ISBN 978 1 905184 57 6.

DISPATCHES

Letters to the Editor

Bagnall Back on its Bogies

Once per week I try to get out to Tenterden to work either for Carriage & Wagon, or mainly these days, the Colonel Stephens Museum. The Rye & Camber Tramway Bagnall carriage underframe of 1895 is now back on its bogies outside the Museum. It is hoped that it will soon be put on the rails we retrieved from the tramway's 1938 extension to the new Camber Sands. John Miller [*the museum's curator*] said that he understood that some sleepers were being cut down to size especially for it.

Laurie Cooksey, Ramsgate

PS Fab *Colonel 100!*

Welsh Weekend

Just a note to say how enjoyable the weekend at Porthmadog turned out, in spite of some mixed weather. Nigel's arrangements kept us all well occupied whether on trains, in railway workshops, in restaurants, or with a suitable beverage in hand among friends. The last time I visited the Welsh Highland it terminated at Rhyd-Ddu with formation work proceeding to Beddgelert. Now to be able to ride in, or on, the observation car for nearly the complete journey amongst some of our members was for me a great pleasure. I look forward to the day when the link up between the Welsh Highland and the Ffestiniog at Porthmadog station is completed.

John Simmonds, via email

Ashover neglected?

Further to my remarks about the Rye & Camber Tramway and the tendency of railway chroniclers to overlook it, some thoughts occurred to me concerning another narrow-gauge railway with which the Colonel had some involvement; the Ashover Light Railway. This line gets an even poorer deal from atlases in my possession, than the Rye & Camber. The Ashover does not feature in the *Pre-Grouping Atlas and Gazetteer*; its 1947-last days of *Big Four* counterpart; or *Jowett's Railway Atlas of G.B. and Ireland*. The first of the three, is understandable and blameless: the atlas purports to

show position nationwide as at 31/12/1922 – the Ashover did not open for business until 1925. Omissions by the other two are harder to justify. The policy of "1947" was to show lines which had lost their passenger service by that year, but still carried freight; the Ashover qualifies there - its freight service lasted until 1950. And "Jowett" purports to show (within reason) all that those with passenger service in the British Isles - though it is oddly quirky in what is included and excluded.

I suspect that here, gut-feelings may play a prominent role. While a fair few light-railway enthusiasts and chroniclers rank the Ashover among England's small number of public narrow-gauge railways of the "classic" kind, others seem to put it in the industrial-line category. I'd agree that it had, largely, the characteristics of an industrial railway – but it certainly ran regular public passenger services from 1925 to 1936.

I feel that the Ashover's very late arrival on the scene and its relatively short life, cause students of the subject to disregard the line – a bit illogically: the very high-profile Welsh Highland was, south of Rhyd-Ddu, likewise late-starting and considerably shorter-lived. A pity; because the Ashover, in its final freight-only status, was the very last survivor of England's "classic" narrow-gauge lines; the era of which spanned in total, a mere 75 years (and that much, only if one counts the Ravenglass & Eskdale in its original form prior to its morphing into a 15" gauge line in 1915).

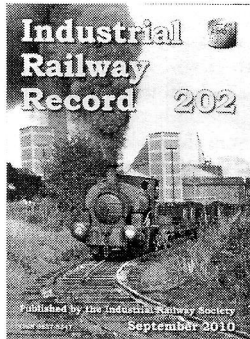
There was, therefore, a minuscule time-window in which an enthusiast could have made a tour which involved travelling on England's five "classic" narrow-gauge lines plus its two "serious" public miniature ones (R&E, and RHDR): i.e. between July 1927 (opening of RHDR as far as New Romney; from there to Dungeness opened only the following year), and April 1929 (closure of Southwold Railway). I realise that such musings lay me open to such comments as "this person should get out more"...

Robert Hall, via email

REVIEW

Hutchings, John M. Sentinel Locomotives on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway, in: *Industrial Railway Record* 202, September 2010 ISSN 0537-5347 pp1-9.

The Journal of the Industrial Railway Society, *Industrial Railway Record*, sometimes contains articles which overlap with the Colonel Stephens railways. In the past Andy Cuckson has written several articles about the Snailbeach Railway for instance. The September 2010 issue, no. 202, contains a fascinating 9 page



article on the testing of Sentinel locomotives on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway, by John M Hutchings.

Sentinel occasionally tested locomotives on the line from the late twenties until 1959, shortly before it closed. Long standing readers of *The Colonel* will remember the fascinating series of articles by the late Bill Willans on his time in the late twenties as an apprentice at Kinnerley*, when these trials took place. This article includes more details on these trials, plus photographs of the three locomotives used on the 1927 trials, all at locations on the S & M, and all unpublished previously to the best of my knowledge.

There is also a photo of the Criggon Quarry Sentinel, ex-works; and more details and photos of five more trials carried out post war on the S & M. These included testing the 400 hp 0-6-0+0-6-0 double Sentinel in 1957, and testing the pioneer Rolls Royce Sentinel diesel in 1959. It is a fascinating and well researched article that will be of interest to many Colonel Stephens enthusiasts.

Back numbers are available from Bob Darvill, 119 Bath Street, Rugby, Warks,

CV21 3JA for £5.13p, including postage. They also have a large range of other publications and a very good website see: www.irsociety.co.uk/

* *Bill Willans's articles are included on the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum website under Topics, S & M Light Railway, Potty Characters at Kinnerley. Alternatively back numbers of The Colonel, numbers 16-20, with Bill Willans's articles are available from Kerry Baylis, see page 2.* ●

'Gazelle' for Sale.

Also in the same issue of *Industrial Railway Record* is a reproduction of the text of the following ad from *The Locomotive Magazine* of September 1900:

“**To Railway Superintendents, Inspectors, etc.** A beautiful and highly finished Locomotive Engine, 4in cylinder, with car to hold 4 persons, on 6 wheels, with copper firebox and brass tubes, polished teak block wheels, steel axles and tyres, gauge 4ft 8½in. Ten trial trips of 80 miles, running perfectly smooth and remarkably steady. Highest speed 45 miles per hour. To be sold on account of a death. For further details apply by letter to “Gazelle”, c/o Locomotive Magazine, 102a Charing Cross Road, London WC.” ●

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BLASTS FROM THE PAST

We have more gems found by Ian Dack, most recently at Whitwell & Reepham station on the former M&GN, now a steam preservation centre. Perhaps we should rename this column 'Dack's Delvings'? First of all, is a copy of the January 1976 issue of *Railway World* featuring a nice three-page article on **Holman Fred Stephens** by Philip Shaw. As you would expect from this author, it is an authoritative summary, although, thanks in part to his work, more is now known about Stephens's life than was the case then. Among the four accompanying pictures is a nice one of the ex-LSWR royal saloon at Rolvenden. Two more well-known authors provided copy on the **K&ESR** for *Trains Illustrated* in the fifties. M Lawson Finch reported in the August 1951 issue on a visit in spring of that year with some fascinating anecdotes which we may reproduce in a future issue. In the January 1954 issue, R C Riley revisited the line. There are some nice photos, including one looking through one portal of St. Michael's tunnel with an O1 entering the other. Riley remarks 'little of the old atmosphere remains the line is well worth visiting, and time is running short, for passenger services will be withdrawn on January 4th, 1954. Unless this issue was published well before Christmas, we fear that the warning was too late!

Another well-known author, Michael Farr, has an article on the **WC&P** in the September 1992 issue of *Steam Days*. As Ian says, this is an excellent find with good photos, several of them new to both of us. Our favourite is a sideways portrait of Manning Wardle No.5 at Clevedon with an ex-Metropolitan 4-wheeler. The tank's solid wheels show up clearly. Still with celebrity authors and still with the **WC&P**, a piece by John Ahern in the February 1941 *Model Railway News* 'Making "Old Time" American Type Coaches', explains in detail how to make models of the well-known balcony cars from wood, card and celluloid in typical

Ahern style. It is difficult to imagine putting such effort into produce these models surrounded by the mayhem of the second world war! **Terriers** must be among the most popular subjects in magazines. Ian came across the Christmas 2007 issue of *Model Rail*, following on from the previous issue's review of the Hornby model of **WC&P Portishead**. It includes two pictures, one of the engine itself and one of 32678 with the number in large numerals unusually on the bunker back. It's not often in this column that we mention railways proposed but never built. One such was the **Hadlow Light Railway**, which was proposed by the Light Railway Syndicate to run from the SER at Tonbridge to Hadlow and Yalding. The article, by John Hilton, appeared in an unspecified issue of *Bygone Kent*. More information may appear in a future issue of *The Colonel*.

The centenary of the reopening of the **SMR** is approaching fast, so a topical find by Ian was an article on Abbey Station by R S Carpenter in *British Railway Journal* 23, Autumn 1988 with lovely illustrations and a map taken from the 1926 OS, showing the track layout. The **EKR** will also soon be celebrating its centenary, so the arrival of *BRJ* 20, Winter 1988 with a 14-page article also by R S Carpenter on the **Wingham extension** is especially timely. Lavishly illustrated, it also comes with some useful maps. As Ian says "I find hard to believe that this line survived (just) into the BR era". We have covered the **rail guns** used on the **KESR** in previous issues. The *HMSR Journal* for April/June 1984 has part 3 of an article by Geoff Balfour, with a nice picture of the Elswick 9.2 and the 12-wheel gun trucks - if you like that sort of thing! Meanwhile the June 1996 issue of *British Railway Modelling* featured an article by Stephen Hannington on '100 years of light railways' to mark the centenary of the Light Railways Act. It includes a nice colour shot of his Rye town layout. Finally, for now, the *Railway Magazine*, February 1970 issue, has a shot of a dmu from Gunnislake at Bere Alston. ●

Press Digest *Our regular round-up of the railway press*

Our 100th issue received good coverage in the press. *The Railway Modeller* (September issue), which is showing increasing interest in things to with HFS, was the most impressive, but *16mm Today* (August) and *Narrow Gauge World* also published nice little notices. *East Kent Railway News No.89* trumped the lot by reproducing our press release in full. As we prepare this issue for press, our **Christmas cards** are getting noticed. *Steam Railway* has a glowing review. They get 4 stars (out of 5) and the comment "extremely attractive card and well-priced". They also get good mentions in *RM* and *British Railway Modelling* (December issues).

For **railmotor** fans there was news on our Yahoo list that the autumn issue of *Continental Railway Journal*, published by the Continental Railway Circle (subscriptions from: audreypeattie@ntlworld.com) reports that the Pleasant Point Railway and Museum in the New Zealand South Island was operating earlier in the year a model "T" railcar Rm4, a replica built on the chassis of a model "T" lorry. Still with **railmotors**, we have recently acquired a copy of *The Light Railway Railcar in Western Europe* by W JK Davies (Plateway Press, ISBN 1 871980 52 6). A hefty, well-produced tome, it includes *Gazelle*, shown as a 'railmotor', the **Jersey Railway Sentinel** steam railcar, (part of which ended up on the preservation era **KESR**, but sadly didn't survive), both **WC&P** railcars and the **Ford and Sheffield** railmotors, including the **DVLR** version. Worthwhile if you are interested in railcars in general, but probably not if you are concentrating on those acquired by HFS. Speaking of the **Derwent Valley**, both Christopher Mitchell and Jonathan Stockwell sent in copies of the Summer 2010 issue of *DVLR Society News*. It had not only a nice report of our visit in May, but also the welcome news that they were able run trains again on the August Bank Holiday and were planning to operate Santa Specials, and that the eviction notice placed on the railway had been with-

drawn by the landlord. As Chris says "They need all the help they can get."

The *Railway Modeller*, as we noted in our article on the same subject, has a glorious three-page article by Angus Watkins on his 'Beddelert 1910' layout. It's not quite the right era for us, but we can speculate what HFS would have made of it if the PBSSR scheme had come to fruition. The latest edition of the *Modeller* promises an article in the January 2011 issue on 'Trudoxhill', described as a Colonel Stephens line in OO.

The 2010 catalogue of Black Dwarf Lightmoor Publications, publishers of *Archive* and *Railway Archive*, as well as host of interesting books, is well worth obtaining for the cover picture alone. It depicts the wagon lift at Calstock Viaduct in about 1910. Two **PD&SWJR** wagons are clearly visible.

If you are in a constructing mood and the railways of north Wales are among your interests, beg, borrow or steal the August issue of *16mm Today*. It has two articles on building **NWNGR**, later **WHR**, 'summer' bogie carriages. One was built by a junior modeller from scratch and won a cup in the annual competition, the other was built from an IP Engineering kit - and painted pink! This was part of a last-ditch attempt to attract custom to what we suppose would now be called a 'failing railway' by creating rainbow trains of carriages in a series of unlikely colours. The amazing revival of the real **WHR**, reported elsewhere in this issue, has no doubt increased interest in models of the line. The December issue of *Garden Rail* includes an article on a successful attempt to recreate in miniature the **WHR** in the 1920s and 30s, including *Russell, Welsh Pony* and, indeed, vehicles from the 'Rainbow Train'. A surprising development in the OO world was the commissioning by *Model Rail* of a model from Dapol of a Sentinel 4-wheel vertical boiler loco, similar to the ones tested on the **SMR** as described in the *Industrial Railway Record* article reviewed by Albyn Austin on the previous page. The November issue of *MR* provides the details. ●

Jackson's Jottings

Belgium Right or Wrong?

CHRIS JACKSON reaches the coverage of the *Yorke Report** as he continues his trawl through the *Railway Gazette*

May 24 1912

Col. Yorke's memorandum on the Belgian Light Railway system,* which has been issued as a supplement to the last report of the Light Railway Commissioners, is a document that, without disrespect of its author, may be described as an excellent example of the workings of the official mind. Whilst dwelling on the success of the Belgian light railway policy, and indicating that the Board of Trade is prepared, if necessary, to make some notable concessions in the matter of restrictions, the report betrays a tendency to insist rather more on the arguments against than those for the adoption of an organised light railway policy in England. But with this reservation, the document may unreservedly be commended to the notice of those interested in an important question, as affording food for thought by the manner in which it deals with both sides of that question.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the history of the development of the Belgian *Chemins de fer vicinaux*, which has frequently been sketched in our columns, but the reader may be reminded of three cardinal factors which have made that development possible:— (1) The creation of the Belgian Light Railway system, which at no distant date will have a larger aggregate mileage than that of the main railways, was due to a definite Governmental desire to extend the advantages of modern transport facilities to those districts where the expense of constructing a standard "heavy" railway was out of the question. (2) When the original legislation for attaining this end was found, as in England, to have been chiefly instrumental in promoting the construction of urban tramways, the Government, unlike our own, took immediate steps to frame fresh legislation that was directly calculated to bring about the desired object.

(3) The financial difficulties that would otherwise have stood in the way of constructing light railways in many districts were overcome by giving legislative effect to a scheme whereby the National Government, the Provinces, and the *Communes* (district councils) were all empowered to contribute a certain percentage† of the capital cost of any light railway, while the task of raising money is further simplified by enabling the payments to be spread over a term of 90 years by means of long-term annuities, in which each payment bears its proportion of both capital and interest.

Intelligent and organised co-operation not being a Belgian monopoly, there seems to be no insuperable reason for predicting that no scheme of this kind can be successful in the United Kingdom. Col. Yorke says in his report that "if there were any demand on the part of the public in this country for railways similar ... to the *Chemins de fer vicinaux* of Belgium, there does not appear to be any reason why the Board of Trade should object ... The mode of working, and the absence of safety appliances, signals, fences, gates &c., are details which depend mainly, if not entirely, on the speed. And if 18 miles an hour, which is the speed in Belgium, and which is little more than tramway speed in England, would satisfy the promoters or the public, I do not think that the Board of Trade need hesitate to dispense with their usual requirements, and allow the lines to be regarded as tramways and worked in the same conditions as in Belgium." ●

* Report to the Board of Trade by Lieut.-Col. H.A. Yorke, R.E., C.B., on the Construction and Working of Light Railways (*Chemins de fer vicinaux*) in Belgium. [Cd. 6158.] 2d.

† Private individuals are also permitted to subscribe towards the capital, but less than 2 per cent. of the capital expenditure to date has been met by private investors.

Further extracts from the coverage of the *Yorke Report* will appear in future issues.