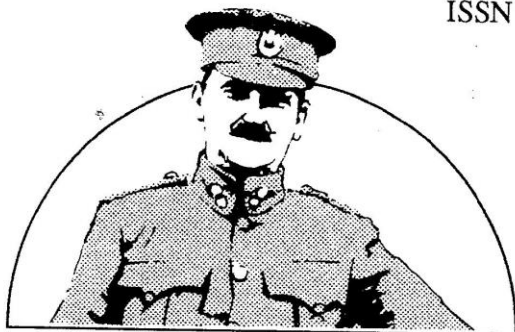


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• THE COLONEL •

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Editorial.....	2
News and Views.....	3
Letters to the Editor.....	4
H.M.S.T. "Chichester".....	6
Visit to Snailbeach.....	11
The Colonel's Lines in Fiction.....	12
The Colonel's Business.....	14
Book Review.....	15
Chairman's Corner.....	16

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

Subscription Renewals

Another year has passed (where did it go?), and once again it is time for subscriptions to be renewed. We have made our small contribution to the control of inflation by holding the subscription to the same figure as before, that is £5.00 for UK subscribers and £6.00 for those overseas.

We hope that every member will feel that this is very good value and will renew promptly, thus keeping our expenses down by avoiding our having to send chasing letters!. A renewal form is enclosed with this issue.

Information Required

This issue sees another instalment in Ron Mann's mammoth survey of the stock of the Selsey Tramway. Still to come, hopefully in the next issue, is the Peckett "Selsey". That just leaves the original "Chichester" to complete all the locos, but neither Ron nor myself have any firm dimensions for this one. It was built about 1847 by Higginbotham at the Railway Foundry, Barnsley, and one reference says it was built for the Great Western and was rebuilt by Swindon around 1860. If this is true, GWR experts may well know of sources of further information.

Has any member any firm details of this elusive loco, to allow us to complete the survey?

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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

K&ESR Working Party

From October 25th to 29th, the Kent & East Sussex Railway is having a Permanent Way Working Week, the object being to relay approximately 25 lengths of concrete sleeper track in the vicinity of Popes Cottage. Any additional pairs of hands would be most welcomed even if only for a day, so come along - "The Colonel's Favourite Railway Needs You!"

For more information please contact Brian Muston (P/Way Manager) on 0679 21897.

(Information supplied by member Adrian Kennedy, who is one of the PW gang)

Model Railway Weekend

Member Richard Jones is organising a Model Railway Weekend at Burton Manor College in the Wirral, Cheshire. The residential course will run from Friday 28th to Sunday 30th January 1994, and is intended to help modellers of all levels of ability to improve their skills, with talks from experts in each area. Your Editor is giving a talk on modelling the Colonel Stephens Railways, and member Martin Brent is talking about layout planning and kit building thus justifying the plug for the course in this journal!

It is hoped that various layouts will be on view, and there will be an optional visit to a garden railway.

The cost of the weekend, including accommodation and all meals, is £88.00 .

For further details, contact the college on 051-336-5172, quoting Course Number GI 94 04.

"Linda" leaves Tenterden

Because of the K&ESR's new policy of running shorter trains hauled by branch-line locomotives, in preference to Austerities and Mark Ones (a policy which I am sure most members would applaud), one of the said Austerities has been declared surplus to requirements. "Linda" (Hunslet 3781 of 1952) has been sold by its owner, K&ESR Chief Engineer Bob Forsythe, to the Mid Hants Railway (the Watercress Line). Still running on the K&ESR are "Northiam", "William H Austen" and of course "Holman F Stephens".

..... and "Minnie" leaves Shepherdswell

Down on the East Kent, "Minnie" (Fox Walker 0-6-0ST) has been sold and has moved to Essex. This is rather a pity as the original East Kent No 1 was a similar Fox Walker and they are rare beasts. Still on the EKR are an Avonside 0-6-0ST "St Dunstan" and a Barclay 0-4-0ST, together with a variety of diesels and two DMUs.

STOP PRESS

I've just heard that the Light Railway Order for the EKR has been signed. Great News!

Seats for Fords

Richard Jones suggests that those not satisfied with the seat representation in the Taurgem Model T Ford railbus kit could use PC Models etched garden seats for trams, which are complete with the flip-over bar for changing direction. They come in two widths, single and double, the double ones at 10 mm wide being the right ones to use. Richard got his from Tramalan of Blackpool, at £2.50 plus postage for a pack of 12, just right for the pair of Fords.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Further Light on "Lily"

I have just read "Branch Lines in Somerset" by Colin Maggs. In 158 pages it covers 20 branches, and contains 150 photographs ranging from the early days right up to 1986. Of particular interest to Society members is the section on the WC&PR, containing a brief history and 11 photos, some new to me, and including a photo of "Lily".

This photo of "Lily" shows her at Wick St Lawrence c1921, six years or so before the Colonel bought her. This intrigued me, so I wrote to Maggs to find out more. He put me in touch with Peter Strange who informed me that the photo came from the WC&PR negatives taken by E H Hazell (not the Auden Collection as credited by Maggs) and was taken between November 1920 and late 1921.

Thus she was known to the Colonel long before he bought her and was probably a regular trader at Wick. It suggests that "Lily", like "Edith", was under contract to

the WC&PR and that Colonel Stephens wanted to retain her services when the owners put her up for sale. A strange thing to do by an astute businessman running a wharf that only had a "coal vessel calling every few months" (Maggs).

I feel that the wharf was not the success that Stephens hoped for but paid its way, a criterion borne out by the capital outlay on a special loco and the changes made at the wharf, a wharf kept open for a vessel every few months.

The chapter in the same book on the "other line" to Clevedon (GWR, from Yatton) says that during the General Strike of 1926 the GWR came to an agreement with the WC&PR to run services on the GWR-Clevedon line with Railcar. No 1 and trailer. However the strike came to an end before this service came about. What an interesting "might have been"!

Doug Ware, Leyton

Last Days of the WC&PR

May I add a bit to the interesting notes on the last days of the WC&PR.

The Bristol Evening Post referred to the impending closure on the Friday before and stated "unless there is some late development". I am not sure exactly what was meant by this. It may have meant a National Emergency as Belgium and Holland were about to be overrun, and the fall of France and coal without an export market was only a month away.

On the Monday after closure the BEP stated the line might re-open after the War, under new management.

I vaguely recall some notes in the Railway Observer (RCTS Journal) that someone had seen one of the Terriers leave light from Clevedon towards Weston some weeks after closure. Probably too much to hope that any member retains a copy of the RO concerned, all these years after the event.

Hanging around railway lines was not an activity to be encouraged after the fall of France!

Jack Burrell, Bristol

Errors in Books

One of the most infuriating things about books and articles on the Colonel's lines is the presence of factual errors. I fortunately had the opportunity to proof read and add comments to the Middleton Press book "Branch Line to Shrewsbury - the S&M", and the end product is I hope an accurate account of the line. John Scott-Morgan's book "Railways of Arcadia" names the station in picture 129 as Shoot Hill, but in fact it's Llandrinio Road, and picture 132 is called Edgerley but is Crew Green. Even Tonks' book on the S&M contains some errors, and these are often repeated in more recent publications.

I suggest that the Society appoint a steward for each line, as was originally set up by Andrew Emery, each steward being a centre of knowledge for a particular line and responsible for issuing in "The Colonel" corrections to publications on their particular line. I'll volunteer for the S&M. How about it?

Jon Clarke, Chester

Selsey Tramway "Hesperus"

With reference to the article on Selsey Tramways "Hesperus" and the missing firebox detail ("The Colonel" No 33), I enclose a drawing of a Neilson "Coffee Pot" showing the cylindrical dome, safety valves and cover. On studying plate 94 in "Branch Line to Selsey", it looks very similar, minus the valve cover. I would have thought it would be a standard design for this type of loco from Neilsons. Build date of "Hesperus", 1871; build date of loco in this drawing, 1874.

David Butterfield, Ottershaw

(The drawing is reproduced on page 16. Thanks also to several other members who sent drawings of "Coffee Pots" - Ed.)

Modelling Topics

I was encouraged to see Stephen's article on building the K&ESR Royal saloon. Like him, I was uncertain about the profile of the sides and contacted the Tywitt-Drake carriage museum in Maidstone because of the obvious similarity to stage coaches. In the end I decided to draw the vehicle "flat" due to inadequacies in my drafting skills! I would agree with Stephen's sketches of the profile but can only guess at the dimensions involved. I have yet to see a copy of Weddell's book to see his treatment of the vehicle.

With regard to modelling, I got Trevor Charlton to make me a set of sides and ends from my drawing, and he expressed reservations over doing them as a flat etch. My intention (when I get round to making them up) is to make very fine cuts in the zinc etches below the waist line at the points where the profile changes, bend to an approximation of the profile, and then solder the gaps up. However I have some ten sets of Trevor's parts, in various stages of construction, plus two Jidenco LSWR Brake Thirds and the Peter K GER set to finish off, so your guess is as good as mine as to when this will get done. I have only 21 years to wait for retirement! *(Get on with them now, Richard. My experience, having taken "early retirement", is that for some unknown reason I have less modelling time now than I had before! - Ed.)*

With reference to the NLR Brake Vans, Peter K also does a kit for these and like the London Road Models one is not of the style owned by the K&ESR. Perhaps either (though preferably not both) manufacturer could be persuaded to do the right one!

Richard Jones, Heswall

H.M.S.T. "CHICHESTER"

Ron Mann continues his survey of Selsey stock with drawings and notes on the Hudswell Clarke

The first spark for this article and the resultant model locomotive can be blamed on our Editor (*I always get the blame - Ed.*) It was while I was at EXPO-EM South, quietly watching the trains run on his "Maidstone Road" layout and dreaming of youthful summer days long ago that Leslie leant over and asked if I had seen the new Hudswell Clarke loco kit on the Impetus stand nearby, and would it be suitable for conversion into the Hudswell Clarke that ran on the HMST. So off I went to talk to Robin Arkinstall at Impetus. It transpired that the 7mm kit was still in preparation and was of locomotive No 2 of the Easingwold Light Railway. After a long chat I came away with details of the kit including a print from a photograph.

At home and looking through my library I found that the second "Chichester", for that was the name of the Hudswell Clarke on the Selsey line, was built in 1903 as Works No 635 for Naylor Bros. of Huddersfield, who used it until 1919 when it was sold to the HMST. It was involved in the tragic accident near Golf Club Halt on 3rd September 1923, after which it was repaired and continued to be used until 1932.

Apart from the accident, when it was up to the footplate in mud and with the cab smashed, it was not a popular subject with photographers, but the few photos I found showed obvious differences between "Easingwold No 2" and "Chichester". These were buffer beams, cab and perhaps wheel size - this because I found a reference to 4 ft diameter wheels, but I am sure this dimension can be disregarded as it would make the buffers far too high.

The 3 ft 3 1/2 in wheel diameter of "Easingwold No 2" would give the proper height. The unusual profile of the front buffer beam is clearly shown on page 45 of "Selsey Tramways" and plate 59 of "Branch Line to Selsey"

Now to cab details. At first it seemed as if "Chichester" had a different cab formation whenever it was caught by a photographer, but it transpired that there were three different forms. I cannot be certain of the sequence, but suggest that the first was the simplest form having an open cab with only an up-and-over front weatherboard. Next, a rectangular box-like structure was built to incorporate the front weatherboard. As there is a photo of this cab in position a few months before the crash, perhaps it was demolished during that incident. Finally, the redundant roof and rear weatherboard from "Sidlesham" were fitted to the original front weatherboard. It "almost" fitted and this shows in some photos.

Cab references:

Open cab with front weatherboard

"Branch Line to Selsey" plates 60 & 61
"Selsey Tramway" (3rd Ed) pp 33 & 34
"Standard Gauge Light Railways" p 21
"Railways of Arcadia" p 28

With the "box"

"Selsey Tramway" p 5
"Branch Line" plate 59 - see Note 4

With front and rear weatherboard

"Selsey Tramway" p 45
"Branch Line to Selsey" plate 85
"Railways of Arcadia" p 32

I could not find a drawing or dimensions specifically for "Chichester", so the one I have produced is based on the assumption that Works No 635 would have been very similar to No 608 (Easingwold No 2) as both were built in 1903. I worked from the drawings of Easingwold No 2 by Don Townley in MRJ 32, and those by Iain Rice in MRJ 38, together with the photographs already referred to plus one from the Editor's collection (a side view taken 16.7.27) and one of H C No 325 "Worsley" for cab and rear end details. The main drawing shows the open cab, and the second one shows the front and rear weatherboard. The exact location of this rear weatherboard in relation to the coal bunker is difficult to determine. Leslie and I both think it was fixed to the front plate of the bunker as shown, but can anyone confirm this and perhaps supply a photograph of the rear end? I have not tried to depict the "box" cab.

Note 1

Photographs that show the front and rear weatherboards are the only ones where the cast name plate appears on the tank side. Prior to that, I can see no evidence of it carrying a name. Was it un-named until the plates were fitted? And was this the period when it was known as "Wembley"?

Note 2

There is a most interesting note on Mr Rice's drawing - "the spring of the rear axle is mounted transversely below the cab floor".

Note 3

In the drawing of the open cab I have shown the hand brake standard in the position indicated on the Easingwold drawings but this is suspect because in this location it would have needed a cut-out in the ex-"Sidlesham" back weatherboard to clear the handle. Also, both the handbrake and cut-out should be visible in the editor's photo, but even under a magnifying glass the area is unmarked. So where was the handbrake located?

Could it be that it was demolished in the Golf Club Halt crash and was never replaced!!!? (I don't think even the Selsey Tramway would have got away with no brakes at all - Ed.)

Note 4

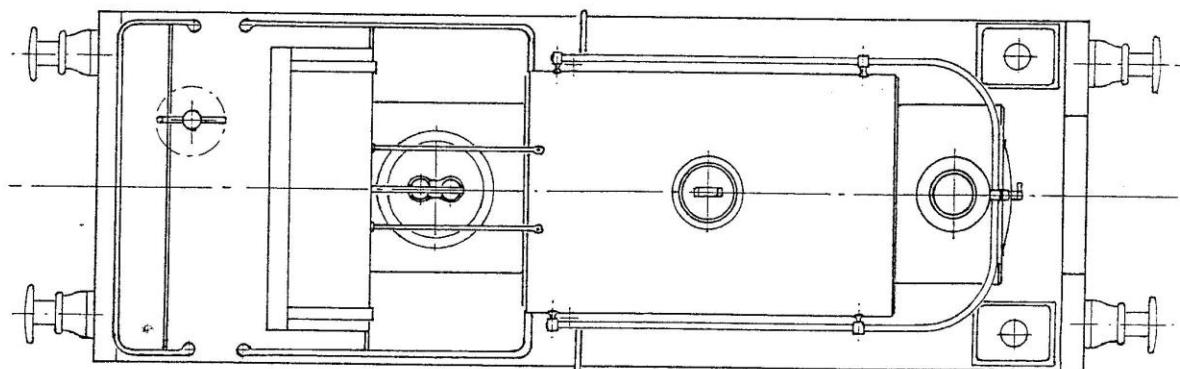
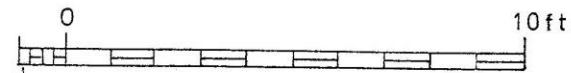
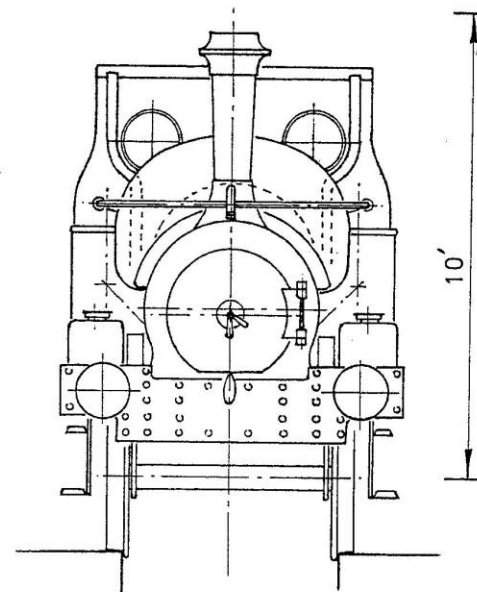
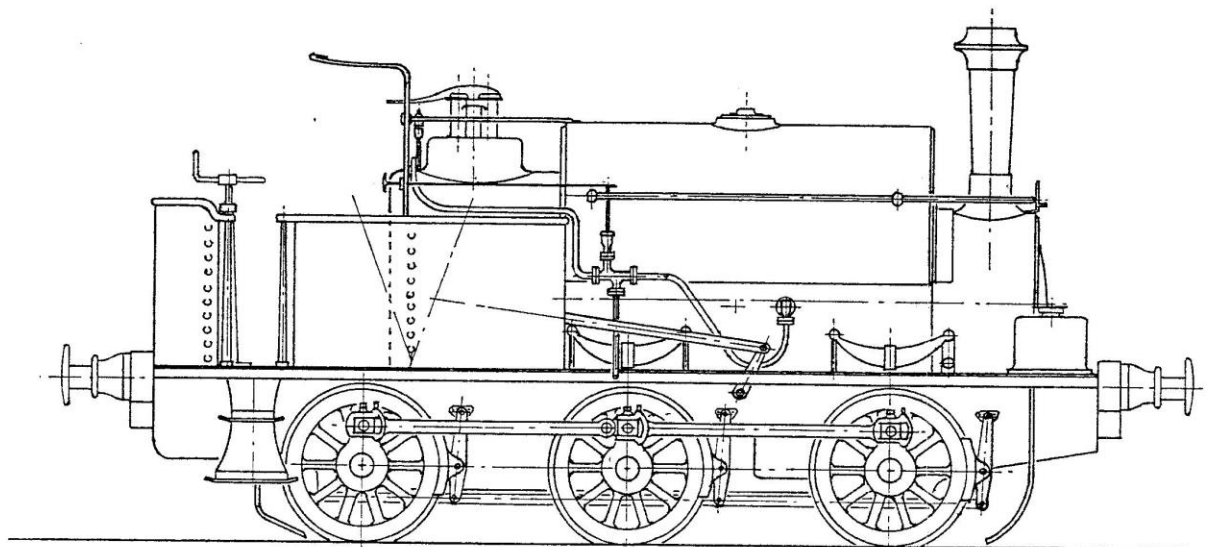
While looking at the photographs of "Chichester" with the "box" cab fitted, I was reminded of another photo of a peculiar timber structure, this time of "Sidlesham". This set me thinking, why? The answer to that is obviously for protection from bad weather. Then I realised we perhaps tend to view these railways of the past through the classic "rose tinted spectacles". We only see photographs taken during the summer months, forgetting that the railways functioned throughout the winter months as well as the balmy days of summer. Has anyone been bird watching at Pagham harbour in winter, when the wind and rain come straight up the Channel from the Atlantic? I can't remember the wildfowl, just being frozen through and my eyes watering all the time. Then think of working a locomotive bunker first from Chichester down to Selsey, and there is no need to wonder why the timber box cabs were added to the very sparse weatherboards!

Note 5

At some later date I will offer the Editor a second part of this article, which will be about putting words into actions and of my endeavours to build "Chichester" from the Impetus kit.

Note 6

While following up the various references to Hudswell Clarke products, I came across the much-travelled "Walton Park" which served on the WC&PR, the S&MR and the EKR. From the footplate upwards it looks identical to "Easingwold No 2", so to convert the Impetus kit into one of the Colonel's locomotives this might be an easier project, needing only cylinders, connecting rods etc and perhaps a new chimney. (That's a strong hint for someone else to write an article!)

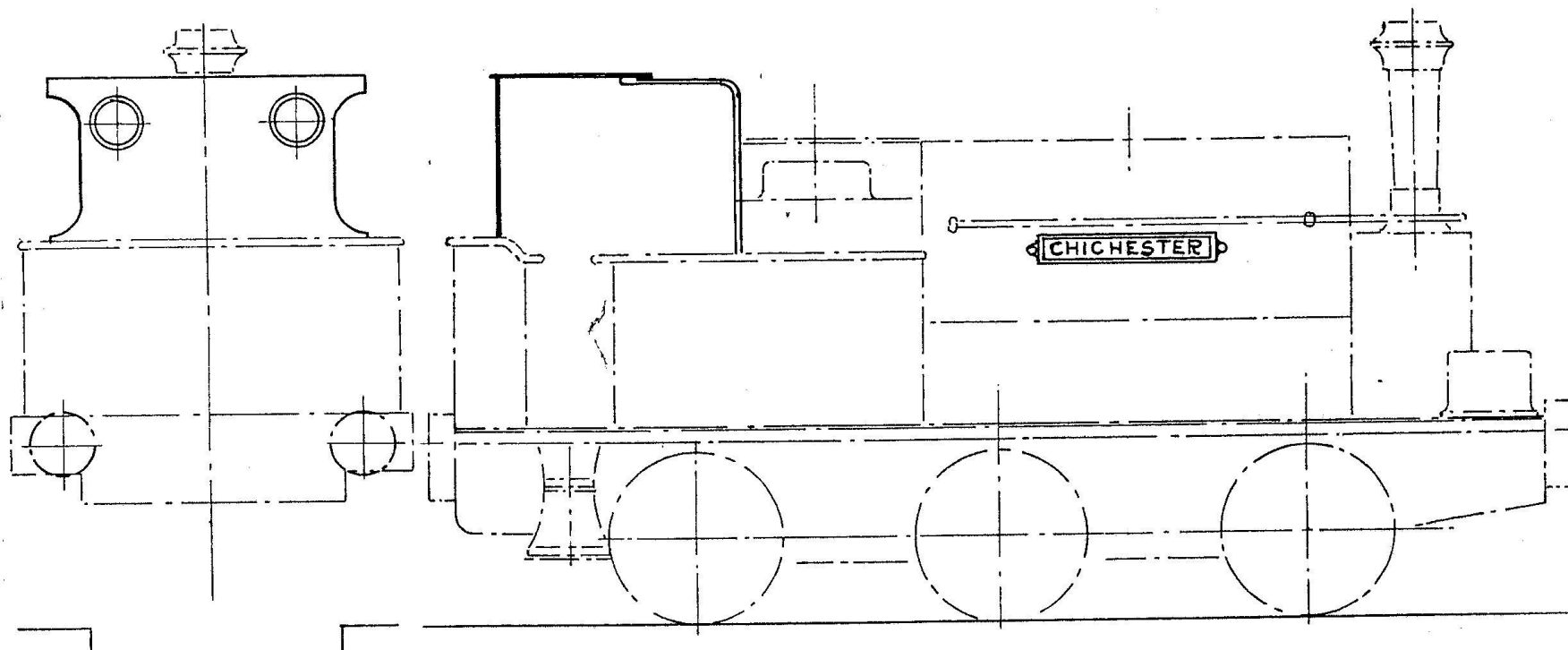


SELSEY TRAMWAY
'CHICHESTER'

HUDSWELL CLARKE 1903
SHOWING CONDITION
PRIOR TO SEPT 1923

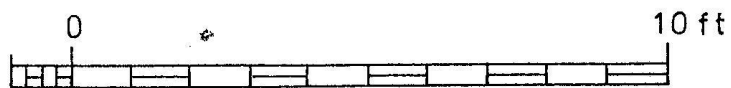
R MANN JULY 1932

SHEET 1



SELSEY TRAMWAY
'CHICHESTER'

SHOWING ALTERATIONS
AFTER SEPT 1923



34.

R MANN JULY 1992

SHEET 2

VISIT TO SNAILBEACH

The Editor reports on the Study Day on the Snailbeach District Railways held on 11th September.

I had never been to Snailbeach so when I heard from our member Mike Higgins about the Study Day organised by the Glyn Valley Tramway Group, I just had to go. I contacted our Chairman, Derek Smith, and he enthusiastically agreed to come as well. So, on a fine and sunny morning, 40 of us turned up at the Stiperstones Inn where we somehow squeezed into one of the rooms to hear the morning's lectures.

After a welcome by Bryan Heatley of the GVT Group, Peter Francis, a local historian, gave us a talk on the development of the lead mines in the area. Lead mining dated from Roman times, and at its peak in the 19th century the Snailbeach area was important on a national scale, producing 10% of the country's output. Of this, more than half came from the Snailbeach mine itself. Production fluctuated wildly according to the prevailing market price, and eventually cheaper sources overseas caused the collapse of the industry, lead mining ceasing in 1916. Some respite was gained for a time by going over to the extraction of barytes, a mineral used in the paint and paper industries and previously a waste product of lead mining, but this eventually died as well. Some quarrying for road stone continued well after all mining activity had ceased.

Graham Vincent, well-known for his Talylyn activities, then gave us an entertaining talk on the Snailbeach itself, which he had visited and photographed as a schoolboy around 1938. Colonel Stephens had taken over the line in 1923, and Grahams visit was of course after Stephens' death, but his influence was very apparent in the stock used and the methods of working.

We were shown a picture of a siding being temporarily connected to the "main line" by the simple expedient of slewing the main line track across and re-fishplating - this was done twice a day, three days a week at the time! We were shown a tank wagon, made from a road petrol tanker body insecurely tied to a wagon chassis; the tank had "Royal Daylight" on the sides, but "Esso" on the ends! The War Department Baldwin locos, notoriously rough riders, were described as "14 1/2 tons of cruelty to footplate crews". To give these footplate crews a little more sleeping time, the "loco of the day" was frequently parked for the night, not in the shed but under a road overbridge of even on the main line by the driver's cottage! All a fascinating insight into the line's working.

After lunch we were taken on a conducted tour around the remains of the railway and the mine workings. We saw the restored loco shed which still had original track leading to it, left when the line was lifted because that part of the site was owned by the mining company and not by the railway! Most of the rest of the trackbed was devoid of track but easily walkable. There were many remains of engine houses and other buildings relating to the mine, and these were being renovated to the extent that they were rendered safe and stabilised from further decay.

Our tour completed, we repaired for tea to the "Weighbridge Cafe" which, as its name implies, was the original SDR weighbridge office sited close to the Crownsnest terminus of the line.

So ended a very pleasant day for all of us. Hearty congratulations to the GVT Group!

THE COLONEL'S LINES IN FICTION

Martin Brent raids the shelves of the Public Library!

One of the problems of living in a village, even one inside that orbital monstrosity the M 25, is that inevitably one's interests become common property. Thus the village library (open three and a half days a week) - or rather its staff - knows of one's little foibles and are wont, at the drop of a hat (or library ticket) to produce the latest literary offering on canals, cars, naval history or 1930s politics for one's delectation, which is how I came to be the proud owner (for 14 days) of "The Station Master's Daughter" by Pamela Oldfield. An Edwardian village drama, it is built around "Gazedown Station" on the Rother Valley railway, between Rolvenden and Wittersham Street (sic).

At the opening of this story, the Tenterden extension had been mooted but during the period covered in the book a carrier ran a horse-drawn omnibus between Tenterden and Gazedown (pop. 407). At Gazedown was provided "a double track for the length of its two platforms, the "up" and the "down". On the "up" there was an entrance hall, a booking office which doubled as a parcels office, and a waiting room and toilets. Further along, on the same side and actually abutting the platform, was the stationmaster's house and beyond that a water tower, wind-pump and Bob Hart's signal box. A small shelter on the "down" platform was reached by a footway across the track, and further back a spur of track ran into a shed and this area served as a goods siding.

Reference is also made to a resident shunting horse and to locomotive cleaning. The train service seems more ambitious than that provided by the Colonel (who is not actually named) and no mention is made of changing trains at

Robertsbridge. [*The manned signal box and goods shed are rather "over the top" for the Colonel, too!* - Ed.] Specific references show some background research - blue locomotives with big wheels? No.1 "Tenterden" gets a one-line mention and the signalling system - the block system that is - is the subject of a layman's description. An interesting social commentary and, of course, anything on the Colonel's lines is always appreciated.

Reading the book set me thinking of other fictional works using the Colonel's railways, usually the Sussex lines, as a background. The first reference that springs to mine is a film. As each and every member knows, No.2 "Northiam" was borrowed by Gainsborough Films to star as "Gladstone" in the comedy "Oh, Mr Porter!" Is it also appreciated that No.3 "Bodiam" (labelled SE&CR) had a walk-on (or perhaps roll-on) part in "The Loves of Joanna Godden"? From memory, there were two scenes when No.3 ran into or through Lydd Station with a brace of SR coaches. Ealing Studios (successors to Gainsborough) wanted a complete K&ESR train but the Southern declined to let K&ESR 4-wheel coaches on its metals, probably on safety grounds.

One might be tempted to assume that Ealing had a soft spot for impetuous light railways. More probably, however, the K&ESR did not charge as much as the SR for the use of a locomotive, a driver (Webb) and a fireman (Hoad) for the filming which, I believe, took place in April 1947.

The author of "The Lives of Joanna Godden" was Sheila Kaye Smith who in "Ember Lane" also wrote about the "Sus-

sex Border Railway" which ran from Flat-tenden to the coast between Martingate and Winchelsea via Potcommon where was situated the principal station. The line, bearing in mind the fictitious names, appears to have roughly followed the course of the Rye extension - the East Sussex Railway.

Sheila Kaye Smith also mentions the K&ESR and "the Bumpers" in her "Guide to the Weald of Kent and East Sussex", as does F J Harvey Denton in his "A Parcel of Kent", wherein he paints an atmospheric picture of the line in the 1920s.

A more tenuous connection is in a book "The Wicked Village" by Donald McCormick. The story is set in a small village which is called Codiham and pronounced "Codgem". Shades of old Bodiam! *[For the uninitiated, I should explain that the "oldest inhabitants" pronounced Bodiam as "Bodgem". Alas, newcomers (and the railway) insist on pronouncing it "Bode-ee-am" - Ed.]* The sole reference of interest is to the closed branch line saving the village. Surely the K&ESR!

Somewhere in my collection - I have searched for it high and low - is a reference to a novel which mentions, I think, "The Manewood Line", based loosely on the K&ESR. Any information on this book would be gratefully received. Undoubtedly though, the K&ESR's best-known literary appearance was in Roland Emmett's poem "Farmer's Train", a beautiful evocation of a light railway at its bucolic best.

Having spent a few years working for the local authorities in Battle and Rye, I read some interesting old files on the lines and met some even more interesting characters, including Percy Shepherd of the Rye and Camber Tramway. Whilst in Rye I also met a couple of elderly "Ryers" who mentioned one Fred Benson. Later I discovered

that "Fred" was the late E F Benson, one-time Mayor of Rye and best known for his "Mapp and Lucia" novels.

Amazingly witty and oh, so enjoyable - his English, unlike mine, flows descriptively and is a pleasure to read - the books revolve around the minutiae of Tilling, in reality easily recognisable as Rye. In "Miss Mapp", probably my favourite of the series, Benson uses "the Tram" to transport Captain and Major Benly to their daily golf amidst the sand dunes. It was, of course, the Rye & Camber Tram and from the description still steam-powered. As an aside, both the Tram and the South Eastern Railway station feature largely in the duel over Miss Mapp's unmarked letter. How's that for something to whet your appetite for this novel, readily available in paperback!

These are the only references to the Colonel's railways that I have found; there may well be others. Is anyone out there aware of any that are worthy of mention? Something on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire perhaps, or the Snailbeach? L T C Rolt wrote a short story that chills your spine, on lead mines served by a steam-worked narrow-gauge railway - was it Snailbeach?

Editor's note: The book "The Manewood Line" referred to in Martin's article was by James Kenward, and was based not on the K&ESR but on the Hundred of Manhood and Selsey Tramway, the name "Manewood" being a slight adaptation of "Manhood".

Roland Emmett did not write the poem "Farmers' Train", but he did illustrate it, for "Punch" magazine, with fanciful (but clearly recognisable) caricatures of locomotives No.3 (Bodiam) and No.8 (Hesperus) hauling typical Stephens ramshackle stock. The poem was actually written by C Hugh Bevan and appeared in "Punch" on June 3rd 1946.

THE COLONEL'S BUSINESS

John Blackburn has provided the following extracts from contemporary publications, which shed a little light on the Colonel's commercial activities

1. FROM BRADSHAW'S RAILWAY MANUAL, SHAREHOLDERS' GUIDE AND DIRECTORY, 1905 EDITION

Kent & East Sussex Light (late Rother Valley)

DIRECTORS

Chairman - Sir Myles Fenton, Red Stone Hall, Redhill, Surrey

Hon A E Gathorne-Hardy, 77 Cadogan Sq., S.W.

C Arthur Head Esq., Hartburn Hall, Stockton-on-Tees

H W Tugwell Esq., Crowe Hall, Bath

H F Stephens Esq., A.M.I.C.E. (Managing Director and Engineer), Tonbridge, Kent

OFFICER - Secretary, F L Beard, 3 Lothbury, London E.C.

Incorporated as the Rother Valley (Light) Railway Company in 1896, and the line opened in March 1900. Authorised capital £294,000 including £44,000 loans. Capital issued £60,000 in £10 shares fully paid and £19,000 in 4% debenture stock. Debit balance to capital £23,893 partly provided for by issue of £12,000 Lloyds bonds. The accounts are made up half-yearly to 20th June and 31st December. For the period ending 31st July 1900 the dividend was at the rate of 2% per annum, for half year to 31st December 1900 2 1/2%; June 1901 1%; December 1901 2 1/2%; June 1902 1%; December 1902 3%; June 1903 1%; December 1903 3%.

The name was altered from Rother Valley to the above under an Order of the Light Railway Commissioners, 1904. Directors qualifications 25 shares. Transfer form, common; fee 2/6d.

2. FROM THE RAILWAY YEAR BOOK, 1919 EDITION

STEPHENS, Holman Fred

Manager and Engineer, Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway, Kent and East Sussex Railway, etc.

Mr Stephens has had an unusually eventful experience in connection with railway work. Son of the late Mr F G Stephens the well-known art critic of the "Athenaeum", he was born in 1869, and educated at University College School, also at Karlsruhe (Baden) and Vitre (et Villaine). A Pupil of Sir Alexander W B Kennedy at University College, London, he afterwards served in the locomotive and carriage shops of the Metropolitan Railway, Neasden and went through the running sheds, then becoming resident engineer of the Cranbrook and Paddock Wood Railway.

For some years he was an Acting Inspector under the "Notice of Accidents Act" for the Railway Department of the Board of Trade. As Engineer for a light railway syndicate he obtained powers for and laid out over 340 miles of light railway, the total estimates being nearly £2,000,000. He afterwards became Engineer and Managing Director of the Kent & East Sussex Railway; is Managing Director and Engineer of the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway; also Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent of the East Kent Railway - a line 25 miles in length connecting the new Kent coalfields with the South Eastern and Chatham Railway. He is likewise Director and Engineer of the Chichester and Selsey Railway; Manager and Engineer of the

Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway; Engineer of the Rye and Camber Tramway, and Engineer of the Sheppey Railway (since purchased by the South Eastern and Chatham Railway). He reconstructed the Burry Port and Gwendraeth Valley Railway as a passenger line and in conjunction with Messrs Galbraith and Church rebuilt the East Cornwall Railway for the Plymouth, Devonport and South Western Junction Railway, opened the same for passenger traffic, and organised as well as worked the line as Engineer and Manager for two years.

He is a member of the Middle Temple and a lieutenant-colonel in the Royal engineers.

Mr Stephens is a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

*Mr Blackburn comments:-*On checking the Shareholders' Guide for directorial cross-references, it emerges that Gatherer-Hardy was a member of the SE&CR Managing Committee and was Chairman of the Tenterden, the Crowhurst, Sidley and Bexhill, and the East London. The other two directors had no other railway directorships. It would be interesting if other members could throw light on any of the above. Who, for example, were the other members of the Light Railway Syndicate? Where had they obtained their working capital?

Lastly, the 1919 list of parties to the Railway Clearing House does not list any of the Colonel Stephens lines. Does anyone know what accounting and mutual payment arrangements were made between the relevant companies and lines managed by the Colonel?

BOOK REVIEW

THE COLONEL STEPHENS RAILWAYS IN KENT

by Peter Harding. Published by the Author at £2.25
ISBN 0 9509414 9 2

This little book by member Peter Harding starts with an excellent brief biography of the Colonel himself, and goes on to cover those of his railways that were wholly or partly in Kent, that is the Hawkhurst Branch, the Kent and East Sussex, the Sheppey and the East Kent. Each line is given a potted history from early plans to closure, including brief details of locomotives and rolling stock, and each line is well illustrated. There are over 40 photographs in the book's 32 pages, well chosen and several new to your reviewer.

The author has of course already produced separate books on the Hawkhurst Branch and on the Sheppey Light Railway, though not on the other two lines

covered here, and to cover four lines plus the Colonel's biography in 32 pages is perhaps asking rather a lot. Nevertheless, I think he has succeeded in producing a book which is a good introduction to the subject and which will serve perhaps to whet the appetite of the reader so that he or she can be tempted to delve more deeply - and maybe join this Society! I am sure the book will sell well at Tenterden and Shepherdswell, where the lay visitor will welcome the opportunity to learn a little about the background of the lines there, and every member of this Society should buy a copy - its worth the modest price for the illustrations alone!

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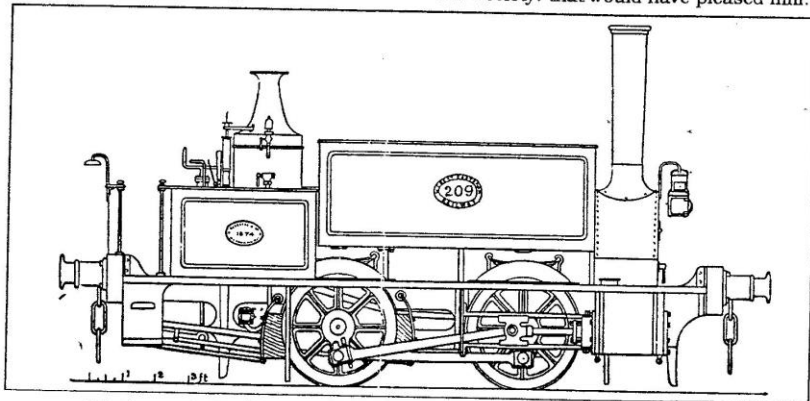
CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

At the last AGM, much thought was given to a proposed Light Railway Centenary Exhibition. Just how important was the Light Railway Act of 1896 to those involved at the time?

For the first time it was possible to promote, build and run lines at about half the former cost, and this meant that many small communities could at long last now look forward to having their own line. The Colonel was in the forefront of developments in this field, and saw the advantages of cheap lines in rural areas using lighter rail sections, second-hand locomotives and stock, minimal buildings and little or no signalling.

Although other engineers built Light Railways, the name of Colonel Stephens stands out above all others as the one who took full advantage of what the Act had to offer, and gave this country some of its best-remembered rural lines. It is my opinion that we in this Society ought to put on something special in 1996 to commemorate the passing of the Act.

Which leads me once again to ask our Members to spare a few thoughts on the morning of the 23rd October, the date of the Colonel's passing in 1931 at the age of 63 years. True, I think, to say "Gone, but not forgotten", as "his memory lives on in our Society: that would have pleased him.



Neilson "Coffee Pot" of the Great Eastern Railway

See "The Colonel" Issue 33 and page 5 of this Issue

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