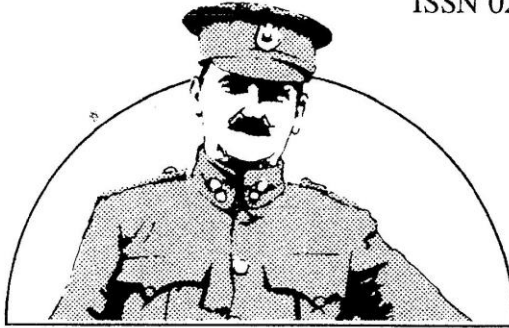


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# • THE COLONEL •

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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

### Subscription Matters

The treasurer tells me that quite a few members have not yet renewed their subscriptions. Reminders are included with this issue for those concerned, so please send your money off without delay. Don't forget. No subscription - no Colonel!

He also tells me that some people have been chasing him for membership cards. The rule is that unless a SAE is enclosed with the subscription, the cards will be put in with the next issue of "The Colonel" after payment is received.

### Plans for the Future

Our "shoestring" operating methods are clearly working rather well, as we have now accumulated funds of around £2000 despite freezing the subscription for several years. The question we must now ask ourselves is, how can we best use the money for the benefit of our members?

Perhaps members could give some thought to the matter and write in with their ideas so that they can be put into the next issue and discussed at the AGM next April.

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

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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

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## K&ESR Norwegian loco back in steam

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The K&ESR's Norwegian 2-6-0 tender locomotive, which has for some time been under major repair, was steamed in public on October 15th for the first time for seventeen years. A few jobs remain to be completed, but it is hoped to have it in service for the start of the 1995 season.

Although not of course a Stephens engine, this 75-year-old does have considerable character and to my thinking is rather reminiscent of an "Ilfracombe Goods". It will look splendid at the head of the Victorian train set.

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## Volunteers Required for Brighton!

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Member Dave Sutton is involved in the organization of the model exhibition at Brighton on 17th/18th/19th February 1995. Dave has arranged for us to have a stand as we did last year, so volunteers will be required to keep an eye on things.

Last time a few models were brought along to add to the display, so a manned stand was essential for security.

Our efforts resulted in several new members being attracted to the Society.

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## Photographs of The Colonel

Ivor Gotheridge has been beavering away trying to find photographs of the Colonel on all of his lines. He has had quite a bit of success for some of the lines, but does anyone know of any pictures of him on the Selsey, Snailbeach, Rye & Camber, Welsh Highland or WC&P? He has found some

"possible sightings" such as at Portmadoc New in 1923 and even on the Brill Tramway in the late 1880s (not a Stephens line of course, but he was a trainee on the Metropolitan). These pictures show a tall man of military bearing with moustache and bowler hat that just *might* be him.

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## Mr R G Jarvis

It is with great sadness that we must report the death at the age of 82 of Ronald Jarvis, who took many of the superb photographs recently offered to members of this Society, the others being taken by his brother Jim.

Ronald had a distinguished railway career, starting with an apprenticeship at Derby. He was in charge of the Southern Region drawing offices at the time of the design of the BR Standard Class 4 4-6-0 & 2-6-4T and Class 9 2-10-0, plus the Bo Bo electric locos and the electro-diesels. He was personally involved in the re-design of the Bullied Pacifics into

what were arguably the best main-line steam locos BR ever possessed.

His final BR years were back at Derby where he was in charge of the design of the mechanical parts of the prototype HST power cars, whose successors so improved services on many main lines.

In the 1930s, Ron and his friend John Adams established a rapport with Mr Austen at Tonbridge, so enabling them to obtain so many good photographs.

Our sincere condolences to his widow and to Jim on their great loss.

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# THE COLONEL'S CROSSING LOOPS

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Chris Jackson continues his Timetable Study

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## 2. The Selsey Tramway

The Selsey Tramway began and ended its life as a single block section. Staff and ticket working enabled more than one train to follow each other, although neither Selsey nor Chichester had much space to handle a second train. Short journey times meant one train could provide a reasonable service - in fact, this would be more balanced if the train could leave when it had run round, rather than having to wait for a second train to arrive. I doubt that extra trains were run except for occasional busy afternoons in the early years.

A passing loop was added at Sidlesham during the post-flood reconstruction in 1910. This allowed the operation of a proper two-train service on sunny summer afternoons during the line's heyday. The summer 1913 timetable quoted by David Bathurst required a second train starting from Selsey at 12.10 each day; crossings were scheduled at Sidlesham at 12.30, 1.25, 2.40, 3.40, 4.40, 5.40, 7.00 and 7.55 before the additional set finished at Selsey at 8.05.

Such intensive services would almost certainly have been curtailed by the outbreak of the First World War, and I have not found any timetable evidence of trains crossing at Sidlesham after that time. Even the advent of railcars in the 1920s did not bring a vastly increased service; the changeover between steam-hauled mixed and railcar took place at Selsey between trips.

Towards the end, the HMST produced a curiosity in its Summer 1934 timetable. Morning departures from Chichester are

shown at 11.05 and 11.40, of which one is clearly the return working of the 10.00 from Selsey. I imagine that the other is a mixed train that must have come up as an un-advertised goods before or after the 10.00.

## 3. Weston, Clevedon & Portishead

The Weston, Clevedon & Portishead ran a comparatively intensive service, reflecting the size of the three towns it connected. The original line, between Weston and Clevedon was split with a loop at Wick St Lawrence, but this is said to have fallen out of use around the time of the first world war. Clevedon - Portishead was always a single section, and from the time that the extension opened in 1907 most timetabled crossings were arranged at Clevedon, even though the inconvenient layout and single platform meant one train backing out each time and running forward into the loop to clear the line for the second.

Colin Maggs' book says the earliest W&C timetable, December 1897, scheduled five round trips with an extra evening working on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Two additional trains were added in April for the summer, but it was not until June that the first timetabled use of Wick loop is recorded. According to Maggs "the 45 minute frequency in the afternoon required the use of two trains and the passing loop at Wick St Lawrence". He gives no detailed times, but any crossings must have taken place after the second crew started at 1.45 and before the first booked off at 7.30. For the August Bank Holiday of 1898, a special timetable of 16 trains was run, probably requiring the loop all day.

During the winter of 1898, services reverted to the single train pattern; the timetable for November 1898 shows one diagram starting from Clevedon at 8.15 and working six round trips to Weston, with an extra on Saturday evening. The Sunday service was just three round trips starting at 2.15.

The pattern of service for 1899 to 1902 was probably similar, although Maggs notes that in 1900 "extra services were run for any special event, and also on Bank Holidays, the latter stretching the line's resources to the full, three trains being run". An innovation in 1902 was "non-stop" services, although in the May/June timetable only one diagram is needed to cover eight day-time and one Saturday evening round trips with no crossings en route.

Opening of the extension to Portishead in September 1907 brought a regular requirement for at least two train-sets, and some much more complex diagramming. Train 1 left Clevedon at 8.05 for Weston, and train 2 started for Portishead at 8.20; they passed again at Clevedon at 9.30/9.35 before running through to the opposite termini. From then on, the pattern standardised with regular crossings at Wick and alternate services running through to Portishead. Train 1's 10.05 Portishead - Weston met Train 2 on the 10.30 Weston - Clevedon at Wick at 10.44. After a quick turn-round each end, the two met again at Wick at 11.23, after which Train 1 went on through to Portishead. Train 2 did another Weston - Clevedon short and back before setting off on the 1.00 Weston - Portishead, which passed the 12.20 Portishead - Weston at Wick around 1.11.

In the afternoon, things became more complicated. After crossing at Wick at 1.11, Train 1 did another Weston - Clevedon shuttle before meeting Train 2 again

at Wick at 3.03. This time, when train 1 reached Weston at 3.20, a third train set off for Weston, meeting Train 2 at Wick at 3.40 - three crossings in the space of just over 35 minutes! Train 2 laid over at Clevedon between 4.00 and 5.30, whilst trains 1 and 3 worked two through services which passed at Clevedon at 4.40 (now it's three trains in one loop!). While Train 3 was at Portishead, Train 2 set off from Clevedon passing Train 1 at Wick before the latter tied up for the night at 6.00. Train 2 returned from Weston with the 6.15 to Portishead, passing Train 3 on the 5.30 Portishead - Weston at Wick at 6.28. Train 3 then did a short round trip, and the two passed again at Wick at 8.22 with the 8.07 Weston - Portishead and 7.30 Portishead - Weston. Train 2 finally reached Clevedon from Weston at 9.35, with Train 3 pulling in from Portishead at 10.07.

Maggs says the winter timetable for 1907-8 reduced to eight trains on the southern section and six on the northern, with two loco diagrams overlapping between 3.30 and 4.00. Locomotives were probably changed at Clevedon, with no crossings as such, or possibly one at Clevedon or Wick.

At the time the Colonel took over, in 1911, a lack of profitability was seeing a steady reduction in services. The timetable was pruned back until November 1915 when there were only four trains a day to Weston and just three to Portishead - probably only one loco in steam. Wick St Lawrence is reported to have closed in 1914; clearly there was no point in maintaining a second passing place when even that at Clevedon was under-used.

Introduction of the small railcar in 1922 saw a sharp increase again in services on the Weston - Clevedon section, to eight or eleven a day. The use of mixed trains on the Clevedon - Portishead run required steam locos, which presumably worked

through to Weston as well; unfortunately neither Maggs' nor Peter Strange's book includes any timetables for the period between, 1907 and the 1930s.

Probably typical of the later years is the timetable for July 1933, which sees two trains dispatched from Clevedon at 7.00 for Portishead and 8.10 for Weston. The two diagrams shuttle back and forth throughout the full length of the line, with waits of up to 30 minutes at Clevedon to cross the other set. Crossings are timetabled at 9.35, 11.00/05, 12.20, 1.28/2.15/2.43, 3.35/55 and 5.05/15, with one set finishing at 6.10. The other does another round trip or two before finishing at 9.39 (MTuF) or 10.56 (WThS). At this time the Sunday service comprised just a single early morning trip from Weston to Clevedon and back.

The last published timetable I have seen is a special for the Bank Holiday Monday of

May 29 1939, which is very similar to the July 1933 pattern. Two sets are used between 8.30 and 4.40, with one in the evening. All trains run through, except the 4.10 from Weston which finishes at Clevedon, and crossings are booked at Clevedon for 9.35/40, 10.55, 12.05/10, 2.30, 3.35/45 and 4.40/5.00.

*Editor's Notes. The July 1938 timetable shows a much improved Sunday service compared with 1933, with five trains each way on the Clevedon - Weston section and three each way to Portishead. With lay-overs at Clevedon from 12.00 to 1.00 and again from 3.25 to 6.00, the service only required one locomotive diagram but there were probably two sets of crew.*

*Chris has now covered three of the Colonel's lines. Could any knowledgeable members contribute similar studies of his other lines?*

**B KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY.**

No. **0254**

**Train Staff Ticket between  
NORTHIAM AND BODIAM.**

TRAIN No. ....

To the ENGINE DRIVER,

*You are authorised after seeing the Train Staff for the Section to proceed from Northiam to Bodiam, and the Train Staff will follow.*

Signature of person in charge.....

.....Station.

.....191

(See instructions at back hereof).

WRITING, PRINTED, ROBERTSON & CO.

A typical ticket for Staff-and-Ticket working, this one from the K&ESR

# 99TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RYE & CAMBER TRAMWAY

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## Laurie Cooksley has a One Man Celebration!

---

Thunder, lightning and torrential rain greeted Wednesday, 13th July, unlike the same date (a Saturday) 99 years ago when the Rye and Camber Tramway was opened to the public in bright, hot sunshine. By mid-day today, at least it was dry, and as I neared Rye Tram Station on my trusty 30-year-old Moulton bicycle, I was greeted by a solitary man walking his dog across the Camber fields, completely oblivious of the importance of the occasion.

With a few minutes to spare, I stood on Monk Bretton Bridge to imagine how it must have been almost a century before with the brand-new station set out before me and the crowds of people thronging the short platform waiting either for a trip to Camber, or just interested in witnessing the start of the new undertaking. As two o'clock approached, I walked down the steep approach road and waited on the site of the short platform alongside which the brand new train would have been waiting.

On the hour, just as CAMBER and her solitary carriage had done all those years before, I set off on my bicycle along the footpath that paralleled the Tramway towards the southern terminus, only just visible in the murky mist 1 1/2 miles away. As I passed the same man returning with his dog he shouted "That was a short trip!", but I did not have time to explain. And no, I did not make chuffing noises as I rode across the fields, but looking all around me I tried to capture some of the excitement those passengers must have felt on that first trip.

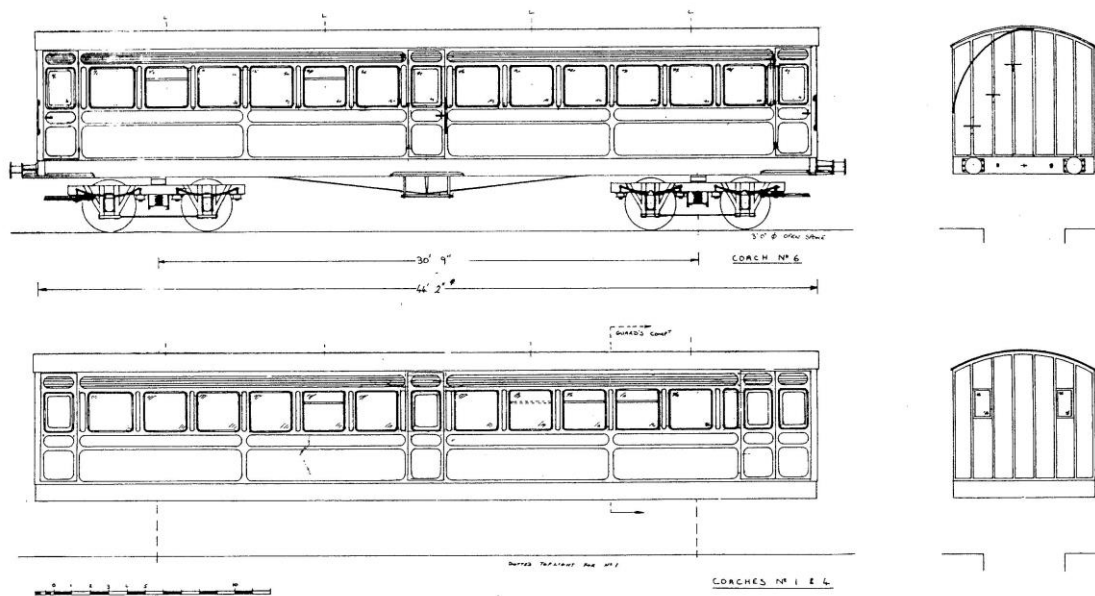
Unlike the tram, I had to negotiate two awkward gates close to the Broadwater Stream bridge, and then make a detour along the twisting Camber road around the large lake (formed by excavating for shingle) that obliterates the course of the line across Northpoint Beach.

Re-joining the Tramway's formation close to the long-since demolished "Squatter's Right", I hurried along the last, long, straight embankment beside the River Rother, but although I was travelling at what I considered a reasonable speed, my arrival at Camber Station\* was one full minute later than the inaugural train at 2.09 pm.

The privileged guests on that first, and the following, tram took a brief walk across the Golf Course past the Club House to partake in a celebratory luncheon at the Royal William Hotel that had opened on the last day of October the previous year - but not me! Instead, I was to cycle home to Camber to prepare a Shepherd's Pie for our evening meal at 6.00 pm!

Next year I am hoping there will be more than one person to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the Rye and Camber Tramway.

\* Camber Station was re-named Golf Links in June 1908, prior to the half-mile extension to Camber Sands opening on the Tramway's 13th birthday, 86 years ago today.



### K&ESR Bogie Re-builds of RVR 4-Wheel Coaches

As mentioned in the last issue of "The Colonel", the six original 4-wheel coaches built by Hurst, Nelson & Co. for the opening of the Rother Valley Railway in 1900 were rebuilt by R Y Pickering & Co. in 1904 as three bogie coaches, and these rebuilds are the subject of this issue's drawing.

The body sections were spliced together, and one would have expected the resulting assemblies to have been placed on standard Pickering steel underframes as used for the almost contemporary new build vehicles they made for the K&ESR. However, in this case timber underframes were used, and the bogies appear from photo-

### Drawing by Richard Jones, notes by Leslie Darbyshire

graphs to have been made using the original Hurst, Nelson W-irons and axle-boxes. Indeed, it looks suspiciously as though the bogie frames are also timber, though I could not swear to that! Certainly the original headstocks, complete with buffers and side-chains, were re-used - a cheap job for sure!

The original livery was described as "Kentish Brown and Ivory", but they were later painted in a dull grey. They do not seem to have been much used after the first world war, and spent much of their lives in the sidings at Tenterden and Rolvenden. They were finally broken up in the early thirties.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## The Weston Point Light Railway

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When I visited the Weston Point Light Railway on 9th September 1994, it appeared to be abandoned up to just north of the Sandy Lane crossing where one length of track had been partially removed. Immediately to the north of this, a baulk of timber had been secured across the line. Beyond this point B.R. were carrying out limited activity with an assortment of I.C.I. wagons. This appears

to have been the state of affairs for some time.

At Cheshyre's Lane crossing, which has obviously been out of use for some time, the old enamel WPLR sign (illustrated in Scott-Morgan) is now missing, probably due to a recent re-fencing of the area.

*Michael Darby, Platt Bridge*

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## Some notes on the WC&PR - and a Confession!

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Extreme pressure of work for the past few years, followed by a period of illness, led me - let me be honest - to overlook renewal of my subscription. This has now been put to rights and consequently I have read the last three years' "Colonels" at one sitting: an experience which concentrates the mind wonderfully. They contain several references to the WC&PR which I should have dealt with at the time, so I am writing a few notes now.

First, a small point regarding Tom Burnham's letter in Issue 28. There was never any question of WP&CR No.3 "Weston" being transferred from the BP&GVR. What happened was that the latter line found its engine "Cwm Mawr" to be inadequate for the job and ordered a new and more powerful locomotive from Avonside of Bristol. This was also given the name "Cwm Mawr", while the old engine of that name was traded in part-exchange. Subsequently the WC&PR, ever impecunious, approached Avonside looking for a bargain (or possibly the approach came from Avonside to the cash-strapped railway) and after substantial alterations, including extension of the water tanks over the smokebox and around the funnel, was

sold this machine in 1906. As Tom states, this all happened some five years before Col. Stephens became associated with the WC&PR.

The same issue reprinted a letter from Col. Stephens written at the Grand Atlantic Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare, followed by a comment from Doug Ware in the following issue on the expense of such a visit, to which the Editor has appended the headline "One Law for the Rich...". It is interesting to note that after Stephens' death his successor, W H Austen, used the much humbler bed-and breakfast accommodation above Parker's bakery, just a stone's throw from Clevedon Station. As he was not above paying surprise visits, the railway employees took to keeping an eye on the upper windows: a light on during the evening could mean that a room was being prepared, and that might presage a visit from the General Manager!

In No.34 Jack Burrell refers to the last days of the WC&PR, concluding with a reference to "some notes in the Railway Observer that someone had seen one of the Terriers leave light towards Weston

some weeks after closure". I do not have copies of the RO, but I do have "Trains Illustrated" for August 1956, which contains an account by John Bourne of several days' activities by a Terrier after closure. It makes most entertaining reading and would be good to reprint if

copyright permits. If not, I can supply Jack with a photocopy.

*Christopher Redwood, Nottingham*

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## The K&ESR in Fiction

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As your furthest away member, I should think, I am writing to add to the excerpts from the novels by Sheila Kaye-Smith by some from another author, Pamela Oldfield, who wrote "The Stationmaster's Daughter", a romantic novel that my wife got out of the Nelson (New Zealand) public library.

I now quote from the book and hope it will be of interest to you and the members.

Firstly, the Author's Note. "In 1900 the Rother Valley Light Railway ran from Tenterden Station which was then two miles outside the town of Tenterden. When later a new station was built in Tenterden the original station was renamed Rolvenden. The line is now the Kent and East Sussex Railway."

Now for some extracts from pages 67 and 68. The characters speaking are two boys who had been playing around the station fictionally named "Gazedown", situated between Rolvenden and Wittersham Street (sic).

"The closing of the crossing gates alerted them to the approach of the "stopper" from Cannon Street. Sam (*the Stationmaster's son*) craned his neck to look at the locomotive, resplendent in its deep blue livery, dome and chimney-cap gleaming in the sun. It was a small but sturdy tank engine, one of the only two owned by the newly-opened line. Her nameplate - "Tenterden" - ran along the side of the tank. The carriages of polished teak gleamed dully and a face peered out from the first class window. "It's "Tenterden", said Sam.

Eric could only bow to his friend's superior knowledge, and Sam made the most of the chance. "It's a 2-4-0T", he said, "and she's got automatic vacuum brakes. Came from Hawthorn Leslie. Her and "Northiam". Good firm, Hawthorn Leslie. They make beautiful locomotives". He had heard his father say this. "Pa says we shall need a third engine before long", said Sam. "We're getting so busy. Maybe next year. Amy (*his sister*) says we should call her "Victoria" after the Queen, but Pa says it's always the name of a station on the line. That's the way Colonel Stephens wants it, so that's how it will be".

"Colonel Stephens? Who's he?"

Sam looked at him with incredulity.

"Don't know who Colonel Stephens is!"

"So what?", said Eric.

Sam said, "He's the man who sort of owns the railway, that's who."

This is as far as my wife has got. but scanning through the book quickly there seems to be a lot more in the same vein. Without being sexist I consider it more of a woman's book, but as I said before it might be of interest.

*Victor Stafford, Nelson, New Zealand*

*Editor's Note. The author must have done a bit of research to get the locomotive and stock details right - but there were never through "stoppers" from Cannon Street, and Colonel Stephens certainly wasn't a Colonel at the time when the novel is set - 1900!*

## 1938 JOTTINGS

### Martin Brent resumes his trawl of old copies of the "Railway Observer"

A visit to the Snailbeach District Railways on 10th January 1938 revealed only two Baldwin 4-6-0Ts (Nos. 44383 and 44522 of 1916) and the Kerr Stuart 0-4-0T (No. 802 of 1902) remaining. One Baldwin was shunting at the mines whilst the other one was lying dead at the shed, the 0-4-2T being in the shed on jacks. Only the wheels remained of 0-6-0T "Dennis" (Bag-nall 1797 of 1910).

About the same time it was noted that the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire had a complement of six engines: three LNWR Coal Engines, "Hesperus" (Ilfracombe Goods), "Daphne" (Terrier) and of course 0-4-2WT "Gazelle". No. 8108 was under repair. 8182 was out working to Shrewsbury and the rest were in or about Kinnerley shed.

There was at this time only one daily train, the 7.30 am from Kinnerley taking goods from Criggion to Shrewsbury followed by shunting the yards and a return to Kinnerley at 1 pm. The engines used were 8108, 8182 and 8236, each working a week in its turn. "Hesperus" had only one turn a week, on Monday, whilst "Gazelle" was only used for inspection trains and by the Managing Director. "Thisbe", another Ilfracombe Goods, had been broken up.

Later, in the Spring, four locomotives were found at Kinnerley shed, the three Coal Engines and "Hesperus". A Ford railcar was standing outside and did not appear to have been used for some time. "Gazelle" was nowhere to be seen. Carriages were still standing in the branch

sidings with others, including the Royal saloon, in the bay platform.

This somewhat vague report was amplified in the July issue when it was explained that "Gazelle" and her carriage were safely housed in the southernmost shed down the Criggion branch. This was filled with bags of basic slag in the winter, as a result of which "Gazelle" was in the open until spring.

The next shed contained the tender of 8108 and "Daphne" (minus brake pipes), whilst the tanks of scrapped Terrier "Dido" were on either side of the siding outside. No. 8108 was not likely to be in service for some time due to heavy over-haul (the wheels had been sent to Crewe for re-turning).

No. 3 "Hesperus" (described as "a grand old engine") was knocking up a mileage of 50 miles a week on her Monday turn. About this time the chimney and smoke-box were newly painted. Her last duty each Monday was to shunt 8182 and 8236 so as to have one ready for the next day's work. This could involve some complicated manoeuvring. A sample Monday trip for "Hesperus" was 250 tons of stone to Shrewsbury with 24 empties on the return journey.

On 23rd May there was no early morning freight but previously, on 11th April, she had worked an extra trip with the empties to Criggion at 1.10 pm, returning at 2.50 with loaded wagons. This extra trip meant that the following morning freight would not run. As an aside, it confirms that

these locomotives did work the Criggion branch, something that was in doubt at one time.

An oblique reference to "Gazelle" inferred that in 1937 she had been hired by a private "camping party" and suggested that the same hiring would take place in 1938. A Directors party had inspected the line using "Gazelle" and her trailer earlier in the year.

The Festiniog, that bete noir of the Colonel, was host to Talylyn Railway No.2, Dolgoch, then apparently named "Pretoria", which was under repair at Boston Lodge Works. Three Festiniog steam locomotives and two petrol locomotives were in use at this time. No.1 "The Princess", No.3 "Taliesin" and No.10 "Merddin Emrys" (the latter two being double Fairlies) and the Simplex No.101 were mentioned, the other petrol engine not being described. Also in the shed but out of service were "Palmerston", "Welsh Pony", an American petrol locomotive and the ex-Welsh Highland Railway "Moel Tryfan", said to be awaiting repair for use on the Festiniog Railway.

In August 1938, R K Cope re-visited Kinnerley. No 8108 was still under repair but the tender had been re-painted dark green (the same as "Gazelle"), and was, it was anticipated, going to receive the number "2". At this time, only "Gazelle" and "Hesperus" were working with their chimneys facing towards Criggion. All other locomotives faced Shrewsbury since up trains (to Shrewsbury) faced the heaviest gradients.

On the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead, the summer service was run by two locomotives each weekday, one being relieved by the other at mid-day. At that time the two Terriers, No.2 "Portishead" and No.4 (un-named) were working a week at a time on each turn. Trains usually comprised three 4-wheelers with goods wagons attached to the rear as required. If traffic warranted it, one of the tramcar type coaches was added to the train. Locomotives No.1 "Clevedon", 3 "Weston" and 5 had been out of use for some time although No.1 was kept in running order for emergencies.

*To be continued*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**HOLDING THE LINE** by Nick Pallant. Published by Alan Sutton at £14.99.  
ISBN 0-7509-0548-4

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This book's sub-title, "Preserving the Kent and East Sussex Railway", gives some clue to the content; in fact, it is a very detailed account of the history both of the line itself and of the preservation activity attempting, and eventually succeeding, to save it, over the period from closure to passengers in 1954 to the first stage of re-opening in 1974.

The author, Nick Pallant, was closely involved with the preservation movement from the early days, so the book is authoritative and very comprehensive in its coverage. The "David and Goliath" battles with the bureaucrats of British Railways and the Ministry of Transport are well described, as is the political in-fighting between those who did the hard work (the volunteers) and those who put up the money (who thought that thereby they

should call the tune) - a situation not unknown to other preservation organisations. Your reviewer, despite having what he thought was a sound knowledge of the subject, found much that was new to him and indeed was so enthralled by the book that he could scarcely put it down until he had read it from cover to cover!

The book has 204 pages of text and contains a useful selection of photographs, many not previously published. It is produced in hardback form to the usual high standard of this publisher.

This is very much a railway book with a difference, and is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in either the K&ESR or the development of the preservation movement.

*LD*

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**BRITAIN'S LIGHT RAILWAYS** by Martin Smith. Published by Ian Allan at £19.99.  
ISBN 0-7110-2223-2

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This book attempts to cover all the Light Railways of Great Britain, from the Amesbury & Military Camp to the Wroughton Vale, the only lines specifically excluded being miniature railways (e.g. the RH&DR), electric tramways (e.g. the Kinver Light Railway) and the recent flush of preserved lines operating under Light Railway Orders. This extensive coverage inevitably means that individual lines do not get a lot of space. Most of the Colonel Stephens lines are included, though not the Selsey Tramway (which was not legally a Light Railway despite appearances), the Snailbeach (also never a Light Railway) or

the Weston Point (which was, but is missed out).

When looking at any new book on the Colonel's activities, the first thing your reviewer does is to see if the author has got his name right. If that is wrong, then it is likely that other things will be wrong as well, for it means that errors have been perpetuated from earlier sources. In this case, the name is wrong and, yes, there are many errors in the text that could have been readily eliminated by a little research. The list of acknowledgements includes a number of experts on some

lines, so no doubt those sections are reasonably error-free. However, to my best knowledge no one from this Society was approached, hence the sections on the Colonel's lines are liberally strewn with errors. To the non-specialist reader, most of the errors would be probably considered small and may not detract from the general usefulness of the book as a comprehensive and well-illustrated index to Light Railways, but to anyone with a more detailed interest they do reduce the value of the book considerably.

The book, a hardback, is well produced but is slightly smaller than "Holding the Line", and is substantially more expensive. In view of the comments above, I cannot in all honesty recommend it to members in its present form. This is a pity, as with a bit of extra effort it could have been a useful reference volume. A second edition with corrections is awaited with anticipation!

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## THE WORCESTER & BROOM (LIGHT) RAILWAY - PART 1

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Stephen Branchett introduces one of the Colonel's "Might-have-beens"

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Broom in Warwickshire was the junction between the Stratford-upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway and points further east, and the Midland Railway loop line from Barnt Green to Ashchurch. Both of these railways were later to become part of the LMSR, only to be finally closed by British Railways in the 1960s. However, Broom might well have become a much more important junction if another abortive scheme had come to fruition.

On 14th August 1885, an Act of Parliament for the 14-mile long Worcester and Broom Railway was passed. It is not definitely known who sponsored it, but that hopeful band the proprietors of and other persons interested in the East and West Junction Railway were probably concerned. [*The E&WJR became part of the SMJR - Ed.*] Financial difficulties, however, speedily stopped its construction and the project was formally abandoned by another Act of Parliament in 1894.

In November 1923, the Worcester and Broom Railway project was revived by Colonel Stephens, who put up a new company called the Worcester & Broom (Light) Railway Co. However, despite his determined efforts, culminating in a Public Enquiry at Worcester on 21st March 1924, the project lapsed early in 1926 when it was removed from the list of applications before the Minister of Transport. No reason has been found for the removal, but it is easy to speculate why.

As is usual in projects that came to nothing, there is very little mention of the proposed light railway in any railway books or magazines. However, Hereford and Worcester County Records Office in Worcester holds a lot of details of both railways between Worcester and Broom, though I shall limit myself to the light railway.

*To be continued*

# CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

## Ice Closes S&M!

The other day I was having a chat with Mr Les Jones, whose father had a wood yard at Crew Green and whose grandfather was Mr John Turner, the S&M Traffic Agent who looked after the camping huts and river boats. Les can recall visits to the wood yard by Billy Austen to order timber and pay bills, and of helping to clean out the camping huts in the summer time. Apparently some folk did not want to pay up or to leave when their time was up.

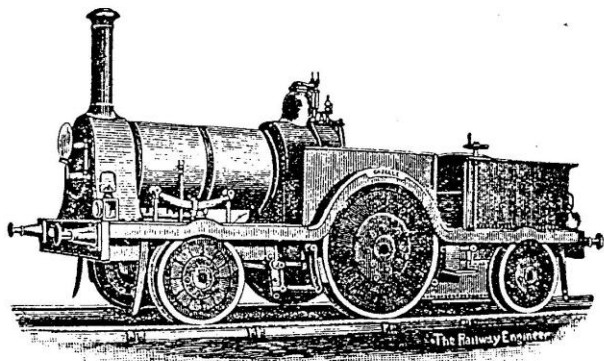
Les can also remember the severe winter of 1939/40 when the river Severn froze solid to a depth of 18 inches. It was in the early morning of 27th January 1940 when a loud cracking sound was heard. When it got light, they found the ice had carried away six piles and bracing from the via-

duct. All traffic was stopped, isolating 64 wagons on the Crigglion side. It was October before repairs were completed, using timber from Les Jones' father's yard.

Other memories were of watching the stone trains passing, both before and after WW2, and seeing the viaduct sagging under the weight. Amazingly it did not fall into the river, it was so rickety!

People who remember the S&M in its working days are now thin on the ground, so it is nice to hear some events at first hand.

I still have a few S&M labels left; an SAE will bring one to you!



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