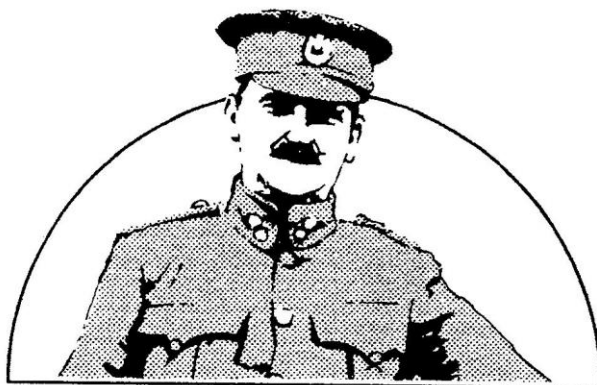


COLONEL 22



• THE COLONEL •

NUMBER 22 AUTUMN 1990

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THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY

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



THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ENTHUSIAST OF THE RAILWAYS OF HOLMAN F. STEPHENS

EDITORIAL

Whither preservation ?

The article by Stephen Hannington in the last issue of "The Colonel" on the re-opening to Northiam of the K. & E.S.R., and the comments by Philip Shaw in the last issue and Mark Toynbee in this one set me thinking on the whole subject of railway preservation.

No doubt, members of this Society would like to see a re-creation of a Colonel Stephens line as it existed at some time in the past. Even if some agreement could be reached on the period to go for, what stock is available to enable the chosen period to be achieved? Short of recruiting a Getty or an Onassis and building from new, existing stock has to be used. Most preserved lines run with stock that never saw service on the line before closure, simply because the "correct" stock does not exist.

Even if by some miracle we could conjure up an "Ilfracombe Goods" and a set of Great

Eastern four-wheelers and, because we were incredibly rich, we could afford to have few passengers in them, they would run into a Tenterden surrounded by modern houses and there would be wall-to-wall spectators and photographers along the lineside!

I believe that there are only three ways around the problems of preservation. One is to create a working museum such as Didcot (which is an excellent museum but nothing whatever like Didcot was in the "old days"). The second is to create what is in effect a full-size model railway, using as much real hardware as possible; this has been done with great skill at Beamish. The third way is to adopt Mark Toynbee's approach, and aim to make your line to the highest possible standards given the restrictions of modern legislation and lack of finance. I think that, for the K. & E.S.R., he's got it right.

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NEWS AND VIEWS

Shropshire and Montgomeryshire crane saved

Derek Smith reports that, following months of uncertainty and discussions with B.R. and the developers of the Abbey Station site, on 19th August the wooden jib crane was removed from site by Mike Wright and his team of helpers and taken to safety at Mike's home near Baschurch. There was no damage caused by this operation, but the end of the jib will need repair due to wet rot over the years in the socket. This marks the end of a very long wait to get the crane away from Abbey yard - Derek has been involved for over 5 years on the project.

When the concrete was broken away from the base it was found that the king post was mounted on a trolley type structure, indicating that it was originally some sort of travelling crane. Even the pulling chains were still attached at both ends.

Already Mike has fitted the main frame back on the king post and has got the gears working, so once the jib is repaired it will be in working order for the first time since 1948.

The track leading away from Abbey station has now become a new road and the station yard a car park. Rock Street bridge has been obliterated, in fact the only items remaining are the front of the station building and the platform on one side.

There is a rumour that someone is trying to buy the remains of the station building, remove it brick by brick and take it to a site near Wolverhampton. However, although it was a sound structure up to two years ago, tramps broke in and wrecked the place, the fire place was taken out and the roof has fallen in, so there is not much left to buy!

"Family Affair" on the K.& E.S.R.

On the weekend of September 22nd and 23rd the K.& E.S.R. is staging its Autumn gala, entitled "Tenterden Railway's Family Affair". Proceeds from the event will be put towards the construction of a public viewing gallery at Rolvenden Locomotive Shed.

At Rolvenden, the Works will be open and visitors will be able to witness the normally unseen work that goes to restore and maintain the railway's fleet. Steam engines not in use on passenger trains will be on view, together with steam cranes and a number of diesel locomotives. An intensive, three-train service will operate throughout the weekend with trains crossing at both Rolvenden and Wittersham Road stations. Four locomotives will be needed to run this service, in addition to a shed pilot at Rolvenden and a Tenterden station pilot, bringing the total number of engines in steam to six.

A rally of over 200 historic vehicles, including traction engines, cars, buses, motor-cycles and commercial vehicles will take place in the fields adjoining Rolvenden Station and a number of craft stalls and side shows along with a refreshment tent will also be on site.

Each of the railway's departments will be putting on a show for the event. Tenterden Town Station will be the venue for an "Edwardian Experience", complete with jazz band, traditional crafts and a period permanent way gang. Also in attendance will be your Editor with his "Maidstone Road" EM gauge layout, even though as this is set in the 1930s it will provide a Georgian rather than Edwardian experience!. Bringing the scene right up-to-date, the P-Way department will be displaying some of their modern track machines as used for the Northiam extension.

K.& E.S.R. to return to Robertsbridge?

The following Press Release, dated 29th August 1990, has been issued by the good folk of Tenterden, fresh from their triumphant re-opening to Northiam. In view of its importance, we have reproduced the text in full.

KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY EXPLORES MAIN-LINE CONNECTION

The Kent and East Sussex Railway has commenced a feasibility study to explore the possibility of extending its line at some future date to meet up with British Rail at Robertsbridge.

The private railway company purchased in 1973 the freehold of ten miles of derelict line between Tenterden in Kent and Bodiam in East Sussex of which seven miles, between Tenterden and Northiam have been restored and are open to the public. Plans are being drawn up for the re-laying of the next three miles of track to Bodiam which has focussed attention on the possibility of extending further. The three and a half miles between Bodiam Station and the old junction at Robertsbridge on the London to Hastings main line were not bought by the railway because of Ministry of Transport objections to the crossing of the A229 and A21

roads and have subsequently been sold to neighbouring farmers.

The railway's board has approached Mark Toynbee as Project Director to conduct the study, initially to establish whether the old track bed can be obtained, whether the Ministry of Transport will remove their objections and finally whether Network SouthEast will allow the running of steam trains into their station at Robertsbridge. The next stage of the study will be to identify the costs of the project.

Negotiations have started with all parties to establish any objections to the plans. Network SouthEast have given their initial support to the project and agreed to the principle of running into Robertsbridge Station. "The problems should not be under-estimated", said Mark. "At least one third of the track-bed has been removed by neighbouring farmers and the land returned to agriculture. We are not talking about simply re-laying track on an existing track-bed but constructing in places a whole new railway. We anticipate some resistance from land-owners who own the track-bed but hope that we can secure agreement in the long-term."

Subscriptions due again!

The bad news is that it is subscription renewal time again; the good news is that the last AGM agreed to leave the subs at their old level of £4 for another year. A renewal form is enclosed with this issue and you will find that apart from the request for cash it also asks for a re-statement of members' interests. This is so that lists of members with specific interests can be published in "The Colonel" to enable like-minded people to contact each other. For this to work of course, addresses and/or telephone numbers would also have to be published, hence the "I do/do not agree...." part of the form.

Trip to Northiam

So far, the response to the request in the last issue of "The Colonel" to let me know the level of interest in a possible "Vintage Special" to Northiam has not produced enough potential passengers to make such a trip a worthwhile proposition as a Society venture. If we threw it open to all comers I think we would easily get enough people, but I would much prefer a trip for Society members and invited guests from kindred organisations. Those who have responded are keen for the trip to take place, so please do not disappoint them. Just drop me a line or ring me up if you want it to go ahead.

BOOK REVIEWS

VERTICAL BOILER LOCOMOTIVES & RAILMOTORS BUILT IN GREAT BRITAIN by Rowland S. Abbott. Published by The Oakwood Press. 182 pages, hardback. Price £12.90. ISBN 0 85361 385 0.

This fascinating book is included in this review on the strength of a half-page entry on the steam-powered four-wheel railcar designed by Colonel Stephens for the Rother Valley Railway and built by R.Y. Pickering & Co. Ltd. of Wishaw in 1905. No new information is given, nor is there an illustration. The author says "Very few photographs of this railmotor have survived..."; your reviewer would dispute this, having 17 different views in his collection. However, it must be admitted that none of them show the vehicle in service and six are manufacturer's photos.

The rest of the book covers all known British-built vertical boilered machines ranging from the "Novelty" to Sentinel railcars and includ-

ing tram locomotives and crane locomotives. There are some weird and wonderful machines described and in many cases illustrated. Your reviewer particularly liked a 20-inch gauge locomotive with passenger trailer built by a Mr. Birley for the private railway on his estate. This and many others would not have been out of place on a Colonel Stephens line and indeed would have made even "Gazelle" look quite conventional!

This book's Colonel Stephens content is minimal, but nevertheless it is highly recommended to those who like railway oddities - and that must surely mean all Society members!

LD

AN ANNOTATED LIST OF BRITISH MANUFACTURERS OF "O" GAUGE "READY-TO-RUN" TOY AND MODEL LOCOMOTIVES AND ROLLING STOCK, 1890 - 1990 by Alan Cliff. Published by the Author at 38 Clifton Park Road, Rhyl, Clwyd LL18 4AW. 25 pages, paperback. Price £1.25 incl. postage.

There can't be many books written as a result of medical advice, but this is one of them. In January 1987, Society Member Alan Cliff was informed by his medical advisers that he would have to take early retirement due to chronic ill health. One of his advisers counselled him to keep his mind active and suggested "a little gentle research". Being a life-long model railway enthusiast, Alan decided to find out more about the makers of "O" gauge R-T-R in Great Britain over the last century. This little booklet is the result of his efforts.

Your reviewer was amazed to find over fifty manufacturers listed, many of which he had never previously come across - including some which are still in business! There is a great

deal of interest these days in model railway equipment from the past, as a visit to any swapmeet will confirm, and some of this equipment commands quite extraordinary prices. This book though does not investigate the mercenary side of the business, nor does it list all the available models. Rather, it is a survey of the manufacturers themselves giving the time span of their activities and a general description of the range of items produced.

For collectors of vintage model railway equipment and those interested in the history of the hobby this booklet will prove invaluable - and no one can complain about the price!

LD

COLONEL STEPHENS _ THE TWILIGHT YEARS

Concluding Philip Shaw's account of the declining years of Colonel Stephens, reproduced from "The Tenterden Terrier" by kind permission.

Stephens is believed to have suffered his first stroke at the end of January 1930, following a visit to London to attend a function. Nevertheless, he still managed to make his way regularly to Salford Terrace, despite a pronounced limp, some paralysis and impairment of speech. By the late Spring he suffered a second and more serious stroke which further incapacitated him. In June, he was reported as "not being well enough to be consulted" and about this time, at the suggestion of his physician, Sir Percival Horton-Smith Hartley, entered a London nursing home, where from all accounts he proved to be a difficult patient. A nurse confided to a member of the Salford Terrace staff that on at least one occasion he had to be restrained from throwing bank notes out of the window, during a period of frustration with his condition. After six weeks he discharged himself and went to convalesce at Hastings. Unable to communicate either physically or verbally, Stephens grew tired of his isolation and arrangements were made for him to return to the Lord Warden, where at least everybody knew him.

From then on he was nursed, virtually night and day by the hotel staff, communicating by means of a nod or a shake of the head and unable to feed or dress himself: clear in the mind but totally inarticulate, except for a pathetic utterance "Wo, Wo, Wo", which he used to draw attention. Several times a week, Arthur Iggulden, his Secretary, went down to see him, often being kept so late that he would arrive back at Tonbridge at midnight, having just caught the mail train. Iggulden had been granted Power of Attorney to deal with Stephens' personal affairs on 17th January 1931.

Despite his grave disabilities, Stephens continued to visit his lines when he felt able, going even as far as the Festiniog at Portmadoc, where it is recorded he went in April 1931. On these occasions he was accompanied and physically supported by a member of the staff (usually Alfred Willard) or in the case of the nearby East Kent, frequently by Ernie Rodgers, who would hire a taxi to take him to Shepherdswell for the afternoon. The end came quite suddenly, when the night porter, Rigden, went up with the morning papers, drew the curtains and found him dead in bed - he had suffered a fatal heart attack.

The funeral was held at St. Peter's church, Hammersmith, the mourners consisting mainly of staff members and business acquaintances, there being no surviving relatives. Amongst several representatives of the Southern Railway were C.F.Barfoot, on behalf of the Chairman Sir Herbert Walker and in person R.E.L.Maunsell, Chief Mechanical Engineer. Interment was in the family grave at the Brompton Cemetery, Fulham Road but Stephens' name was not inscribed on the tombstone - probably due to an oversight. Four staff members shared equally in his estate of some £30,000, under a will dated 19th January 1931, initialled "H.F.S." in a shaky hand, and included W.H.Austen, J.A.Iggulden, A.Willard and G.H.Willard. The family collection of mainly Pre-Raphaelite paintings was bequeathed to the Tate Gallery.

Stephens' close friend, Gilbert Szlumper, General Manager of the Southern Railway, wrote after the funeral to Austen, "My little mother sent the poor old Colonel a photo of herself as he always had a soft spot in his heart for her and she is wondering if you can send it

back now he is gone? I am glad he looked after you and some of his other "boys" in his will - you were certainly very good friends to him and it is a just reward. I suppose you have not had time yet to consider what you are going to do about carrying on the office and some of the jobs".

In the event, Austen assumed overall responsibility for the office after Stephens' death - a role that he had been obliged to fill anyway since the beginning of 1930, but with the depression years ahead and the growth in road

competition, its days were clearly numbered. The War provided a temporary respite for the East Kent, Kent & East Sussex and Shropshire & Montgomeryshire lines, but with nationalisation in 1948, the doors of Number 23, Salford Terrace, Tonbridge were finally closed to light railway administration for ever.

The Author would like to acknowledge the assistance of A. Michael Davies, John Miller and Paul Sutton in the preparation of this article.

The original "Tenterden Terrier" article contained the following interesting postscript by their medical correspondent :-

The Colonel's death certificate shows the causes of death as Coronary Thrombosis and Polycythaemia Vera. The latter condition is interesting in that it was undoubtedly the real cause of the deterioration in his health in the last years. The disease is one of middle age and is more common in men. It is characterised by the over production of red cells in the blood and may give rise to a rather ruddy appearance in the sufferer. The patient may complain of headache, dizziness and tiredness and indeed it is possibly not surprising that the Colonel, feeling far from well, may have seemed rude and lacking in patience in his latter days. Among the complications of Polycythaemia is the possibility of blood clot formation and this may be particularly devastating if a clot (thrombosis) occurs in the brain.

Stephens had probably suffered from the complaint for some time and the earlier episodes of cerebral thrombosis (or "strokes"), may well have been attributable to this. Because the nerve pathways cross over at the base of the

brain, the left side of the brain controls the right hand side of the body and vice versa. Stephens seems to have had firstly a "mild" thrombosis in the left side of the brain which resulted in a partial paralysis on his right side, hence the limp and difficulty with writing. Unfortunately for the Colonel, the left side of the brain also controls our powers of speech, so that when he was struck down with a more "severe" thrombosis, he lost not only his powers of writing but verbal communication as well. If only he had been left-handed!

Although the emotions may be disturbed following a "stroke", the victim of such a catastrophe may be intellectually un-impaired. The frustration of a man such as Stephens, unable to communicate his ideas and wishes either in writing or speech may be imagined. The fatal coronary thrombosis in the early hours of 23rd October 1931 at least spared him from further suffering from Polycythaemia Rubra Vera, to give the condition its full name.

Nigel Bird

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MODELLING

M.W.Pannell tells how he modelled the Rye & Camber in "G" scale (16mm/ft)

The Rye and Camber Tramway has held a special fascination for me ever since I first came into contact with it in 1980. The association with holidays and summer probably have a lot to do with the special feeling.

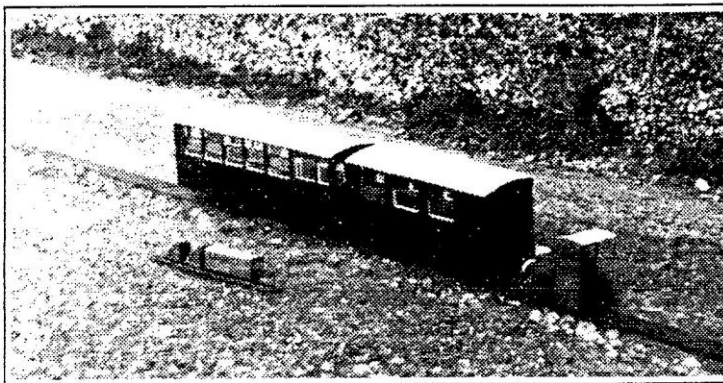
Being a modeller it was inevitable that I would build a model of the tramway. This I did in 1983 in 009 scale, purely for ease with the ready-made Peco track. It was a model of the section from Rye to Golf Links Station, and with the Saltford Models Simplex was quite realistic considering the information then at hand. About 8 months ago however, my father started building 16mm to 1ft or "G" scale American box cars, and my attention turned to the Rye and Camber Tramway rolling stock in this same scale.

Strength of course in this scale is superb. The models are built out of eighth-inch birch faced ply as this has a beautifully smooth face. Windows were fretted out and planking simulated by using a framing saw set at a pre-determined height to give regular depth to the planks. The Bagnall coach being planked on one side only had strips pinned over the joints

on the seaward side to stop salt spray entering the joints. I made working sash windows for the Bagnall coach out of plastic strip, and plywood overlays to form the runners for the windows. The seating was made using the excellent Evergreen Scale Models plastic strip of varying sizes; this was also used to make the sliding doors.

The bogies were made out of Plasticard with a wood spacer between the frames. The wheels and axles are the excellent Tenmille curved spoke type. Roofs are made to lift off to enable easy access to the interior. The colour scheme was Humbrol chocolate brown, with matt white for the roofs.

Saltford Models were approached and their 16mm scale battery Simplex kit purchased. Whilst very basic, it does include a nice set of castings for sandboxes, engine detail, wheels, gears, motor and couplings. The frames and whole superstructure including radiator and bonnet are made from Plasticard. As it was such a prominent feature I decided to motorise the radiator fan and this was done by installing a motor at right angles to the frames with a



drive band running through the floor onto the fan spindle.

anyone to work in this scale as it is so robust and easy to detail.

The loco is somewhat over-powered (when running light) with four R6S batteries. However, when hauling the two coaches it is slowed down to a realistic crawling speed. It is based on the 1925-1931 period with half cab and is painted in emerald green. I would recommend

The models were photographed in front of the real Golf Links station in April 1990. The larger model is actually standing on the 3-foot gauge rail, and just behind it is the face of the concrete platform!

COL. STEPHENS REFERENCES

Jack Burrell has sent in this list of useful references to the Colonel's lines. RM = Railway Magazine, R = Railways, RO = Railway Observer. All references are to issue/page number

ASHOVER LIGHT RAILWAY: RM 461/385; 482/148. RO Jan 1942/20; Jul 1947/123
CALLINGTON BRANCH (PLYMOUTH, DEVONPORT & SOUTH WESTERN JUNCTION): RM Oct 1908/348; 293/342
CWM MAWR STATION: R 95/48
EAST KENT RAILWAYS: RM 487/65; 503/378; 599/205. R 82/30 (Knowlton Halt); 58/31
EDGE HILL LIGHT RAILWAY RM 378/463; 542/355
FESTINIOG: RM 555/46
"GAZELLE": RM 529/329
ILFRACOMBE GOODS: RM 564/256
KENT & EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY: RM 481/76; 486/468; 487/65; 498/457; 599/174; 501/222; 523/47
Royal Saloon: 369/240; 469/67
Hop Pickers Trains: 474/465; 572/397; 325/28
NORTH DEVON & CORNWALL JUNCTION RAILWAY: RM 497/380; 304/299 (construction)
R 133/92
RYE AND CAMBER TRAMWAY: RM 392/158; 471/181; Dec 1929/498; 570/256. R 30/163
SHEPPEY LIGHT RAILWAY: RM 598/98. R 122/111; 129/9
SHROPSHIRE & MONTGOMERYSHIRE RAILWAY: RM 368/147; 472/308; 476/155 (timetable mistake, service advertised four years after closure!) 486/457; 492/399; 509/355. RO 122/101.
R 97/75
SNAILBEACH DISTRICT RAILWAYS: RM 488/134; 544/355; 551/183; 553/310 (last four at end of war prior to conversion to tractor haulage) 560/362. R 46/28; 131/159.
RO Aug 1947/143; May 1947/69
SOUTHERN HEIGHTS LIGHT RAILWAY: RM May 1929/404; 564/263
WELSH HIGHLAND RAILWAY: RM 305/395
WEST SUSSEX RAILWAY: RM 453/226 (time of closure) 483/223
WESTON, CLEVEDON & PORTISHEAD RAILWAY: RM 487/73; 523/41; 542/378; 544/114; 550/116; 551/185

Editor's note: it is hoped to be able to print extracts from some of these in future issues. Photo-copies of the references would be most welcome.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WC&PR Nameplates

The letter from Ron Mann to the Editor in the latest "Colonel" prompts me to write to you in the matter of the WC&P nameplates. There is really no contradiction here. The short reference to these plates in the caption in my book is correct. The brass plates from the "Clevedon" along with the oval plates from the "Weston" were removed early in World War 1 as a "token" gesture to the war effort. The plates were never in fact melted down. One of the "Clevedon" plates went to the Bristol Railway Circle where it is currently residing in a Bristol bank vault along with numerous other valuable name plates including some from early GWR broad gauge locos.

The Bristol Railway Circle also have one of the "Weston" cast-iron plates which were placed on the Manning Wardle loco of that name when the oval brass plates were removed. The latter were still in the Traffic Manager's first floor office at Clevedon when the line closed in 1940, but what happened to them after then is not known. These plates were the original Furness Railway number plates which were engraved on the reverse side with the name "Weston" and affixed to the single-wheeler acquired by the Company in 1899. The later photos of the "Clevedon" depicted in my book clearly show the smaller cast-iron plates.

Peter Strange, Shadwell, Glos.

WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR THE KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY?

The Tenterden Railway Company's Director of Commercial Operations and Marketing, Mark Toynbee, replies to Stephen Hannington.

Stephen Hannington described the re-opening of Northiam Station in the Summer issue of "The Colonel" when he attended the festivities as a guest of the Tenterden Railway Company.

Stephen's observations and comments are a part of the great debate within the Kent and East Sussex Railway at the moment - just what are we? Inevitably there are various camps and factions each with their own views and it is the duty of the Railway's Board of Directors to attempt to steer a middle course.

The image of Colonel Stephens' railways - and of the Kent and East Sussex in particular - is one of a spartan train service operated by aged tank engines and rolling stock along a meandering and weed-grown track, used by a mere handful of country folk. That was the Kent and East Sussex in the '30s, '40s and '50s as

bankruptcy brought about an inevitable closure. The 1930s and '40s were desperate times as passenger traffic plummeted. Is this the railway that should be preserved or should standards be raised to try to emulate the Kent and East Sussex before World War 1 when it carried annually a very healthy 105,000 passengers, a total yet to be topped by the Tenterden Railway Company?

Running a steam railway in the present climate is a far cry from the pioneering days of the early 1960s when Stephen first encountered the Kent and East Sussex. Regulations become more demanding year by year, safety standards are made more rigid - and quite rightly so. A fleet of obsolete engines and rolling stock running over a cheaply constructed track-bed becomes ever more expensive to restore and maintain.

The choice facing the Tenterden Railway Company is whether to be a small, weekends only operation faithful to the traditional image of a Colonel Stephens line with minimal facilities and therefore a limited public appeal or to strive to be one of the best private railways in the country, maintaining very high standards of presentation and quality with a broad public appeal and by generating hundreds of thousands of pounds of revenue each year, be able to preserve as much of the Kent and East Sussex as possible for posterity.

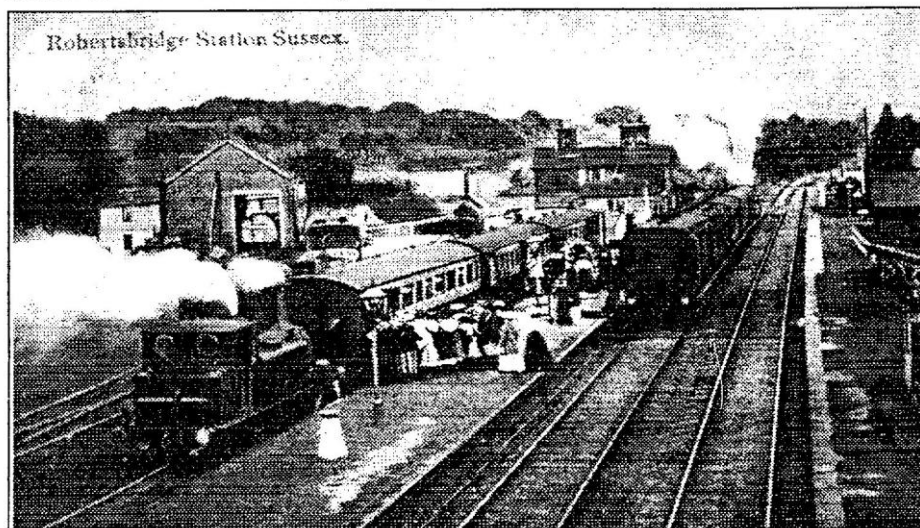
The restoration of our Terriers and vintage coaches is costing us tens of thousands of pounds. The costs would be the same whether we were the small outfit or the "brand leader" that we have made ourselves. As a large and successful organisation we can afford such projects - if we adopted the alternative option I fear that we would be on a spiral of decline, never able to carry out the expensive overhauls of our collection.

The Tenterden Railway Company is embarking upon its most ambitious and exciting challenge

yet and in doing so will write itself into the history books: the possible re-connection of the Kent and East Sussex to the main-line railway network. (See "News and Views" on page 4 - Ed.) In doing so the Company will be overturning the resistance of the road lobby to the crossing of the A21 and A229 roads and is faced with the complete construction of over a mile of new earthworks where the originals have been removed by neighbouring farmers. The aim is not only to extend the present operation of tourist steam trips but to generate new leisure traffic through the cross-platform interchange at Robertsbridge, reducing the congestion on the country roads through the Rother Valley.

Thanks to the progressive and skilled management of the Tenterden Railway Company, the Kent and East Sussex Railway may once more provide a useful public transport link for local people, surely the finest possible tribute to Colonel Stephens.

Mark Toynbee, Tenterden, Kent



The Goal! - a very busy Robertsbridge in about 1905

The original of this picture is a coloured postcard posted in October 1906
(L.Darbyshire Collection)

I WAS THERE

The late R.E.Tustin took a trip over the East Kent Railway in 1939. His evocative account is reproduced by kind permission of Roger Carpenter.

I had one or two sorties to the line well before the last war but on days where nothing was running and there was merely a deserted bit of single track to look at near Richborough. On Saturday 8th April 1939 however, accompanied by my cousin Percival Edwards of Walsall, I did manage to travel over the length of the railway from Shepherdswell to Wingham (we booked to Canterbury Road but in the event only got as far as Wingham Town as I will explain later).

We were staying for a few days at Folkestone and went by car to Shepherdswell on the Saturday morning and had a wander round the shed and yards before going off again to Deal for lunch. The only two trains were the 7.30 a.m. and the 5.45 p.m., so as the former was much too early of necessity it had to be the latter although that was going to finish in the dark unfortunately.

At about 5.30 we returned to Shepherdswell and started our little excursion by lending a hand to a barrow load of fish manure in sacks which two S.R. porters were struggling to transfer to the E.K.R. The E.K.R. guard greeted us with a cheery "Good Evening" and issued our tickets. This chap was obviously dressed up for a night out - smart sports jacket, grey flannels, rather doggy cap and a Cambridge blue tie. The train, a single six-wheeler, was in the platform and contained a single passenger. The locomotive, the L.S.W.R. "Saddleback" No.7, appeared, coupled up and departed without ceremony immediately but after a few yards backed down the spur from the S.R. and added a covered goods van to our rear.

Now a little late we set off with great gusto, ignoring all signals (all in the stop position!) and rattled off through Golgotha tunnel and into the sunset. We made no stops at all unless

passengers were spotted on the track. At Woodnesborough we picked up two passengers and at Ash we set them down again. We had also exchanged the tablet at Eastry and dropped a few parcels and the fish manure; at Staple we put off the van and at Wingham Town there were a few more parcels.

As I said previously we didn't quite reach the terminus, for about a quarter of a mile short of the platform - which we could see in the distance - we stopped, uncoupled the engine which ran into a siding, and then gently ran the coach past the points stopping it again on the hand brake. The engine was coupled on again but we didn't bother to go down to the platform as there were several wagons occupying the line beyond the level crossing!

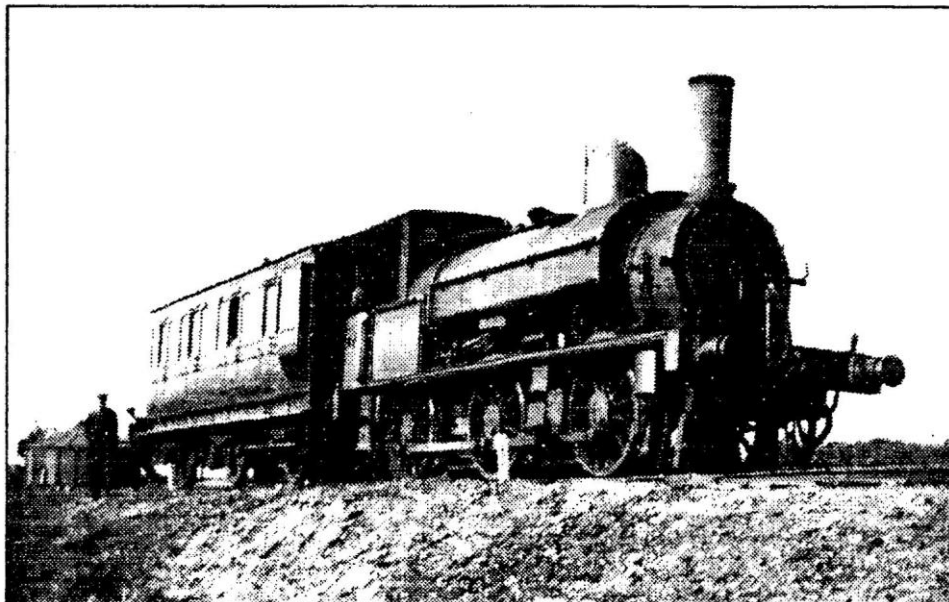
Instead we set off again at the same break-neck speed flying over level crossings with much whistling in the gathering dusk; we did however make more cautious crossings of several rather "blind" ones. We picked up our other passenger who had got off at Ash on the outward journey and only stopped at Staple and Eastry before our arrival at Eythorne where we were about ten minutes early. The driver drew off a bucket of water from the injector overflow pipe and had a good wash, the guard went into the booking office and made up his fares sheet while the fireman cleaned the fire and gave the engine a good wipe down for the weekend's rest. The phone bell rang and was answered by the general factotum at the station. No doubt the enquiry was as to the whereabouts of the train. "Just coming in" said that worthy, although we had been standing there for a good five minutes.

Off again at the previous rapid progress in the dark, now stopping just short of Shepherdswell station. Here the driver, now minus his overalls

and appearing quite smartly dressed, rushed off to the S.R. station in a great hurry leaving the fireman to move the engine into position alongside the shed. The guard let the coach gently into the platform on the hand-brake, nipped into the station office to lock up the cigarette tin containing the day's takings in a

desk and returned hastily locking up as he did so and wishing us "Good Night" as he joined his two cronies and made for the Dover train which was just coming in!

I greatly enjoyed our little E.K.R. trip, but sadly never visited it again.



E.K.R. No.7 with ex-L.C.D.R. 6-Wheel Coach No.10 at Wingham in 1936

This is the location just short of the terminus where the gravity shunting took place.

In the background is one of the Round Huts described in the next article.

(L.Darbyshire Collection)

When in Tenterden, be sure to visit the
TENTERDEN & DISTRICT MUSEUM
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COLONEL STEPHENS RAILWAY COLLECTION

One of the Museum's galleries is organised by the Archive & Museum Section of the Tenterden Railway Company Ltd. On display is part of the collection of relics and ephemera relating to the railways engineered and managed by H.F.Stephens including a re-creation of his office at 23 Salford Terrace, Tonbridge.

A photographic display tells the story of his involvement with these railways.

Admission: 50p adults, 25p pensioners and children (T.R.Co. members free)
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COL. STEPHENS' "ROUND HUTS"

The request for information in the last issue resulted in sufficient material for a brief article on the subject. Thanks are due to Roger Carpenter who provided some information and the photograph, and who drew my attention to an article in "The Tenterden Terrier" No.17 which provided more details and to which grateful acknowledgement is given.

The "Round Huts" were circular buildings of sectional construction in corrugated iron, with a conical roof. They are believed to be of World War 1 origin, but Roger's attempts to trace them in British Army records, through the Imperial War Museum and the Museum at Beverley, have come to nothing. He therefore speculates that they might be of foreign origin, perhaps German, or maybe from a non-military source.

Be that as it may, Colonel Stephens acquired a batch of them in about 1921. There were at least ten of them, eight on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire and two on the East Kent. The former were used as camping huts and

were let out to tourists during the summer season, commencing in 1922. Five huts were situated close to the line at Crew Green, on the Criggion branch, and were sufficiently close to the River Severn to be subject to inundation when the river was in flood. Two or possibly three more were situated close to Shrawardine viaduct on the "main line" and another was at Criggion next to the cafe there. Only the Crew Green ones survived as camping huts after the 1922 season, the one at Criggion eventually becoming a store for the cafe. The rent for what were described with not a little exaggeration on the Company's posters as "Commodious Camping Huts" was 7s (35p) per week, with a 10s (50p) deposit for the key.



The Criggion Round Hut in August 1935

(H.F. Wheeler, R.Carpenter Collection)

The huts on the East Kent were situated one at Shepherdswell and one at Wingham Canterbury Road, just short of the road crossing. These were never used for camping or such-like activities, except possibly by tramps. The Shepherdswell one was apparently used at first as a waiting room and later as a store: the one at Wingham served as a goods shed of sorts.

All of the huts were of similar construction, being made of corrugated iron panels bolted together to form a building of fifteen feet in diameter. The roof was conical and also in sections, but in flat metal sheets rather than corrugated and with raised ribs (presumably interlocking sections) at the joints. There was a single doorway which from photographs seems to have opened inwards. Whether it was of wood or iron is not clear. The floor was of timber, and there was a central stove exhausting through a ventilator at the apex of the roof.

The S. & M. huts had two windows, each with four panes, hinged along the top so as to open outwards. The windows appear to be sited at 45 and 135 degrees from the door, though due to

the sectional construction they may not have all been the same. Internally there were partitions dividing the space into a semi-circular living room and two tiny bedrooms, but it is not clear how these related to the window positions. There was no water or sanitation in the huts, at Crew Green these necessities being provided in very basic form elsewhere on the site. The huts were painted black with white roofs, giving rise to their nickname of "Mushroom Terrace". The East Kent huts were identical in construction but do not seem to have had any windows, and it is not known whether they had any internal partitioning; they were painted red oxide.

The huts at Crew Green remained in use until war came in 1939, after which they slowly disintegrated, while the Criggion one was virtually a ruin by 1937. The one at Wingham also lasted until about the beginning of the war, and was eventually replaced by an old van body. The record for longevity was held by the one at Shepherdswell which lasted until after Nationalisation.



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QUERY CORNER

Petrol for the Railcars

Several of the Colonel's lines used petrol-engined railcars, so there must have been a source of petrol at least at Rolvenden, Selsey, Clevedon and Kinnerley. Where was the petrol stored? Were there pumps at any of the locations, or was it all kept in cans

Any information, especially photographs, to the Editor please.

Mystery Special

While operating his "Maidstone Road" layout at a recent exhibition, your Editor was spoken to by an elderly lady who had an interesting tale to tell.

As a young girl, she lived near Maidstone where her grandfather was a senior railway official. One day she was taken by him on a special train containing a party of "top brass",

and they ended up on the Kent & East Sussex. She was hazy about the detail but thought they changed trains somewhere, presumably Headcorn. She definitely remembered travelling in a very comfortable coach with sofas round the sides, and remembered being told to be sure she didn't dirty the upholstery. When she was shown a model of the K.& E.S.R. Royal Saloon she immediately recognised it as the one she travelled in, and was most excited to see it. One more thing she remembered was that the engine was decorated with flags.

So, when did the trip take place and what was the occasion? The lady said she was 73, and the event took place when she was 6. This would put it in 1923 give or take a little - the time of the grouping. The K.& E.S.R. of course was not included in the grouping, but was there an attempt to persuade it to join the Southern group? And was the Colonel on the train?

Can anyone throw more light on the matter?

TAILPIECE

The response to the request for material for "The Colonel" has been very good so far, and several articles are in hand for the next issue. Thank you all, and keep them rolling in!

There is still a little bias towards the K.& E.S.R. but this is largely due to it being a very active line with a most efficient publicity machine. I would like to see some material from the smaller lines - what about the

Snailbeach, the Edge Hill and the P.D.& S.W.J.? Someone out there must have some interesting snippets on these that would be worth publishing.

I would also welcome help with reviews of books and model kits as at the moment I am restricted to those I have actually bought myself (unless of course publishers and manufacturers send in review copies - hint, hint!)

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