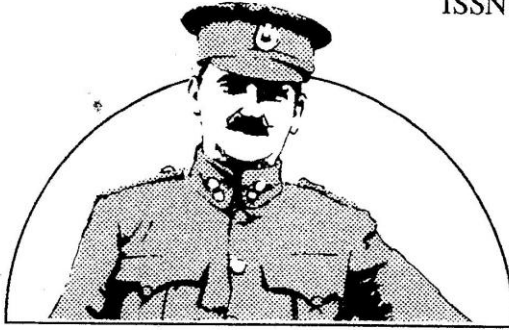


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• THE COLONEL •

NUMBER 40 SPRING 1995

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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

AGM Time Again!

Another year has gone by, and it's time for our annual meeting. It would be nice if more members than usual could get to the meeting - it always seems to be the same few who turn up. I know that many of you are too far away, but quite a number are within easy travelling distance, so let's see you there - and I mean YOU! It is difficult for the Committee to reflect the views of members if the members don't come and tell them what their views are.

As Stephen Hannington has indicated that he wishes to stand down, we will be looking for a volunteer for Publicity Officer, whose responsibilities would include organising our attendance at exhibitions etc.

I have been persuaded to continue as Editor for a little longer, subject of course to your approval at the A.G.M.

I am happy to do this, but I am once again getting very short of material. Ideally, I would like to have each issue containing an article on historical matters, one on the contemporary scene and something on modelling as well as the usual drawings and old magazine extracts. To fill the News and Views slot I need news items of general interest, details of forthcoming events etc. I get a regular press release from the good folk at Tenterden, which is why they get more publicity than anyone else! What I don't receive, I can't publish.

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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

Rye & Camber Tramway Book

Sussex publishers Plateway Press are producing a new book "The Rye & Camber Tramway - A Centenary History" by Society member Laurie A Cooksey. July 1995 marks the centenary of the line's opening, and the book will be published to coincide with that event.

It will be a hard-back book to a high standard, in the same format as the publisher's recent "West Clare Railway".

Many previously unpublished photographs have been located to illustrate the work, and there will be specially commissioned scale drawings of all three locomotives and examples of rolling stock. The price is not yet confirmed, but should be below £20.

It will be stocked by our Treasurer/Membership Secretary, Nigel Bird.

K&ESR's 21st Anniversary

The K&ESR is celebrating this year the 21st anniversary of the first stage of re-opening in 1974. Throughout the 1995 season there will be a much greater use of the restored "Victorian Train" of four- and six-wheel stock, which will be further strengthened by a SE&CR second-class four-wheeler, due for completion this Spring. Previously, the train's limited capacity had precluded its use at peak times, but the complete five-coach train will seat almost 150, making possible its more frequent use.

The loco to be used with this train will be either the "P" Class 1556 (as used in 1938!), the Manning Wardle "Charwelton" or the newly-restored Norwegian mogul.

There is to be a "21st Anniversary Steam Spectacular" on June 3rd and 4th, a "Behind the Scenes" weekend in August and a "Festival of Steam and Song" in September.

Further information from 01580 765155 during office hours.

Society Exhibition Attendance

The Society has been invited to attend two Exhibitions this year.

The first is IMREX at the Royal Horticultural Society's New Hall in London at Easter. It will be open to the public from Saturday 15th April to Wednesday 19th April. We will have only our display board there, so there will not need any real need for volunteers to man the stand.

Our second fixture is the Warley Exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on October 7th and 8th. For this, we will be having a rather larger

stand of about 12 ft frontage so we can put on a better show. We hope to obtain a display cabinet to hold a selection of models of Colonel Stephens subjects, and although the cabinet itself will be made as secure as possible, the stand will need continuous manning. We will be looking for models for display and also for offers of assistance with manning the stand. Would anyone who could help on either of these please contact the Editor.

THE WORCESTER & BROOM (LIGHT) RAILWAY - PART 2

Stephen Branchett continues his account of a fascinating
Might-have-been line

The draft LRO of 1923 was made under the Light Railways Acts of 1896 and 1911, and the Railways Act of 1921, and proposed two railways:

1. Railway No.1 was to be 16m 2fur 1ch long running from a terminus north of the city centre at Worcester to a junction with the LMSR line from Broom to Stratford, the old SMJR, east of Broom.

2. Railway No.2 was to be 2 fur long running from a junction with Railway No.1 at Blackpole to a junction with the GWR Droitwich-Worcester line.

There was a reference to some 16 public road crossings, numbered 1 to 7, 7a, and 8 to 15; there would also have been a number of occupation crossings. Five other crossings were also mentioned, one of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, one of the GWR, two of the LMSR and one of the River Arrow. In addition there would have been numerous crossings of the various small watercourses that abound in this part of the world.

Broom is some 15 miles east of Worcester, but such is the nature of the countryside that the route of the proposed railway was anything but straight and level, every opportunity being taken to minimise earthworks in true light railway style. It would have climbed 80 ft in 3 miles to get out of the Severn valley, fallen 65 ft and then climbed 50 ft in the next 6 miles as it crossed first the Bow Brook and then the Piddle Brook, climbed a further 115 ft over the next 2 3/4 miles to reach the summit

on the north side of Rough Hill, and then fallen 165 ft over the next 4 miles into the Arrow valley, with the final 1/2 mile level.

Railway No.1 commenced in the Barbourne district of Worcester on the west side of the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at St George's Lane, on the site of the current Worcester City FC ground. Shortly after leaving the terminus the railway passed over the canal, crossed the A4536 on the level and then passed under the GWR Droitwich-Worcester line at 1 1/4 miles, at which point Railway No.2 descended on the right from the GWR line before reaching a junction at 1 1/2 miles, to be immediately followed by a second level crossing of the A4536. Heading eastwards the railway had another level crossing, and then three miles out crossed what is now the M5. It should be remembered that seventy years ago the first three miles of the railway would have run through an area very much less developed than than now.

After this there were two more level crossings, the first with the B4084 (now the A4536), before the railway passed under the LMSR Birmingham-Bristol line at 4 miles. After another level crossing the railway ran alongside Crowle Brook for about half a mile. Following a further level crossing at Broughton Hackett, there followed a succession of four rail overbridges crossing Bow Brook, a local road at Upton Snodbury, the A422 and finally Piddle Brook. This was followed by three more level crossings at North Piddle, Flyford Flavell and Abberton.

As the railway climbed to the summit at 11 3/4 miles it passed under the road to Rous Lench, while as it began to fall the railway passed under the A435, after which there was another level crossing as the railway approached Broom. At 15 3/4 miles the railway crossed over the LMSR line from Barnt Green to Ashchurch just south of Broom station, to be immediately

followed by a bridge over the River Arrow, before running alongside the LMSR line from Broom to Stratford (the old Stratford-on-Avon and Midland Junction Railway) to a junction at 16 1/4 miles. It is interesting to note that the limits of deviation included part of the sidings to the south of Broom station.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Spending Suggestions

You have asked for suggestions for sensible spending of some of the Society's monies. Leaving aside the obvious one - book a hotel and get blotto to the Colonel's memory - may I suggest the publication of a slim volume of writings about the Colonel and his railways? I have in mind something along the lines of a single issue of "British Railway Journal". The contents could contain the most scholarly articles from "The Colonel" to date, or alternatively fresh ones commissioned from our members. It would need to be profusely illustrated, but I imagine we could drum up quite a few unpublished photographs between us. The book might be distributed free to members and also put on sale to the general public, thus recouping some of its costs. If such an idea were to find

favour, I would be willing to contribute input in an editorial fashion.

Regarding Ivor Gotheridge's request for photos of the Colonel, I have a print (but only one) of him on the WC&PR.

Finally, Chris Jackson does not seem to have read my book (*The Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway, Sequoia Publishing/Avon Anglia 1981 - Ed.*), in which I give quite a lot of detail about the use of the crossing loop at Wick St Lawrence, as well as other timetables between 1907 and the 1930s. Both Maggs and Peter Strange took their information from my book, but only selected what they wanted.

Christopher Redwood, Nottingham

Mr E S Tonks

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of another of our members, Eric Tonks, who died on 26th December at the age of 80.

Eric had a life-long interest in minor and industrial railways, and was a fund of knowledge on the subject. He was the author of books on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire, The Edge Hill Light and the Snailbeach District Railways, as

well as others on industrial lines. He made a particular study of the ironstone quarries and their railways in the Midlands, and quite recently completed a series of definitive volumes on them.

We offer our sincere condolences to his widow and family, and we share their loss.

THE FIRST "CHICHESTER"

Ron Mann completes a "full house" of Selsey Tramway locos with a look at the first and most enigmatic one

This is a case of "the first shall be last" because although this was the first locomotive to work on the line, it is the last one in my series of articles on the locomotives of the Selsey Tramway.

In his book about the Selsey Tramway, Edward Griffith records that "Chichester was actually the oldest locomotive the line ever possessed, and had an extremely chequered career. It was built by Longbotham's Railway Foundry in Barnsley about 1847 as an 0-6-0 side tank with a haystack firebox and was extensively damaged in the 1860s when it was sent to Swindon for repairs. Later it worked for a considerable period at a colliery near Merthyr, whence it passed into the hands of Peckett & Co of Bristol by whom it was thoroughly overhauled, and their standard cab and safety valve cover fitted".

The locomotive came to Sussex in 1897 as the Contractor's loco engaged in building the line to Selsey. During the construction stages the canal bridge at Hunston was not complete but the loco was needed to work on the southern section of the line, so it had to be towed by a traction engine 3 miles along the public highway to regain the tramway route at Hunston. In photographs showing this operation the loco driver can be seen in his cab and steam is issuing from the loco so it would appear that it assisted in the movement and perhaps the traction engine was primarily for guidance.

When construction of the line was completed the Tramway Company purchased the locomotive from the Contractor, and it was the loco used for the opening cere-

mony. Running as an 0-4-2T (by virtue of having a section of the coupling rods removed) it hauled the train of three Falcon coaches for the inaugural trip on 27th August 1897.

By 1903 it had been altered to a true 0-4-2T by the fitting of small (2 ft diameter) rear wheels on a radial axle. This work was done at Selsey by the Avonside Engine Company of Bristol. These pony wheels did good service as after "Chichester" was scrapped in 1913 they were fitted to "Hesperus" and were in use until 1924.

Changes

The original condition is unknown, so the recorded changes relate only to the time after arrival at Selsey in 1897.

1. Rear wheels as stated above
2. There were originally sandboxes for front and rear wheels on both sides. These were removed and replaced with a single sand box forward of the front right hand wheel splasher.
3. The tool boxes originally on both sides located between leading and driving wheel splashes were changed to a single box forward on the left hand side.
4. The loco had 3-link couplings in 1897 but by 1903 had just a plain hook.
5. The usual Selsey Tramway wooden cover was added over the reversing lever.

Additional Notes by the Editor.

The history of this locomotive is, to say the least, mysterious. Some published "facts" are impossible! Woodcock, in "Minor Railways of England and their Locomotives", confirms the date as 1847 and the builder as the Railway Foundry, Barnsley (but spells the proprietor's name "Longbottom"), but says it was built for the Great Western. Since the GWR was an all-broad-gauge line in 1847 (not acquiring the standard-gauge Shrewsbury & Chester and Shrewsbury & Birmingham lines until 1854), this is hardly credible! Even if it worked on a standard-gauge section of the GWR around 1860 and was involved in an accident, it was most unlikely to have been repaired at Swindon as Wolverhampton was responsible for all standard-gauge repairs at that time, and anyway I don't think there were any narrow-gauge rails to Swindon.

The manufacturers Longbotham (by whatever spelling) are also a mystery. They were not locomotive builders, and if indeed they did build this locomotive it seems to have been the only one they ever built. It was not unknown for an engineering company to try its hand at locomotive building, so perhaps this was a one-off experiment. Does anyone know of any others from the Railway Foundry?

The published accounts are reasonably consistent in dimensions - 3 ft 6 in driving wheels, 11 in bore x 18 in stroke cylinders though Woodcock gives 1 ft 10 in for the trailing wheel diameter rather than 2 ft. Griffith gives the tank capacity as 700 gallons and Woodcock 300 gallons; from the dimensions, the latter seems correct.

All in all, this locomotive is quite a puzzle and I doubt if we shall ever discover its full history.

WANTED

Taugem Railcar Kit

Keith Patrick is looking for a 4mm scale kit for the Colonel Stephens two-car railbuses, produced by Taugem. Chris Holden, who produced the kit, has no stock left.

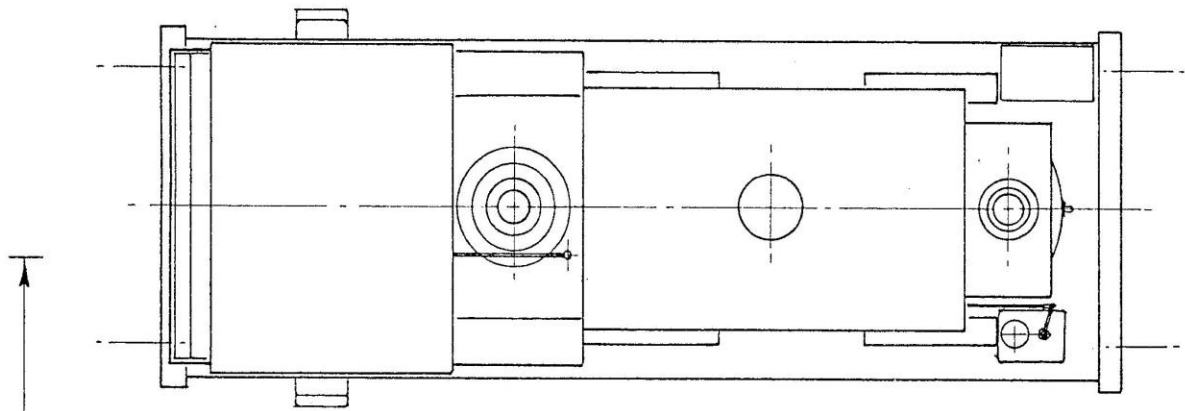
He would prefer an un-made example if possible, but would consider a partly built one if that is all that he can find.

If anyone can help, would they please contact Keith on 01684 562290

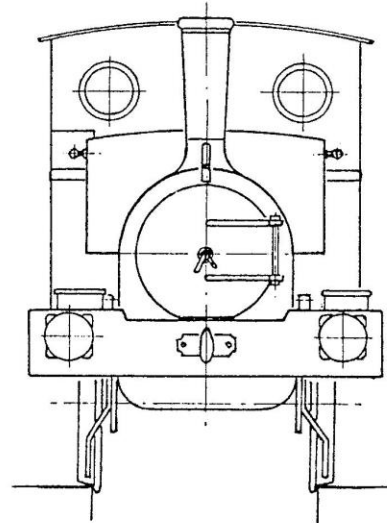
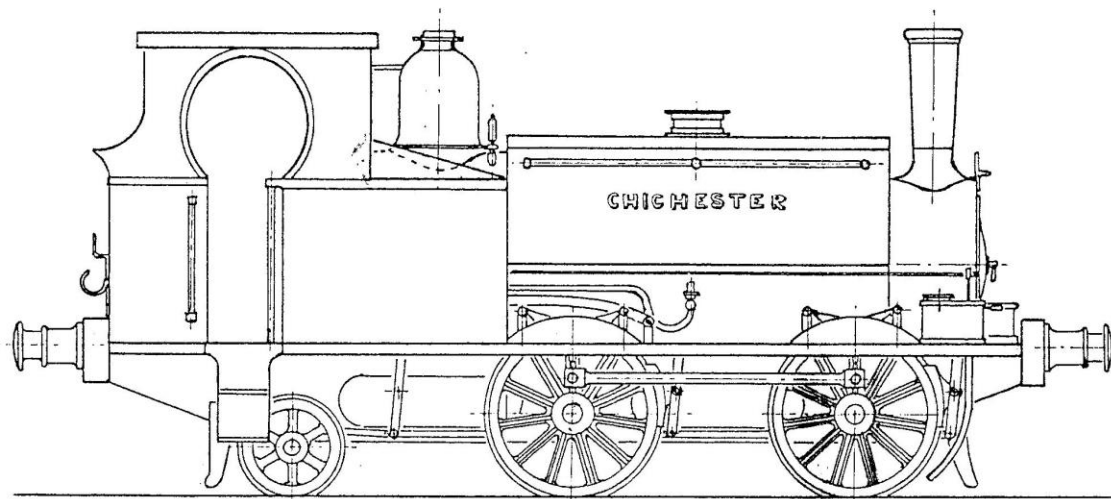
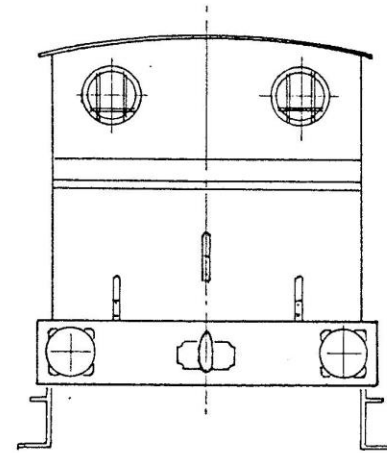
Northiam Track Plans

Richard Jones, who is building a 4mm scale layout based on Northiam on the K&ESR, would like a copy of the track layout drawing marketed by OPC Railprint and published to a very small scale in Stephen Garrett's book on the line. Are these drawings still available from any source, or has anyone a print that could be copied? The reference numbers may be 25903 and 591/0/1.

Replies please via the Editor, who would also like to obtain copies of these or any other plans of stations on the KESR or other Stephens lines.



10'



R MANN DEC 1934

8

SELSEY TRAMWAYS
0-4-2 'CHICHESTER'

Built 1847 by The Longbotham Railway Foundry

9

40

1938 JOTTINGS

Martin Brent continues his extracts from past issues of "Railway Observer"

In August/September, the K&ESR was the subject of a number of visits mentioned in copious notes. Most of the stations were clean and smart, apparently recently painted. The permanent way was well kept and rail replacement (with a heavier section rail) was in evidence. Riding was smooth and speed good between shunting movements, which caused delay. Passenger traffic fluctuated but sometimes was extremely good as the hop-picking traffic was in full swing.

At Rolvenden, 0-6-0ST No.8 (formerly "Ringling Rock") (and then "Hesperus" - Ed.) and 2-4-0T "Northiam" were standing in the open. No.4 was on shed as was No.1 "Tenterden", under repair. Also on shed was SR Terrier 2655. The remains of the two "Ilfracombe Goods", No.7 "Rother" and No.9 "Juno" were "fairly widely distributed" around Rolvenden station yard.

The Pickering steam railcar stood in a siding partly dismantled whilst most of the original K&ESR freight stock stood in other sidings in various states of decrepitude accompanied by several of the early carriages, including the underframe of one of the bogie coaches. The paint shop contained two railcar sets, one with a trailer wagon apparently being re-painted.

During the hop-picking season and for some months previously, trains had been steam-hauled by Nos.3 & 4 helped by SR "P" Class 1556 on loan. SR coaches 2684 and 2714 were in use as were K&ESR coaches 1, 2 and 3.

Locomotive No.3 was smartly kept in its livery of green, lined black and white. No.4 was said to be in a similar condition.

(True that they were both reasonably well-kept, but No.3 was a bright apple green and No.4 was in SR dark olive - Ed.) It was thought likely that the rest of the stock would never work again, particularly sad in the case of No.2 "Northiam" which had starred as "Gladstone" in "Oh Mr Porter".

At the same time, the East Kent Railways showed a similar picture with the main line very smart and freshly painted. On the branch to Richborough, the stations had apparently been abandoned but the line was in good order being kept for freight traffic on a regular basis.

Shepherdswell yard contained 10 coaches including on ex-K&ESR coach, and 13 EKR wagons being re-painted. The locomotive yard contained the frames and boiler of Stirling No.6, Kerr Stuart No.4, the ex-LSWR Adams Radial No.5, saddleback No.7 and 0-6-0 No.100. No.2 (formerly "Walton Park") was out on a train. No.5 was due to take over next day whilst No.100 was on the colliery turn - four trips a day from Tilmanstone to Shepherdswell. Tilmanstone was the last working colliery; Guilford was closed and the branch lifted, Hammill now served a brick-works and Wingham Colliery had closed.

A description was given of the system of gravity working of passenger trains at Shepherdswell and Canterbury Road: an expedition beyond the latter discovered signs of the proposed track formation for several miles. Traces of the never built Eastry triangle were also evident.

Still in Kent and East Sussex, a visit to the Rye and Camber Tramway produced

notes on the hourly service worked by two brown-painted coaches hauled by a green-painted petrol tractor. It was stated that the total passenger stock of four vehicles had to be pressed into service on fine afternoons. *(The Rye & Camber only ever had two coaches, so the other two must have been goods wagons fitted with plank seats! - Ed.)*

The comments on the K&ESR aroused the ire of a Mr Jones who, in December, wrote stating that few of the stations were clean and smart and some were practically devoid of paint. There was a luxuriant growth between the lines over practically the whole system. Much re-sleepering was required and riding particularly between Rolvenden and Tenterden was VERY rough. Passenger traffic was light although freight traffic was good. The writer went on to claim trips behind Nos.2 and 8. An SR Class "P" had been on the line for some time, certainly since last Whit Monday. Coach 2684, an ex-LSWR bogie composite brake, was painted in SR style but was un-lettered.

Who was right? Will the 1939 "Railway Observers" enlighten us? Don't miss the next thrilling instalment!

Editor's note.

Without wishing to diminish the excitement of waiting in anticipation for the next issue, I can add a little. The K&ESR was visited by several photographers in August and September 1938. Their (dated) photographs show that the line was generally in reasonable order with clean and tidy stations, and with most of the track fairly well-kept by light railway standards. On the running lines, only in the area near the tunnel at St Michaels was there much grass between the rails and even that was no worse than on some of British Rail's track these days! The Rolvenden "dump" sidings were of course well overgrown, as usual. Locomotives in operation were Terrier No.3 and SR "P" Class No.1556.

COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY

Notice is hereby given that the 8th Annual General Meeting of the Colonel Stephens Society will take place at 2.30 pm on Saturday 22nd April 1995 at Keen House, Calshot Street, London N 1.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Actions from the last A.G.M.
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's/Membership Secretary's Report
5. Election of Officers:
 - (a) Chairman
 - (b) Treasurer
 - (c) Membership Secretary
 - (d) Editor
 - (e) Publicity Officer
 - (f) Committeeman
6. Subscription for 1995/6
7. Publicity and Exhibition matters
8. Any Other Business

Derek Smith, Chairman

ON THE K&ESR IN THE THIRTIES

The Editor delves into some pre-war Railway Magazines

The K&ESR seems to have been a favourite for contributors to the Railway Magazine, particularly in the thirties when fairly frequent notes were to be found in its pages. The report in May 1935 gave some livery details.

"The Stroudley "Terrier" No.3, formerly "Bodiam", has now been rebuilt and put into working order. She is painted a bright apple green, lined out with black and white, and lettered in yellow and black. The running plate is Indian red, lined out in white, while the buffer beams and side-rods are vermillion. The copper-capped chimney has been retained, and the top left bright. The whole engine looks as if she has been made the object of a labour of love....Of the coaches, the old Royal saloon and two London & South Western six-wheelers have been overhauled, and are nearly as smart, externally, as the "Terrier" locomotive. These are painted light chocolate, lined out in yellow, and with the lettering shaded and blocked in scarlet."

The October 1936 issue gave some information on operation, as well as more on liveries.

"During the hopping season, passenger traffic on the K&ESR increases considerably. In addition to accommodating the hop pickers themselves, the company runs special Sunday trains for the benefit of day excursionists who come to visit friends in the hop gardens. Headcorn, of course, is in the heart of the Kentish hop district, while on the southern or East Sussex section there are Guinness' famous hop fields at Bodiam. A normal K&ESR train includes but one coach, usually an eight-wheeled composite, but

when the "Hoppers" are travelling a typical load comprises two bogie coaches, a six-wheeled composite and two brake-thirds, all of LSWR origin. Such a train presents no difficulty to either the Brighton "Terrier" No.3 or to the South Western Beattie period saddletank, now No.4. Both these locomotives handled far heavier loads on their parent systems in days gone by.

Three colours are in use for K&ESR coaches now: the bogie coaches are painted in Southern green, one of the four-wheelers in bottle green with white lettering over the windows and white class figures on the doors, and the remaining passenger vehicles are painted chocolate."

Since the 1935 season is being referred to, the bogie coaches must be the two LSWR low-roof ones, Nos. 2 and 3, the 6-wheel composite No.4 and the brake-3rds (4-wheeled) Nos 1 and 19, No.1 being the bottle green one. The "gen" on liveries raises one question. Since "Southern green" at the time would have been Maunsell dark olive, which to me looks much like the colour of your average green bottle, what then is "bottle green"?

The train described does seem quite long by light railway standards, but it was completely eclipsed by a report in the December 1936 issue which described a train from Robertsbridge to Bodiam comprising "... 15 SR bogies and a van (including six old Brighton vehicles) plus two K&ESR six-wheelers, hauled by No.4". Even in LSWR days this would have been a hefty load for a small loco - though the "Saddleback" was known as "The Big Engine" on the K&ESR, giving an indication of the size of the others!

SADDLEBACKS BACK IN KENT?

Adrian Kennedy reports on recent work on the K&ESR

The work on the line through the 1994/5 Winter season has brought three stretches of line up to scratch.

1. Popes Straight. This has been re-laid, from just beyond the Wittersham side of the occupation crossing at Popes Cottage to Gazedown, with 95 lb rail on concrete sleepers, ballasted and tamped.

2. Newmill Straight. This remaining section between last year's work, Newmill Bridge and Foxbury Cutting, has been re-laid with 95 lb rail, ballasted and tamped. The track bed through the small cutting has been dug out, a new drainage system installed and a Minestone track bed put down.

3. Wittersham Road. To comply with Railway Inspectorate requirements, the two lengths of track between the station loop and goods yard points have been re-laid

with Jarrah sleepers in place of the old metal ones.

The completion of these works now means that the speed limit can be raised to the maximum of 25 mph from Popes to Northiam except for bridges and station limits.

What has that got to do with saddlebacks, you ask?

Well, a new lineside attraction has been installed at Gazedown/Foxbury - a Wild Boar stockade ~~has~~ been erected and stocked!

(Yes, I know Saddlebacks aren't exactly wild boars, but they are a breed of pig! I couldn't resist that one, sorry! - Ed.)

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THE CHALKE VALLEY RAILWAY

Chris Jackson takes a look at a good subject for a model

Most of my layouts have been "might-have-been" models based on real schemes that never happened, which to me combines the discipline of a real location with a flexible "history" that can develop to suit my butterfly-like mind. When casting around for a prototype for my new Colonel Stephens line, my attention was focussed by a remark from Cyril Freezer that light railways "often ended up in the nether regions of a cathedral city". Shrewsbury and Chichester jump to mind.

Whilst poring over various old maps, my eye alighted on Salisbury and the string of villages along the idyllic valley of the river Ebble which runs south and west towards Shaftesbury. Further research by my wife and I revealed that a light railway from Salisbury had indeed been proposed along this route in 1898. A Committee formed by the various parishes approached the LSWR but their light railway team, then occupied with the Basingstoke and Alton, were not convinced that the route would generate sufficient traffic. At a meeting in February 1899, the Chalke Valley Railway Committee considered starting discussions with "another promoter" who might be able to build the line more cheaply. In fact, they voted to continue to try to convince the LSWR, with the inevitable result. But what if the "other promoter" had turned out to be the Colonel.....

With light railway orders taking around two years, construction could have started around 1901-2. The LBSCR had about 15 terriers looking for buyers, and there were plenty of contractors' locos changing hands at the time. And then, the two "Ilfracombe Goods" that the Colonel didn't buy disappeared from stock in 1905. The omens were looking good!

So lets take a trip along the Chalke Valley Railway as it might have been around 1925. We find the terminus amongst the back streets of south east Salisbury, not far from the Cathedral Close, in a seedy area known as the Friary. A faded blue terrier named "Ferne" waits at the head of an assorted mixed train with one or two ex-LSWR four-wheel coaches. Departure time comes and we set off with a lurch. Following the A36 Southampton road out of town, we pass a steeply-graded interchange siding leading up to the LSWR goods yard at Milford. Crossing a rickety swing bridge over the Avon Navigation we reach the first halt at Britford.

From here, the level route to the Ebble valley is blocked by the grounds of Longford Castle, so our train is forced to climb steeply to a ledge above the Ringwood road before swinging around the edge of Oddstock Down. After the second milepost we roll gently downhill to Oddstock station, almost a mile from the village across the valley. "Ferne" now follows the northern edge of the valley floor past a halt at Homington to the first passing station at Coombe Bissett, five miles from Salisbury, and surrounded by watercress beds, one of the staple industries of the valley.

Leaving Coombe Bissett, we cross the Blandford road on the level and head on up the valley. Another halt is passed at Stratford Tony, before the small station at Bishopstone is reached. The village here was moved following a fire in the 14th century, but the station by the church serves the original site! The line, crosses the Ebble and curves south past Fulton Manor to Croucheston and Stoke Farthing halts. The latter is blessed with a siding to serve Knighton Manor Farm.

Swinging north again, we re-cross the Ebble and run into the principal intermediate station at Broad Chalke. Being midway along the line, this is the main passing place and bears an uncanny resemblance to Northiam. Waiting for us is "Minerva", an Ilfracombe goods at the head of a dozen stone wagons from Winkelbury Quarry. Broad Chalke village is in two parts on either side of the valley, allowing the railway to run through the middle along the water meadows. A siding serves more watercress beds, after which we pass Fifield Bavant halt serving a Norman church, a farm and little else.

In earlier years, Ebbesborne Wake station saw much traffic to and from the Larmer Tree Grounds, a park created in the 1880s at Tollard Royal by pioneer archaeologist Fox-Pitt-Rivers. 100,000 visitors a year were recorded in the 1890s, but alas no longer. Alvediston halt nestles in the lee of the village church, after which the line climbs steeply again to the next passing place at Berwick St John. Overlooked by the ancient British camp of Winkelbury, this is the source of the stone traffic.

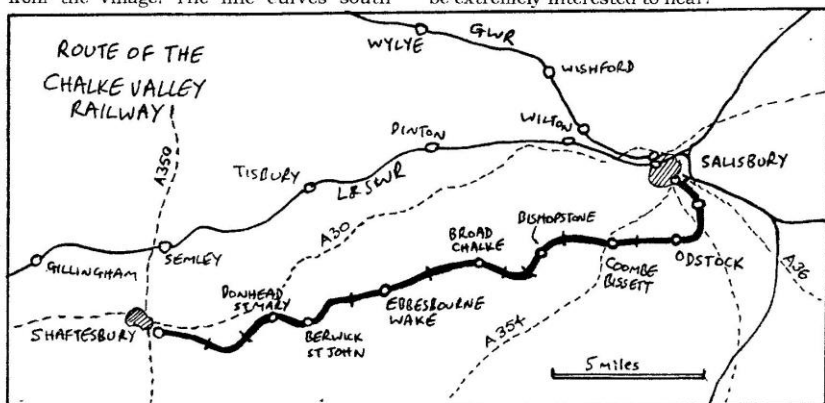
After Berwick comes a breather for the loco as the line drops to Donhead St Mary station, just in that parish but two miles from the village! The line curves south

through the edge of Ferme Park, to Ludwell with its dairy siding. Skirting the head of the Nadder valley, the train reaches Charlton halt. From here an unbroken climb at 1 in 50 brings us to the terminus, tucked behind the Royal Anchor pub on the very outskirts of Shaftesbury.

The town itself stands on a high bluff overlooking Blackmore Vale, but the CVR terminus and loco shed are on the gentler dip slope. Running into the station we see the line's two Hawthorne Leslie 0-6-2Ts, "Ebble" and "Nadder" standing out of use beside the shed. The station is fairly quiet; despite its good location, much traffic still goes via the LSWR at Semley, three miles away on the Exeter main line.

That, then, is a portrait of "our" Chalke Valley Railway. All that remains is to build it! We plan to model Shaftesbury, and the passing station at Broad Chalke, where the real ales and Egon Ronay catering of the Queens Head Inn just across the road from the station site make "field research" a pure delight.

Incidentally, if anyone has come across any records of correspondence between the Colonel and one Mr W Pinkham, secretary of the CVR Committee, we would be extremely interested to hear!



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

More problems at Porthmadog

It seems that having beaten off the Welsh Highland (1964) company for the right to re-build the line from Dinas Junction to Porthmadog (plus converting the erstwhile standard-gauge line from Dinas to Caernarfon), the new group under the auspices of the Festiniog Railway have had a claim for re-payment of Debentures of the old Welsh Highland Railway Company - plus 70 year's interest! This claim has been made by Gwynedd County Council from the Official Receiver for the old Company which went into liquidation over 70 years ago. The Festiniog's solicitors were no doubt astonished to hear of this; the Debentures were bought by the former Caernarvonshire County Council way back in the Twenties, and with added interest their original £15,000 investment now produces a claim of around £100,000. I understand that the Festiniog are strongly rejecting the claim; no doubt they would rather the money went on developing the line.

So once again there are problems with the Welsh Highland Railway. Will it ever be completed, I wonder? I can almost hear the Colonel saying to Bill Austen "Get up there and see what they are doing - but don't sign anything!", and thinking to himself, "Will it never end? I wish I could get rid of it all and get back to running the S&M!....".

We know how hard it was for Stephens and Austen to get anything done on the Festiniog and Welsh Highland.

If the re-build of the WHR goes ahead, the cost will be enormous and it will take many years to complete. The people involved are very optimistic however, so I hope it will be possible to once again see trains running through the Aberglaslyn Pass.

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