

Colonel 14



• THE • COLONEL

NUMBER 14 AUTUMN 1988

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THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ENTHUSIAST OF THE LIGHT & NARROW GAUGE RAILWAYS OF HOLMAN F. STEPHENS



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THE COST OF GLOSS

Editorial

Recently I had the pleasure of chatting to Eric Gresty, sales officer of the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association, about its rather splendid glossy A4 magazine, *Narrow Lines*. Though I am not keen on opening up all over again the debate about whether our society should be producing something more substantial than this little booklet, Eric provided some interesting facts-of-life about quality printing.

When we spoke, the 7mm NGA were just going to print on their latest issue: they print six issues of 16 pages each year. The print costs alone of a run of 550 copies were just under £500. This was from "camera ready" artwork, so does not include typesetting and so on. Eric estimated that about half of the cost is for "setting up" - producing the printing plates themselves - which is independent of the number of copies actually printed.

Working from these figures, we would need to put up membership fees to £10 a head to cover the cost of printing a quarterly, A4 *Colonel* of sixteen pages to our current level of membership. The cost of professional typesetting and artwork generation would bump this up even further.

The 7mm NGA only embarked on *Narrow Lines* after its membership began to exceed 200. It is clear that professional printing is only really feasible with a large print run, supported by a large membership.

"I would think very carefully before you go into proper printing," said Eric.

I take his point. Another point, of course, is that my job would become considerably more involved and time-consuming than it is now. We would have to start thinking about an editorial *team* rather than just an editor.

The upshot seems to be that if you want a better journal, recruit more members: and more *active* members at that. And that would be a whole different ball game.

SH

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#####NEWS

K&ESR GETS GO-AHEAD TO NORTHIAM

Work has now started on reinstating the K&ESR to Northiam, following the English Tourist Board's agreement to grant £45,000 towards the cost. The total estimated cost of the project is £225,000, of which £140,000 has been raised by the sale of Bearer Bonds. A further £35,000 worth of Bonds have yet to be sold.

The extension will see public trains running into East Sussex for the first time since the line was closed. Work involves rebuilding two miles of track and associated civil engineering works, and refurbishing Northiam station to include a second platform, footbridge, car parks and toilets. Target date for the reopening is Spring 1990.

"Who's Who?" available

Member Jack Burrell is offering what he calls "a small photostat publication" entitled *A Who's Who of Colonel Stephens Railway Personnel* for a mere 80p including postage. Jack, you may remember, contributed a piece on the Great Man's Tonbridge headquarters and staff in Colonel 12, so he knows his stuff. Of the *Who's who*, he says:

"Obviously all staff cannot be included, even if they were known, but I think it is a reasonable selection of staff of special interest. It includes operating people on the lines and the staff at the Tonbridge HQ."

I hope it includes my favourite: the ubiquitous Junction Man Jones of the Snailbeach. Jack's address is: 35 Metford Road, Bristol BS6 7LA.

Questions in the House

Hansard, the record of proceedings at the House of Commons, reported on 28 July a debate on railway privatisation. Bob Cryer, Labour MP for Bradford South, answered an assertion that there were more than just the Big Four railways nationalised in 1948 with the following:

"There was a handful - just 56. In terms of mileage, it was a tiny amount. The Stephens light railway was developed in the 1920s: the Kent and East Sussex light railway operated about a dozen miles of grotty track with equally grotty carriages and locomotives. In terms of mileage, locomotives and rolling stock ... they were largely irrelevant..."

Irreverent perhaps? Assuming the word "grotty" to be a term of endearment, a CSS application form was dispatched forthwith to Mr Cryer, who claims to have been the founder of the K&WVR. Some points of information were also corrected. Nice to know the Great Man's name is still to be heard in the corridors of power after all this time.

Middleton Press developments

Vic Mitchell points out that Branch Line to Tenterden has been reprinted, and that Branch Line to Selsey is now out of print. The Tenterden book retails at £7.95.

Letter#####

ASHOVER, BOATS AND THE POTTS

"Further to my notes on the Tonbridge office (*Colonel 12*), I have since read an excellent Oakwood Press book on the Ashover Light Railway by K.P.Plant. Stephens, and Austen after him, were consulting engineers to the line and were paid £25 pa plus another £25 for expenses. Visits were paid to the line twice a year, so it is perhaps not surprising that the railway had little impact on life at Salford Terrace.

"With regard to Ivor Gotheridge's article on the line, another of the Jackson family, Guy Rolfe (1896-1966) was better known in another field, that of County Cricket. He captained Derbyshire from 1919-36 and in view of this, plus a winter tour of Argentine, could not have given too much time to the business. His obituary, however, described him as joint managing director of the firm.

"A cousin was Sir Anthony Henry Mather Jackson, who would also seem to have some connection with railways, as I recall seeing an industrial locomotive thus named, but cannot place where. He died at Kirklington, Notts., not too far from Ashover, in 1983.

"Next, the interesting advert of 1919 from the Railway magazine on page 7 of *Colonel 12*: some notes in the Tenterden Terrier during 1979 refer to the "12 miles water journey to Newport" claimed of the WC&PR. This would be from Wick St. Lawrence and three ketches were known to have been involved: Sarah, Lily and Edith. The Lily was actually registered in the *Colonel's* name, but perhaps he put a jinx on it. Registered on 6 July 1927, it sank in the Usk 18 months later."

LAST TIMETABLE

"Regarding Derek Smith's article on the S&MR in *Colonel 13*, there is a photograph in British Railway Journal number 18 of a Collier entering Meole Brace (from Shrewsbury) in 1937 with a parcels van and several wagons. One can see for some distance down the track towards Shrewsbury and this confirms that the wagons had been collected at a point much nearer Shrewsbury.

"An article in two parts on the S&MR in the *Railway Modellers* of September and November 1934 stated that the last passenger service timetable was introduced on 6 February 1933. It consisted of a 7.30am Kinnerley to Llanymynech; 8.10am Llanymynech to Shrewsbury; and a 10.15am from Shrewsbury to Kinnerley from Mondays to Fridays.

"The 8.10am from Llanymynech would seem to be something of a mail and newspaper train. This might be Manchester newspapers, as London papers would, by then, have come by road from Shrewsbury.

"Only on Saturdays was the service of even a minimum use to passengers, with a 2.30pm from Kinnerley to Shrewsbury and a return through Melverley at 3.45pm. After backing to Kinnerley, there was a trip from there to Llanymynech and return. Melverley also had a morning passenger working.

"The article also describes the exchange sidings as being outside Shrewsbury West."

Jack Burrell, Bristol

I Was There
THE COLONEL'S SECRET PAPERS

Peter Bowden was a mere strip of a lad when he found treasure in a little hut at Shepherdswell station on the East Kent

THE photo reproduced as a line drawing in Colonel 11 of the round, ex-WD "mushroom" hut at Shepherdswell was taken from the footpath leading from the SR station yard. I used to enjoy going down that path to come on the view across the EKR yard and light railway world seen in that photo. Unfortunately, the choice specimens of rolling stock had gone by my first visit.

Just once I saw a four or six-wheeled coach in the station siding. The two ex-LSWR bogie corridor coaches that comprised the passenger fleet in the last days were "different" in that they were lettered East Kent Railway and carried single figure numbers.

But to return to the hut, no doubt originally a waiting room, it had no door and on venturing in one afternoon, I was amazed to find the floor covered with discarded official EKR books, forms and correspondences, just mouldering away. Many, I recall, were signed by HFS himself.

As a studious schoolboy, I was fully aware of the unique importance of what I was feverishly looking through, dreading that I would be seen and thrown out. Being a law-abiding character (and also having got there by bus and being about to ride on the evening train and therefore to be under the eye of the staff) there was little I could do except grab a couple of items and stuff them inside my belted school mac.



To my lasting regret, the little I snatched has long since disappeared, along with those now sought-after Dinkies, Dublos and so on. There were a couple of letters signed by Stephens, one referring to a deceased employee and the other, I am sure, to Wingham Colliery (very tantalising) and this I do lament: a second hand SE&CR truck and sheet ledger.

This had been used by the EKR to record wagon numbers and loads to and from the line during 1923. Mostly SE&CR coal trucks to and from Tilmanstone as I recall, but interesting private owners recorded and many of the pre-Group lines stock. The EKR stock was mainly running to "Eastry from R'boro Branch", presumably for construction materials. I do recall that there was just one post-Group wagon listed - LMS, in fact.

The sight of that round hut always brings mixed emotions - had I been a little older, perhaps today I would possess an unrivalled collection of original Stephens documents. On the other hand, I was there, and actually mounted a footplate and stood beneath a round Stirling cab#

Modelling#####

KESR BIG ENGINE IN BRASS

In the first of a series, Stephen Hannington describes how he built a 4mm model of one of the KESR's workhorses

AFFECTIONATELY known as "the big engine", the second number 4 was a regular workhorse in the K&ESR's latter days, and survived until the BR takeover, at which point it was scrapped. M. Lawson Finch has this to say about it:

"Steam heating connections had been fitted, although the handbrake remained the sole means of stopping. This same brake handle gradually worked very loose and during its last years had to be approached very stealthily and, so to speak, taken by surprise, because it developed a nasty habit of jumping up and down while the train was in motion and a blow from it could easily have broken the wrist.

"Trouble had also started with the saddle tank, and this had to be filled before the fire could be lighted as a certain amount of water invariably slopped over and extinguished it."

This and the following articles covers my second attempt at constructing a 4mm scale model of the Big Engine from a Jidenco (now Falcon Brass) kit. Why second? The first was my first ever attempt at an etched brass kit - and it showed. Various bits were not squarely assembled, for example, and it was generally untidy had several inaccuracies, and ran on relatively coarse Romford wheels. So when it fell of the fiddle yard onto the floor, I decided to have another go at it, though it suffered only minor damage.

DAFT FAULTS

The kit itself has several inaccuracies and suffers from generally poor design. Though some of the "unsquareness" was a result of my inexperience, it was not helped by the lack of such useful design features as tab and slot location that some of the better kits now use.

The daftest fault is that the cab roof has details etched 90° out - the external ribbing runs along instead of across the roof. This was rectified by turning the etching plain side up and adding the ribbing from 5thou boiler band strip from George Norton. Not an easy task, but an immensely satisfying result.

A major error is that the saddle tank should be flat sided at its lower panels, not rounded as in the kit. This seems to be an error perpetrated from the incorrect drawing supplied with the kit. Fitting the tank wrapper supplied was pig to say the least - I ruined mine in an attempt to soften it to make it bend easier. A new one was made from thin sheet bronze picked up at the Model Engineer exhibition at Wembley.

Bronze is nice stuff, but a bit stiff for this sort of work. The tank wrapper was made in two piece, with a top, lengthwise join. This was mainly because my sheet was not big enough for one go, but in the end it proved to make the job considerably easier to use two pieces.

The prototype tank is made of overlapping sheets rivetted together and running across the tank. The outer sheets were

Modelling

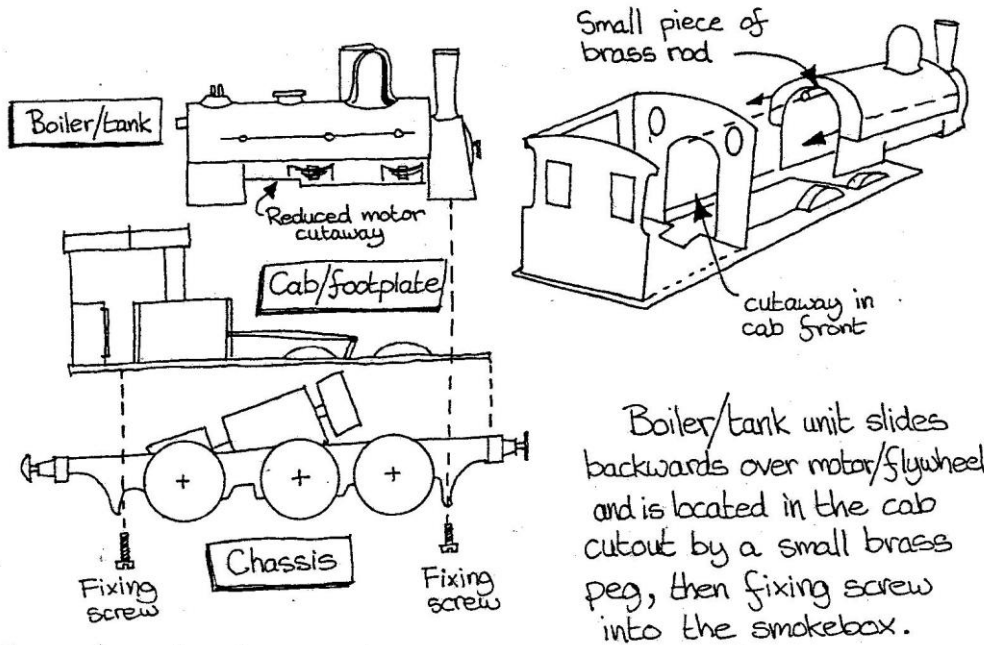


Figure 1: Sub-unit assembly

represented by Evosticking panels of varnished millimetre graph paper onto the bronze. Rivets were represented using tiny plastic cubes, which stick very nicely to the varnished paper using Humbrol solvent. The rules on the graph paper are useful for lining the "rivets" up and getting even spacing. Rivets in the metal parts were represented with brass wire soldered into holes.

The new wrapper fits round the original formers which were filed to a more correct profile - the Skinley drawing is right. The front cosmetic overlay received a similar treatment to the formers. It looks a little odd if you peer too closely, but I decided to live with that.

The body was constructed as two separate sub-assemblies: the cab and footplate; and the boiler/saddle/smokebox (see Figure 1). This meant that the boiler could be slid *lengthwise* over part of the motor and flywheel, allowing a smaller cutout on the boiler bottom. It also made painting easier, though disassembly and reassembly for maintenance are somewhat trickier than for a one-piece body.

First, the cab/footplate. The footplate valances supplied in the kit are simple brass strips intended to be soldered on edge underneath the footplate. I never found this satisfactory, so I substituted some Scaleway bullhead rail, soldered with the bottom

Modelling

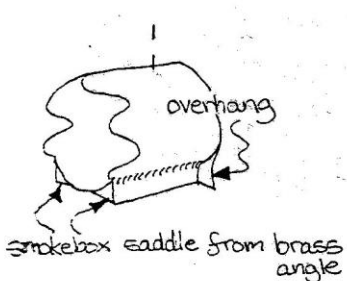


Figure 2: Smokebox front plate

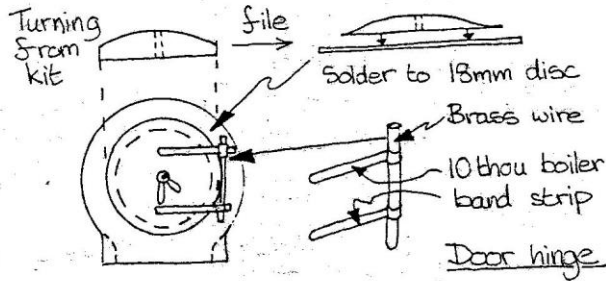


Figure 3: Smokebox door details

edge facing outwards. This is more rigid, easier to get straight, and generally simpler than fiddling with thin brass strips.

Buffer beams were made part of the chassis - I can't remember why now. They were made of two thicknesses of 40thou plastic with added plastic rivets and washer strips, and glued to two small pieces of brass angle soldered on the inside of each end of the frames. This is much easier and better looking than the fold-up items with etched wood grain supplied with the kit (the Big Engine had rather battered wooden buffer beams).

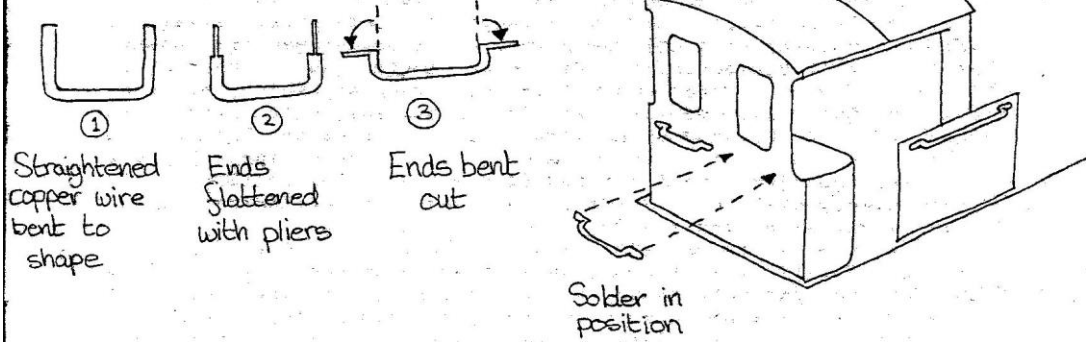
The cab roof is demountable, and is a force fit held in place by short lengths of bullhead rail soldered on its underside to fit within the cab. This makes the spacious cab interior accessible. A rear axle drive arrangement is used so that the cab is almost completely free of any drive mechanism, allowing full details to be fitted. These are quite clearly visible through the fairly open cab sides.

BOILER ASSEMBLY

The boiler itself is supplied ready rolled and must be soldered to circular formers - not an ideal arrangement, especially when space and cutouts have to be made for the motor. I struggled with this method, but in a subsequent Ilfracombe Goods from the same stable, I found that tacking the former at one point to the wrapper and then closing the wrapper round the former in the vice to complete the soldering produced good results.

Considerable effort went into the smokebox front - the loco's "face" which holds so much of its character. A front plate was cut from bronze to provide the right shape of side overhang (see Figure 2). The smokebox door provided is a crude brass turning of the wrong profile. This was thinned down by rubbing it across a coarse file until its edges were paper thin and beginning to flatten out. This was then soldered to a disc of bronze, marked out using an Ilfracombe Goods boiler former, which was the right diameter.

Figure 4: Cab handrails



Other details are shown in Figure 3. The locking handle came from Crownline. A patch in the lower edge of the door was reproduced by drilling holes and soldering in small pieces of brass wire to represent rivets - tricky, but an essential parts of the machine's run-down appearance.

Boiler bands were added using George Norton's strips to the underside of the boiler, and various bits of pipeworks were added from brass rod and tube. The springs were lost wax brass casting supplied by George. I sent him a photocopy of the drawing of the loco, and he managed to track down some oddments that were just right. What an excellent fellow!

These spring castings were soldered to the boiler to make the body split easier. They were positioned whilst the two components were screwed together - the front screw passes through the footplate into a nut soldered inside the smokebox - to assure their correct positioning. Holding them in place while soldering, however, is a matter of Blu Tak, matchsticks and a lot of swearing. The piping also has to be carefully arranged to pass around the reversing lever, which is a part of the cab/footplate assembly.

Cab handrails were made from stretched copper wire as shown in Figure 4. Being copper, they are a little softer than would be ideal, but they have survived well enough. An alternative would be brass, with the ends filed rather than squeezed flat. There were a few other tricks used in the detailing, but these were the major ones, and space precludes the rest. Chassis construction will be covered in the next Colonel!

The Real Thing#####

THE GOLFERS' LINE

Stephen Hannington puts the Rye & Camber Tramway in its place

HOLIDAY traffic was always a significant source of revenue to the Great Man's railways. They ran through isolated rural areas of the sort popular with holidaymakers, and Stephens was not unaware of this fact: Bodiam castle was much touted as a source of tourist revenue on the K&ESR; there were camping huts for rent near the S&MR; and tourists were just about the only passengers carried by the Welsh Highland. But the Rye and Camber Tramway was unique in that it catered almost exclusively for leisure activities: golfing, and the splendid beaches at Camber Sands. It would surely still be a going concern today if the Admiralty had not wrecked it during the Second World War.

The Tram, as it was affectionately called, was the Colonel's second project, after the Hawkhurst branch. It opened on 13 July 1895 and ran entirely on private land down the east bank of the River Rother. Its history is admirably covered in Peter Harding's little book, *The Rye & Camber Tramway* and it is not my purpose to try and compete with this work: more to place the little line in its context, both geographically and historically.

Where the Tram ran was once open sea, less than 150 years ago. Waves lashed the rocks at high tide just below Rye where now there is a miniature golf course. Camber got its name from a tidal lagoon called Le Chaumbre (presumably from the French word for "room") which provided a sheltered anchorage for the ships of Good Queen Bess.

A combination of land drainage schemes and the eastward drift of shingle along the coast resulted in a retreat of the shoreline to three miles south east of Rye. The harbour authorities of Rye have had a centuries long battle with these influences to keep the port going, and these are well documented in *A Maritime History of Rye* by John Collards, which also mentions the Tram.

SOURCES OF REVENUE

So the silting up of the port produced the three sources of revenue for the Tram: the Rye Golf Club, which opened in 1894 on the site of Le Chaumbre; the village of Rye Harbour, from which the fishing boats plied; and the mini seaside resort of Camber.

The golf club provided the original impetus for the line, and even subsidised it between 1901 and 1925. The Tram's relevance to the golfers is illuminated in the Mapp and Lucia books by E.F. Benson, mayor of Rye from 1934 to 37, and published in the 1920s. He called his fictional Rye Tilling, after the river Tillingham that flows round the south of Rye to join the Rother just below the town. Amongst his characters are the golf fanatics Major Flint and Captain Puffin, who "had wrangled over the correct procedure if you lay in a rabbit scrape or on the tram lines". Part of the course of the Tram - the 1908 extension from Golf Links to Camber Sands - cuts right across the Links.

In *Miss Mapp*, published 1922, the Major and the Captain are believed to have gone out to the links on the "11.20 steam tram" to fight a duel. Miss Mapp, having dispatched the vicar to try to

#####The Real Thing

stop it, goes to the end of the high street to watch for their return:

"From here the progress of the tram across the plain was in full view: so, too, was the shed-like station across the river, which was the terminus of the line, and expectation, when the two-waggoned little train approached the end of its journey, was so tense that it was almost disagreeable."

The real Vicar of Rye, incidentally, attended the opening luncheon of the Tram at the Royal William Hotel on the Links after the inaugural trip on the line. And the visibility of the Tram from the town was a particular feature: the words TRAM STATION were painted in huge letters across the roof of the Rye terminus.

Of those two "waggon" that Miss Mapp noticed, one was built by the Rother Iron Works, which was founded in the late 19th century as a shipyard by the side of the Rother. It was one of many "cottage" iron works in the area that were wiped out by the huge furnaces of the Industrial Revolution. Wealden Kent is dotted with so-called hammer ponds, which are all that remains of the little forges that once were common.

ANCESTRAL COACHBUILDER

The builder of the Tram's coach was E.P.S.Jones, great grandfather of CSS member and draughtsman Richard Jones. The Rother Ironworks is now let as small industrial units on its old site, and still retains its name. As for the fishermen, who could buy a 30/- season ticket for a complete boat crew for a year on the Tram, Collard attributes some of the Post War decline of the Rye fishing fleet to the Tram's demise:

"Another discouraging element for the fishermen was the expiry of the Camber tramway after its war service."

As the upper reaches of the Rother had begun to silt up, the base of the once considerable fishing fleet had migrated a couple of miles downstream to Rye Harbour. This was served by a standard gauge goods branch on the west bank. The only public passenger service from the town to the harbour was provided by the Tram on the east. Golf Links station was directly opposite the fishing fleet's moorings, which could be reached by ferry.

Collard's book also reveals an interesting footnote to the railway history of Rye. At the time that the Ashford-Hastings rail link through Rye was being debated, the Harbour Commissioners were opposed to a bridge across the Rother, which would have interfered with their navigation rights. As a result, in March 1845, they commented: "a line of railway from Rye to Tenterden and Headcorn would naturally increase the trade and commerce of the Port".

This line of interest was not to die out for another 60 years, and its last protagonist was the proposed East Sussex Light Railway, intended to run from Northiam on the K&ESR to Rye SE&CR station. Part of this proposal was that the East Sussex should take over responsibility for the Camber Tram. It was never to be, and the Tram was quietly dismantled in 1947#

The second part of this article will be in the next Colonel

The Keen Talks#####

TWILIGHT YEARS AT ASHOVER

In the third part of his story of the Ashover Valley Railway, Ivor Gotheridge reveals the secret of the Ashover ballast and sees that, despite this, the end was nigh

ASHOVER quarry produced 500 tons of main line ballast a week. With ten tons in a wagon, that's 50 wagons a week, so about 7 wagons came down a day and about four on Saturdays. I have always wondered why the LMS paid far more at Ashover quarries than they needed to, compared to the huge quarries at Buxton, Matlock and Cromford. Any small quarry or small plant is more expensive to run and its a long way down the light railway. Why on earth did they always pay? I wondered this all my life: I wondered if it was sentiment.

But that didn't come into it at all. The reason was that the chemical constituent of the Ashover ballast was suitable for use in railway tunnels where it is wet and running with water all the time. That one point kept it going. The LMS would probably want about 50,000 tons of ballast a week to keep the LMS system going, but they had this 500 tons from Ashover because its ballast was particularly suitable for wet conditions in railway tunnels.

Despite this ballast trade, the Ashover line became a white elephant and was running at a loss. The way it ran, the man came on at about 7.30 in the morning, raised steam in the engine, and went up from Clay Cross to Ashover with the empties. That was easy, taking about eight empty trucks. Loaded trucks were brought down as far as Ford loop, where half the train was left behind and four trucks were taken up the hill to Clay Cross, where the men had their dinner.

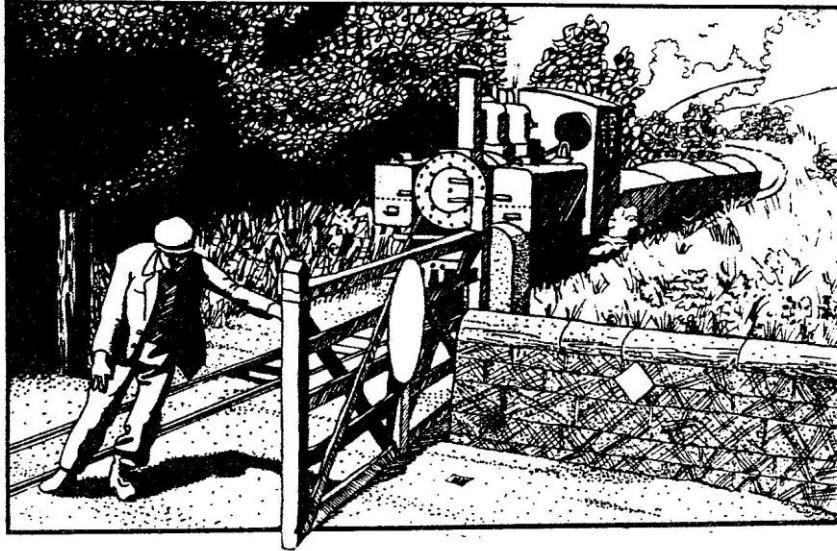
In the afternoon the engine went light engine out to Ford and brought the other four trucks to Clay Cross. One man put the engine away, cleaned it and watered and coaled it for the morning, while the other one tipped the stone into the mainline railway wagons. That's how it worked.

Now as I said, the line was running at a loss. Why did Clay Cross run it at a loss? It suited them. If they closed the railway they would have to buy big lorries - there is a lot of capital in big lorries. And the loss could be offset against the profits of the parent company, so that it would end up paying tax on a lesser amount. Consequently it suited them to run the line.

It ran at a loss except in 1943 when there was an open cast coal field opened at Hill Top. So for about six months there was a large coal field and an extra engine taking the open cast coal to Clay Cross all the time. For about one year they made a profit.

By 1948 the line was in very poor condition. The track was pretty bad. It was very rotten and worn out: weeds and broken sleepers were everywhere. In some places there were no line-side fences: it went straight through the fields. When the line went from one field to another, in some cases there was a pit dug to prevent animals from straying from one field to another. In others there was a fence across the line and the fireman took the fence away, let the engine go through and put the fence back. The

#####The Keen Talks



fences were across the field instead of down the side of the railway. It was getting into a pretty bad state altogether.

In 1948, the Clay Cross coal mines, iron works and gas works were nationalised, so nearly all of General Jackson's company had been taken from him. That upset him very much: the Clay Cross company and the light railway were his life.

By 1947-48 the steam engines were beyond use: they were hardly safe. So they bought a new Planet diesel locomotive. It is surprising that they bought a new one, considering the line was obviously not going to last more than a year or two, but they bought the engine anyway, and it is still running on the Ffestiniog Railway.

The train crew in those days was driver Harold Skinner; the fireman and the mate was Charlie Maycock; and Will Banner drove the Fallgate shunting engine. What track repairs there were, were done by the Clay Cross gang, which patched up the line for track repairs. Skinner the driver left in 1947 so it seems for three years the whole line was worked by one man: Charlie Maycock. The only other line that has been worked by one man was the Snailbeach, by a man called Gatford.

There was one last passenger train in 1948 by the Birmingham Loco Club. There was Joan and four open trucks for them to sit in, and it seems that Charlie Maycock on his own drove the engine. It is rather unusual to have a passenger train worked by one man. Well, it was obvious it would not last, something had to happen. But the unexpected happened#

Find out what happened in the final instalment of Ivor's Ashover saga in the next issue of the Colonel

The Keen Talks 2#####

GENESIS OF THE EAST KENT

Stephen Garrett traces the convoluted wheelings and dealings that eventually gave rise to the East Kent Light Railways

IT WAS on 27 November 76 years ago that the inaugural train ran on the East Kent. The fact that the railway itself did not officially open until another four years after that is neither here nor there: in fact, you could say that the East Kent never *did* open. It was opened in stages, often without authorisation: the Board of Trade seems to have turned an enormous number of blind eyes in this direction.

Bits of it were built and never run, whilst others were claimed to be up and running at times when, according to eye witnesses, there was no track in the place where it was allegedly running and where subsequently there were arguments over the acquisition of land.

But back in November 1912 when that first train ran - an ex-Whitland and Cardigan saddle tank engine and an ex-KESR Pickering bogie carriage - it did so on track which doesn't appear to have been ballasted with much more than hope and what spilled off the coal train that must have shuffled through already.

Hopes were very high. It's wonderful to look back on the phrases which came out then: "A second Glamorgan, a second Lancashire - will the Garden of England be despoiled by the industrial Capitalists?"

There were all sorts of fears; and fears that, if all the plans had been realised, were very real fears. It wasn't just going to be a railway, it was going to be a whole infrastructure. There were going to be steelworks, iron ore extraction, coal. There might in the long term be shipyards. There was going to be new docks. And yet, of all these hopes, very little actually materialised.

SCHEMES AND SCHEMING

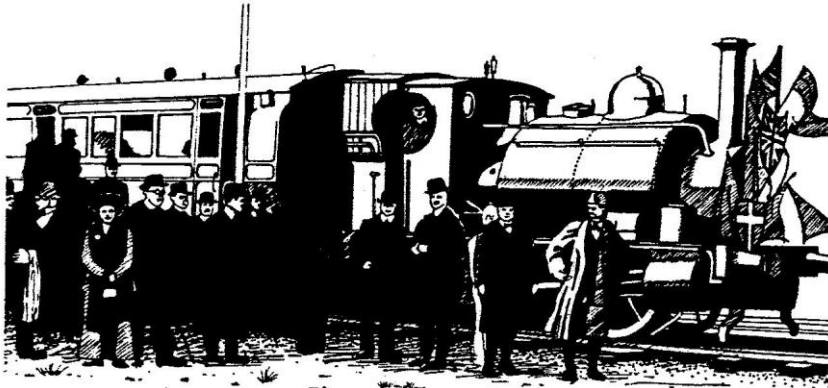
It is very difficult to separate the history of the EKR from the history of that great industrial scheme. Perhaps I should say *scheming*, because I don't think everyone's intentions, or certainly their conduct, was entirely honest.

If you go back to the origins of the EKR, you go back to 1855. Godwin-Austen postulated the existence of an immense coalfield, an extension of the Northern French coalfield extending all the way to Somerset. He suggested that the Kent location was probably the ideal place to begin to extract that coal.

It took some time for that to be put into practice. At first the theory was poo-pooed, and when people did take it up, they dug in all the wrong places. They mainly seem to have been attracted to East Sussex. The first borings were at places like Penshurst, well away from where coal was later proven to be.

So it was a very troubled first fifty years or so. It wasn't until 1890 that Boyd Dawkins, who had taken up the issue of coal existing in Kent as a personal crusade, actually proved the

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Opening day on the East Kent

existence of coal at Dover. That was as a result of the aborting of the Channel Tunnel that was to have been built by Sir Edward Watkin to link Manchester and Paris.

Not being able to build the Tunnel, they thought they might as well do *something* with the equipment, so they dug down behind the Shakespeare Cliff and found traces of coal. This set off an enormous chain of syndicates and companies and investments. A body called the Kent Coalfield Syndicate was set up to exploit the coal. That ran out of money, went into liquidation, and was taken up by the Kent Collieries Corporation.

Most of these companies tended to have the same directors so that new and innocent shareholders could be found each time to plunge money into them. The Kent Collieries Corporation failed to get realisable amounts of coal out of the Dover pit, and was taken over by the Consolidated Kent Coal Corporation, which began developing shafts at Dover. It in its turn went into liquidation and was succeeded by the Kent Collieries Ltd, to distinguish it from the Kent Collieries Corporation: they seem to have lacked imagination with names.

DEAD END AT DOVER

The Dover pit in the end only ever produced 12 wagonloads of coal, and they came up in 1912 for testing purposes. The Dover side of coal extraction was a bit of a dead end. One of the directors of the Kent Collieries Corporation, disappointed by the lack of progress being made, decided to branch out on his own. He was Arthur Burr. He was a very ingenious man and apparently a very plausible man, since he was able to convince shareholder after shareholder that he was onto a very good thing.

The good thing that he started off with was the Dover Coalfield Extraction Company, which was to do almost anything except extract coal from Dover. It was a company that would buy

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up mineral rights in the area north of Dover and promote their exploitation. Out of that was born in 1904 the Kent Coal Concessions Company (KCC).

This was the company that gave its name to the Concessions Group, which spawned an enormous number of companies, most of which were involved in 1910 in putting forward the Light Railway Order for the East Kent Mineral Light Railway. They dropped the mineral from the name at a subsequent date.

This collection of companies included the Snowdown Colliery, the South Eastern Coalfields Company, the East Kent Contracts and Finance Company, the Guilford Colliery and the Deal and Walmer Coalfields Company. The best of all, I think, was the Extended Extensions Company, set up to bring in fresh shareholders for the other companies when they ran out of money. They were all more or less the same company - the KCC - under umpteen different names. Some of them didn't even have boards of directors, while in others Arthur Burr was referred to as "president for life" - he seems to have gone in for wierd and wonderful titles.

So in 1910 they put up the first idea for an East Kent railway, or network of railways, which would enable all of these companies to exploit their coalfields without ruining the roads, which the Kent County Council was beginning to get worried about. The roads simply weren't capable of carrying the quantities of spoil, the machinery and all the rest of it.

So in the first instance the East Kent Light Railways were going to be a network of lines linking up all these possible borings for coal. At the end of the day, even allowing for the fact that they often submitted plans which they then did not follow through and get Light Railway Orders for, there were 40 different lines planned in all.

LIGHT RAILWAY TO LONDON

Some of these were minor junction lines of a couple of furlongs, but some of them were quite extensive lines. In the early days there was talk that if the SE&CR didn't play ball they would put in their own line to London as well. But they never put up a Light Railway Order for it, and I don't think they would have got Parliamentary permission for it!

They got their first Light Railway Order for a line running from Shepherdswell running through to Eyethorne, near to which would be Tilmanstone pit. It would then head off for Richborough where, in association with St Augustine's Golf Links, they were planning to build a new port from which the coal could be exported. St Augustine's was involved because they owned most of the land and thought that a big coal exporting port would make more money than just playing golf on it.

From that main line there would be various branches, one of which would run off from Eastry to Canterbury, and another down to Guilford, where a pit was already under development. In fact, the Guilford pit slightly predates the Tilmanstone one, though it never made the same progress#

Find out how the EKR got off to a bad start in the next Colonel