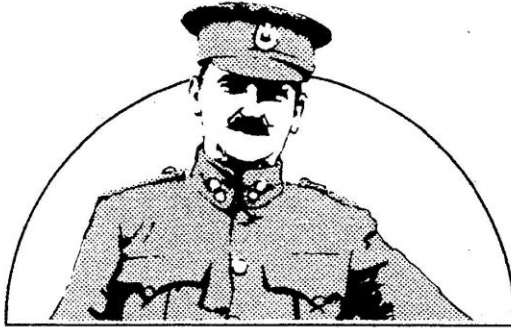


*Gazelle +
later trailer*



• THE COLONEL •

NUMBER 26 AUTUMN 1991

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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

Have we got it right?

Jon Clarke's letter (see "Letters to the Editor") raises some interesting and perhaps controversial issues. Jon has obviously given the matters he raises some careful thought, so please read his letter and send in your comments, both for and against.

Two of his points relate to "The Colonel" and its contents, so I will use Editorial Privilege to reply to them now.

Firstly, the production costs. The situation here is simple: I cannot afford to produce this journal at my own expense, and nor do I believe I (or anyone else) should be expected to. I do claim for some out-of-pocket expenses such as materials used and postage, but rarely claim for everything I have spent so "The Colonel" is still to some extent subsidised by me. It is also duplicated at low cost by courtesy of the Broad Gauge Society and one of our

Members. If anyone feels sufficiently philanthropic to edit, produce and duplicate it for nothing, let him step forward and the job is his!

Secondly, the content. I had not realised that my innocent comment in the last issue about accepting non-Stephens light railway material would have been controversial! I am always on the look-out for more material, but I am not quite desperate - yet!

There is an article on the Bishops Castle in this issue, but the Colonel did at least consider acquiring that line so perhaps that makes it acceptable to Jon. So far though, I have had as many letters welcoming such coverage as I have condemning it - one of each in fact - so I do not feel too badly about it. Please let me know what you think; I will publish the results and abide by the majority view. In any case, keep the articles rolling in!

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NEWS AND VIEWS

Renewal Time Again!

Yes, it is time to part with your money and a membership renewal form is enclosed with this issue. Please note the revised subscription as agreed at the Annual General Meeting.

Col. Stephens Railway Photographs

Amongst the collection of mostly unpublished photographs available from Hugh Davies, 32 Charterhouse Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 2AQ (write for lists enclosing a large s.a.e.) are included photographs of the S&MR, K&ESR, EKR, B.P.G.V.R., P.D.S.W.J.R. and the Snailbeach District.

S. & M. War Department Working

Jon Clarke is researching the working of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway under War Department control, especially of operations at Kinnerley. If you can help, please contact Jon at 13 Lumley Road, Chester CH2 2AQ (0831 527733).

The Good Old Days at Tenterden

"Step back to the age of striped blazers and straw boaters, chauffeur driven Rolls Royce cars, steam trains and steam rollers as you walk through displays that capture the flavour of everyday life from Victorian times to the 1950s."

So begins the brochure issued by the K.& E.S.R. advertising their special week end on 21st and 22nd September with the theme "The Good Old Days". There will be a variety of tableaux and side-shows, and the vintage train of 4- and 6-wheel coaches used for the Society Special will be running, so if you missed it you've got another chance!

Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days, admission £2 (children £1) - train fare extra.

Good News from Snailbeach!

Derek Smith writes:

I was able to visit Snailbeach on 27th June, and despite some heavy rain had a good look around the site.

The loco shed has been completely refurbished, with new window frames and glass, new doors, and (a real Colonel touch) a new corrugated iron roof! It was while waiting for some dark clouds to pass that I was approached by a strange little man who lives near the shed. It appears that the track bed divided his ground in two, and when the line was built they provided a small tunnel under the formation. He kindly let me photograph the one end of the tunnel in his garden. He has only lived in Snailbeach for 7 years, so did not remember the line working. In the past I cannot recall reading anything about the little tunnel, so maybe I have achieved a first!

Derek has four prints which he is prepared to copy for members at a cost of £2.50 including postage if there is sufficient interest. - Ed.

A Good Day Out

"thank you for a wonderful day out"
"we all enjoyed ourselves immensely"
"all in all a perfect day"

These are some of the many comments received following the Society trip to the K.& E.S.R. in July. The folks at Tenterden went out of their way to make us welcome, and the weather was just right; certainly a day to remember. Letters of thanks have been sent to Mark Toynbee to pass on to the K. & E.S.R. staff, and to David Howard of Eastbourne Buses Ltd. who provided our road transport.

A full report on the day's events is given by Stephen Hannington elsewhere in this issue.

I WAS THERE

Derek Smith describes his visit to the Bishop Castle Railway in the Spring of 1934.

Tucked away in a remote corner of Shropshire, almost on the Welsh border, lie the remains of what must surely rank as one of the quaintest old railways in England, the Bishops Castle Railway.

Dogged by bad luck and incredible difficulties, financial and otherwise, and never able to achieve its full ambition, it nevertheless managed to struggle on until 1935.

In 1860, when the Central Wales, Shrewsbury and Hereford, and Oswestry - Newtown railways had already been built, Bishops Castle found itself left out of things, so plans were drawn up for a line from Stretford Bridge, two miles from Craven Arms, to join the Oswestry - Newtown line near Montgomery, with a branch through Chirbury to join the G.W.R./L.N.W.R. at Minsterly. A start was made and by October 1865 the section from Stretford Bridge to Lydham Heath, together with a branch to Bishops Castle, had been completed and it was decided to open that part immediately and not wait for completion of the Montgomery line.

It was in 1866 that everything started to go wrong, with the sensational failure of the Overend and Gurney Bank. (*Another BCCI? - Ed.*) Panic spread throughout the country, hitting many small railways and those in course of construction. The Bishops Castle was one of these, and the plans for the Montgomery and Minsterly lines had to be abandoned. After that it was all downhill, and the almost bankrupt line was put in the hands of the Official Receiver.

We now jump forward to the year 1934. A near neighbour of mine who often visited Bishops Castle to see her sister and do some shopping, asked my mother if I would like to go with her on one of her visits. So it was that we started

from Shrewsbury on the 10.15 a.m. train on a lovely warm May morning. I recall the excitement as our train started to slow down as it approached Craven Arms station. It was at this moment that I had my first sight of a Bishops Castle train. The engine, one coach and some wagons were standing in the bay platform on the up side.

We alighted, and after a cup of tea in the refreshment room made our way over the foot bridge to the Bishops Castle train. The engine was "Carlisle", very clean and smart looking, and the coach was an ex-L.S.W.R. 6-wheeler. About 11.30 a.m. we started to move slowly back towards Shrewsbury and at Stretford Bridge Junction passed on to the Bishops Castle line proper. The line at this point ran alongside the River Orry, one of the most picturesque parts.

It was soon apparent that the track was in poor condition as the coach was lurching and rolling from side to side; I thought it was great fun! Later we came to a long halt; it was Lydham Heath station. I put the window down and looked out. Everything was covered in long grass and weeds. It was then I saw that "Carlisle" was running round the train, and would pass our window on its way to the other end of the train to take us on to Bishops Castle. Because of the track layout, every train had to reverse at Lydham Heath!

When we arrived there, I was able to look at the loco. shed, with No. 1 "dead" inside, and the other buildings. Everything was in a very poor and sorry condition, and the track was even worse. It was said they cut down elder trees from the side of the line to use as sleepers! Mud thrown up from the loose sleepers covered the ends of the coaches, and even came up through the floor boards.

Some time in the 1920s, they had tried to get both the G.W.R. and the Colonel to take the line over, but they both turned the offer down. Right at the very end, a life line was offered in the form of the opportunity to carry stone from a quarry near Lydham Heath, but apparently the Railway wanted too much money so the last chance to keep the line going a little longer was thrown away.

It is worth noting that all the bridges and formation were built for double track, a point shared with the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway. The story might have been different had the line managed to hold on until the Second World War; as it was, the track bed was used in places to store ammunition in

Nissen huts. Some relics have survived; I have a rail chair passed on to me by a former neighbour who met the demolition train when it arrived in Craven Arms yard on Sunday 21st February 1937. Both locos were cut up for scrap a few days later, but the nameplates from "Carlisle" were saved.

I have traced the course of the track bed again last year (1990), but little now remains other than the station houses at Eaton and Plowden, both in private use. The track was 75 lb. bullhead, with 95 lb. in the stations, in chaired sleepers. Operating on "one engine in steam", no signals seem to have been used. Finally, despite its character, the line was never legally a "light railway".

BOOK REVIEWS

A PICTORIAL RECORD OF SOUTHERN LOCOMOTIVES by J.H.Russell. Published by Haynes/O.P.C. 384 pages, A4, Hardback. Price £34.99. ISBN 0 86093 443 8.

This book by the late Jim Russell was in preparation at the time of his death, so he was unable to check the final proofs. Unfortunately this shows; even a fairly cursory read through revealed a good many errors. The book is in the format of Mr. Russell's earlier works on Great Western locomotives, containing numerous photographs and drawings, most of the latter being from the Southern Railway diagram books.

All locomotives which came into the stock of the Southern Railway are covered, so a review in this journal is excused by the presence of "Hecate", the P.D.S.W.J. locos, the W.C.&P.R. Terriers, and the East Kent O and O1 0-6-0s. The other Colonel Stephens Terriers and the Ilfracombe Goods, being sold prior to grouping, did not come into Southern Railway hands so are not included, but the East Kent Adams Radial is mentioned because it was re-acquired by the S.R. The K.& E.S.R.'s "Saddleback", ex-L.S.W.R. 0335, is wrongly described as "Sold to East Kent Railway"

while the sale to the East Kent of sister loco 0127 is not mentioned. Another mix-up between the K.& E.S.R. and E.K.R. occurs with the O/O1 classes, where it states "No.372 had been sold to the Kent & East Sussex Railway in 1923" - not true, it was the East Kent! All the classes mentioned are illustrated by drawing (4mm scale) and photographs, the drawings giving the principal dimensions but being only weight diagrams do not show details.

The book is very expensive and would certainly not be worth purchasing for its Colonel Stephens content alone. However, there are drawings and/or photographs on practically every page (several on most), all very well reproduced, so the cost per illustration is remarkably low - about 3p each! Despite the errors (which are in the text, not the illustrations) and despite the price I think it is a good buy for any true lover of the Southern Railway and worth putting on the Christmas or birthday list.

LD

THE LIFE & TIMES OF "GAZELLE"

Robin Gay tells the story of one of the Colonel's oddest locomotives.

The company of Alfred Dodman & Company Limited, Kings Lynn, were renowned steam engine builders. They produced portable and traction engines through to marine and launch engines. They were not exactly known for railway locomotives, though they did build some traction tram engines.

Nevertheless, in 1893 they built two standard gauge 2-2-2 well tank locomotives. The first of these was for the West Norfolk Farmers' Chemical and Manure Works of South Lynn. What use they made of such a loco I do not know; the loco was later reported to be in Australia.

The second loco named "Gazelle" was built for William Burkitt Esq., a Director of the Kings Lynn Dock & Railway. "Gazelle"'s dimensions as built were:

Driving wheels (Mansell type) 3' 9" dia.
Leading & trailing wheels (Mansell type) 2' 3" dia.
Wheelbase total 10' 6"
Cylinders (2) 4' dia. x 9" stroke
Valve gear Stephenson's
Boiler 2' 2" outside dia.
Height rail to chimney 7' 9"
Weight in working order 5.5 Ton

The water tank was placed under the footplate towards the rear. The cranks and motion were placed either side of the fire box; many parts used in the construction were standard traction engine components.

Accommodation was provided for four passengers in a small uncovered compartment behind the open driver's platform.

With such dimensions she was probably the smallest standard gauge loco ever built.

Burkitt used "Gazelle" over the main lines of the Great Eastern and the Midland & Great Northern Railways on business trips. On these trips "Gazelle" was driven by Burkitt's own drivers accompanied by a pilotman. He is known to have gone to Cambridge, and on one occasion in July 1897 he went to Chesterfield and back in the same day. Leaving Kings Lynn at 6.10 a.m. and arriving in Chesterfield at 11.20 a.m., with delays of 50 minutes, this gives a net time of 4 hours 20 minutes for a run of 105 miles, an average speed of 24 m.p.h.

Following the death of Burkitt, "Gazelle" was advertised for sale in the "Locomotive Magazine" for September 1900, "with wheels of polished teak and a top speed of 45 m.p.h."! We next hear of "Gazelle" in 1910 being sold to T.W.Ward of Sheffield, from whom Colonel Stephens purchased it in February 1911 for use on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway as an inspection loco. She arrived at Kinnerley in her original form; the livery is unknown to me.

Soon after her arrival she was sent to W.G.Bagnall Ltd. of Stafford to be rebuilt as an 0-4-2. The way this was achieved was to use the front wheels as a pattern for casting a new pair of driving wheels, which were connected to the front Mansell wheels by a pair of coupling rods. With this work completed "Gazelle" was returned to Kinnerley in July 1911. In this rebuilt form with 2' 3" drivers her maximum speed would now be 27 m.p.h.

When the Criggion branch was re-opened in 1912, "Gazelle" was used to carry passengers in the uncovered compartment at the rear of the loco. The Rev. R.Brock of Criggion made a complaint to the Board of Trade about being carried in an open train. After this complaint, "Gazelle" was returned to Bagnall's to have

the passenger accommodation covered and a luggage rack fitted to the roof. The driver's cab was also fitted at the same time.

The livery is again unknown to me at this period. (*almost certainly dark blue lined red, as for the 0-6-2's and the later Ilfracombe Goods. - Ed.*) Soon afterwards a horse tram car was provided for "Gazelle" to haul on the Criggin branch. (*see The Colonel issue 25 - Ed.*)

"Gazelle" now settled down to working passenger services between Kinnerley and Criggin until 1928, when competing motor traffic made the service uneconomical. She was then placed behind the water tank at Kinnerley and partially dismantled.

Here she languished until 1937 when she re-emerged after a total overhaul and re-paint. The livery was olive green, lined out in black and white, with red buffer beams and coupling rods, brown frames, and polished brass dome, safety valves and nameplates.

The body of the tramcar was beyond repair, though the underframe was sound. The frame and wheels were re-used together with the body of the Wolseley-Siddeley railcar to construct a new carriage for "Gazelle". (*see p.13 - Ed.*) In this form "Gazelle" and the carriage were used for track inspection and for private parties.

During World War 2, the War Department took over control of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway. They used "Gazelle" for

inspecting the track and for permanent way work until 1945, when she was once again put into store at Kinnerley. Then in 1950 she was moved to the Railway Operating Department camp at Longmoor; here she was repaired and re-painted in Longmoor blue livery, and mounted on a plinth outside the main building.

When Longmoor closed in 1970, she was put into store yet again before going to the National Railway Museum at York. Finally, in 1981, "Gazelle" was moved to her present resting place at the Army Transport Museum at Beverley, Yorkshire.

References.

1. The Steam Engine Builders of Norfolk by R.H.Clark. (Haynes)
2. The Criggin Branch of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway by Roger Carpenter. (Wild Swan)
3. Branch Line to Shrewsbury by Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith. (Middleton Press)
4. The Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway by Keith & Susan Turner. (David & Charles)
5. The Colonel Stephens Railways by John Scott-Morgan. (David & Charles)
6. "The Colonel" No. 25
7. The Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway by E.S.Tonks (Industrial Railway Society)

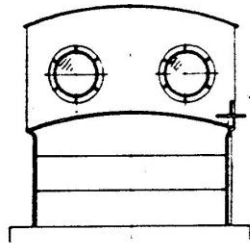
The drawing overleaf was made by the Editor using measurements taken while Gazelle was at Longmoor, and is reproduced to 7mm scale.

PUZZLE SPOT

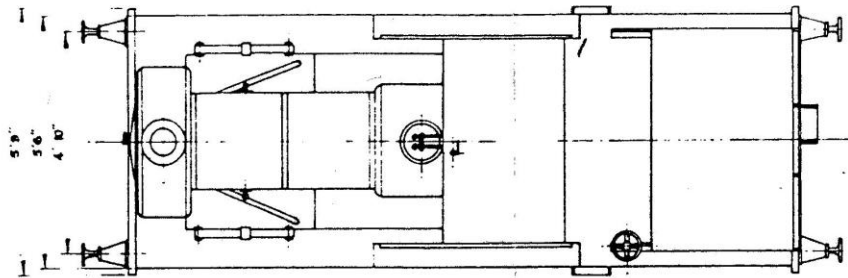
Two questions from Ivor Gotheridge to tax your brains and test your knowledge. Answers next issue.

Can you name a light railway in the outer London commuter area with a station subject to a Preservation Order, a level crossing over a busy road and trains every two hours?

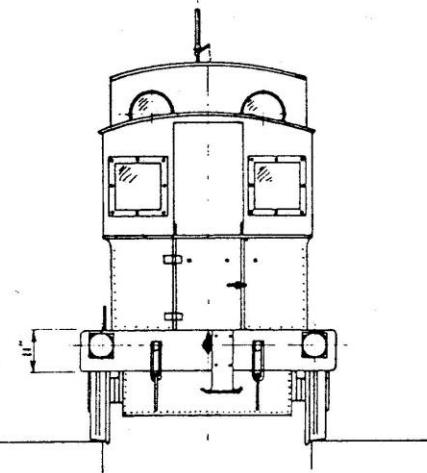
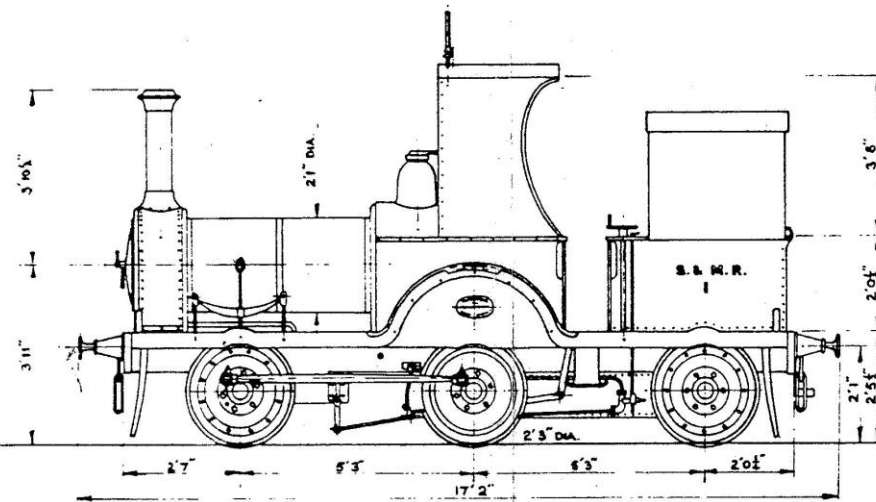
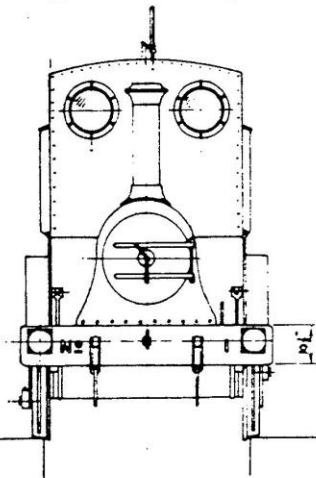
Can you name a large town, also in the outer London commuter area, with two picturesque two-foot gauge industrial lines with trains every twenty minutes during the working day?



4'5"



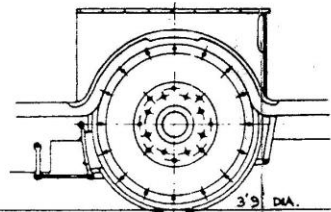
5'9"
5'6"
4'10"



0 3 6 9 12 in

Detail of Nameplate

8



Driving Wheel as originally built as a 2-2-2, 1893-1911.

12 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Scale

SHROPSHIRE & MONTGOMERYSHIRE RAILWAY

0-4-2 "GAZELLE"

Dodman, King's Lynn, 1893.

As renovated in 1937.

L. Derington 8-11-70

9

THE COLONEL'S DAY OUT

Stephen Hannington reports on the Society visit to the K.& E.S.R.

It was touch and go. Only a few days before the Society outing on the preserved K.& E.S.R., the ex-G.E.R. coach had yet to be fitted with seats. But only chairman Les knew this, and the other 60 or so of us had no idea until Mark Toynbee, marketing director of the Tenterden Railway Company, mentioned it to us on the day. And we would never otherwise have known, because the coach was spick and span and ready to go when we all turned up at Tenterden on a beautiful summer Sunday morning on 14th July.

Work on the G.E.R. coach had only been finished at midnight on Saturday, which speaks for itself of the dedication and hard work of the T.R.C. volunteers. We were to see more evidence of this throughout the day, in Tenterden coach workshop, Rolvenden Loco shed and Bodiam station. I have to confess that the rest of the trippers also included Robertsbridge and a tour of other Stephens-related sites in the neighbourhood, but I was unable to join them.

Our special left Tenterden just a little late and comprised the ex-G.E.R. 6-wheeler of 1887, unusual for its central luggage compartment, an ex-Metropolitan District Railway 4-wheeler of about 1880, and an ex-L.N.W.R. 6-wheel saloon of 1890, all hauled by 74-year-old Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 14 "Charwelton".

The G.E.R. and District coaches were described as "garden shed" projects by Mark Toynbee, who was our host for the day. They were recovered as bodies only, which were restored and placed on more modern underframes. The L.N.W.R. saloon came from Longmoor. All coaches were immaculate in their original liveries, and a credit to the company.

"Charwelton" too performed excellently, undaunted by any of the steep gradients on the line. One of the earliest preserved locos on the

line, it had only relatively recently returned to service following damage from a derailment a few years ago. It took us from Tenterden to the recently re-opened Northiam station and back without a hitch, and provoked considerable interest from the service trains and lineside anglers we passed along the way.

Ours was the first outing for this train of historic rolling stock, though it ran again during the afternoon and on the last weekend of July; it will continue in off-peak service because of its relatively limited capacity.

After returning to Tenterden and taking a lunch break, we were shown round the coach workshops at Tenterden station, the contents of which included an ex-S.E.C.R. Birdcage brake in suspended restoration; priority has been given to the higher capacity Mk.1s for obvious reasons.

Then the bus tour began, courtesy of David Howard of Eastbourne Buses Ltd. First stop was Rolvenden and its locomotive repair shop, which was a hive of activity. Included was the A1X Terrier "Knowle" from Butlins at Minehead, with its frames ready to be re-united with its boiler.

P Class 1556, previously "Pride of Sussex" and one of the first locos to be hired to the original K.& E.S.R. by the Southern Railway, was in for routine inspection. Also to be seen were Terrier No. 10 "Sutton", a brace of Austerities and the Norwegian Mogul, due to be back in steam hopefully next Easter.

Some members were lucky enough to inspect the signal box at Rolvenden, and were duly blamed for a subsequent failure of the block apparatus! (*I never touched nuffin, gov. Onnest. - Ed.*) It gave us a good chance to look at the two service trains delayed while waiting

to pass at that point, including one in charge of Austerity No. 23 "Holman F. Stephens" and a Robert Stephenson and Hawthorne 0-6-0T on loan from the Great Central Railway.

The real historical interest began at the next stop, which was Bodiam station where we were met by John Miller, the T.R.C.'s archivist, who has special responsibility for Bodiam. The station has been cleared of all undergrowth and some serious archaeology is going on. The aim is to restore the station to its condition circa 1930, and already some post and rail fencing, scaled from photographs in a way familiar to most modellers, has been erected near the road entrance, where a lovely garden has also been re-established.

Mark Toynbee told us that the T.R.C. is attempting to gain special dispensation from the Railway Inspectorate to retain Bodiam in its original condition on an "occasional use" basis. This would allow the original low, short platform to be retained, for example. A full "functional" terminus to modern standards could be established just around the bend from the original.

Archaeology on the site includes the exposure of the original yard tarmacadam surface, complete with pathway kerb made of running rail. It is hoped to replace the original sleeper built construction of the cattle dock, and by careful "excavation" of its surface attempt to establish exactly how the cattle were penned. The current theory is that it was fenced across at the end and temporary pens made using hurdles tied to posts. It is hoped that the post holes will be found during excavation.

Alongside the dock, the original siding in spiked, flat-bottomed rail is still in place and will be retained, even though in places it has rusted through! The site of the coal dock has also been cleared, to reveal that it was built of original Rother Valley Railway half-round sleepers. John told us of a photo in the T.R.C. collection showing it supported by hop poles.

The really exciting preservation news is that a new company has been formed, the Rother Valley Railway (East Sussex) Ltd., to press ahead with restoring the 3.5 mile link to Robertsbridge at an estimated cost of £1.5 million. There are plenty of hurdles to be crossed yet, including negotiations with eight land owners and the controversial road crossings near Robertsbridge. Dispute over these and interruption to road traffic caused by level crossings, were the original reason for the line being severed.

It is hoped that level crossings to modern standards will be acceptable again as they cost, at £150,000 apiece, around 10% of the price of a bridge; and there are 28 other bridges and culverts of a lesser scale to be built between Bodiam and Robertsbridge. It is to be hoped that the preservationists prove as doggedly successful in this project as they have been over the past thirty years on the rest of the line.

I'm sure I speak for us all in expressing thanks to the Tenterden Railway Company, and Mark Toynbee in particular, for a thoroughly enjoyable and educational day out. They deserve the very best of luck for the future, and I look forward to the day when steam trains once again run into the bay platform at Robertsbridge.

Postscript

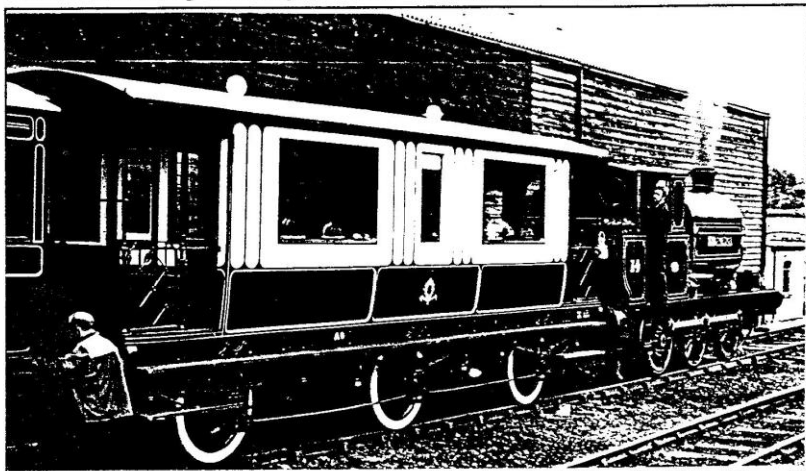
Since Stephen didn't continue with the tour after Bodiam, I thought I had better add a few words on that part of the day's activities. - Ed.

Rejoining on the bus, we made our way towards Robertsbridge and, approaching from the south, took the new by-pass road just East of the village centre. Our bus pulled up on the verge as near as we could judge at the spot where the old track bed crossed it, and where the new one would as well. There was little to see close to, as the track bed had been levelled on that stretch, but traces could be made out further away on both sides. It gave us an appreciation of the magnitude of the task ahead.

We then went on to Robertsbridge station, a fine and well-preserved example of the architecture of the Hastings line. The K. & E.S.R. bay was still in situ, occupied by track maintenance machines, and only a little imagination was needed to visualise it occupied once again by a K. & E.S.R. train. Mark told us of the plans and progress so far, including the very good news that the land between the station and the old A21 level crossing had been purchased at

auction, at a very low price, from a development company which was disposing of it because of the recession. It's an ill wind!

By this time our tour was running very late, so the rest of the trip was somewhat hurried and we didn't stop at any of the other sites. We had a brief glimpse of the recently restored station at High Halden Road before we arrived back in Tenterden after a long but very memorable day.



Charwelton assembles the Society special at Tenterden

QUERY CORNER

The Colonel's Business

Alan Garden asks: how did the Colonel run his business? Was it a Limited Company, was he simply employed as a consultant and paid an annual retainer, or what? Austen and the rest of the staff must have been paid so there must have been a regular income of some kind. A "tithe" on the takings of each line perhaps?

An interesting question to which I don't know the answer. A subject for an article? - Ed.

Stock Transfer

Ron Mann asks: With Colonel Stephens' habit of transferring stock from one part of his empire to another, does anyone know how it travelled over other companies' metals? No doubt coaches and wagons would be treated as P.O. wagons, but what about the locomotives? Did they travel under their own power or were they cold with the coupling rods disconnected? However they moved, it means that at times the Colonel's stock must have been seen passing through the most unlikely locations!

WHEN THE RAILCARS WERE NEW

Our feature from the Locomotive Magazine on the Colonel's railcars concludes with the Shefflex set of the K.& E.S.R.

June 14, 1930

SHEFFLEX RAIL CARS, KENT & EAST SUSSEX RY.

So satisfactory and economical in service have been the petrol railcars introduced by Lieut.-Col. H.F. Stephens on the West Sussex Ry. that he has recently acquired a similar set built by the Shefflex Motors Ltd. of Tinsley, Sheffield, with certain modifications in the design, for the Kent and East Sussex Ry. (Headcorn to Robertsbridge).

The alterations made cover the new regulations of the Ministry of Transport, in addition to allowing a larger body to be used on the same chassis. This is made possible by halving the original bonnet and moving the dash board forward 18 in.; the driver's controls are carried forward by the same amount, but this does not in any way interfere with repairs, as the engine is quite as accessible as before. Front-wheel brakes are now employed and these are of the screw type, and operate on the tyres. The petrol

tank is fitted outside the bodies, and the engine feed is by the "autovac" system.

Coming now to the accessories, 12 volt C.A.V. lighting sets are fitted, an electric horn, explosion whistle (*what on earth is that? - Ed.*) and sanding gear are also provided and screen wipers are fitted. During the winter months the bodies are heated by the exhaust gases, but the hot-air pipes can easily be disconnected and thrown out of use in warm weather. The seating capacity of each coach is twenty-five, exclusive of driver; a total of fifty passengers can therefore be carried, as the vehicles run back to back as illustrated; the wheelbase of each is 11 ft. Half of the windows in the coaches are fixed and half are of the drop type. Of course all the controls are so arranged that they can be locked when the driver changes ends. A speed of 30 to 35 m.p.h. can be obtained.

Each car is fitted with a four-cylinder engine of 3 15/16 in. bore by 4 23/32 in. stroke, giving 24.8 h.p. at 1,200 revs per minute, or 47 h.p. at 1,600 revs.



TRAILERS TO CRIGGION

The Editor concludes the story of Gazelle's trailers on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway.

Colonel Stephens and his successor W.H.Austen were masters of the art of re-cycling, long before that term was invented, and nowhere was this better demonstrated than in the history of the second trailer used behind "Gazelle".

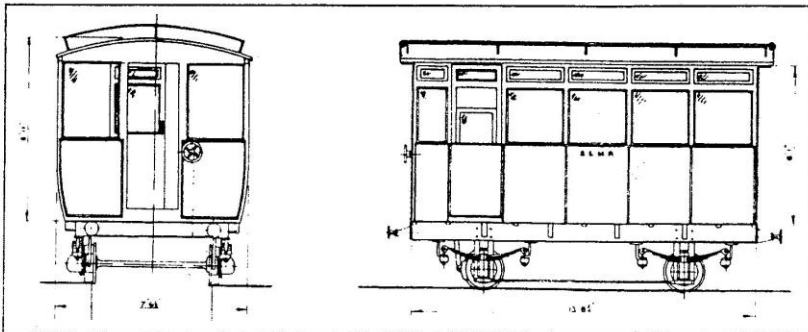
Some time around 1920, Stephens acquired an ancient motor car chassis constructed by the firm of Wolseley-Siddeley. This firm only existed in the early years of the century, so the chassis must have dated from around 1905 - a real vintage model, with chain drive to the rear wheels. Arriving on the Kent & East Sussex Railway, flanged wheels were fitted and the vehicle was tried out on the line. It must have been a success as a passenger body was soon fitted and in this form it became the prototype of the famous Colonel Stephens railcars.

There was only ever one Wolseley-Siddeley unit (it was never one of a twin set as reported in some sources) but when transferred to the Selsey Tramway it ran coupled back-to-back with a Ford lorry similarly fitted with flanged wheels. Both units were then transferred to the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway where the Ford lorry was certainly used in service but the Wolseley-Siddeley probably was not. Be

that as it may, by the early 1930s it was out of use at Kinnerley and probably would have been scrapped had not it been decided to refurbish "Gazelle", which also was in a sorry state at that time.

To provide a trailer for "Gazelle", the body of the Wolseley-Siddeley was refurbished and placed on the chassis of the old horse tram trailer, rebuilt with a rather longer wheelbase. The "new" trailer looked very smart when it emerged from the paint shop in 1937 in an olive green livery to match the locomotive, and the ensemble was used as an inspection train and for hire by private parties. Use for inspection work continued under military control during the war, but eventually the vehicle was grounded as a p.w. hut beside the Criggion branch at Kinnerley, where it stayed until removed for preservation.

Unlike the drawing of the horse tram trailer reproduced in the last issue, the drawing below has been produced from measurement of the grounded body so at least the body dimensions are accurate; the underframe is still a little suspect though!



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Brickbats.....

Having just read "The Colonel" No. 25, I feel compelled to comment on several developments which trouble me.

Firstly, Society membership. I was disappointed to see that membership numbers have only risen slowly and slightly, since Andrew Emery and myself ceased to be actively involved in the Society. Andrew's efforts in promoting the Society, through a trade stand, adverts in the *British Railway Journal*, and articles in the *Model Railway Journal*, achieved far more than the combined efforts of the committee which replaced him.

Secondly, and a point which will have an effect on membership numbers, is the relatively high cost of subscriptions, especially now that this is to be increased to £5 per annum. This fee is used almost exclusively for the production of "The Colonel". When I created "The Colonel" and produced it as Editor, I did so at my own expense. Admittedly the quality of the copy has improved with the use of a computer, but all that was originally asked of members were s.a.e.'s and no subscription. One must conclude that a reduction in the costs of producing "The Colonel" would mean a cheaper subscription, and greater prospects for

increasing membership. It should be realised however, that without "The Colonel" the Society would cease to exist, as it is this which keeps the Society going.

Thirdly, I was most disturbed to see the appearance of non-Colonel Stephens railways in "Lines from the Past", plus the Editor's request for material on "other light railways", and describing it as "quite acceptable". Acceptable it most certainly is not! Yes, I am a fan of other light railways, but they do not belong in the Colonel Stephens Society. If the committee support this intrusion, then they should be voted out of office!

I hope that the request from the Editor is just a desperate plea to get additional material for "The Colonel". From my period as Editor, I know only too well how difficult it is to get members to put pen to paper. I even have trouble myself. For the sake of the Society, let's get some more articles sent to the Editor, before the aims of the Society which I defined are forgotten, that is to be "The Society for the Enthusiast of the Railways of Holman F. Stephens".

Jon Clarke, Chester

.....and bouquets!

I'm writing to tell you how much I enjoy "The Colonel".

Over the past year, since I joined the Society, I have been building a library on English Light Railway and narrow-gauge subjects. I've found "The Colonel" very helpful with the reviews and references that regularly appear. My favorite line is the Selsey Tramway and I'm planning to do some models of the equipment of the line in 7mm.

I'm pleased to see that you will be covering other light railways (Bishops Castle etc.) in coming issues.

Terry Van Winkle, New York, U.S.A.

LINES FROM THE PAST

Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway

On 8th May 1951 the 1.45 p.m. train from Burry Port consisted of Nos.1602 and 1609 (1) with two 4-wheelers and two B.P.G.V. coaches (2) placed alternately. On reaching Cwmmawr, one engine, one B.P.G.V. and one 4-wheeler returned to Burry Port at 3.20 p.m. and the remainder at 4.15 p.m.(3) On a trip up the line and back about 40 passengers made use of the train all told. A number were colliers who entrained and detrained at a level crossing between Ponthenry and Pontyberem stations.(4) The line owes its livelihood entirely to the collieries, although out of a total of 13 only 4 are now working.

Electric tablet is used except for the very short stretch from Burry Port station to Burry Dock Junction, over which a wooden train staff is used. Crossing places are at Kidwelly Junction (adjoining Trimsaran Road station), Pontyates, Pontyberem and Cwmmawr. Pontyates and Pontyberem stations have both up and down platforms.

B.P.G.V. signals and "Trespass" notices are very common particularly in the upper part. The valley, unlike most other Welsh mining valleys, is shallow and not well defined; up as far as Trimsaran the scenery is more like the Fens or the Fylde of Lancashire than S.Wales.

From the Railway Observer, July 1951 by kind permission of the R.C.T.S.

Additional notes from Jack Burrell, who sent in the article.

- (1) Had recently replaced the 1901 Class pannier tanks
- (2) The so-called B.P.G.V. coaches were similar to many G.W. non-corridor coaches except that they had a lower roof.
- (3) Mondays - Fridays there were 3 passenger trains from Burry Port but 5 in the reverse direction. There were slightly more trains on Saturdays.
- (4) Known as Pontremawr Colliery Siding and an unadvertised halt for most of the life of the line. There was also Carway Colliery Siding from pre-Stephens days and "Milk Platform", introduced somewhat later than the previous two, between Trimsaran Road and Burry Port. Passenger trains called here to unload churns, but its use for passengers is doubtful. Finally there was Tycoch (variously Platform or Halt) between Kidwelly Junction (Trimsaran Road) and Kidwelly Quay. It was situated near the present Coed Bach Washery.

Until well into the 1950s there was a mid-morning working from Burry Port to Sandy Junction on the Llanelly and Mynedd Mawr, serving Pwll brickworks.

On reaching Cwmmawr, the branch train did not always return direct to Burry Port. There were waits of up to 3 hours, suggesting the coaches were left at the terminus while the loco engaged in freight workings.

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