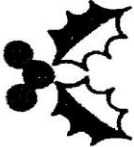


• THE COLONEL •

NUMBER 27 CHRISTMAS 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

Members rally round the flag!

The letter from Jon Clarke in the last issue of "The Colonel" certainly had a dramatic effect: I think I have received more letters in the past couple of months than in the previous year!

All the letters were very supportive of present Society policy and all thought the current £5 subscription was good value for money: some said so in stronger terms than others!

As to the content of "The Colonel" and the vexed question of including non-Stephens matter, a large majority thought that it was alright in moderation, if it did not dilute the mainstream subjects too much. Some, however, went further and suggested that our scope should be widened to include all light railways.

Most people thought that we should advertise ourselves more and this is being addressed - an advert has already been placed in "British Railway Journal". However it was pointed out that as a specialist organisation we may have already attracted most potential candidates.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time and trouble to write in and give their views: the size of the postbag indicates that we have a healthy Society whose members care about the way it is run. Because we received so many letters I have made this a bumper issue with 20 pages, but I am still unable to print them all. I think I've managed to cover everybody's point of view, though.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A very full postbag this time, mostly on the subject of Jon Clarke's letter. However, the first one covers another subject as well!

Alan Gardcn asks "How did the Colonel run his business?". The idea of a tithe from each line is fascinating but not likely, for though he ran his Kingdom in a sort of God-like way he had individual contracts or arrangements with each company. It is an interesting exercise to look through a Bradshaw's Railway Manual, and if one takes the 1922 Edition (published just before the grouping) one can find out quite a lot about the official position of the Great Man with regard to each of his railways. For example he was Managing Director of the S & M R, the K & E S R and the East Kent with other Directors on the respective Boards to contend with. In the case of the W C & P R he was General Manager as the line was in the hands of a Receiver. On all these railways he was also the Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent.

He is also listed as a Director of the West Somerset Mineral Railway in 1922 but interestingly is not listed as a Director or Officer of the B P G V line; presumably he had resigned from the Board by then. He was actively associated with the North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway and later the Welsh Highland, but he is not listed in any capacity so was presumably a Consultant and doubtless paid as such.

Regarding your editorial in "The Colonel" I think your reasons for including material on the Bishop's Castle are perfectly valid. In fact how do we know that other minor line were not considered for take-over by Stephens? Are we quite certain that he did not have some dealings with the Southwold? In any case, so little has been written that I would love an article on it.

If he had been involved with the Corris we would probably have heard, and in view of not getting on with the Welsh one shudders to think

Much as I like the Biblical concept of a tithe, I fear we have to settle for more Earthly concepts of salaries and fees as the way the colonel earned his living!

Turning to Jon Clarke's letter, I am in agreement with him on keeping the material Colonel Stephens-based in our Journal - but that does not mean we should not compare the Stephens railways with their contemporaries or not comment for instance on the Bishop's Castle which the Colonel could have had in his Kingdom but chose not to.

Unlike Jon, I do not think the £5 membership fee is a deterrent; if membership is not growing as fast as it once did then either we are not promoting ourselves hard enough or that most likely candidates are already recruited.

Finally with regard to the Journal's production, I agree entirely that this should not involve the Editor or anyone else being out of pocket. This goes for any other Officer of the Society. "The Colonel" is a high quality production in my opinion and compares very favourably with the journals of other small specialist societies.

The Revd. Alan Cliff, Rhyl

what would have happened had there been any involvement with the Campbeltown and Machrihanish!

J C would seem to be worried about establishing a precedent but there is no real danger of this. In any case if a light railway entirely unrelated to Stephens is included, a useful comparison could be made with a railway not managed from Tonbridge.

Jack Burrell, Bristol

Prompted by the intemperate outburst from Jon Clarke in the last issue, I am writing to express my confidence in the Committee of the Society.

I regard the £5 fee as not only very reasonable but lower than might be expected in view of the quality of the newsletter in content and production. It is vastly improved compared with the amateurish effort of the Society's early days.

Like certain gentlemen in the USSR last August, Mr Clarke may have started something which will lead to the opposite of the result he intended, because his remarks have provoked me into putting forward a proposal that has been in my mind for some time, namely that the Society should enlarge its aims and activities to embrace other light railways besides the Colonel Stephens lines. I would even go so far as to suggest that it might change its name to the Light Railway Study Group (or something similar). By confining itself to Stephens lines only, the Society is imposing on itself an artificial and illogical limitation.

Having been a member for only a couple of years I must say that I have been very pleased with "The Colonel" which has been very interesting and informative - keep up the good work!

To deal with Jon Clarke's points: I can't comment on his efforts or those of Andrew Emery as I have not been in the Society long enough. With regard to advertising, this is a very expensive business and there can be little point in paying for an advert unless enough new members can be attracted to cover the costs. Free publicity can be had by members who have layouts promoting the Society at exhibitions (I know our Editor already does this) and also perhaps by getting some publicity in the Historical Model Railway Society Newsletter, for example.

Concerning subscriptions, I am afraid that Jon must be very out of touch if he thinks £5 is a high subscription. I belong to many societies

I suspect that the image the society originally created for itself may have been off-putting to some people. I remember that the advert which read "The Colonel needs YOU", made me cringe; there was something rather puerile about it all. I am pleased to see that the Society has "grown up" and that the newsletter is now a far more sophisticated publication, written by adults for adults.

I would be interested to see what members' views are on a widening of the Society's aims (and possibly even a change of name). I suggest the best interests of the Society may lie in widening its scope to embrace the whole range of standard gauge light railways. Those who wish to concentrate on Stephens' lines need have no qualms as the importance of that group would ensure that they remained a primary focus of interest and research. But they were not the be all and end all; other light railways are worthy of our attention.

Martin Goodall, Bristol

and ours has by far the lowest dues, most being in double figures. It is not fair to expect any officer of a society to be out of pocket when they are working for the society and a subscription should be set at a level that allows for all out of pocket expenses to be paid to the society officers. Anybody who has the goodness to donate their time for the benefit of members should not be expected to be out of pocket.

It should also be remembered that with a sort of perverse logic some people are put off joining a society with a very low subscription in the belief that it can't really be worth anything!

Regarding material on non-Stephens lines, I don't see anything wrong with this providing the articles are on lines with the Stephens spirit and are not specifically covered by other societies.

Tony Rogers, Alton

I read Jon Clarke's letter with a mixture of anger and disbelief.

In the same issue is a review of a book costing £34.99. This may be on the high side, but the average nowadays is £15 - £20. This will buy 3 - 4 years subscriptions to "The Colonel" and I can't help thinking that the latter will provide far more information than most books!

When Jon says he produced "The Colonel" at his own expense, I suspect that what he really means is that he photo-copied it at work. The Broad Gauge society charges 32p per copy of "The Colonel", and I also charge for the cost of envelopes, labels and postage. The printing charge has not altered in the 5 years we have been producing "The Colonel". Can Jon do it cheaper? If so I am quite happy to hand it all over to him!

After reading the last issue of "The Colonel", I put my brain into gear and came up with some thoughts regarding your editorial on what goes into each issue.

I have no problem with articles on other light railways; however I do feel that Jon Clarke does have a point regarding the original aims of the Society. If these other lines creep in to the journal then the main aim will be lost, but we as members MUST supply the articles to fill up the pages. I also wonder who, apart from the Editor, will say which lines will qualify etc.? I did find the article on the Bishop's Castle interesting, but then it was only a stone's throw from the S & M R.

In any Society such as ours there is a limit to the material available; even if every member comes up with an "I was there" article we are sooner or later going to have to re-cycle previous details with bits added depending on the diligence of contributors. I personally welcome articles on other light railways even if links with the Colonel are tenuous or non-existent.

As for the "system" of sending s.a.e.'s which he used, having taken over that system I can tell you it was a complete shambles: envelopes the wrong size, wrong stamps when the postage rates went up, etc. The system was very time-consuming and if Jon wants to return to it, he can operate it himself!

I think "The Colonel" is very good value for money and, unlike Jon, I am even prepared to put a considerable amount of my own time into ensuring that it continues to be published.

Finally, yes I do approve the publishing of articles on "other" light railways from time to time. Obviously, they should not take over from the Stephens lines, but within reason I think it is a good idea.

Alan Garner, Canterbury

Regarding the subscription, in this day and age £5 is very good value when you consider what other societies cost: £12 Scalefour; £15 Great Eastern.....? An interesting magazine four times a year, the only thing missing is a list of the other members with their interests.

After all that Jon said, the S & M R in W D days is NOT really Colonel Stephens!!!! Well, that was what the last Editor said to me once!

Ian Hammond, Bury St. Edmunds

For those that object to format, cost, content or any other aspect of the society, let them exercise their rights and change things at the A G M - either put up or shut up!

Better still, send in an article of not less than 250 words - before Christmas!

John Simmonds, Worthing

SMALL PLATE GIRDER BRIDGES - 1

Stephen Hannington models one of the Colonel's basic civil engineering structures

Light Railways means light, if not downright rickety, engineering, and this is most visible in bridges. And on the Great Man's lines, this usually meant bridges over streams or rivers. Overbridges were almost unknown (except those inherited by the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway) and roads were usually crossed on the level. The Colonel had a distinctive method for crossing water, particularly narrow bits of it: a pair of fabricated steel girders set at gauge centres and supporting normal, sleepereed track laid on longitudinal timber baulks.

This method was as simple and basic as you can get, and therefore typical of the man and his railways. So when modelling my favourite K.& E.S.R., I just had to get one in. The model is based on the drawing of Rock Street bridge on the S&MR published on page 17 of "Colonel" No. 12, itself derived from a recent photo by Derek Smith.

The span of my bridge was roughly 33 ft. - scaling out at 130 mm in 4 mm scale - and about half as great again as the Rock Street span which I estimate at about 20 ft. I now enter engineering deep water! It seems reasonable to me to assume that the depth of the supporting girders is dependent on the span, assuming a constant design load. The Rock Street girders appear to measure out at about 12 inches deep (using the abutment brick courses as a measure). I chose a scale 2 ft. (8 mm) depth for my model: they would surely need to be deeper, and 8 mm looked right. I am prepared to take informed advice on this!

It is worth digressing briefly into the general area of the Great Man's bridgework at this stage. I have seen examples of the underslung girder bridge on the K.& E.S.R. on the embankment just north of Northiam station with a span

of a mere 3 ft. or so. These are obviously no more than culverts and were no doubt to relieve the weight of floodwaters when the River Rother escaped its banks, which it was rather prone to do.

Again on the K.& E.S.R., there is a similar bridge, spanning perhaps no more than 10 ft., on the opposite side of the level crossing to Rolvenden station. Then there were larger structures still - Hexden Bridge, I believe - with a span closer to my own model. Beyond the K.& E.S.R., the Broadwater Stream bridge on the Camber Tram used the same construction method ("Colonel" No. 15, page 6).

Beyond that, for example the Rother bridge on the K.& E.S.R. with a span of 66 ft., a more conventional plate girder design with the tracks supported on the lower web of much more massive girders, was used. And of course there were any number of other designs to be found on the Colonel's lines. But the underslung girder must be as close to typical as the Colonel ever got.

I mention this because, originally, I made the mistake of scaling down the Rother Bridge side-girder design for my model. It just wasn't right, and the new underslung version conveys the proper atmosphere much better and, I suspect, more accurately. Since you rarely come across serious discussion of such subjects, it's a point worth making. Perhaps more knowledgeable members can shed a little light on the engineering principles involved.

To return to the model, I hope the accompanying diagram makes the basics of my chosen techniques sufficiently clear. To support this, a few detail notes are in order. The major fabrication work is in the girders themselves. I made the webs from 40 thou. plastic for

strength: their thickness is not visible. The top and bottom plates (which must also have a proper name, but I don't know it) (*flanges - Ed.*) and the central rib were made from 10 thou. because their thickness is visible.

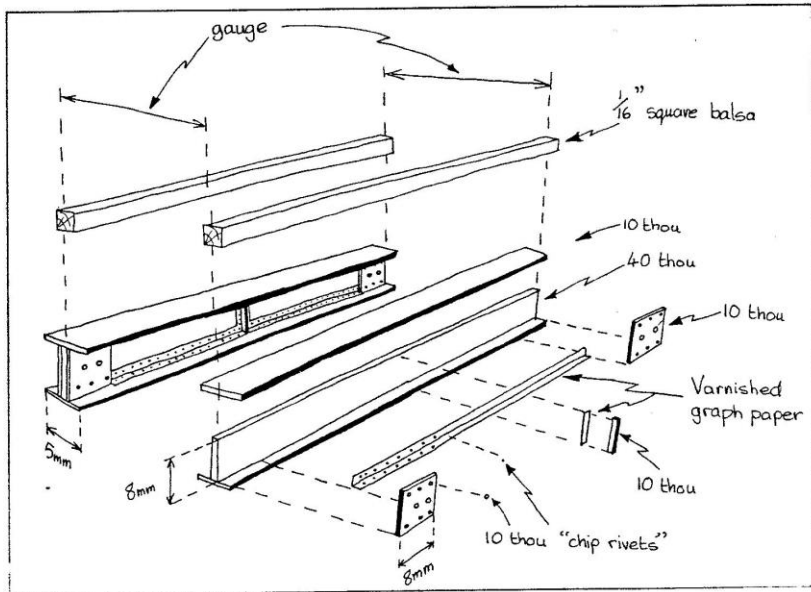
However, unless you can get the edges of the 40 thou. exactly square, you will end up with some pretty wonky looking girders. Modellers in the larger scales may be lucky enough to find proper metal sections instead. I couldn't find any of proper scale thickness for 4 mm, but some of you may be less fussy: it certainly would be easier.

However, plastic construction simplifies the addition of characterful details such as the washer plates and rivets that hold the girder plates together. The construction sequence is this: web and top and bottom plates were assembled; end plates (10 thou.) were fitted, followed by longitudinal washer plates of varnished graph paper. Then comes the central,

vertical washer plate (paper) and finally the vertical rib (10 thou.). The last part is the rivetting, made of tiny "cubes" of 10 thou. floated into place and secured by solvent.

It is vital to ensure the web and top and bottom plates are set hard before proceeding. Keep tweaking them to make sure they are set square. Varnished graph paper washer plates are the right scale thickness, are easily secured with solvent, and have printed divisions to help even placement of rivets.

Note that the web end-plates have larger rivets: three biggish ones top and bottom, and two great chunky ones on the centreline. These are details that might vary, but I stuck with the information I had: Rock Street. The longitudinal washer plates I made a scale 3 inches deep on each arm, with the "rivets" offset between the vertical and horizontal elements to prevent them melting together. This may also be prototype practice - I don't know.



Those who quail at such eye-crossing work as plastic rivetting shouldn't worry: it's not as bad as it seems. In any case, I only put full rivetting detail on the one side of each girder, as the rear of each is not visible. The visible results are essential, I think, to the character of the things.

Now the track: it may be obvious that, in the model, the track really supports the bridge, rather than vice versa. I did it this way: the baulks were set at gauge centres (held lightly by Pritt adhesive to a sheet of paper) and ply sleepers were glued on using balsa cement. K & L plastic chairs were threaded on to the rails and glued to the sleepers using Araldite. When all this was set hard and painted, the painted girders were glued to the under-side of the baulks. I painted the girders a nondescript mid-green: it seemed as good a colour as any.

The whole assembly was designed to be a snug fit between the simulated concrete abutments. In the real thing, the girders are typically embedded at each end into the concrete. Rock Street is an inevitable exception, where the brick abutments were probably inherited from the S&M's original construction.

Rock Street had other details worth pointing out, which I have not included in my model. It had U-shaped steel ties looping under the girders and attached to the under-sides of the sleepers on either side of the baulk - presumably to keep the track centred. It also had wood post and metal rail fencing along one side, where probably there was also a wooden "catwalk" for lineside workers. Whether or not these features are original, I have no idea. You can probably make it up to suit yourself: no doubt the S&M did!



The bridge opposite Rolvenden station, as mentioned in Stephen's article (*L. Darbyshire*)

SMALL PLATE GIRDER BRIDGES - 2

The Editor describes a prototype from the East Kent Railway

It is said that great minds think alike. Certainly it was quite a coincidence when I received the preceding article from Stephen Hannington, as I had myself recently completed a very similar bridge for "Maidstone Road". Indeed, so similar is the construction that I could have been building it using Stephen's article as an instruction sheet! The big difference, though, was that I had the benefit of a prototype drawing to go by, so didn't have to guess the dimensions.

I had built an extension board for the layout, with the track bed crossing a shallow valley on an embankment, and had formed a river bed along the valley bottom, intersecting the track at a skew angle. I was puzzling how the Colonel would have tackled the river crossing when I received from Roger Carpenter a set of drawings of a bridge on the East Kent. By a remarkable coincidence, the bridge was of the right span and skew angle, but a mirror image of my requirement, so it was simply a matter of reversing the drawing for it to fit.

The bridge in question was over a small stream just beyond Sandwich Road station on the Richborough branch. I have been unable to locate a photograph of this bridge, so do not know if it was actually constructed in accordance with the drawings. Be that as it may, it is a very good example of a "typical" Stephens bridge, so is well worth publishing in this Journal.

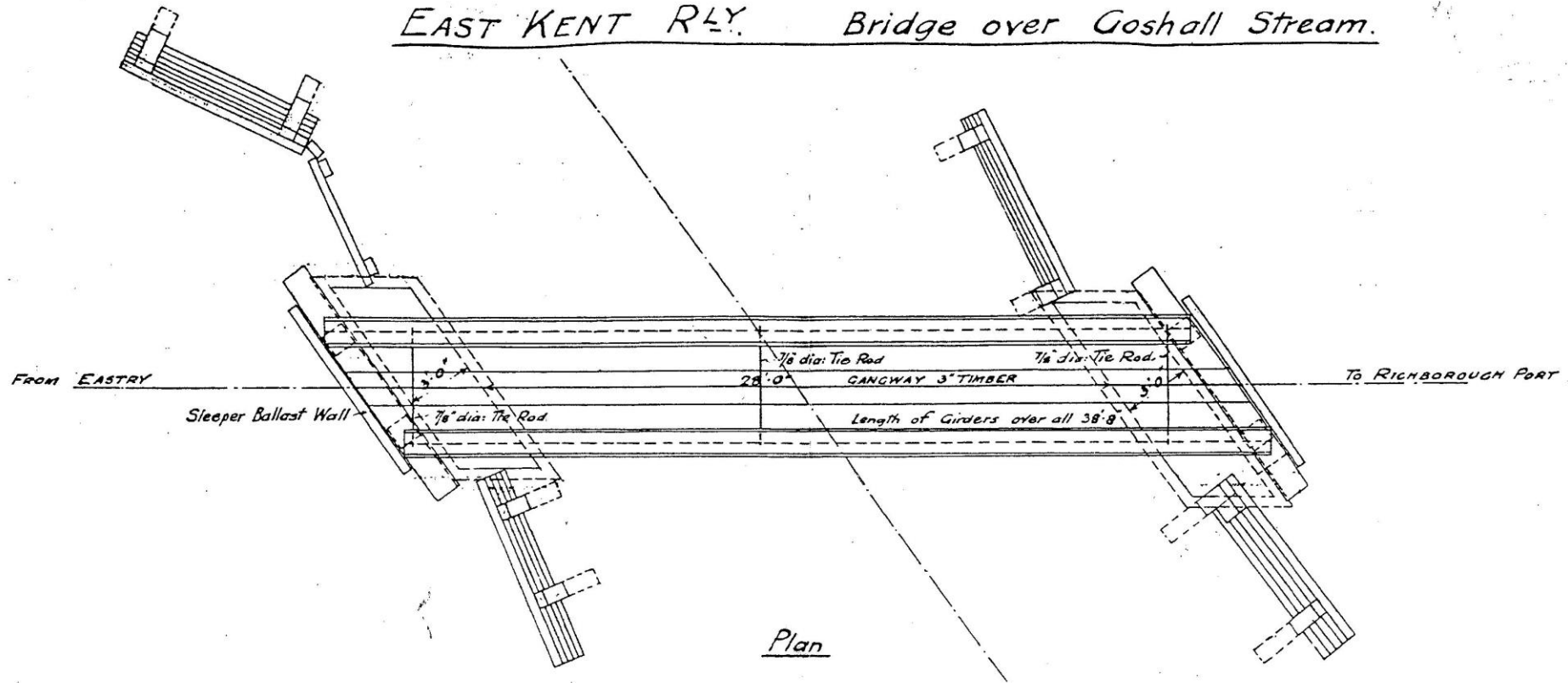
The drawings, reproduced as close as I could get to 4 mm scale, may lose some detail in reproduction so I will describe the salient features. The clear span between abutments along the track centre-line was 28 ft, and the girders were 38 ft. 8 in. long overall. Their extreme ends rested on 14 in. square timber caps which in turn were carried on 12 in. square timber piles driven vertically into the

ground, and they also rested on 3 ft. thick mass concrete abutments. In practice, I would have expected the concrete to have subsided with time, leaving the girders sitting only on the piles - shades of Brunel's baulk road!

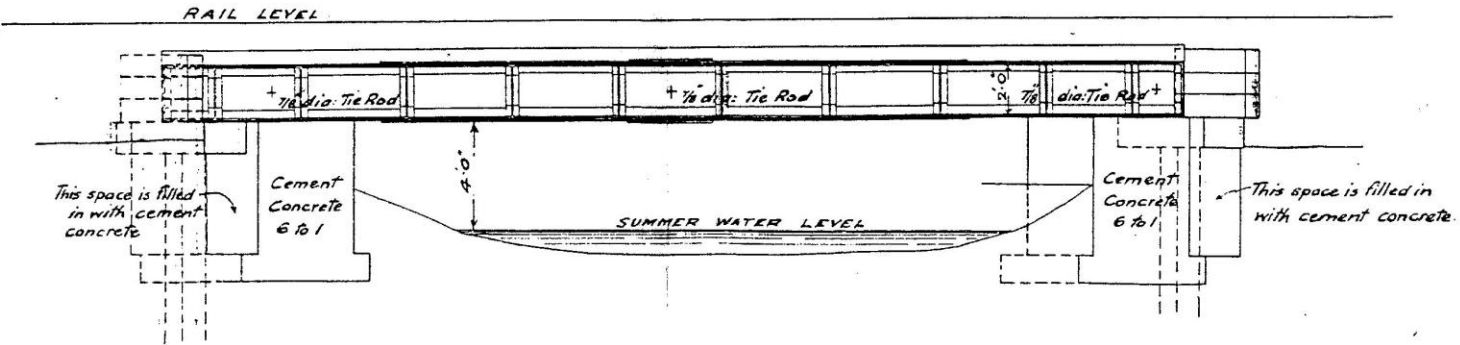
The girders were built up from steel plates of 1/2 in. thickness, the web being 2 ft. in depth and the flanges 16 in. wide, so Stephen's guess at the correct dimensions for this span was about right. The flanges increase in thickness (by adding extra layers) from 1 in. (i.e. 2 plates) at the ends to 2 in. (4 plates) at the centre, where the bending moment (= load x distance to support) is highest. The web and flanges were joined by 4 x 4 x 1/2 in. angle on both sides of the web (Stephen's "washer plates"). Stiffeners to prevent buckling were provided at 4 ft. intervals, again on both sides of the web, made from 6 x 3 in. "T"-section steel bent into a "U" shape. The two girders were kept at the correct spacing by three tie rods of 7/8 in. diameter, presumable nutted on both sides. The track itself rests on longitudinal timbers 12 in. wide, and there is a walk-way of two 9 x 3 in. timbers along the centre.

Three features of the drawing are of particular interest. The first is the use of sleepers as retaining walls for the ends of the approach embankment; was it actually built like this? It looks good on the model, but I can't recall seeing a real-life example. The second is the indication of "summer water level"; I would have thought that the winter level (surely much higher) would be of far greater importance. The third feature is the apparent superelevation or "banking" of the track by the use of thicker timbers on one side, clearly shown on the cross sections (with the correct opposite slopes in the two views). This is particularly odd as the bridge was straight and so, from the Ordnance Survey map, were both approach embankments. On my model I laid the track level!

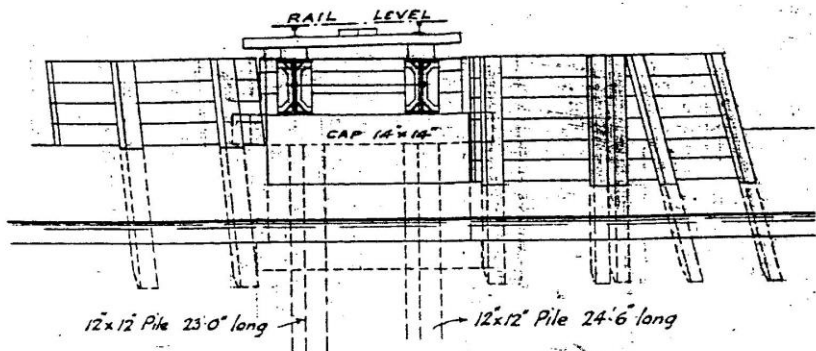
EAST KENT RLY. Bridge over Goshall Stream.



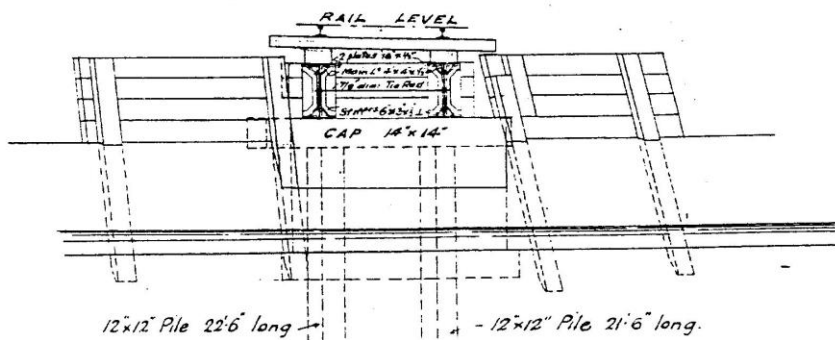
Plan



Long Section



Cross Section showing Eastry Abutment



Cross Section showing Richborough Abutment

I WAS THERE

Derek Smith visited Kinnerley in the Summer of 1938

What was it really like on the Colonel Stephens railways in those far-off days over half a century ago?

Members will recall the excellent articles by Bill Willans in "The Colonel" when he described vividly his experiences of starting an engineering apprenticeship at Kinnerley in the late 1920s.

Some 10 years later, many things had changed, mostly for the worst. The passenger services on the branch and main line had long since gone, together with the bank Holiday excursions; all that was left was the stone traffic from Criggon quarry and the tanks to the oil depot at Abbey station. In fact these provided the life-blood that just managed to keep the line going. It was still possible to travel on the line, and many folk did just that by hiring "Gazelle" and the trailer coach, but I always felt it did not generate much revenue.

I had resolved to visit Kinnerley, and to start on the right footing called at Abbey station to ask permission. I was given a little memo which said something like "Let this lad have a look around", so armed with this I set off one Summer's morning in 1938.

I soon found out it was much harder to find Kinnerley by road than I thought it would have been, but eventually I did arrive at the road bridge and had my first look at the layout of the yard and loco shed. On my many train trips on the S & M I had never left the platform, so it came as a surprise to see what else was in the yard.

After a few minutes I left the bridge and made my way to the station, handing the memo to a man sitting in the office. When I got into the yard, I was able to look around at will. Most of the relics we all know about were standing in

their places, as was "Gazelle" and the trailer near the paint shop. I was able to look in the loco shed and machine shop, while talking to some members of staff who were working there.

It was just then that the morning trip from Shrewsbury arrived behind ex-L N W R "Collier" No. 8182, with some vans and empty wagons. After shunting the yard, it left for Llanymynech and I returned to look inside the shed again. I seem to remember two engines under repair, and I was surprised to see electric light fitted. It was much later that I discovered that the light was supplied by a steam-driven dynamo; one of the staff said it did not work too well! In the machine shop was a vast array of machines of all sorts, driven by overhead belts from a steam engine.

It was while looking at "Gazelle" and trailer that I had the offer of a cup of tea: it must have been lunch time! I left about an hour later, but the visit has stood out as one of my most successful of all time to any loco shed.

Words cannot fully describe the wonderful atmosphere prevailing at Kinnerley in those pre-war days, the like of which will never return again. I feel privileged to have shared it for a few hours, 53 years ago.

Postscript

On Sunday 8th September 1991 I visited the site once more. Everything was overgrown and derelict, and the area round the station master's wooden bungalow was for sale as building land. The bungalow was still standing, and in very good condition both inside and out.

A COURSE ON THE COLONEL

The Editor goes back to school for a week-end, and discovers that the Colonel really moved!

I must start with an apology. Had I read my "Tenterden Terrier" thoroughly, I would have known that a course on "Colonel Stephens Railways" was to be held at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch on 27th -30th September, and would have advertised it in "The Colonel". But I hadn't, so I didn't. Sorry!

As it was, by the time I received details of it there were only a couple of places left. The programme certainly looked exciting: talks by several well-known Stephens aficionados, including John Miller, Philip Shaw, A. Michael Davies and Stephen Garrett; trips on the Festiniog and Welsh Highland railways; and some archive film, so I applied immediately and got the last place.

On Friday 27th September, I climbed on (or rather in) my trusty steed and headed towards the north west. The weather forecast for the North Wales area was appalling, so I was expecting the worst, but I need not have worried. It was fine all the way, and I arrived at the Plas, close to but far below the Festiniog line, in good time.

After a welcome from the Course Organiser, Eileen Clayton, we had an excellent dinner then adjourned to another room to begin the course proper. Doug Lindsay started things off with a general introduction, and then Philip Shaw gave us an outline history of the Colonel's railways to set the scene for the week-end. Several things he mentioned were new to me: for instance, that Stephens was not the Engineer to the Paddock Wood and Cranbrook Railway - it was Edward Seaton, Civil Engineer of the Metropolitan Railway - but he was the Resident Engineer working under Seaton, and apparently did most of the work! Also revealed was the fact that William Henry Austen joined Stephens as a sort of personal assistant on the P W

& C project when he was only 15; Austen was referred to by Stephens as "My man"!

The next morning, we began with a talk by Peter Swift on the Festiniog and Welsh Highland systems with particular reference to Colonel Stephens' period, and what survives from that time. This prepared us for the next activity, a visit to the Welsh Highland. A coach took us down to Porthmadog (Portmadoc to the Colonel no doubt) where our train was waiting. It was hauled by "Russell" which of course ran on the original W H R, and looked superb. It had been restored to original condition, as it was before the Festiniog cut it down to try to get it through their tunnels. It still did not fit, so the drastic surgery was in vain! We saw the sad remains of "Portmadoc New" station, burnt out by vandals, and the site of the disputed crossing over the Cambrian, then we took a trip up the line and back. The line doesn't go too far at the moment, but they have plans (worthy of the Colonel at his most optimistic) of getting certainly to Pont Croesor, probably to Nantmor, possibly to Beddgelert and maybe to Caernarfon! I wish them luck - they'll need it!

Back at Porthmadog and a quick look round the shed/works which contained, among other things, a side tank from the W H R Baldwin 4-6-0, then on the coach for a tour of the W H R "remains". We went via Tremadoc and Pen-y-Groes almost to Caernarfon, glimpsing the track bed of the Gorseddau tramway as well as the L N W R Afon Wen branch, then cut across to join the W H R route (ex North Wales Narrow Gauge) at Waenfawr. We stopped to examine the N W N G bridge under the main road (braving a very large bull to do so), then again at the sites of Quellyn Lake and Rhyd Ddu stations, before disembarking just south of Beddgelert to walk the trackbed across the

river bridge and through the Aberglaslyn tunnels to Nantmor. The last time I did that, the long tunnel was flooded but mercifully this time it was dry!

Back at the Plas, John Miller gave an interesting talk on Stephens early career up to 1900, illustrated by material from the archive at Tenterden, following which we were allowed a privileged look at some of the archive collection itself. Of special interest was a Railway Clearing House map of the railways of England and Wales marked up in pencil, presumably by Stephens himself, with the routes of some yet-to-be-built lines and some that never were built. After dinner, Stephen Garrett gave an entertaining talk on origins of the K. & E.S.R., particularly dwelling on the many abortive schemes in the area. He brought out some interesting details, such as the fact that the Tenterden - Headcorn line was built by the Rother Valley Railway on behalf of the S E C R, the latter guaranteeing the running costs plus £1. He also mentioned how the R V R obtained supplementary income by letting shooting rights over the Junction - Bodiam stretch (the mind boggles at the thought of the implications of that!) and by selling lineside willow trees for cricket bat timber.

On Sunday we began with a fascinating talk by Michael Davies on "Salford Terrace", in which he shed much light on the management structure of the Colonel's empire, describing the layout of the building floor by floor and the activities which took place in each room. He answered the question on Stephens' source of income, posed in the last "Colonel": Stephens received salaries and fees from his various lines individually, and enjoyed quite a healthy income for the time. Michael was followed by John Miller continuing his talk, this time taking us up to 1914 and the outbreak of World War 1.

We then set off again on the coach, this time to the Festiniog Works at Boston Lodge. We had a "Grand Tour" around the works, seeing among other things various parts for new locomotives under construction, including a new double

Fairlie boiler. Outside was an unexpected item of Stephens interest, a small diesel named "Ashover" which had worked on that line. We travelled by train to Porthmadog, being hauled by the diminutive Simplex "Mary Ann" which was of Stephens vintage. Our train was formed of an amazing variety of stock, all immaculate, and including a W H R example, a "bug box" and a quarryman's coach. Once over the Cob, "Mary Ann" came off and was replaced by double Fairlie "Merddin Emrys", as immaculate as the coaches.

Our train set off with great gusto, the acceleration of a double Fairlie giving electric-like performance. We stopped at Penrhyn to examine the excellent restoration work carried out by volunteers under the leadership of our Course Leader, Eileen, and again north of Tan-y-Bwlch at Campbell's Platform for a photographic run-past. At Blaenau we had time for a very brief look round before setting off back down the line. This time we got off at the private Plas station, a new experience for me, and walked down the steep path through the woods back to the Plas and more talks.

Michael Davies looked at Stephens' family background, illustrated with much archive material, and outlined his military career. Michael has an amazing fund of personal information and anecdotes, obtained through his close friendship with Arthur Iggulden who was a key figure at Salford Terrace. We then had a look at some material from the Festiniog archives, most of it new to me, and including some information on railcars, mentioned elsewhere in this issue. Stephen Garrett then returned to talk about the East Kent Railways, the Kent Coalfield, and the machinations of the parties involved with both; compared with Kent in the early years of this century, the B C I affair looks like a child's tea party!

Our final morning on the Monday was taken up with three talks. Philip Shaw spoke on the subject of Stephens' career from 1914 to 1931, a period which included the opening of the North Devon & Cornwall Junction, Ashover

and Edge Hill lines, the purchase of the Snailbeach, and the involvement with the Festiniog and Welsh Highland. He also covered the numerous "might have been" lines, including some new to me such as the Newport and Four Ashes, the Worcester and Broom and the Sandwich Bay Tramway. He described the Gower Light Railway, which of all of them probably came the closest to actual construction; it would have entered Swansea by running powers over the Swansea and Mumbles, giving another line for "legitimate" inclusion in this journal! He mentioned that he had no information, apart from the name, on the Isle of Lewis Railway: has anyone any details, or could someone do some research on it?

Michael Davies entertained us again with his "Shropshire & Montgomeryshire memories" and more anecdotes, and finally Doug Lindsay concluded with something on the Preservation scene and on "what remains today". He is trying to compile a comprehensive dossier on the latter topic, and would welcome contributions especially on the lesser-known lines. He wants to cover all aspects: locomotives and

rolling stock, physical remains (stations, bridges, earthworks etc.) as well as smaller items such as nameplates and ephemera in museums or private collections.

And what of the moving Colonel? I've left the best bit till last! After the lectures on the Saturday we were shown some archive film, which included a film taken in 1911 at the opening of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway. On it, briefly, the Colonel is seen walking along the platform at Shrewsbury Abbey. After the festivities, the camera was apparently strapped to "Gazelle" for a trip along the line, and we had a rather shaky but nevertheless fascinating "driver's eye" view of much of the line to Kinnerley. This was all quite new to me - I didn't know such a thing existed, and its survival is amazing! I never thought I would ever see a moving picture of the Colonel!

All in all it was a fantastic week-end, which I hope will be repeated - and next time I'll try to give plenty of notice so you can all go!

PUZZLE SPOT

Answers

Here are the answers to Ivor Gotheridge's questions in the last issue. Any queries to him and not the Editor!

1. The Corringham Light Railway serving Coryton Refinery. The level crossing is public but the station at Coryton is on private property within the refinery. Prospective visitors must first go to the gate office.

2. Southend-on-Sea, which has the line to Butterley Brickworks, Cherry Orchard Lane, near Southend Airport, and another at Great Wakering, on the way to Shoeburyness. They may not both be fully operational at the present time, but are likely to be when work picks up.

QUERY CORNER

Stock Transfer

Jack Burrell casts some light for us on Ron Mann's query as to how stock was transferred from one line to another. He writes:

I read a note in a 1937 Railway magazine on the second terrier to be acquired by the W C & P. It ran under its own steam from Eastleigh to Clevedon and, among doubtless other places, stopped at Trowbridge for water. Here great amusement was provided for waiting passengers when a very large driver emerged from such a tiny engine! Eastleigh had assigned a driver of somewhat ample proportions to the job. Fortunately, as far as Bristol no pilotman would be needed as, at that time, there was a regular working of a S R Mogul into Bristol.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Some interesting items from the Festiniog Railway archives, by kind permission of the Archivist, Michael Seymour

COL. STEPHENS RAILCARS - A POSTSCRIPT

After the successful introduction of Ford railcar sets, all new build, on the K & E S R, the Selscy Tramway and the S & M R in the early 1920's, Colonel Stephens must have decided that for future units the conversion of second-hand buses would be more economical, as he placed the following advertisement in "Motor Transport" for 3rd January 1927.

Motor Coaches Wanted

One penny per word, minimum 1/-
REQUIRED 2 good second-hand motor omnibuses, not less than 14 seaters, 4 ft 6 in - 5 ft wheel track.

Write - Col. H.F. Stephens, Tonbridge.

Whether there was any response to this advertisement is not known, but certainly there were no second-hand conversions made. It is possible that the advertisement attracted the attention of Shefflex Motors Ltd. who subsequently supplied new vehicles.

The Archives also contain two interesting drawings relating to this subject. One is a detailed and dimensioned drawing of a road vehicle chassis, probably a Ford "T", and the other shows a railcar with un-powered trailer. Neither drawing is dated unfortunately. The railcar is rather shorter than the twin units actually built, more like the Wolsley Siddeley single unit, and is standard gauge. It is known that railcars were considered for the Festiniog, but presumably their stability on the two-foot gauge was questionable.

ANOTHER LILY?

Festiniog & Welsh Highland Railway
Salford Terrace, Tonbridge
23rd April 1925

Mr T. Rees, Portmadoc

Dear Sir

With reference to my letter of the 21st instant, whilst you are inquiring into the question of rates for me, make inquiries please as to the possibility of starting the seaborne coal traffic to Festiniog, Beddgelert etc. which existed before the War.

I am quite prepared to finance a small motor colliery (sic) similar to the one I have on the Weston Clevedon & Portishead Railway. I enclose you a photograph of the little jetty I built, showing the boat alongside, and steam crane at work. (it is a very bad photograph)

Yours faithfully
H.F. Stephens

THE COLONEL'S SALARY

Festiniog & Welsh Highland Railway
Salford Terrace, Tonbridge
29th December 1924

R. Evans Esq.

Accountants Office

Festiniog Railway

Portmadoc,

North Wales

Dear Sir

Will you please be good enough to instruct the bank to credit my account at Lloyds Bank Dover with my Salary, at the rate of £400 per year, deducting Income Tax at the rate of 4/6d in the £, to be charged in the agreed proportions to the Welsh Highland and Festiniog lines. This should be credited every week.

Yours faithfully
H.F. Stephens

THE GHOST TRAIN

A Christmas story that is also a puzzle.

How many words with Stephens associations (stations, loco names, people etc.) can you find in the story? Some are rather better hidden than others!

Answers please to the Editor by 15th January 1992. The first correct entry, or the one with the greatest number of words if no-one finds them all, will receive a prize of a £5 book token.

To help you get off to a good start and ensure that everybody gets at least one right, I will tell you that the first word is "Stephens".

It was one of those dark, dreary days before Christmas. Tony Stephens and his friend Daphne Austen were sitting in their local pub, the "Seven Stones", thinking about where they could go for the week-end.

"I know", said Tony, "let's go down to Kent. It's a good many years since we were in that part of the country, and I know a good pub near Tenterden."

"That's a good idea", said Daphne. "We'll meet here at nine o'clock tomorrow morning so we can make an early start".

The next morning, having arranged for the alarm to give him an early calling, Tony climbed into his old Ford and drove the short distance down to the pub. Daphne was already there, sitting on a broad stone that was one of a row of seven that gave the pub its name. "Are you sure this beat-up old wreck will get us to Kent?", she quipped.

"Of course it will, it's never let me down yet", Tony answered. "I'll worry about the car; you take the map and do the navigating".

She got into the car, and they set off on the road they hoped would take them to their destination. A light mist was hanging over the golf links as they left the built-up area behind them and travelled through deep country.

They had been travelling for a couple of hours when Daphne exclaimed "Are you sure we're going in the right direction? I thought Kent was south, but surely we're going north".

"I am going south", said Tony. "You've got the map upside down".

"No I haven't. I'm not that stupid. But I'm sure we passed Hawkhurst half an hour ago so we should be in Tenterden by now. Anyway, this mist is getting so thick I can hardly see the map let alone the road ahead."

"Cor, now I can't even see the road edge. Hilly country, this is. It's far too dangerous to drive in these conditions. We'll have to get out and walk".

Tony let the car roll down the camber of the road towards the grass edge, boldly hoping there was not a ditch hidden under it, and stopped. They got out, and set off on foot along the road. The mist was swirling about them, making it difficult at first to see anything, but after a while their eyes adapted a little to the gloom and Tony said "I have a strange feeling of having been here before, long ago".

"Yes", said Daphne, "I have, too. I remember, when we were teenagers we came on a club ramble down this way. Isn't this road called Chapel Lane?"

Suddenly, through the gloom, they heard the distant sound of bells ringing. Rocking back on his heels, Tony said "That must be St. Michaels. It sounds a good way away, but you can't really tell in fog".

"I heard a sound like a crash over there", said Daphne. "Let's try to follow the sound, it may lead us to somewhere we can stay".

They soon came to a junction road, and were not sure which way to turn, east or west. Once more the sound came through the fog, so they followed it. The road soon turned into a muddy track, and their shoes became thick with clay. Crossing the many puddles was difficult without putting their feet in the water.

"Gate ahead" cried Daphne, and set off at a trot, her friend following close behind.

They passed through the gate, and found themselves on a railway track. The crashing sound was close now, and seemed to be coming from along the track, so they walked along the sleepers until, round a slight bend, they came to a station. Although the fog around it was as thick as ever, the station stood out clearly as though a hole had been cut out of the mist.

It was a very small station, just a single platform with a building made of creosoted timber, and an awning supported on three posts. There was no passing loop, but behind the platform were two sidings, full of wagons, some carrying timber for sale. Men were bustling about loading and unloading them.

In the platform was the strangest train the two friends had ever seen. It looked for all the world like two old buses, arranged back-to-back, and with a small truck between them. On the bonnet of each was the mysterious word "Shefflex". Beside the vehicles stood the train crew, green flags in hand, as though waiting to give the "Right away". It was now that they realised where the crashing sound was coming from, for on the track was a workman belabouring one of the wheels with a large hammer.

Watching him was a tall, military-looking gentleman who was obviously of some importance.

"Good day to you, Madam", said the gentleman, raising his hat. "And to you, Sir. Will you be travelling with us?"

"Good day", said Tony and Daphne, somewhat taken aback. "Where are you going to?"

"Why, to Robertsbridge, of course", said the gentleman, "though Tenterden's our next stop. We are having trouble with the rail motor as you can see, but we'll off in about an hour."

"Is there any where round here to get something to eat?" asked Daphne. "I'm starving".

"Yes", said the gentleman. "Just along the road is the local, stocking an excellent range of rye whiskies, and the catering is good too, I'm told. They will do you a roast chicken leg or wing, ham and eggs, or maybe a pie and peas. Try that, I'm sure you won't be disappointed".

They set off along the road, and as soon as they were out of sight of the station the fog returned as thick as ever. Fortunately the road was straight enough to be a Roman road, and they soon came to the pub the gentleman had told them about. Going in, they sat down by the blazing fire; the landlord came over to them.

"Not a good day to be out on the road."

"No", said Tony. "We have abandoned our car and we're taking the train into Tenterden. We have got time for a quick drink and a bite to eat, then we'll go back to the station and hopefully the train will be ready by then."

The landlord chuckled. "A train? You've got a hope! Millie, come over here". He was joined by the buxom barmaid. "These two say they're going to catch a train to Tenterden."

"You'll have a long wait", said Millie. "Our line was closed nearly forty years ago."

"But we've just been there, and we saw the train waiting in the station" said Tony.

"Yes we did. Only a few minutes ago. And we spoke to the military gentleman who sent us along here", added Daphne.

The landlord grinned broadly. "You must have seen the ghost of the Colonel. I've seen him myself on a foggy night."

"The Colonel? Colonel who?", asked Daphne.

"Why, Colonel Stephens of course. He built the line, d'you see, all those years ago. It was his favourite line, and he just won't let it die."

"And what was the name of the station?"

"Well, the timetables called it "High Halden Road". But the local farmers and shepherds, well they call it "Arcadia". I think that suits it better, don't you?"



Snailbeach Shed Restored, 27th June 1991 - See the note in the last issue
(Derek Smith)

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