

The **COLONEL**

Number 121 Winter 2015



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

THE COLONEL'S STORES

Subscriptions *The Colonel* is distributed to members of the Colonel Stephens Society only. Membership of the Society costs £10 annually in the UK. Joint membership for two people, one *Colonel*, same address, is £12. Overseas membership is £15. Applications to our Membership Secretary (address on p.31). **An up to date Index** of *The Colonel* is available on our website (see below).

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 "ColonelHFS Stephens" and follow the prompts to register.

The following items are available from our Sales Officer, Kerry Baylis, 10 Cedar Court, Farrand Road, Hedon, East Riding of Yorkshire, HU12 8XL 01482 897645 Email: kerry@thetrackside.karoo.co.uk

Back numbers of *The Colonel* from 2 to the latest issue are all in stock. Price to members for up to 20 issues is £1.60 per issue, including UK postage. Orders above 20 at cost after contacting the Sales Officer. 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.

DVDs containing 39 rare **Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway photographs**, mostly of locomotives, from the WD Detachment photograph album, provided by Mike Christensen, author of *The SMLR under Military Control*. Book and DVD were reviewed in *Colonel 104*. This superb DVD is available at the bargain price of £3 including p&p.

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

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

Editorial

Well yet another issue's deadline has arrived and its time to wish you all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Hopefully I've put together an interesting issue to entertain you all! Just when we thought after 30 years that we knew all we were going to find out about the Colonel, we received an article on his plans for a Light Railway in Ireland! It was thwarted by the First World War and the subsequent "Troubles".

We continue the 30th anniversary theme with an article about the committee and name a few long-serving members. Howard Carey pro-

vides some more fascinating insights into the carriages and wagons of the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway. There is a newspaper report on the abandoned Shropshire and Montgomery Railway from the 1890s. We also have a history and update on the Ryde Pier Drewry tramcar project supported by the Society. I've published, in vignette form, all the known civilian photographs of the Colonel that the museum possesses, of which there are surprisingly few. "Blasts from the Past" summarises two fascinating articles from ancient "Railway Worlds". The first is about the fascinating Torrington and Marland industrial line, preceding and later feeding the ND&CJR. The second article has some stories from the wartime Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway.

All this plus our usual features of News and Events, Society News, Book Reviews, Press Digest, Letters and Modelling Notes (with a photo of the new Dapol O gauge Terrier in K&ESR blue livery).

A few small items have had to be held over to the next issue, and I've a bit of copy in hand, but I'm always pleased to receive new articles, photos or letters/emails.

I hope there is plenty of interest for you all, and there is enough to tempt all those who've not renewed yet to fill in their renewal slip!

Front cover: Retired local TV presenter Richard Wyatt, who lives in Worle, unveiled the latest plaque erected by the WC&P Railway Group at the site of Worle WC&PR station on 21st October. After unveiling the new plaque our photo shows Richard Wyatt interviewing two former railway passengers—Fred Parsons and Richard's mother. See News & Events section and back cover. [Photo—Paul Gregory]

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NEWS & EVENTS

Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Rlys

Recent issues of Inside Motion celebrated the 60th anniversary of the FR reopening by “Prince” with one coach and a van in 1955 with photos of “Prince” double-heading “Taliesin” on 10 coaches on 3rd August. The concrete floor has been poured in the shell of the new Minffordd workshop and steelwork is being erected for the wagon storage shed. The FR has 220 vintage wagons of which 60 are operational. All will be housed in the new shed. Plans for the winter maintenance programme are given. More volunteers to assist would be very welcome. Statesman Rail are looking for extra stewards on their charter trains-apply to operations@statesmanrail.com or phone 03453 102458, but the days are very long! Saloon 117 is nearing completion and there are aerial photos of the WHR. Plans are given to improve vehicle access to Boston Lodge. Kids training week, with 35 kids and nearly that number of supporting adults, did a wide variety of tasks-painting offices and locos, dismantling sheds, and preparing two locos for boiler inspection, then firing one up for use during the social evening. Perhaps the most tedious but financially valuable job was cleaning up about 1500 yellow Ruabon bricks from a long demolished building. These are much in demand and fetch about £3 each! The Society is also promoting a Sainsbury shopping card which pays 4% to the Society. There are also of course Santa trains on both the FR and WHR running on 12th, 13th, 19th and 20th December. Revised plans for Caernarfon station have been revealed. However £2 millions of funding is required. Work could start next year if the money is found.

Golden Valley Railway

Two surplus Ffestiniog coaches have been sold to the Golden Valley Railway to supplement their newly restored Ashover coach No. 4. The first coach, 119, arrived recently. The

Ffestiniog wants to retain the bogies for future use. The coach has now been mounted on accommodation bogies until a pair of Polish narrow gauge bogies are restored for it. Various other modifications are to be made. Coach 117 will arrive next year. Both FR coaches have been replaced by new saloon coaches with the same numbers.

The Golden Valley Railway runs through the country park at the Midland Railway Centre at Butterley in Derbyshire. It runs at weekends in the summer.

North London Brake Coach now at the Ribble Steam Railway

The body of the sole surviving North London Birdcage Brake Coach, that resided in the open at Appleby for many years, is now under cover. It is stored in the Furness Railway Trust’s new shed at the Ribble Steam Railway. This railway runs from near the Marina (formerly Preston Docks) and along by the river for about a mile and a half. The FRT also have the body of a NLR first class coach in the shed too. This was fitted with double doors for wheelchair access when it was part of a First World War Ambulance train. Both bodies are being dried out prior to beginning a long-term restoration project. The Trust already have a restored NLR second class coach and also the body of a fourth NLR second class coach in store in the Blackpool area.

The Ribble Railway is rather fun with three coach trains pulled by industrial locos such as ex-Preston Docks Bagnalls. They also occasionally use one of the ex-German 4-wheel railcars. They have an interesting museum with many industrial locos and a busy workshop with public access to a viewing area. Unusually they handle several trains of 14 large bitumen tank wagons a week. These come from the big railway, and are divided up into four wagon lots to

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be unloaded in a private siding. The line is located on the west side of Preston, north of the Ribble, just south of the main road out to Blackpool. There are brown signs but these disappear, so finding them at Chain Caul Road, Riverside, PR2 2XL is a bit tricky. Go past the bitumen road tanker storage park and a caravan sales place. All their sheds are modern white metal sheeted ones and so are not obvious even when you get to the site. They were very helpful and friendly with a café and on-train buffet car too. The interesting line crosses a couple of roads by level crossings and runs over the lift bridge at the entrance to the Marina before a scenic stretch by the river.

Kerr Stuart 4415

The pioneer British diesel loco that spent several months on the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland in the 1920s is now at Boston Lodge. Springs have been sent off for refurbishment/replacement and the frames are to be grit-blasted. The overall condition is better than expected as the wheel bearings are in good condition and there is plenty of life in the tyres. Restoration costs are estimated at £54,000 using volunteer labour, of which £40,000 has been secured so far. Efforts to raise the remainder continue .

K&ESR Cavell Van Visits Norwich

The K&ESR Cavell Van has been on exhibition at Norwich, from 9th-17th October. Our own Ross Shimmion helped staff it for two days. The Cavell Van is so-called because it was used to carry the body of Norfolk nurse Edith Cavell from Dover to Victoria, to be conveyed to Westminster Abbey for a service. The coffin was then taken to Liverpool Street for Norwich where she is buried outside the cathedral. Nurse Cavell had been working in Brussels before WW1 broke out. Unlike many British nurses there, she elected to stay in Belgium. Her hospital became a Red Cross institution. Edith Cavell is believed to have helped 200 Allied soldiers

escape German occupied Belgium until she was arrested in August 1915. She was tried and found guilty. She was executed by firing squad on 12th October.

The Cavell Van was also used later in a similar way to convey the body of Captain Fryatt, a Great Eastern Railway ferry skipper executed by the Germans, and the body of the Unknown Warrior to London.

The van is normally stored at Bodiam station where it is open to the public. It contains a replica coffin and interpretation boards outlining the story of the three individuals.

National TV news covered the event itself.

K&ESR Operations

Earlier in the year the two Terriers in BR black livery operated services, with a bit of double heading. The main reason was the delay in returning the DMU to service. They have also been allowed heavier trains resulting in vintage coaches running with Mark 1s, a real Stephens' mixture. As well as 32670, the former K&ESR *Bodiam* (now near the end of its boiler ticket), there was 32678. This also has a long association with the line, being hired in from the Southern for stints in the 30s and 40s and regularly working over the line in the 50s. In fact it worked the last regular passenger train over the line in 1954.

In high summer the services were mainly run by the Norwegian 2-6-0 and the hired-in GWR pannier 5786, running as London Transport L92, the guise in which it was withdrawn. With the railway also hosting several ex-GWR locos- light pannier 1638, 0-6-2Ts 5668 and 6619, 2-8-0T 4253 and railcar 20, the wags have suggested renaming Rolvenden shed as Swindon East and the line as the "Kent & Great Western Railway".

The new carriage shed at Rolvenden has its first incumbents after Manning Wardle *Charwelton* hauled in the LNWR Inspection Saloon, the Golden Arrow Pullman Kitchen

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First and the SR Maunsell Nondescript Brake Open, all awaiting restoration. It is to be called Rolvenden Riverside Carriage Shed to avoid confusion with the loco shed. (**Ross Shimmon**)

Proposed Devon Narrow Gauge

The society received the following email:-
 “We are in the process of forming the North Devon Narrow Gauge Railway to run from Petrockstow to Meeth on the trackbed of the former ND&CJR. This idea is only at the formative stage and we consider that numerous societies along the route could contribute toward this being an umbrella movement that could benefit all relevant parties. It is envisaged that a comprehensive advertising brochure would combine and further everyone’s interests, and be of promotional benefit to illustrate the qualities of all.

We would welcome in the first instance your comments on the proposal and in due course your support.”

David Stiff

David Powell replied on behalf of the Society:- “The Colonel Stephens Society certainly wish you well. However, at this stage our support will have to be limited to promoting news of your endeavours through our quarterly journal.”

News from the East Kent Railway

The Autumn East Kent Railway News includes the opening of the new car park on 18th July, and cosmetic restoration of *St. Dunstan* to return it to the condition in which it ran at Betteshanger colliery. A JCB has begun clearing the route for the new access line to the engine shed, and a second-hand building has been erected to become the new café. The building came in five sections, with two extendable lorries carrying two sections each and a third with one section and a crane. The two-section lorries were too long to access the site and the crane lorry had

to unload its section, and then unload one section off the other lorries, enabling their trailers to be shortened sufficiently to access the site. Unfortunately heavy rain began, and the crane truck became bogged-down. It was eventually towed out by one of the other trucks after a hardcore track was laid under the wheels. Concrete slabs were then used to build a temporary access road, enabling the final sections to be unloaded and bolted together. Darkness was falling by this time. The roof has to be repaired, a toilet removed, a new kitchen fitted, new floor covering laid, the building re-wired and then re-decorated. Hopefully this will be completed over the winter. Easter weekend will feature £1 return trips from Saturday 26th March to Monday 28th. Extra volunteers are badly needed for all the projects. The trolleybus “Barney” has had more windows and two front offside panels refitted. The electric lighting downstairs is now operational. It is aimed to refit all the windows during the autumn.

The Rother Valley Railway

The autumn 2015 Phoenix reports that the planning application for the extension of the line to join with the KESR is still deferred. There has been a last-minute query by one of the Councils involved that requires further thought.

Work has begun on the new two-road engine shed at Robertsbridge between the main line and the connection to the RVR station. Work also continues on painting the railings, gardening and restoring the rolling stock. A new Isuzu road/rail pick-up truck has been purchased and fitted to spray weedkiller. There is an appeal for an event organiser to organise fund-raising events.

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway

Mark Bladwell reports that the doors partly financed by the Society after our visit to Chelfham station in May have now been delivered and fitted, see the L&B Society website under “News for September”.

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A New WC&PR Interpretation Board

The WC&P Railway Group have erected a new interpretation board at the site of Worle station [on the outskirts of Weston] which is now part of a footpath. The board was unveiled on 21st October by retired local TV presenter Richard Wyatt who lives in Worle. There was a very good turnout for the event considering the wet and windy weather. It was also a privilege to have two people present who could remember travelling on the WC&P, Fred Parsons from Wick St. Lawrence and Richard's mother. The board was funded jointly by the WC&P Railway Group and Worle History Society. See cover photos.

Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust

Abbey Lines, their newsletter, reports the election of a new committee and completion of the restoration of the former "Potts" station buildings at Shrewsbury Abbey station. The discovery of a quarry wagon chassis at Graham's Moor Quarry is reported. The quarry was connected to the Snailbeach Railway. The early wooden-framed side-tipping wagon chassis appears to be the same 2ft 4in gauge as the Snailbeach Railway. There are reports on a steam special through Shrewsbury, news from local preserved railways, and a railway walk around Shrewsbury. It is now 50 years since the last "Manor" class locos were withdrawn from Shrewsbury shed. An article recalls their last days, and their subsequent fate. Several went to Barry scrapyards and are now restored.

New Bishop's Castle Railway Plaques

The Bishop's Castle Railway Society (the line even Stephens turned down) have set up two plaques to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the line opening on 24th October 1865. Of course it was shut down very soon afterwards by the Board of Trade as the BCR hadn't wished to bother them by requesting an inspection. One plaque is located near the ticket machine at Craven Arms Station and one is placed on the side of the former gas-

works retort house at Bishop's Castle. This is near the station site which is now a large wood yard. The plaques were unveiled by local dignitaries on 24th October 2015, the Craven Arms one in the morning. Then a special lunch was held at the Castle Hotel, Bishop's Castle (where the directors held a banquet for 300 in 1865). Later the Lady Mayor of Bishop's Castle unveiled the second plaque. The rain stopped on both occasions!

The original opening celebrations were in the full Victorian tradition with evergreen arches, banners, parades, fireworks and bands. There was a meal of roast beef, beer and plum pudding for the navvies. People came from miles around to see the event. As the local paper said it was the next best thing to a public hanging!

The line didn't quite reach its 70th birthday, shutting in early 1935. Thus now it has been shut for over 80 years. See photo on page 17.

1948 Aerial View of Llanymynech

Tom Burnham found this view of the former S&MR terminus on the "Britain from the Air" website. See <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/eaw012745>

Gwendraeth Valley Fairlie Appeal

The GV Society are trying to raise £20,000 urgently to salvage the four boilers used as a culvert at Burry Port, belonging to BP&GVR locos, when these are replaced by Welsh Water in the next few months. Two belong to the first Fairlie double-boiler loco *Pioneer* that was used on the railway from 1869, and later renamed *Mountaineer*. The line was converted from a canal in 1866. One of the other boilers might be from the Hughes loco used by the contractor. Cheques payable to Gwendraeth Railway Society Pioneer Fairlie Appeal, 2 Bridge St. Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, SA17 4UU.

SOCIETY NEWS

Membership Renewal

A big "thank you" to members who have renewed promptly, this helps your Society keep costs down, saving on wasted postage for reminders, etc. which in turn helps maintain the subs level. Those who have renewed their membership will find their membership cards enclosed, and those who haven't will find another renewal notice to remind them! Those who don't renew will find that this is the last Colonel they will receive!

If your contact details have not changed, you may care to renew by Bank Transfer (BACS). The Society account details are :-
Lloyds Bank, Tregaron
Account Name: The Colonel Stephens Society
Sort Code : 30-94-85
A/C No: 00287489

Please ensure you include your name and membership number as the

'ORIGINATORS REFERENCE', as this will be the only way we can tell that you have renewed! We need both name and number as several members share common surnames so we know which one has renewed.

(Keith Patrick)

Nigel Bird added—For members renewing by cheque—my local branch of Lloyds Bank (Tregaron) has cut opening hours and changed days of opening, this has meant I am unable to access the branch as often as I used to, therefore be aware that it may take longer than normal for your cheque to be banked.

2016 AGM.

This will be at Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway on Saturday 21st May 2016. Final details will be included in the next issue.

2015 Christmas Cards

Still time to buy the 2015 Society Christmas Card shown on the centre pages of the last issue. It shows *Hesperus* and an "American" coach on the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Rlwy. Cards are £5 per pack of five plus £2.40 postage regardless of how many packs are ordered. Cheques made out to "The Colonel Stephens Society" please. The cards are available from Alan and Mary Garner, Avalon, Deansway, Chippenham, Wilts., SN15 1QY. Email a.f.garner@btinternet.com

Our Sales Officer, Kerry Baylis, details on page 2, still has 1 pack of five and three loose Selsey Lift Bridge Christmas cards and several packs of last year's Christmas Cards of five varied K&ESR subjects. These are available at the bargain price of £4 per pack including postage. Cheques made out to "The Colonel Stephens Society" please.

New Members Needed

With consecutive membership numbers now hovering just below the 1000 figure, the Membership Secretary is particularly anxious to enrol the new member with that number, so to nudge you members, the Committee has come up with the following offer The member who introduces member number 1000, will get their next years membership free! This is in addition to the new member 1000 getting a free year's membership (which will be advertised in railway and railway modelling magazines separately).

The introducing member will be responsible for ensuring that the Membership Sec. is aware of the introduction and accompanied by their membership number, and membership applications will be dealt with strictly in date order of receipt. Should more than one application be received on the same day to which this number could be allocated, then the Membership Sec. will arrange for an independent draw to take place. **(Keith Patrick)**

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The Ex-LSWR Coaches of the WC&PR

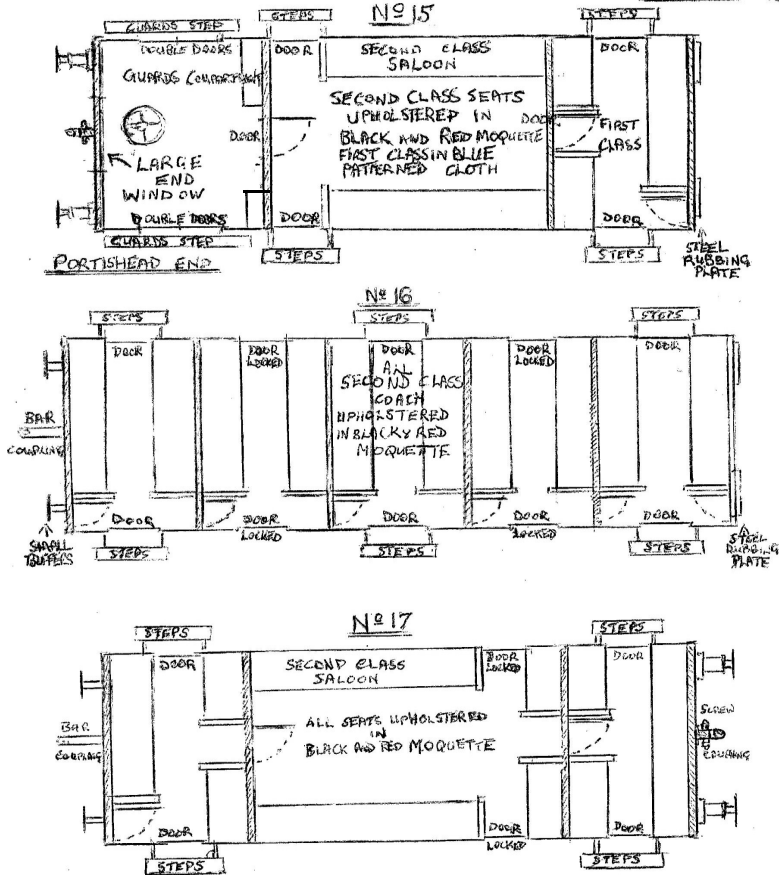
By Howard Carey (Son of WC&P Guard)

The ex- LSWR (*London & South Western Rlwy. and from 1923 part of the Southern Railway*) three coach set arrived on the line in 1924, via the Portishead connection. [*The oldest coach was built in 1869 and the newest in about 1879-84, see Col. Stephens Museum "Thoughts on WC&P Coaches"—Brian Janes.*] The brake composite, No. 15 was at the Weston end. The set was close coupled between the coaches,

with shortened buffers on one coach bearing upon a rubbing plate on the adjacent coach. The set had conventional buffers on the outer coach ends. The Colonel instructed the WC&P staff to put a large window in the end of the guard's brake compartment. Both second No. 16 and the saloon second No. 17 had doors locked out of use without access steps. All seats were upholstered. The seconds were in a black

SEATING PLAN FOR EX-LSWR THREE COACH SET WC&PR NO 15-16-17. 1924-1940. H.K. CAREY 2015

NOT DRAWN TO SCALE.



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and red moquette while the firsts were in a blue patterned cloth. These coaches, like the ex-Metropolitan coaches (*see Colonels 108 and 109, Ed*), had connecting end doors on one side between coaches through which only the guard could pass. 15 and 17 had centre gangways and central saloon compartments while 16 had a side corridor with each compartment separated by a partition, but the compartments were open to the corridor.

The set ran like this until late 1928, when, on Colonel Stephen's instructions, they were turned on the GWR turntable at Portishead. No. 15 was now at the Portishead end. They ran this way until closure on 18th May 1940.

stayed on when the train was stopped. These coaches also had steam heating and provided a comfortable ride at the speeds used on the WC&P.

The coaches were always kept clean and tidy throughout, but the paintwork on the sides was quite dull compared to the finish on the Met coaches. They had yellow lettering along the waistband—No. 15 etc. plus WC&PR. They were originally painted green but later were repainted a darkish reddish brown. (*Mr Selwyn Higgins in Colonel 114 said they were painted a rather pleasant dark chocolate brown but perhaps he meant a dark drinking chocolate brown? However the red colour in traditional maroon fades with age to a brown colour. Ed*)

The LSWR set at Clevedon on 13th July 1935.
(SW Baker)



In 1936 the middle coach No. 16 was taken out as it was in need of urgent repairs. For a while No. 15 and No. 17 ran as a twin-set. There is a photo of them behind *Clevedon* running past the loop at Wick St. Lawrence in my collection. Later No. 16 was reinstated and the set had electric lighting fitted, which worked off a dynamo driven by a leather belt off one of No. 15's axles. There were no battery boxes under the coach, but I do remember two seats boxed in front and side of the Guard's compartment. One or both must have contained the wet cell batteries as the lights

The two outer coach ends of the set were painted post office red which weathered to a dark pink. The inner ends of the coaches were black. A start was made to repaint the roofs of the coaches in 1939. There were two white roofs and one which was half white and half black. A couple of months later the job was completed when some more paint was purchased!

These coaches also ended up in the Shriv-enham and Watchfield areas as tailor shops for the military, as did the Met coaches. **H. Carey**

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A Note on WC&PR Coach and Wagon Liveries

By Howard Carey

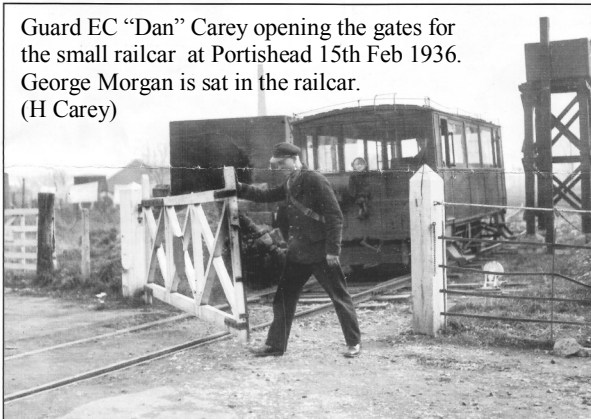
The Met coaches Dad told me looked like they were in varnished mahogany when he started on the line in 1923 and used to clean them. When they first came to the line in 1907 the external ends were pillar box red. They were so closely coupled that to remove them from the GWR at Clevedon they had to be uncoupled and moved individually round the tight curve. (There was no connection to the GWR at Portishead until 1908.) I remember them with dark reddish-brown sides and with faded pink outer ends and black inside ones. They were kept in

three bogie coaches. These bogie coaches had an acetylene generator underneath with a pipe running up about the middle of one side into the clerestory and with three lamps inside. All six bogie coaches had first class accommodation as well as second class. There was no compartment for the guard. The first class seats were originally in the centre of the coaches but were later moved to the ends and had 16 seats.

The small Drewry railcar was very noisy and rattled a lot. The large one was much quieter but the wheels squealed on the tighter curves. This was especially from All Saints Level Crossing to the level crossing on Walton Road just before Walton Park station. Both railcars were always dark green. The regular driver and mechanic for the railcars was George Morgan. He had been a "Black & Tan" regular soldier in Ireland after the First World War until independence and was paid £1 a month pension. He seemed to spend most of his money on Ruby Port. He could be quite awkward

when in drink, which was quite a regular occurrence.

Wagon No. 17, the old ex-Midland Railway machinery wagon, was grey. It could be seen at Wick St Lawrence sidings. I have a 1925 photo of it at Clevedon with the cab and a tank from No. 5 on it, while the loco was having a new firebox fitted. My father told me it was the only time he saw it being used. He also told me that it and three open wagons were sent up to the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway in the late 1920s. They weren't allowed to run there on their own wheels but were sent there and back either on GWR Loriot or Hydra wagons. I do wonder what the S&M wanted them for? (*Perhaps to provide extra ballast*



Guard EC "Dan" Carey opening the gates for the small railcar at Portishead 15th Feb 1936. George Morgan is sat in the railcar. (H Carey)

lovely condition. (*Howard wrote an article on these coaches in Colonel 108 - Ed.*) [*Mr Selwyn Higgins in Colonel 114 recorded them as varnished wood, perhaps mahogany re-varnished to produce a dark brown colour? Brian Janes noted that the surviving Met coach had been varnished wood with red ends*]

The winter coach 18, said by dad to be ex-Taff Vale, had 4 axleboxes marked GER. [*GER and TVR coaches were very similar—Ed.*] Coach 18 was used on one of the last trains, the 7.50 am to Weston. It was not on the very last one which used two of the bogie coaches. A photo of No. 18 on this train was published in the Bristol Evening News when the line closed. It was dark green with white lettering, as were the

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wagons for track improvements, as *Criggion Quarry won a big road stone contract for Lancashire at this time?* Ed) I guess that on No. 17's return it was sent to Wick St Lawrence and I never ever saw it at Clevedon.

Looking through a photo album book of GWR photos I came across a picture of a goods train at or near Kennington Jcn. (near Oxford) hauled by a Dean Goods. This shows, a few wagons down the train from the loco, some machinery wagons carrying two or

three open wagons. Unfortunately you can't see any lettering on the wagons. I have a strong suspicion that these were the WC&P wagons returning from the S&M. It certainly looks like them.

The gasworks at Clevedon used both square and round tar tanks. They even had a round one of their own, "Clevedon Gas Co. No. 1". They also had 12 of their own coal wagons. These were seven plank wagons with end doors lettered "Clevedon Gas Co."

RYDE PIER TRAMCAR PROJECT

By Terry Hastings

The Pier at Ryde latterly carried two independent tramway tracks each served by two-car units; Drewry built the motor cars in 1927 and the trailers were constructed by the Southern at Eastleigh in 1937 and '38 respectively. The tramway closed on 26th January 1969 and the Island Vintage Transport Group raised sufficient funds to purchase Car No. 2. The following months were taken up with dismantling the body and moving it to safe storage in the old parcels shed at Whippingham Station, by that time in private hands. The motorised chassis was later removed from the Pier and used at Newport Station by the nascent Wight Locomotive Society (predecessor to the I.W. Steam Railway).

Car No. 2 was used as a work trolley during the removal of the Wight Loco Society stock from Newport to Havenstreet in 1971 and continued in that function for a couple more years. It even had makeshift sides fitted together with old station seats and carried passengers on occasions between Wootton and Havenstreet. Sadly lack of maintenance saw the transmission dismantled for repair. This failed to happen and the vehicle was shunted to the end of a long siding in dense woodland and left to moulder. Meanwhile the body parts were evicted from their home at Whippingham due to property sale. There was little covered storage at Havenstreet and what there was saw priority use keeping the operating fleet maintained. The tram parts were hastily retrieved and although a few

items were carefully stored (droplights, doors etc.) the remainder was left in the open around the site. Deterioration was rapid and subsequent clear-ups, of which there were many, saw the remaining parts disposed of as scrap or on bonfires. As though this was not bad enough, in the late 1980's the Steam Railway was preparing to extend the railway to Smallbrook; and all the old stock housed on the long siding was to be removed or broken up. The tram was earmarked for scrap but fortunately it escaped this fate and was relocated in a field under a hedge. Here it languished until March 2012 when it was moved into a temporary shelter by the workshops. A small team then began assessment of what was required to restore Car No. 2.

Team Tram, as it was affectionately known began by sending out searchers to various records offices, museums and other railways to establish the whereabouts of original drawings for the tramcars both motor and trailer. The trailer car drawings were easy to find, we already had some in the Steam Railway archive, and the NRM provided a whole lot more. On our travels we also found drawings for the similar ex Southern 'milk van', later WC&PR. No. 5.....built about the same time as our No. 2 car. You might think we would have found ours at the same time.....no such luck. Whilst we accessed numerous documents regarding the proposals and early drawings, the final version

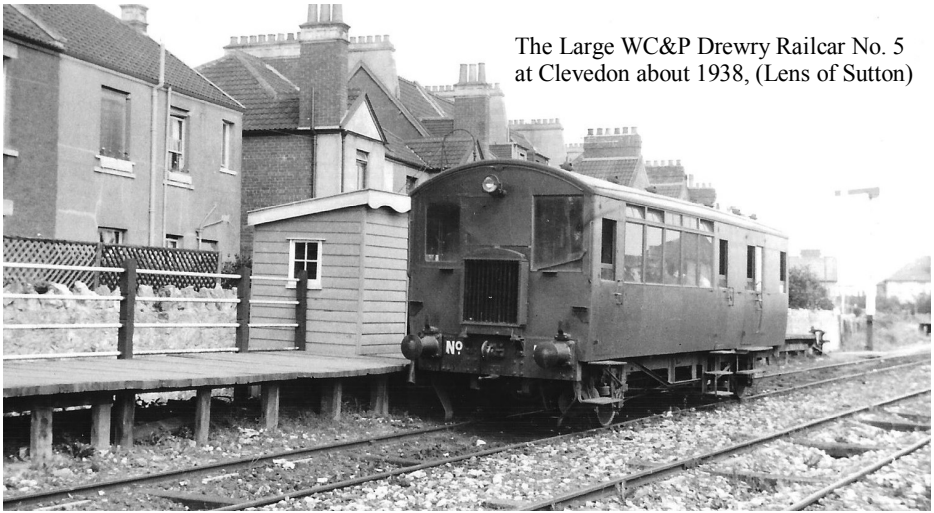
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of the two pier Drewry cars still elude us to this very day!!!

As a result, one of our team commenced a new drawing of the existing chassis before any part of it was touched. Once complete, this was archived along with over 150 other drawings and sketches relevant to the trams and a photographic record of the remains.

building of a driving trailer with disabled access was a reality.

Havenstreet workshops were (and are) at full stretch. Major tasks include three Ivatt Class 2 locos in need of restoration, and four bogie passenger carriages requiring new underframes. Meanwhile the day-to-day maintenance of operating the line, and the continued restoration of



The Large WC&P Drewry Railcar No. 5 at Clevedon about 1938, (Lens of Sutton)

There were two real choices for the future of No. 2: restore the car as a static exhibit, replacing the unserviceable engine, the missing transmission and body for display on high days and holidays; or alternatively restore Car No. 2, with a modern transmission, and build a replica trailer car to match. This would have a driving position to provide a two-car unit able to carry fare paying passengers.

With the extent of 'rebuilding' required, and the cost to construct a non-operational trailer, it seemed pointless if, for a little more, the car could be rail-compliant and have an operational trailer which would be wheelchair friendly. On this basis the Steam Railway opened an appeal for the project, and a number of individuals provided guaranteed funds to ensure the

vintage carriages and wagons, also has to progress. The prospect of the tram finding a slot was remote. The resultant search for a contractor to carry out the work was an interesting but time-consuming task. Sadly a contractor was found, and a favourable price offered, but after various delays it became apparent this was not going to materialise. The search for a suitable alternative took nearly a year. Funding steadily accumulated and the I.W. Railway Board formally approved the project.

The decision has now been made to run the project in a different way. We will now use individual contractors to provide specific services. Construction will be overseen by our own engineering staff and Independent Competent Person (who was appointed right at the start of the project). To this end, Graham Morris Engineering

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have been appointed to provide engineering drawings for the modified underframes (to raise the vehicles an additional 3" to access standard height platforms), wheelsets and axles, body modifications (trailer car to accept wheelchair access) and sundry other matters. Much of this is now with manufacturers for pricing. Currently the drive system is under review. A tried and tested kit which will provide drive to both axles in the motor car using automatic transmission, plus driving positions at each end of the unit is favoured, along with an air braking system with automotive origins.

At the time of writing, prices are awaited from various sources, once agreed the hardware construction will start.....that's if you exclude the various fittings such as commode handles, brass light fittings, door handles and the gathering of original door locks and sundry fittings which has been going on for the past two years. As much of the original vehicles which can practically be recovered will be reused in the project. Additionally, in consultation with the operating departments, various rules and operational matters for safe operation are under review. It is our intention to make the unit fully compliant for passenger operation. It will, subject to availability and certain safety matters, be available for hire to other railways.

A DESERTED RAILWAY ON THE WELSH BORDER

Courtesy of The Welsh Railway Circle from their files

To those with an eye that can appreciate the subtle romance suggested by up-to-date yet picturesque disrepair, we highly recommend (says the Pall Mall Gazette) the rotting permanent way of what was once the Potteries, Shrewsbury, and North Wales Junction Railway, the resurrected title being the Shropshire Railways Company. The exact origin of the line is hard to determine, and though it was evidently intended to cut out the Cambrian, no reasons were assigned for the belief that two such powerful companies as the North Western and Great Western would forsake that faithful servant without any provocation. To commence with, the terminus of the line was badly chosen, an entrance into Shrewsbury Station proper never being obtained, so a shanty was erected amidst the conventual remains of the Abbey of the Holy Cross. From this point the line then followed the already existing railway as far as Hanwood, the trunk line into Wales, and then bending northwards expired at the little town of Llanymynech, some 25 miles from its starting place, but save for the scanty local traffic presumably as far off from its object as ever. A stroll anywhere along the deserted railway, for

trains have ceased running on it for several years, is interesting, nay, romantic. The rails are still extant, though hidden by luxuriant herbage of grass and weeds; beneath the chairs and sleepers lie rusting and rotting. No telegraph wires drone a ceaseless obbligate, no signal wires entrap unwary feet; the signal posts themselves lean over with a half-mournful, half-tipsy air; all vestiges of paint have long since quitted their arms, while their spectacle-glasses early fell victims to the stones thrown by small village boys. Care is needed in traversing the bridge, for though the iron girders still remain, the track between them is absolutely clear, or so rotten that the risk of being precipitated down into whatever there is below is a real one. One walks past deserted stations with crumbling platforms and tumbledown offices, the sidings torn up, the hedges unclipped, the embankments undrained, obliterated caution boards – everything, in fact, testifying to an unparalleled fiasco in a part of the country where railway enterprise is of necessity a hazardous and unremunerative speculation.

(From the South Wales Daily News, Wednesday, September 16th 1896)

MODELLING NOTES

Selsey Town at Telford

“Selsey Town”, Keith Smith's 7mm layout, was exhibited at the Telford O Gauge show this year. It was featured in the Railway Modeller recently. See the photos on page 16. What a splendidly atmospheric layout!

Colonel Stephens Model Index Updated

Allen Morgan has updated his list of available Colonel Stephens railways' kits and ready to runs in all scales and this is now available on the Society's website. Many thanks Allen for putting in so much work.

Allen added—One other 7mm loco (while not correct and not listed) but is in the likeness of a Colonel Stephens loco is the Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0 ST made by Ixion and priced generally at about £225. *(The loco is fairly similar to East Kent No.2 Walton Park. This was built in 1908 for the WC&PR. Too heavy for the WC&PR, it worked on several Stephens' lines. It was soon transferred to the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway but then went to the East Kent in 1913. No. 2 was briefly loaned to the PD&SWJR in 1917. Last recorded working on the EKLK on 23 August 1943, it was sold for scrap in 1943, but repaired to work at Purfleet Deep Water Wharf and then Hastings Gas Works. It was scrapped in July 1957. The Selsey also had a Hudswell Clarke, the second Chichester, but this had a very different cab and a much more antiquated appearance than the Ixion model. Ed]*

The New Dapol O Gauge Terrier

The new ready-to-run Dapol Terrier in 7mm is now available in the dark blue K&ESR livery as *Bodiam*. See page 17 for a colour photo of one of the first models received by Society member John Boshier and which he put on the Yahoo website. Ross says his own model looks very nice, has excellent detail and runs very

well. It is also excellent value at £165. It really just needs coal rails and the condenser pipes removed to make an accurate model.

Allen Morgan has got permission to make the notes and drawings on the Terriers, extracted from the book by the late Colin Binnie, available to CSS members. There is also some further information from Colonels 87 and 88. He hopes to be able to offer the information as either an email or in paper form on receipt of an SAE and the cost of copying the twenty-odd pages of A4 that he will have collected. More information in the next Colonel.

Colonel Stephens in Railway Modeller

The March 2015 issue (I've just got round to looking at it) has an article by Andrew Ulllyott on “Researching Clevedon”, his new WC&PR layout, and how he built some of the buildings. A further article is promised. This issue also has a very nice feature on “Plaxtol Road”, a 7mm model based on the “Hadlow Light Railway”. This was a proposed Stephens' engineered light railway that was never built. It would have run from Tonbridge to Plaxtol via Hadlow with a branch to join the main line at Yalding. The model uses typical Stephens stock such as Terriers and the large Drewry railcar from the WC&P. It looks very impressive.

Whatever Happened to the Craig and Mer-tonford Light Railway

The April 2015 Railway Modeller has an article by Malcolm Macleod about the fate of this pioneering and inspirational OO9 railway built by the late PD Hancock in the 1940s to 1960s. Though dismantled in 1987 quite a lot has survived. See the PD Hancock entry on Narrow Gauge Railway Modelling Online and picasaweb.google.com/112904466287746079405

Dundreich station was exhibited at the OO9 Society's exhibition in 2013.

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Two views of Selsey Town 7mm layout at Telford. (Photos: Roger Harmer)



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The Lady Mayor of Bishop's Castle and Vic Smith, Chairman of the BCR Society, after unveiling the plaque erected on the old retort house of the former gasworks at Bishop's Castle to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Railway opening on 24th October 1865. The Board of Trade soon closed it down again as no inspection had been carried out. It reopened again in February 1866. (Photos: Sandra and Vic Smith)



The new Dapol ready-to-run Terrier in 7mm scale. (Photo: John Bosher)

30 Years of the Colonel

As we came up to Issue 120 I realised that it was now 30 years since the Society was founded. Ross got Jon Clarke and Steve Hannington to write articles on their memories of the early days of the Society in Issue 100 for the 25th Anniversary. Andrew Emery and Jon Clarke made contributions in the last issue.

In the beginning Andrew Emery put some ads in the model railway press about forming a Colonel Stephens Railway Society. Jon Clarke, who was thinking about forming a Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway Society, saw an ad and contacted Andrew. They combined forces to start what became the Colonel Stephens Society.

For the first two years there was no formal structure. Andrew attended various model railway exhibitions with the Society stand to recruit members. Jon edited and issued the Colonel.

Jon says - "initially membership was free, and registration forms were sent out so people could let me know what their interests were. To join just required me to be sent some sae's so I could send out a year's worth of "The Colonel". I produced this myself and paid for the photocopying."

Alas after Issue 7 Jon's baby daughter died of meningitis and he felt unable to continue as Editor. Andrew Emery edited the next edition, Issue 8, and then Steve Hannington took over from Issue 9, and continued until Issue 20. Jon retired from the committee but has continued to write articles, and prepared the first edition of the "The Colonel's Guide". He has also given copies of his extensive collection of papers and photos of the S&M to the Colonel Stephens' Museum. Andrew soon left the Society and his article in the last issue told of his varied careers in the years since.

From Issue 8 the Society started to have a

formal structure, subscriptions and AGMs, and had 80 members. Les Darbyshire soon became the first official Society Chairman for some years, then Editor and Chairman for two years. Long-time member Derek Smith took over as Chairman in 1992 until he retired in 2006. Les continued as Editor for another four years, and for the year 1992-3 was Membership Secretary as well. Then we had 147 current members, but had issued membership numbers up to 192. Nine of the original 30 had disappeared by then. Les then became Publicity Officer for a stint, eventually becoming Chairman again in 2006!

From about Issue 8 or 9 Alan and Mary Garner took up distribution of the Colonel [and for some years organised printing too]. They have done the distribution ever since, about 28 years. Alan was also Publicity Officer until Derek Smith took that job over.

Nigel Bird became our first Secretary/Treasurer at about Issue 8 or 9, soon assisted by Chris Holden as Membership Secretary. Ross Shimmon was another early member. There is also a raft of other familiar names, many alas now deceased, though Keith says 12 of the first 50 members remain and 22 of the first 100. I feel quite a newcomer with only about 20 years of membership.

Nigel Bird was persuaded to be both Treasurer and Membership Secretary in 1993, which he did until 2000. Nigel continues as Society Treasurer. David Powell became Membership Secretary in 2000, continuing until 2014, and is now Society Secretary. Dick Gander-ton took over from Les as Editor for 10 issues, and was succeeded by the return of Steve Hannington from Issue 56. He edited for five years until 2004, when Ross took over for 10 years. Another very early member, Hugh Smith (one time editor of the 009 News), is still a member, and sent the note about the Selsey Tramway on page 30 of the last issue. [Continued on Page 30]

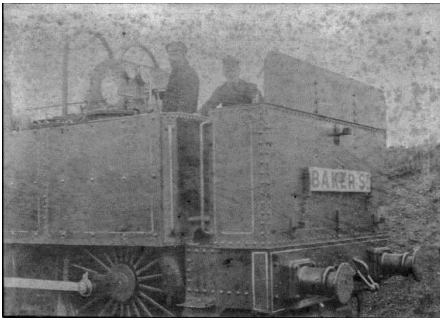
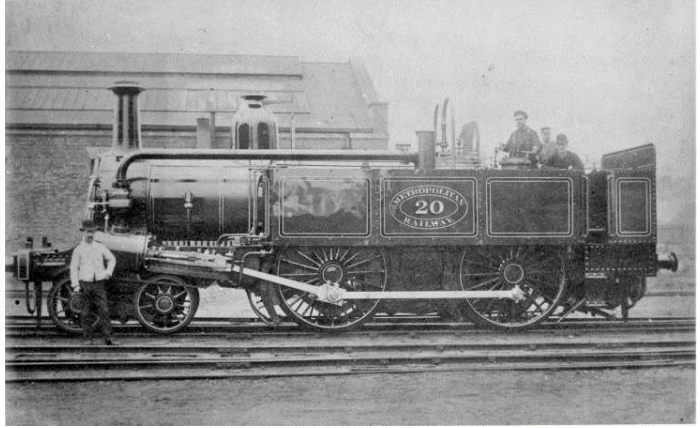
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Photographs of the Colonel

The Colonel Stephens Museum has begun sorting out its photograph collection. Their first project is to gather together all the civilian photos of the Colonel. They would be delighted if you know of any more and contact them with a copy or details. There are surprisingly few.



Above: Age 18. Right: On the footplate, in a bowler, at Neasden.
Below: As fireman of the loco at Neasden.



Above: Stephens is centre left at Cranbrook, circa 1892, with the survey team.



Two photos on the Hawkhurst Branch, circa 1892. On the far left photo he is far right; and in the immediate left photo, he is sat down on the left, in-front of the loco.

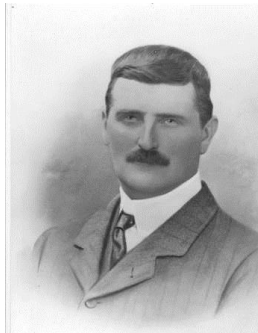
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Above: On left at Goudhurst c. 1892.



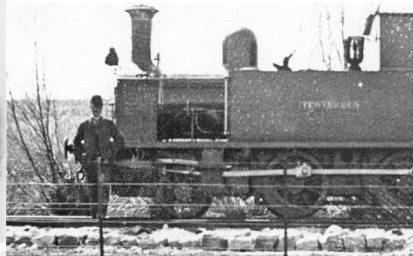
Above: White Hart, Tenterden 1904, tall man in cap centre. Below: At Rolvenden ?



Above: 1904



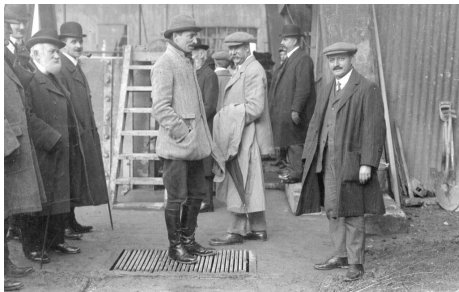
Above: Hastings 1914



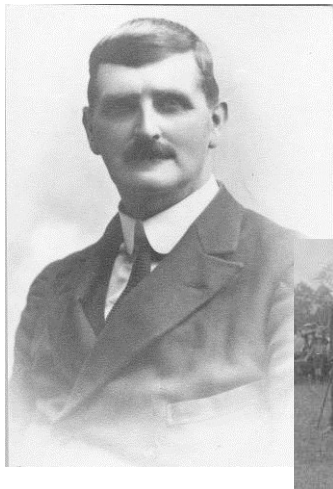
Above: Opening of EKR 1916, third from left. Below: Opening EKR of 1916, centre figure.



Above: Guildford 1912, standing third from left. Below: Opening of EKR 1916, standing far left.



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Left: Early 1920s



Various views of cutting the first sod for the ND&CJR in 1922. Above Centre: Stephens on far left. Top Right: Behind the speaker top right. Above Left: Marked 2 left of centre. Above: With back to the camera.



Right: Stephens at the site of Hele station ND&CJR 1924. Above: Detail of Stephens.



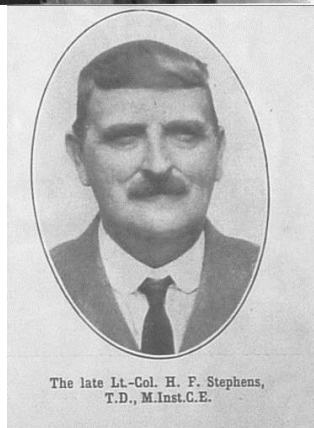
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Right: Stephens on the WC&P left at Clapton Road Halt (see Howard Carey's letter). Far Right: Detail of Stephens.

In the early days of the S&MR. Below Left: In Gazelle's passenger compt. Below Right: On goods brake van.



OPENING OF THE ASHOVER LIGHT RAILWAY



The late Lt.-Col. H. F. Stephens, T.D., M.Inst.C.E.

Stephens at the opening of the Ashover Light Railway in 1925. Above and Below: Group photos with detail views showing Stephens. Right: Obituary photo.



Colonel Stephens in Ireland

Ian Sinclair

The following paragraphs are taken from “**The Belfast and County Down Railway**” by Desmond Coakham, published by Colourpoint Books in 2010 and reproduced by kind permission of the author and publisher. Notes in brackets are additions by the author:-

The name of Holman Frederick (*actually baptised Fred, Ed*) Stephens has been embedded firmly in railway history for his deeply-held belief that light railway construction was the way to fill the gaps in the British transport infrastructure and bring prosperity to thinly-populated rural areas. His missionary zeal came as a surprise to the present writer, when perusal of BCDR Board minutes revealed that a letter from Mr H Stephens of Tonbridge, Kent had asked for a conference regarding a “Light Railway scheme in which he is interested”. This was on 19 November 1913. The General Manager, Moore (*Charles A Moore, General Manager of the BCDR 1904-26*), was instructed to interview Stephens, duly reporting to the Board (*17 December 1913*) that the scheme involved a light railway between Ballynahinch and Kingscourt, a small town in County Cavan, the northern terminus of a branch of the Midland Great Western Railway. Moore was to have a second interview “and make another suggestion” to Stephens. Culverwell (*George P Culverwell, BCDR Civil Engineer 1888-1918*) was called in to report on the distances involved:-

Suggested line Ballynahinch to Newry and Kingscourt; a straight line from Ballynahinch (to Newry) is 24 miles. An actual railway would be at least 26 miles. From Newry to Kingscourt in a straight line is 28 miles, and by a railway... . Not less than 31 miles. Distance by rail Kingscourt-Broadstone (*Broadstone was the Dublin terminus of the MGWR*) is 50½ miles.... . The distance Belfast to Dublin would therefore be probably not less than 129 miles

against the GNRI (*Great Northern Railway of Ireland*) 112½ miles. The proportion of single line would be a factor against speed.

Suddenly, Stephens’ light railway had become a rival to the GNRI main line! In early 1914 there had been two more meetings with Stephens. By that April, Moore had been over the ground of the proposed new line with Keogh, General Manager of the MGWR. In July, Moore had met Stephens in London, with further points to be discussed. The outbreak of World War One was only days away and the BCDR Board had more serious matters on its mind. Stephens (*he had been a Territorial Army officer most of his adult life*) was now apparently full-time with the Royal Engineers and acting Lieutenant Colonel. Even so, when Moore was in London in January 1915 – the Railway Inspectorate were adjudicating on an argument between the BCDR and GNRI involving the new Ballymacarrett Junction signal cabin – he had also seen Stephens, and his interview was minuted as “satisfactory”. Fortunately, nothing ever materialized of this proposal, the most irrational of any scheme involving the Colonel. The MGWR had a long-cherished desire for pushing north from Kingscourt to reach the then-prosperous towns of Dungannon and Cookstown in County Tyrone. This was GNRI territory, but after a fierce battle, the Great Northern had put paid to Midland ambition by building a branch from Armagh to Castleblaney on its Dundalk-Enniskillen line, blocking any advance beyond Kingscourt by the MGWR. What possessed the County Down Board to involve itself in any competitive adventure by another company remains a mystery, compounded by the lack of detail in BCDR Board minutes.

In March 1926, with resources depleting rapidly, an encouraging letter from Stephens “of the East Kent Light Railway” reached the (BCDR)

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Board, recommending purchase of “small economical Tank Engines” that the Southern Railway had for disposal. Crosthwait (*John L Crosthwait, BCDR Locomotive Engineer 1919-45*) was to go to England to inspect them immediately. This he did; it is not said whereabouts on the Southern, but they were certainly the Brighton “Terriers” (*small 0-6-0Ts*) that Stephens had found so useful on his little lines.

Crosthwait reported back in the following week. He could not recommend the SR engines, mainly on account of their age, which was between 40 and 50 years. (*Note: the Irish standard gauge is 5'3" compared to the British standard gauge of 4'8½", so had Terriers been purchased for the BCDR, as recommended by Stephens, they would have required re-gauging.*)

BOOK REVIEWS

A recent book by Jeffery Grayer, and published by Crecy Publishing, is “**Impermanent Ways, the Closed Railways of Britain, Volume 10**” which deals with the Welsh border counties.

Contained therein is a feature on the moribund Shropshire and Montgomeryshire line visited in 1956, although later photographs taken in the 1960s are included.

The Abbey station and Kinnerley Junction are featured, together with scenes from the Criggon branch.

Probably not worth buying for these alone, but the book contains a fascinating glimpse of the devastation wrought in the Welsh Marches by the railways’ unequal task of competing with road transport. Of 157 stations originally opened in Shropshire, only eight remain today. Oh for a time machine! **Keith Patrick**

Keith added:- I actually make it nine stations still open in Shropshire:- Shrewsbury, Gobowen, Wem, Whitchurch, Church Stretton, Ludlow, Wellington, Telford and Cosford. Still not enough!

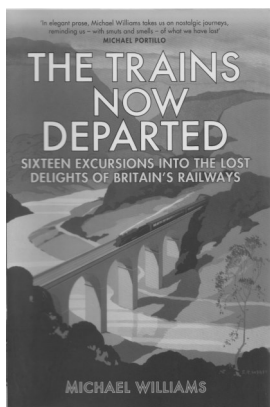
The Trains Now Departed by Michael Williams, Preface Publishing, 2009, ISBN 978-1-848 09435-2, 328 pages (hard back) £20.00.

This latest delightful offering from the pen of Michael Williams (On the Slow Train and On the Slow Train Again) is subtitled **Sixteen Ex-**

cursions into the Lost Delights of Britain’s Railways. My excuse for promoting this book in our journal is that one of the chapters is an affectionate look at the story of the Shropshire & Montgomery. “Britain’s most eccentric line. Even Heath Robinson might have struggled to invent it...”

Other chapters cover: the Somerset and Dorset (the Holy Grail of lost railways); the Night

Ferry from Victoria (final ticket for the boat train); the Metropolitan (kippers and champagne on the tube); the Stainmore line (the railway that touched the sky); famous named expresses (the glamour that ran out of steam); the Liverpool Overhead (the train ahead of its time –



a memory on Merseyside but emulated around the world); the Stratford-upon-Avon & Midland Junction Railway (the Slow, Mouldy and Jolting, the railway that time forgot); the Pontefract Line (leading into a thought-provoking essay on ghost trains and confirming that the way we run our railways is totally barmy); the Lynton & Barnstaple (goodbye to the toy train); Engineer-

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ing Genius in the Scrapyard (another thought provoking essay on the premature scrapping of examples of the pinnacle of steam technology); Last Call for the Dining Car; The Country Railway Terminated (including Stephens' North Cornwall Railway); the Final Whistle for the Grand Stations (victims of the wreckers' ball); Blackpool Central Station (a reminder of the days of the summer seaside holiday traffic); and finishing on an upbeat note with The Line that

Came Back From the Dead (the partial reopening of the Waverley Route).

The book is accurately summed up on the fly cover: "... it is a journey into the soul of our railways, summoning up magic which although mired in time, is fortunately not lost for ever." This is definitely one for the railway enthusiast's bookshelf. **David Powell**

PRESS DIGEST

*Our regular round up of
the railway press*

Ross Shimmon has sent me a pile of cuttings from the railway press. We have received a lot of coverage in recent Railway Modellers. In September Ross wrote a letter saying he had acquired one of the lovely new Heljan 7mm railbuses as used briefly on the K&ESR with the photo used on our last cover-just what a latter day Colonel might have acquired. The Editor asked for further suggestions. [*There was also a view of PD Hancock's chest of drawers, full of treasures from the Craig and Mertonford, with a letter from Malcolm Macleod.*]

In the October issue Nigel Bird's letter suggested he might use Pacers, redundant Underground stock, Class 08s and other old school diesels. David Churchill suggested the Parry People Mover. The November issue has a super 7mm narrow gauge model of the Ffestiniog and the December issue kindly mentions the Society Christmas Cards.

The July Railway Magazine has some nice colour photos taken in July 1964 of a visit to the ND&CJR. There is a photo of an Ivatt Class 2 tank 41208 with a single brake composite coach at Halwill Junction. The November issue has an account of a 1949 visit to the North Wales narrow gauge lines with some lovely colour photos. The October Heritage Railways has a feature on the celebrations by the Welsh Highland heritage Railway to mark 35 years since they first started running trains from Pen-y-Mount at Portmadoc. *Russell* headed the commemorative train while in 1980 the first train was pulled by the diminutive

Ruston & Hornsby 40DL diesel *Kinnerley* with an all female crew. One of the 1980 photos shows a Cambrian Line DMU in BR blue in the background that would now be on a preserved line if it is still around. Their July gala featured three North Wales quarry Hunslet steam locos.

The Leighton Buzzard Railway starts work on its new station building at Pages Park in January. Their autumn gala on Sept 13th had several visiting locos including a Corpet, an O&K and a Barclay.

The November Steam Railways has an article on the collapse of the railway book market featuring Nigel Bird amongst others. They also reported that the September WHR Gala had 10 locos, only two of them the big NNG16 Garratts, so they had some unusual workings with double headed trains.

Lots of other news stories feature events already described in our News and Events Section so I will not repeat them here. Thanks Ross.

Volunteer Colonel Required?

Jon Clarke contacted us to say that Modelu, who were at Telford O Gauge show, will provide a resin model of yourself in any scale in resin for £20. David Powell offered to lend a bowler and a great coat if a suitably tall volunteer could be found with a real or false moustache. However Ross pointed out that Andrew Stadden does a 7mm Colonel in a tweed jacket holding a flat cap for £2.70, see the acstadden website.

DISPATCHES

Letters and Emails to the Editor



Stephens on the WC&P

Thank you for the photo of Colonel Stephens on the WC&P. He is stood in the road next to the entrance to Clapton Road Halt. This consisted of just a sign board and a small strip of land. There was no shelter. It was a mile or more from Clapton-in-Gordano which was across the valley to the south. The next station up the line was

Portishead South on the Bristol Road. A pub nearby was "The Albion" that in 1903 was run by my grandmother's brother George Pine. Its still open and doing well although George is long gone. Another brother was Harry Pine, who lived in South Wales and was a miner. He spotted a 9in lead/silver vein while out walking near Cadbury Camp on the hills south of the Gordano valley, but took the secret of its location with him when he died. When we lived on the outskirts of Clevedon near Conygar Quarry there were three pits on Court Hill, like bomb craters, which my father said were Roman lead mines. **Howard Carey** [*Somerset has lots of ancient lead mines. Ingots—"pigs" of lead with Roman inscriptions have been found. Two are in Wells museum. Ed*]

A Few Points

Christopher Redwood writes with a few points from the last two editions:-

In No.119 you commented that the L&BR journey must have been uncomfortable on the wooden seats. They originally had cord-covered cushions extending right across the compartments. One of them survives at Woody Bay. [*I thought this was a Southern Railway improvement or did they just replace them? Ed*]

In the photo on p.17 the recipient of the cheque for the restoration of Chelfham station presented by Les Darbyshire is Nigel Thompson, a quiet and dedicated volunteer from the opening who also arranges regular social outings.

Regarding Tom Burnham's enquiry on p.23, I doubt that Col. Stephens would have wanted a pile-driver for the Wick St. Lawrence Wharf as it had been built several years earlier; I cannot think of any other requirement on the WC&PR. [*Problems with wharf subsidence perhaps? Ed*]

It was good to read Howard Carey's notes on WC & PR locos. With reference to the Dübs loco *Clevedon* being refurbished in the last years, I attach Peter Strange's 1936 photo of her being steamed up with an old oil-drum added to the chimney to increase draughting.

WANTED: Tyer's No.7

The Colonel Stephens Railway Museum is seeking to acquire, by purchase or long term loan, a Tyer's No. 7 electric tablet instrument as used for single-line working on several of the Colonel's lines. The museum is not interested in acquiring the much more common Tyer's No. 6. If you have a No. 7, or know where one might be available, please contact Philip Shaw at Shawmalthouse@aol.com

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A 1954 Visit to the ND&CJR

Society member Ralph Gillam found this photo of the old narrow gauge tunnel at Torrington when sorting out the photographs of his old pal Graham Cosway, now deceased.

“We went on a holiday runabout tour of the West Country Southern Region branch lines in May 1954. We were able to travel from Halwill Junction to Torrington behind 41298, an ex-London Midland Region Ivatt 2-6-2T. I think we were the only passengers. At Petrockstow 32610, an E1R class loco, was shunting and sister E1R 32096 was at Torrington. [*These were the ten specially modified 0-6-2T converted from Stroudley’s E1 0-6-0T for the West Country, and in particular the ND&CJR, that were withdrawn between 1955-59.*] At Barnstaple we spotted another two-32608 and 32696. The following day we saw two more. 32094 was on shed at Plymouth and 32095 was at Bere Alston. At Exeter on 20th May we saw 32135 and 32124. We were well pleased to



North Devon and Cornwall Junction Railway, opened 27/7/25 from Torrington to Halwill Jcn., 20.5 miles. The tunnel of the narrow gauge Torrington and Marland Tramway at Torrington, Tunnel No. 137A (SR). The tramway ran from Torrington to Dunsbear. 17/5/1954. (Photo and caption - the late Graham Cosway)

have seen eight out of this small class of ten engines in a few days. This was especially so as we’d seen the other two, 32695 and 32697, the previous year at Exmouth Junction. So we could claim to have seen all of this small class, whose days were numbered.” **Ralph Gillam**

BLASTS FROM THE PAST

Ian Dack has been sorting out magazines at Weybourne on the North Norfolk Railway again and has kindly sent us a selection.

The January 1960 Railway World has a fascinating article on **The Torrington and Marland Railway** by RE Vincent. It was built in 1880 to serve ball clay works (not china clay). The clay was laid down in the bed of a huge lake about

100 million years ago. Though large pits were originally dug, by 1960 nearly all the clay was mined using drifts from the surface down to the clay bed. The clay was cut out using air-operated mechanical shovels and loaded into wooden trucks to be hauled up a rope worked incline to the surface. The clay was then tipped into narrow gauge wagons. Originally this three

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foot gauge system ran the eight miles to the railhead at Torrington via a tunnel and a wooden viaduct across the River Torridge. The route deviated from the later standard gauge railway near Dunsbear Halt. The system served a variety of mines, finishing sheds and skirted old open-cast pits. Miners were conveyed in converted clay wagons with ramshackle wooden roofs. The company also had two old single-deck horse tramcars for managers and visitors. After 1925 a standard gauge siding and loop were built to the transshipment sheds, where clay was tipped into standard gauge wagons.

At one time or another the line used nine steam engines, two of which were standard gauge acquired after 1925. All were gone by 1953 but were an interesting bunch built by six different builders, mostly second or third hand. Three were from Fletcher Jennings, two from Black Hawthorn and one from Lewin for instance. To save weight most of the engines towed a wagon carrying their saddle or side tanks and so looked rather odd.

The replacement diesels were also fascinating. There were three narrow gauge Fowler diesels. Two were single cylinder Marshall-Fowlers looking rather like the old Dinky Field-Marshall tractor on a loco chassis. The vibration was terrific apparently. The third narrow gauge diesel was a four cylinder Fowler. There were also two standard gauge Fowler diesels built in 1940 and 1945. In 1960 about 40,000 tons of clay a year were dispatched. Loaded wagons were collected by the branch train to be sent to Petrockstow. They were later collected for shipment to Torrington. About half the clay was exported. Fremington Quay was used to send clay to Europe while clay for America was shipped either from Avonmouth or Fowey.

A fascinating system and **Nigel Bird** still has one copy of the Garner book on the **Torrington & Marland Railway** (now out of print) available at £14 plus £2.50 postage and packing.

The October 1960 Railway World has an article by W. J. Thorne of his wartime memories of the **Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Rail-**



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way. He had joined the LSWR in 1913 and transferred to the army as an instructor. He then spent two years at Kinnerley as Sergeant in charge of operations from 1941 when the army first arrived there. His best stories have appeared in numerous books and articles since then, notably in Mike Christensen's book of "The SMLR under Military Control".

The last Ilfracombe Goods, *Hesperus* couldn't be made to move as it leaked so much steam. "Coal Engine" 8108 had been overhauled before the war but then had been worked into the ground and was a terror to operate. The other two "Coal Engines" were both dreadfully run down. One by one they were sent to Crewe for overhaul and an LMS loco borrowed in their stead. He recalled 28204 and 28308 being borrowed.

Gazelle was tiny but came into its own at the time of El Alamein when a lot of ammunition was being sent out. Extremists among non-combatant troops in the area were thought to be sabotaging points to wreck or delay trains. "They may have been conscientious in their objections to seeing a shot fired in anger, but their consciences were pretty elastic when it came to endangering the lives of their fellow men." Gazelle came into her own to inspect the track to make sure it was safe. Her regular driver, who liked his glass more than somewhat, was not always too happy at the early starts this required. The sergeant who shared this duty was a tall chap and his head stuck out over the top of the diminutive cab so he had a good view of the track ahead. The rear compartment was removed at this time to improve

the view when running in reverse. The cab was so small that a domestic coal shovel was used to fire the loco. It was also useful to take "Gazelle" out for test runs occasionally to ensure she was still working OK. These runs often terminated at Criggion or Llanymynech, where the pubs were much quieter than the "Cross Keys" at Kinnerley, which was always packed with off-duty troops.

The platelayers' hand-pumped trolley was occasionally borrowed for pub visits too, but the revellers were often too tired to take it off the track at Kinnerley and left it to be found the following morning. However after their first trip to Criggion they didn't realise there were trap points at Kinnerley and in the dark derailed the trolley and themselves!

The line was gradually rebuilt with ammunition bunkers located on miles of new sidings. New exchange sidings were built at Hookagate and generally army trains didn't work beyond the yard there. The exception was the Saturday night train to Shrewsbury. Working it down was usually simple, though on one occasion it failed to stop, and pushed an old coach through the Gents and on to the road. Starting the train back on the 1 in 40 climb was much more difficult. The load was limited to three coaches but these were packed tight with troops who were often pretty tight themselves. The author didn't recall a run without an incident of some sort or another. Departure was 11pm. The loco stalled on several occasions, and once the vacuum brake was disconnected to save steam so they could get up the bank. On another occasion they hit a herd of cows that strayed on the line

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after elderberries, killing five.

The drivers were delighted when Dean Goods engines started to arrive which were powerful engines and fully up to the job. Several small tank engines were sent to the line but were of limited use. Some of them were very old indeed. Two ex-GER 0-6-0 locos arrived also that were more useful, having been used by a film studio as Russian locos.

Coaching stock was a bit of a problem as all the S&M coaches were in a very poor state. Most were moved to Ford yard out of the way and some were used as stores for grain in Shrewsbury by a local miller. A portable circular saw was used to make planks from timber felled locally to repair three old Midland bogie coaches for use by the troops. Some ex-LNWR camping coaches arrived and were used as temporary, and very comfortable, billets. Finally eight former London, Tilbury and Southend Railway coaches of 1912 arrived that had been used on Ealing–Southend services, discontinued after 1939. The upholstery was removed and slatted seats provided.

One head-on collision occurred between two morning works trains, fortunately without any serious injuries. An unauthorised man had issued a ticket for the single line section without checking the section was free.

The GWR replaced the damaged coaches with four non-corridor clerestory coaches. Shrawardine viaduct was strengthened to run Dean Goods locos. Repairs were also made to the viaduct on the Criggin branch but the stone traffic was worked by the quarry Sentinel shunter which took about four hours to complete the round trip. The “civvy goods” worked as required on the mainline with a wagon and a passenger brakevan, picking up or dropping off any quarry wagons at Kinnerley. Sugar beet was also carried. The first autumn the army were able to help run extra trains for the beet traffic but the following year they were too busy to help and road transport had to be used. The army did however drop off the odd churn of milk at Maesbrook.

The old Royal Saloon of 1844 was still in faded blue livery with lovely blue upholstery and teak panelling. As Gazelle’s trailer had broken its back, this coach was used for VIP visits coupled to a 150HP diesel shunter. A sapper had to ride in the coach with the “brass hats” to act as guard. Sadly it was too far gone to preserve it when an attempt was made in the 1950s.

30 Years of the Colonel

[continued from page 18] Other early members mentioned in the first few newsletters were Philip Shaw [Colonel Stephens Museum], the late Robert Kinghorn [a leading light in getting the East Kent off the ground at about this time], Bob Williams, Len Ashby, J Burrell, the late Ivor Gotheridge [Ashover Railway book and the first Society web-master], Peter Harding [author of numerous booklets on branch railways in the SE], John Scott-Morgan [well-known author], Vic Mitchell [author and publisher], the late John Keylock [WHR archivist and author], Tony Chelford, Mike Green, Derek Smith [late Chairman and on the committee from Issue 3], Brian Clarke of Saltford Models, Alan Kittridge, Robin Arkinstall [Impetus Kits], and John Baker, though many of these soon fell by the wayside.

Les added that he is member number 28, between John Scott-Morgan (no longer a member) and the late Ivor Gotheridge.

Rear Cover: The new plaque at Worle Station erected by the WC&P Railway Group. [Photo—Paul Gregory]

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Contributions to The Colonel are very welcome. Please send them to the Editor (address on this page). They may be in the form of a Word document (Times New Roman font preferred), an email attachment, a CD or a typescript. Steam age authors may, of course, send them as a manuscript - but please write legibly. Please ensure that photos, either in electronic form or traditional print, are reproducible. Authors are responsible for ensuring that their material is not subject to copyright restrictions •

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

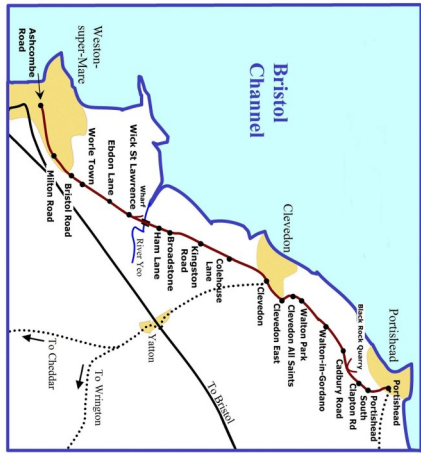
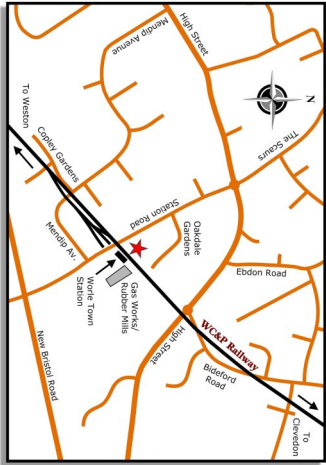
122: Spring 2016: 15th February
123: Summer 2016: 9th May
124: Autumn 2016: 8th August
125: Winter 2016: 7th November

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

Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway

Site of Worle Station

You are here 



You are standing alongside the route of the **Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway**. This was an unusual independent standard gauge light railway. It was quiet and colonial and operated on a 1000 lb gauge. It was built by Messrs-Speck in Clevedon in December 1897 and was extended to Portishead on 7 August 1907.

The map on the left shows the modern road layout, with the WCC&P Railway superimposed. The modern footpath linking High Street and Station Road follows the old track, but closely. Worle was one of the more important stations. The station was originally a 10' 0" high platform but this was later removed. Worle was once larger than Weston, but by the time the railway was built it had been overtaken in size. Worle remained a distinct community and an important supplier of food and services for the growing resort.

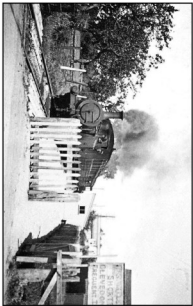
The station was originally simply called 'Worle', but in 1913 it was renamed 'Worle (Weston)'. It was from 1917 onwards, Worle Town. The station was on the south side of the line, just east (the Clevedon side) of Station Road where there was an ungated crossing, the site of several fatal accidents. Traffic lights were installed in 1957/8. There were level crossing gates where the line crossed the High Street. A siding served the Worle gas works until they closed in 1962. The gas works were replaced by 'Worle's' rubber factory, and then a retirement (R&V) shop.

The railway was always short of money, and most of the boys and rolling stock were bought second-hand from various sources, making a very motley but interesting collection. Increasing road transport in the 1930s worsened the railway's finances, and World War II was the last straw for the struggling railway which closed on 18 May 1946. Little of the railway now survives, but there are still things to see and short stretches of the route can be walked. Col. H. F. Stephens managed the railway from 1911 until his death in 1931. He was known as the 'Light Railway King' as he managed a number of other railways.

The WCC&P Railway Group has erected other boards like this, including at Weston-super-Mare, Aishome Road, Clevedon centre and Portishead near the White Lion.

Find out much more about this fascinating railway at www.wccpr.org.uk

Maps, books and other publications giving information about this railway may be obtained from the WCC&P Railway Group at www.wccprgroup.org.uk



Train arriving at Worle from Clevedon in 1932.



Worle Town Station in 1930 looking towards High Street.



One of the locomotives - No. 1 in Clevedon.



Worle Town Station looking towards Weston.



Worle History Society

This display has been designed by the WCC&P Railway Group and jointly funded with Worle History Society. www.wccprgroup.org.uk www.worlehistorysociety.net Erected in 2015.

Photos are courtesy of the Colonel Stephens Museum - www.flightfromweston.org.uk and the WCC&P Railway Group collection. Further information on the Colonel Stephens railway may be obtained from Colonel Stephens Society - www.colonelstephensociety.co.uk