

• THE COLONEL •

NUMBER 33 SUMMER 1993

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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

It Pays to Advertise

As reported at the AGM, there has been a considerable influx of new members in the past couple of months, and most of these heard about the Society through the whole page write-up that our Publicity Officer Stephen Hannington managed to get in Issue 2 of "British Railway Modelling". If this is the result of an article in a new magazine with, I would imagine, a relatively small circulation to specialist readers (i.e. modellers), think what results we could achieve in one of the more established magazines. Several of the new recruits said the article was the first they had heard of our existence, so it is essential that we publicise ourselves more.

Shoestring Society

On another topic, one new member said that to keep our subscription as low as £5 a year, we must have discovered the shoestring used by the Colonel to run his lines. I like that!

Seriously, our aim, like that of the Colonel, is to provide a good service at the lowest possible cost. If only British Rail (what a horrible title!) would adopt the same approach for their more rural lines! The Middlesborough-Whitby line was said in an article in the Daily Telegraph this week to be costing £10 for every £1 collected in fares. I'm sure Colonel Stephens could have done better than that! There's nothing wrong with shoestrings when they are used to stop your shoes falling off!

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Personal views expressed in articles and letters in this journal are those of the contributor, and not necessarily those of the Society or the Editor.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Snailbeach Study Day

The Glyn Valley Tramway Group have organised a Study Day on the Snailbeach District Railways, perhaps one of the Colonel's lesser-known undertakings. It will take place at the Stiperstones Inn, Stiperstones, Shropshire on Saturday 11th September starting at 10 a.m. After a morning of lectures, the afternoon will be spent exploring the trackbed and looking at the surviving buildings. The cost is £10 a head including morning coffee. Lunch is extra but may be obtained at the inn.

The number of places is restricted to 40 so if you want to attend, contact the organiser immediately. He is:

Bryan Heatley, Cantlow House, Vicarage Lane, Burton-in-Wirral, Cheshire L64 5TJ. Tel. 051-336-3569

More Branchlines Kits

Following the success of their cast and etched 4mm scale kits for the Ilfracombe Goods (original and rebuilt versions), Branchlines are bringing out two more kits suitable for the Colonel's lines, the ex-SE&CR Stirling O Class and the Wainwright O1 Class rebuilds of these. Both classes ran on the East Kent, and the O1 on the Kent & East Sussex (after Nationalisation).

East Kent Makes Progress

The East Kent Light Railway, after protracted negotiations with British Rail, has at last agreed a very favourable purchase price for the freehold of the trackbed between Shepherdswell and Tilmanstone.

The EKLR already owns the track itself, and possession of the freehold of the land should speed up the process of obtaining the essential Light Railway Order.

New Membership Secretary

As stated rather baldly in the AGM Report, Nigel Bird has taken over the job of Membership Secretary in addition to his old job as Treasurer. This will simplify the paperwork and reduce the handling of money. Would you please address all membership correspondence to him in future.

Publicity Material

Enclosed with this issue is an A4 poster advertising the Society, and a couple of smaller A5 ones on an A4 sheet; we will give you the pleasure of cutting the sheet in two - the shoestring again!

Please display these at local events if you can, and give us a little extra publicity. If you come across any of the old posters bearing the name of a previous membership secretary, please replace it with a new poster.

Issue Number One

In response to demand I have run off a number of copies of Issue 1 of "The Colonel" (though it was not called that at the time), reduced to A5 size to match the other issues. Anyone who wants to complete a set can have one free if they send me a stamped addressed envelope, A5 size of course if you don't want it folded.

North London Brake Van Kit

Having seen the actual kit, we can report that the information given in the last issue concerning the London Road Models North London van kit is wrong. The kit is for a very different style of brake van to those on the K&ESR and EKR. Only the underframe is correct! Our apologies to members and to London Road Models.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Report on the Society's 6th AGM, held on 24th April 1993

Attendance was rather better this year than last, with 17 Members attending and apologies from 6 others.

Actions from the last AGM

1. Badges: D Sutton reported that he had produced a master for a badge incorporating the head and shoulders of the Colonel (as on the cover of this journal). Silver plated, the badges would cost £6-7.

2. Back Numbers: the Editor reported that these were now available, had been advertised in "The Colonel", and were selling well.

3. Liaison with the Industrial Railway Society: the Editor reported that there was no formal link with the IRS, but that our two Societies had several members in common so that there was a good exchange of information.

4. Proposed Centenary Exhibition: there was a lengthy discussion on this topic, and various suggestions for a venue were mentioned. I Hammond suggested a joint venture with his already-established exhibition at Newmarket and D Sutton suggested Bletchley Leisure Centre; they would each investigate the costs etc and report back. C Jackson suggested a Society display stand which could "do the rounds" of exhibitions accompanied by various Members' layouts.

Chairman's Report

I am pleased to report that the year has been a successful one for our Society. Membership remains high, and although we have lost some members, new ones are joining all the time.

Last year we had a problem in the Membership Secretary's area, but L Darbyshire came to the rescue and pulled us back from the brink; a special "thank you" to him for his efforts.

All things appertaining to the Colonel continue to be of interest to the public; indeed, he seems to be better known now than in his lifetime! This must be at least in part due to the efforts of Members of this Society. More books are being published, three so far this year (*reviewed in this issue - EdJ*). I am glad to see modelling playing an important part in the Society's activities; not many of us are able to have our own full-size railway, and models seem to express one's desire to build and own something worthwhile.

Since I was elected as your Chairman last year it has been a great pleasure to be in contact with so many of you. I look forward to hearing from more Members in 1993. In the meantime, Thank you for all your support.

Derek Smith, Chairman

Treasurer's Report

The 1992/3 Accounts continue to show a healthy position with a net balance of £635.84 after all expenses have been paid. It would appear prudent to place say £400 on deposit to earn interest, subject to approval. (The Meeting gave its approval, the Treasurer to use his discretion in choosing a suitable account).

I see no reason (yet again!) to increase subscriptions, and our ability to maintain the same level is due to the kind work of Alan Garner in printing "The Colonel" at a

very reasonable rate, and to other Committee members for absorbing some of the postal costs etc. A special thank you to Les Darbyshire for covering the Membership Secretary's duties at short notice. I am prepared to stand for re-election and, in a moment of weakness, offered to do the Membership Secretary's job also!

Nigel Bird, Treasurer

Membership Secretary's Report

Up to 1st March the position was 128 paid-up members. Two members had formally resigned, and there had been no subscription received from 23 others. Although it was past the formal cut-off time, because of the hiatus in the Membership department these 23 were being sent a final chase-up letter.

Since the 1st March and up to the time of the AGM, one more member had paid and 11 new members had joined giving a paid-up total of 140. (Post-meeting note: Since the AGM, 6 more existing members have paid, and another 12 new ones have joined giving a total as at 1st June of 158. One more formal resignation has been received, leaving 16 past members who

seem to have fallen by the wayside. Nearly all the recent new members joined as a direct result of the article by our Publicity Officer, Stephen Hannington, in the new magazine "British Railway Modelling".)

Leslie Darbyshire, Acting Membership Secretary

Election of Officers

The following were elected unanimously:

Treasurer: Nigel Bird

Membership Secretary: Nigel Bird

Editor: Leslie Darbyshire

Publicity Officer: Stephen Hannington

Committeeman: Ivor Gotheridge

Subscription for 1993/4

The recommendation of the Treasurer that the Subscription should remain at £5 (£6 overseas) was accepted.

Any Other Business

Publicity: it was agreed that posters/hand-outs should be produced, giving the name and address of the new Membership Secretary. These could be distributed with a future issue of The Colonel.

Financial Statement to 31.3.93

Balance Brought Forward		£397.03	
plus			
Subscriptions Received	£650.00		
Sale of Back Issues	£ 72.90		
Donations	£ 17.00		
	£739.90	£739.90	
less			
Stationery Costs	£ 23.50		
Room Hire	£ 15.00		
Printing/Posting "The Colonel"	£426.94		
Other Postage	£ 35.65		
	£501.09	£501.09	
Balance per Bank Statement of 1/4/93		£635.84	

Certified N C Bird, Treasurer

I WAS THERE

David Woodnott went on a trip on the K&ESR in 1991, and had more travelling than he had bargained for!

A more recent "I WAS THERE" than usual, but with rather more than a hint of "Oh, Mr Porter"!

On my arrival at Wittersham Road at around 11.00 am one Saturday in Spring 1991, I noticed a small Diesel shunter busying itself in the platform road. It was preparing to propel some goods stock into a siding. I hurriedly set up my camera and tripod and taped the proceedings; I find goods trains being shunted particularly enthralling. The 11.30 am, Northiam to Tenterden was due to arrive any minute so I prepared my position for its arrival. It was now becoming a rather overcast morning, but just right for what I was about. Things look more "atmospheric" with a little drizzle - perhaps it's me!

At exactly 11.30 the train arrived, pulled by Isn't it funny how you never seem to note these things. Could look at the video, I suppose! She steamed in and came to rest in exactly the right spot, hissing and simmering alongside my vantage point. I quickly folded my tripod and boarded the train. As is so often the case, Wittersham Road Station wasn't open for ticket sales, so a hand-written (and now treasured) ticket was purchased from the guard whilst on the move.

My plan was to continue to Tenterden Town Station, spend some time there and hopefully eat at the restaurant, and then return to Wittersham, collect my car and return home ready to meet my wife who had spent the day with her parents at Bromley. I reasoned that I should be home by about 2.30 or 3.00 at the latest; at least, that was the plan. However....

After a most pleasant time at Tenterden, I boarded the train for my return journey. Rolvenden was soon passed and then on to the level stretch before Wittersham. Just before the long curve into the latter station, the train halted. No problem, plenty of time for videóing. A look back along the track to Rolvenden, some birds nesting in the line-side trees; it all adds to the continuity of the filming. Half an hour later, we were no nearer Wittersham, and the few other passengers on the train were looking restlessly out of the windows. The engine let off steam. Still no reason to complain, this was probably how it was in the Colonel's day!

At last, with a toot of the whistle, we were on our way. As we neared the station, an uneasy feeling took hold - were we going too fast? Imagination plays funny tricks! We were not in the platform loop, we were accelerating past Wittersham Road, across the level crossing towards the incline on our way to Northiam! My ticket was for Wittersham! Oh well! I hadn't actually been to Northiam before. This was I think about the time that the extension had just opened.

It later became evident that the Diesel shunter seen earlier in the day had in fact blocked the platform road with it's trailing goods wagons, thus making it impossible to stop. My first and unintentional view of the newly-restored Northiam Station was soon upon me, a delight to behold and of course "free" as my extended journey was not of my doing.

I continued with my videoing until approached by the young guard who had earlier sold me my Wittersham - Tenterden return ticket. He (smiling) apologised for my extended journey and hoped I had enjoyed my free travel, to which of course I agreed! The train would stop specially at Wittersham on the return journey, there being no one else wanting to stop there.

The return journey started uneventfully, until once more when approaching Wittersham that uneasy feeling returned! We went past Wittersham at a fair lick! Straight on as before!! The skies were now darkening with the first spots of rain clouding the carriage windows. I accepted my fate: I HAD BEEN HIJACKED BY THE COLONEL'S RAILWAY!!

On arriving at Tenterden (again!), an approach to the Station Master was met with profuse apologies, tinged with a half-hidden smile of amusement! We parted amicably on the understanding that as Wittersham Road platform was still blocked by the goods train, an unscheduled stop would be made across the minor road next to the station so that I could alight on to the road, aided if required by the train staff. This arrangement would have pleased the Colonel!

As we once more passed Rolvenden, it crossed my mind that it was A PITY THAT THE SIGHT OF ME CLAMBERING DOWN FROM THE TRAIN, LOADED WITH CAMERA AND TRIPOD WOULD NOT BE RECORDED FOR POSTERITY!

Almost as my mind cleared of these thoughts, we were at Wittersham. The platform road was now clear, and I was able to alight in a more dignified fashion! I felt slightly cheated now at not being allowed to make the more unusual exit from the carriage as had been arranged!

The solitary figure, now cold and leaning into the rain, alighted from the train to the comfort of the modern car. The reason for the demise of a better means of transport! A wave and a smile from the guard and the train was on it's way once more to Northiam. It was 4.00 in the afternoon. I had been on the K&ESR since 11.00 in the morning, travelling mainly as a guest of the Tenterden Railway Company! Tired and bemused, I headed the car homewards. An enjoyable day. An unexpectedly busy day! But, best of all - I WAS THERE!!!

SELSEY TRAMWAY "HESPERUS"

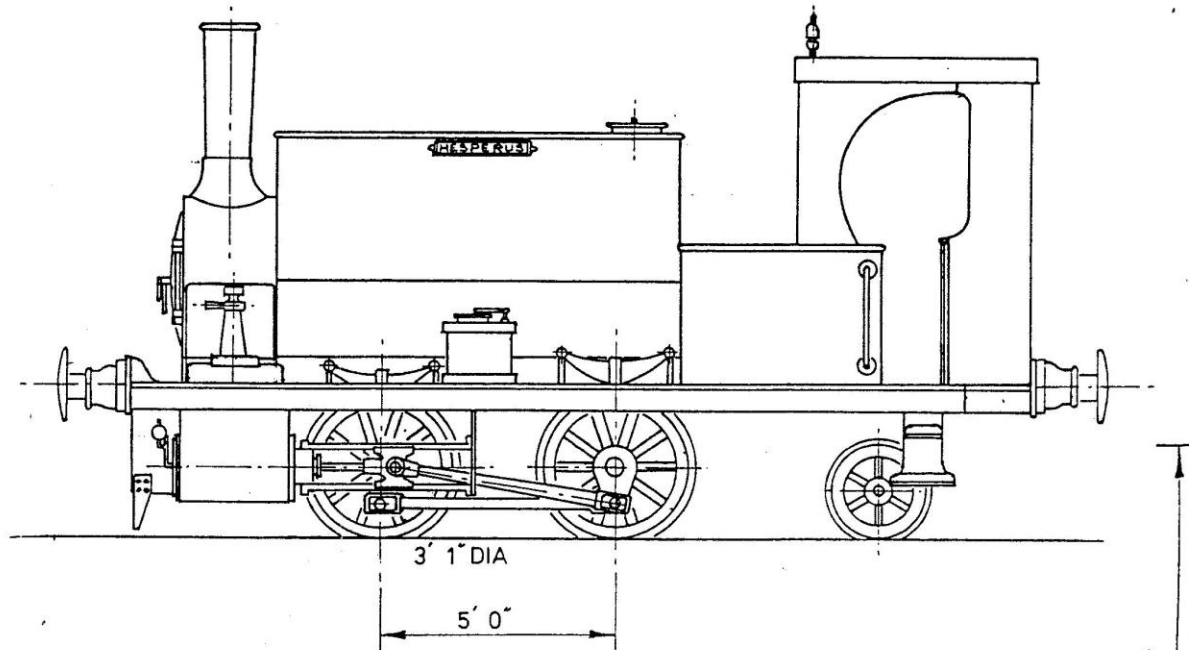
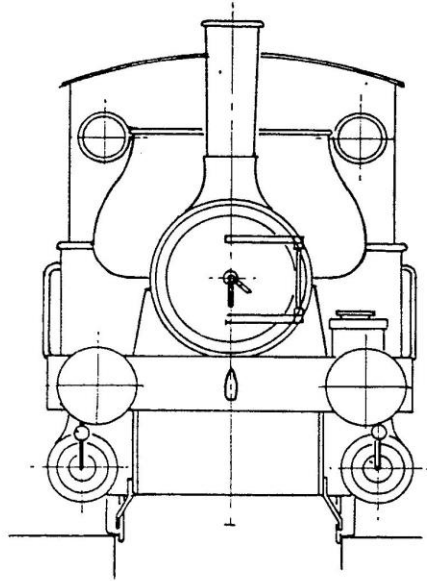
Ron Mann concludes his study of the little Neilson "Coffee Pot" with a "final condition" drawing.

The drawing (overleaf) shows Hesperus in the condition after the rebuild of c1921. Readers will notice a few details missing from the drawing, particularly the firebox, safety valves and the rear frame extension. This is not due to an error on the part of the draughtsman, but rather to lack of knowledge.

Most photos seem to be 3/4 front views in

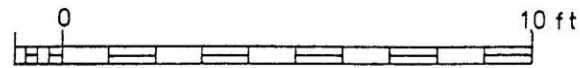
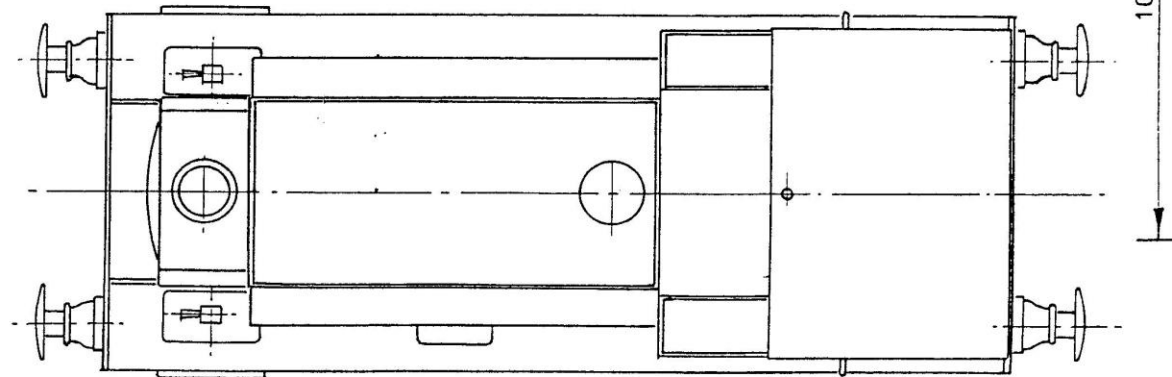
which the firebox area is obscured by the saddle tank, and the few other views available are not very sharp. There is a suggestion of a cylindrical dome surmounted by two safety valves of the Ross Pop type. In all the photos, the frames are in deep shadow and nothing is clear.

Have any members got clearer photos of the loco?



SELSEY TRAMWAY
'HESPERUS'

NEILSON & CO 1871
SHOWING CONDITION
AFTER 1921



R MANN MAY 1992

MODELLING TOPICS

Stephen Hannington concludes his account of building the K.& E.S.R. Royal Coach.

The underframe components of the K&ESR Royal Coach are, to a certain extent, shrouded in mystery. Happily, they are also mostly shrouded in shadow so a little intelligent guesswork goes a long way. Despite its age, the running gear components are of normal design, though one or two bits require special attention, as we shall see.

Basic underframe construction starts with headstocks and solebars made from 3 x 1.5mm brass section from John Flack, soldered up on a sheet of glass, protected by a sheet of paper, for flatness. This makes a strong basis with weight low down where it's needed. Lower footboards of 3 x 0.5mm brass are supported by L-shaped brackets of 0.5mm brass wire soldered into holes drilled into the lower edge of the solebars, as near the outer face as I dared. This was done, incidentally, before the solebars were soldered to the headstocks.

Lamp brackets were bent up from miniature staples and soldered to the headstocks, and the upper footboard was butted against the supports and soldered with low-melt, to prevent upsetting the other soldered joints which were made with normal melting-point. Heating pipe hoses were formed from .032 guitar string and soldered into holes drilled under the headstocks. Finally, coupling hooks and mounting plates were soldered into slots cut into the headstocks, and the whole lot was scrubbed in Jif and water.

I have previously represented solebar bolt-head detail by drilling the solebars and force-fitting brass wire into the holes. However, there are so many bolt-heads,

some of them relatively fine, that on this vehicle I adopted a different technique. A strip of millimetre graph paper was glued with Evostik to the outer face of the solebar, with bolt-head detail added using tiny cubes of 10-thou plastic. The graph paper ruling helps to accurately place the cubes, which were placed by eye with reference to photos. The solebar mounting plates of the footboard supports were represented with 5-thou plastic, fixed in line with the functional wire brackets.

The floor was a rectangle of 40-thou plastic glued with Evostik to the brass underframing, overhanging the headstocks by about 0.5mm. Buffers were, if I remember rightly, ABS standard SR van-buffers. The Royal Coach's buffers were somewhat longer than normal, thanks mainly to a fairly thick baseplate. This was represented by first gluing the buffers into holes drilled in 40-thou, using cyano, then cutting them out and filing the 40-thou circular when the glue had set. They should, strictly speaking, have larger diameter heads/rams, but I gave up the attempt at drilling out the shanks after ruining two.

W-irons are MJT, though for some reason the floor is too low to make room for the compensating rocking units. Instead, the W-irons are glued direct to the floor after first painting them Humbrol matt chocolate. Axleboxes were cut from Roxey's LSWR coach axleguard castings, and are spot on. I had to scratch-build the springs from strips of 10-thou plastic, fixed directly to the W-irons before gluing them to the floor. Hangers are from the Roxey castings.

Wheels are standard Mansell from Alan Gibson and rather spoiled things by one axle being off-centre, making the coach hunt up and down like a drunkard. Unfortunately, everything was in place and un-removeable by the time I noticed. These are not the first wheels I have had from this source to be untrue. I hope I have just been unlucky...

Brake shoes are again ABS castings, glued to 0.5mm brass transverse rigging, trimmed and cyanoed to the floor. Les Darbyshire once more proved his worth in gold (*flattery will get you nowhere - Ed.*) by lending some unpublished photos which show the brake rigging quite clearly. These reveal some archaic external linkages between the brake shoes across the lower face of the wheel. Their purpose or function is beyond me, but they were represented by simple square U-shapes of 0.33mm brass wire cyanoed into convenient holes already in place in the ABS castings.

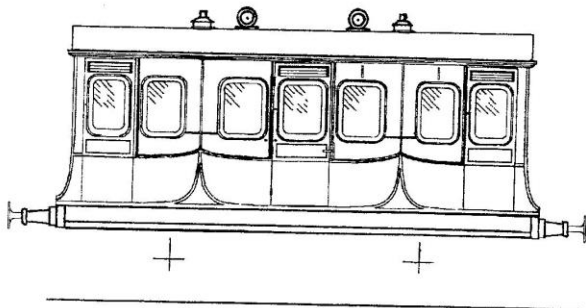
Now, nobody seems to know what went on in the murky shadows under the floor in respect of braking arrangements. I simply mounted a vacuum brake cylinder assembly - a rather splendid item from ABS yet again - more or less centrally. It gives the right impression of "something going on under there" when the coach is in action, with V-hangers and linkages silhouetted in the gloom.

When the body and chassis were united by Evostik, the body retaining straps on the headstocks were represented by cyanoing short lengths of 20 x 10-thou microstrip to the headstocks and corresponding squares of the same material to the body. The absence of the connecting bit between the two is invisible, even if you look closely, and the assembly was completed by three plastic chip bolt-heads on the headstock portion.

Vacuum pipes were those nice Japanese brass turnings. Fixing brackets between the pipe and body ends were flattened brass wire wrapped round the pipes and soldered before mounting into holes drilled in the body. Final bodywork details were the little grab handles made from brass wire, and door handles made from loops of 5A fusewire.

And that's all there is to it! This excellent little vehicle has given me an extra coach set all by itself - paired with one of my LSWR 4-wheel brake-thirds from the other set. One of these days I'll get round to making a GER brake-third to give it a permanent and prototypical partner. I wonder if that Peter K kit is any good....

(Stephen wrote this before he'd seen the article on the Peter K kits in "Colonel" No.31 - Ed.)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More on HMST Stock

My thanks to David Churchill for his comments and the photo of "Ringling Rock". I will try to answer at least some of his queries.

Ringling Rock

Without seeing the original print I cannot be absolutely certain, but I am sure the rear of the cab must be attached to the rear of the flared-out portion of the bunker. This was the standard form of canopy for a Manning Wardle Class K. It is my opinion that the proportions of the cab in this photo look far better than do the later shots, partly because after the alterations the rear weatherboard was no longer upright but leaned slightly forward, giving the cab a very mean appearance.

Yes, it does look like a spark arrester on the chimney but is it an illusion that the chimney cap is a simple trumpet form and not the usual Manning Wardle profile? It certainly has two bands at the lower end of the cap. I have checked my collection of photos and come to the conclusion that early shots of Ringling Rock show this trumpet-shaped cap with two bands at its base and the lamp-iron is visible in each, i.e. up to 1925, after which there is no lamp-iron and the chimney cap is the conventional Manning Wardle one. I wonder if the whole chimney was replaced and the lamp-iron dislodged then.

The square which shows on both sides of the tank seems large for a name plate (the only previous name I know of was "Vida") but I can offer no other explanation.

Lambourn Valley Coaches

I apologise for omitting the panel which carried the crest but I produced the drawing from details in the book "The Lambourn Branch" and a sketch in a

contemporary "Locomotive Magazine" and assumed the crest was merely painted on the sides. Now that David has raised the subject, I see that the clearest photo I possess (of a derelict coach) does indeed show an oval panel roughly 18" high by 12" wide half way along the coach side.

I would like to hear more about the timber reinforcement along the coach bottoms. What information does David possess?

Assuming the coaches were never repainted, the LVR colours were:

bodies, varnished wood (teak or mahogany); underframes, black; lettering, gold shaded red and black. The numbers 5, 6 & 7 are also quoted by Kidner in "Carriage Stock of Minor Standard Gauge Railways" but I know of no evidence for or against numbers being carried on the coaches.

Morous

Can I raise another peculiarity about "Morous"? When built it would have been fitted with a D-shaped smokebox door, hinged along the top edge, which swung upwards just clearing the buffer beam as per "Sidlesham". But by the time it came into the Colonel's empire it had a circular smokebox door hinged at the side. This would swing open 18 inches and then clout the buffer beam, so how was it opened to clean the tubes? Was it like opening a farm gate that swings a little way and then has to be lifted? Did the smokebox door have to be lifted off its hinges and laid aside? Later Manning Wardles, from works No.995, carried round smokebox doors but for those the boiler was raised by 4" so the door cleared the beam!

Ron Mann, Newbury

Freight on the W.C.& P.R.

Doug Ware's article in the Spring "Colonel" was particularly valuable and I hope others will do the same job for other lines. We all too often try to find out what happened in the past without first asking why.

One or two references from the "Railway Magazine" suggest that in later years at least, regular goods traffic was handled in mixed trains where possible. An article by J H L Adams in June 1938 states that "most of the trains on the Weston-Clevedon section are worked by railcar, while those on the Clevedon-Portishead section are steam operated, the chief reason being that most trains from Portishead pick up trucks of stone from the Black Rock Quarries and special workings are thus saved".

The only illustration to this article to depict a goods wagon is one of 0-6-0ST No.3 outside the shed at Clevedon, in the background of which part of a 5-plank wagon lettered WC&PR and apparently containing loco coal can be seen. Presumably this would have been shipped via Yeo

Pier; the GWR would no doubt have been reluctant to allow the wagon on its metals.

The January 1940 issue refers to a letter from R H Hiscock describing a trip over the WC&PR, "which from the traffic point of view appeared...to be in a flourishing condition", in August 1939. The ex-Southern petrol railcar was used from Weston to Portishead, but the return comprised "Terrier" No.4 and three South-Western four-wheelers. "Some coal trucks" were taken from Portishead and dropped at Clevedon (which was left half an hour late).

Finally, a description in August 1940 of the last day of operation (despite the "flourishing condition" a year earlier) states that the 4 p.m. train (Terrier No.4 and American cars 2 and 4) "started off for Portishead trailing three wagons behind". These were put away in the GWR transfer siding before the train returned to Weston.

Tom Burnham, Sidcup

Gas Works Loco

In answer to the question posed by my near-neighbour Doug Ware in "The Colonel" No.31, may I refer to "Industrial Locomotives of South-Eastern England" published in 1958 by what is now the Industrial Railway Society?

Beckton Gas Works had two 0-4-0 electric locos for use on coke oven duties. Both were built by Wellman Smith Owen and picked up current from overhead wires. Neither carried a number.

The book gives neither works numbers nor building dates for these two machines.

I'm afraid this is rather sketchy but at least it's better than nothing.

Hugh Smith, London E15

Editor's Note. I consulted a rather later IRS publication (Industrial Locomotives 1982). Beckton had closed by then, but I found several Wellman Smith Owen locos at other locations. All were overhead wire electrics working in coke plants and the like. The oldest dated from 1935.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SHEPPEY LIGHT RAILWAY by Brian Hart

Published by Wild Swan at £10.95. ISBN 0 874103 09 7

This is as full an account of the Sheppey Light railway as one could wish for, the 104 pages being lavishly illustrated with numerous photographs as well as track plans of the stations. As is usual with Wild Swan books, the production standard is high.

Another Wild Swan feature which is less welcome is that of including photographs only vaguely connected with the subject - see pages 10, 49 and 82 for example - which do help to put the railway into its social and economic context but also pad out the book and add to its cost. It is difficult to see why space should have been devoted to photos of Queenborough

Pier, Sheerness Docks and the Sheerness Trams, delightful though the latter are.

One minor niggle is that details of the locos used on the line are scattered throughout the book; an appendix listing them would have been a useful feature.

If you are seriously interested in Colonel Stephens' railways, and the Sheppey Light Railway in particular, you will want this book on your shelves. If you have only a passing interest in the line you will doubtless find Peter Harding's book quite adequate, but Brian Hart's book is the definitive history.

HS

LSWR CARRIAGES: VOLUME 1 1838-1900, by G R Weddell.

Published by Wild Swan at £19.95. ISBN 1 874103 08 9

Everything you wanted to know, and more that you didn't realise you wanted to know, about LSWR carriages is contained in this superb book. Gordon Weddell is already probably well known to many of us as the author and draftsman of a series of high quality plans and notes on LSWR coaches in the "Model Railway Constructor", many, if not all, of which are included in this 245-page work, along with detailed text, many excellent photographs, and over 100 drawings, mostly 4mm scale.

Drawings cover the very earliest "stage coach" vehicles - crying out to be modelled in 7mm scale - right through to the 48ft elliptical roof bogie stock of 1899. Passenger luggage vans are also included. The wealth of supplementary detail drawings include Fox's and compensated bogies in 7mm scale, and body framing and panelling elevations and sections at

12mm to 1 ft. These, together with close-up photos such as torpedo ventilators, lamp tops and compartment interiors, mean that there is very little left a mystery to the aspiring modeller or historian.

The Great Man was an avid purchaser of second-hand LSWR coaches, and every example he ever owned is included in these pages in drawings and photographs, from the two Royal coaches to the later bogie stock. A particular favourite of mine is the drawing of the K&ESR Royal coach in a speculative original condition, including "chariot horns" and a detailed analysis of the body shape.

In this book, both Weddell and Wild Swan are carrying on their first-class traditions of thoroughness and quality, and it is unreservedly recommended. Volume Two will cover the period 1900 - 1923.

SH

THE SELSEY TRAM by David Bathurst

Published by Phillimore at £11.95. ISBN 0 85033 839 5

The author is a solicitor and legal adviser to the Chichester magistrates which means he has had the opportunity to examine the surviving paperwork in the West Sussex Record Office. This should have resulted in a first class book.

Speaking as a former Cicestrian and an avid Selsey Tram enthusiast, I have to say that I was disappointed with the book. True, there is plenty of fresh detail and some interesting photographs but some of the latter have been very poorly reproduced and the text is riddled with silly mistakes. For example, the photo of "Morous" on page 45 is described as being "Sidlesham" and the company is referred to as the "Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway" (singular) even though the tickets illustrated on page 59 clearly state "Tramways" (plural) which is the correct title! One gets the impression that Mr Bathurst, whilst clearly having a love of railways, does not have a great deal of

technical knowledge - the use of the word "railmen" rather than "railwaymen" grates somewhat!

A more serious complaint concerns Chapter Nine, "Fatal Accident", where the inquest report is quoted at length but not in its entirety. The Coroner's comment "You give me the impression of trying to cover something up" and the Foreman Platelayer's statement "I didn't see the marks of the wheels of the engine..." were in fact separated by a number of questions and answers which Mr Bathurst has completely omitted. As a result, the text reads a little oddly. There is no good reason why the report could not have been printed in full.

All in all, something of a Curate's Egg but worth having, provided that you don't take the text as Gospel! Incidentally, the book is a hardback with 134 pages.

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BRANCH LINES AROUND PORTMADOC 1923-46 by Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith in association with Adrian Gray and Michael Seymour. Published by Middleton Press at £8.95 ISBN 1 873793 13 8

The 120 photographs in this hardback book - augmented by tickets, posters and track plans - illustrate a journey from Dinas Junction via Portmadoc to Blaenau Ffestiniog. Some of the locations have had to be illustrated with photographs taken before 1923 but this is surely better than not illustrating them at all. The photographic section is prefaced by notes on place names, the historical background, key figures, the geographical setting, locomotives and coaches, passenger services and traffic statistics.

Vic Mitchell is a founder member of the Ffestiniog Railway Society and Michael

Seymour has been the FR's Honorary Archivist since 1957, so you'll be lucky to find many errors in the text. Some of the photographs are well-known but many others have not, to my knowledge, been published before. At a little over seven pence per photo, this book represents good value for money.

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Middleton Press are intending to bring out next year a companion volume covering the period 1954-94. Not of course Stephens, but no doubt worth waiting for.

THE MAIDSTONE EXTENSION

Jack Burrell provides an interesting extract from the Railway Magazine of 1905

Readers of the Railway Magazine are aware that the Light Railway to Headcorn from Tenterden, on the Kent and East Sussex Railway (formerly RVR), has recently been opened to traffic.

With regard to the extension to Maidstone, the Light Railway Commissioners have granted the application of the promoters of the Headcorn and Maidstone Junction Light Railway. In notifying that sanction had been given to the scheme, the Secretary of the Commission writes:

"The Order will require that the railway shall be taken over the main road at Sutton Valence and over the East Farleigh Road respectively, by bridges entailing in the latter case those modifications of the proposed works at Cake Hill which were referred to at the last enquiry; and also that a tunnel should be constructed between Hayle Place and Hayle Mill nearly 400 yards in length upon an alignment which will cross the road below Tea Saucer Hill upon the level, at a point adjacent to the road between Hayle Mill and the Bockingford Arms, but avoiding the road instead of crossing it on the level in two places as shown on the deposited plans.

I am further directed to state that the Order will provide for an increase in the capital powers necessary to meet the consequent increase in the cost of the railway, and will also provide that the Company may make an extra charge as for an additional mile upon all traffic passing through the tunnel"

Jack Burrell comments: Doubtless all hopes of construction ended with the outbreak of war in 1914, and land purchase money was refunded in 1917. The line, however, appeared on K&ESR Annual Report maps until the mid-1930s!

Editor's note: The tunnel referred to was not necessary from an engineering point of view - in fact it would have been a costly embarrassment - but was insisted on by the proprietors of the nearby paper mills who persuaded the Commissioners that smuts from the railway would soil their lily-white products. They probably had a point there!

The line would have joined up with the SE&CR's Tovil goods line, the only part of an earlier similar scheme to have been built, and so K&ESR trains would have run into Maidstone West.

Published by
THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY
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