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• **THE COLONEL** •

**NUMBER 41      SUMMER 1995**

**RYE & CAMBER TRAMWAY CENTENARY ISSUE**

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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

### Light Railways are on the up!

In his Annual Report, our Chairman spoke of the ever-increasing interest in the Colonel's Railways. How true this is! Just look at News and Views this issue, and see how many things are happening at the moment. Four new books on the Colonel's lines this year, centenary celebrations, exhibitions, another line about to open to the public, and now to cap it all a real Colonel Stephens Railway Museum in the pipeline. Yes, things are certainly happening! I would like to think that this Society has played some small part in this upsurge of interest and that we can keep the momentum going into the years ahead, and indeed into the next millennium. 1995 may be the centenary year for the Rye & Camber Tramway and 1996 of the Light Railways Act, but after that is

the centenary of the Selsey Tramway in 1997 and the Rother Valley in 2000, so there will be plenty to keep us occupied.

It will not have escaped readers' notice that this is a special Rye & Camber issue. Because of this, I have had to leave out some regular features this time. Perhaps we could have special issues on other lines on other occasions - if you send in suitable material!

The list of Society Officers below reflects the results of the recent AGM. It also reflects the result of phONEday, with extra 1's everywhere. Please note also the new Editorial postcode with one digit changed. At least they left my personalised LD at the end alone!

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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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### Another R & C Book...

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Following our announcement in the last issue of the forthcoming book on the Rye & Camber Tramway by Laurie Cooksey, published by Plateway Press, we now hear that another is due from Oakwood Press, also timed to meet the centenary of the line's opening. The Oakwood book is to be more of a photo album rather than a detailed history, and it will be interesting to see how many of the illustrations are common to the two books.

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### ...and Yet More Books!

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Two more books of interest to members have emerged very recently.

The first is "Colonel Stephens Railmotors", by Stephen Garrett and John Scott-Morgan, published by Irwell Press. The term "railmotors" as defined in the book includes not only the Wolseley-Siddeley, Ford and Shefflex units but also the Drewry cars of the WC&PR, the K&ESR's steam railcar and even the "Gazelle" and trailer combination; all of these are comprehensively covered. The book is a slim 48-page volume in card covers, but contains practically everything known about these fascinating vehicles. It is printed on good quality paper so the plentiful illustrations are well reproduced.

The second is "Porthmadog to Blaenau", by Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith, published by Middleton Press in their usual format. This volume concentrates on the preservation period since 1954, and gives a more detailed insight into the problems experienced during the line's revival (and their solutions) than was possible in the authors' earlier "Branch Lines around Porthmadog 1954-94".

### Centenary Exhibition at Rye

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To celebrate the Centenary of the Rye & Camber Tramway, a special Model Railway Exhibition is being held in Rye on Saturday, July 15th, from 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. at the Thomas Peacock Community College. The exhibits have been carefully chosen to include a selection of narrow gauge and light railway layouts based on, or inspired by, Colonel Stephens' lines, particularly in the south east. This Society will be represented there, with our display stand and the Editor's layout "Maidstone Road". Dave Brewer's splendid Snailbeach layout will also be in attendance, and among the traders will be Golden Arrow who can supply most Colonel Stephens nameplates.

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### Photographing the K&ESR

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The K&ESR has introduced Annual Lineside Photographic Permits for those who wish to photograph trains on the line from lineside locations to which the general public do not have access. The permit will cost £20, and applicants will have to attend a short safety briefing.

On Saturday, June 24th a special day has been arranged for photographers with freight and passenger trains having photo stops and run-pasts staged at a number of locations. Places are strictly limited, and the price of £30 includes the above-mentioned Annual Permit valid for the rest of the season.

For more details of either the Permit or the Photographers' Special, telephone 01580 765155 or write to K&ESR, Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6HE.

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## MORE NEWS AND VIEWS

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### Newmarket Exhibition, 1996

As you are aware the Society was invited to participate in a Model Railway Exhibition to be held next year at Newmarket. There will be a section dedicated to Light Railways, in commemoration of the 1896 Light Railways Act. The date for the Exhibition has now been set for Saturday, 8th June, 1996. If you have a layout or individual models that you would like to be considered for display, please contact Ian Hammond on 01284 761215.

### News from the East Kent

We hear that considerable progress has been made since we last reported on the activities at Shepherdswell. A station platform is being built at Eythorne, and many safety features such as crossing gates and point locks are now installed. Provided that all the requirements of the Railway Inspectorate can be met it is hoped to be able to start a passenger service from Shepherdswell through the tunnel to Eythorne on June 24th.

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### Colonel Stephens Museum to be established at Tenterden

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For some years, a section of the Tenterden & District Museum has been used for a small display of material relating to the railways of Colonel Stephens, but the space there has been inadequate to do justice to the material available. Now however plans are under way to set up a dedicated Museum in one of the buildings on the north side of the line opposite the station. Planning permission has been granted, and detailed planning has commenced. The target is to open the Museum to the public in the summer of 1996, the centenary year of the Light Railways Act.

The Museum will contain sections dedicated to each of the Colonel's lines, together with displays and tableaux illustrating aspects of light railway construction and use. Stephens' Tonbridge office will be re-created using as much original material as possible. Models, tickets and posters will be displayed, and there will be an area with external access for display of a small railway vehicle, model layout or temporary exhibition.

I am sure all members will want to wish this project every possible success

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### Print of Rolvenden in 1932

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A specially commissioned watercolour has been painted by the well-known railway artist, George Heiron, depicting a scene at Rolvenden station in 1932. Locomotive No.4, the ex-LSWR Saddleback which has recently arrived on the line, is at the platform with a single bogie coach. K&ESR driver, Jimmy Webb, chats to a passenger, while a Ford railbus set and 2-4-0T No.1 Tenterden are parked outside the shed nearby.

A strictly limited edition of 300 prints, overall size including border 65cm x 49cm (picture size 54cm x 37cm) each signed by

the artist and numbered, has been privately sponsored with all proceeds to the new Museum. The cost is £35 per print, inclusive of postage in a cardboard tube. Orders, with a cheque made payable to The Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, should be sent to: The Malt House, 109 High Street, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6LB.

Your Editor has purchased one, and can tell you that the print is absolutely fabulous! So good, in fact, that the domestic authorities have allowed it to hang in the living room! Send for one, it's in a good cause and you won't be disappointed.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## Report on the Society's 8th AGM, held on 22nd April 1995

13 members attended, with apologies for absence from 8 others.

The Chairman opened the meeting and called for a minute's silence to remember members and friends who had passed away during the past year, in particular Eric Tonks and Ronald Jarvis.

### **Actions from the last AGM**

Society Badge: In the absence of the Publicity Officer, no progress on this could be reported.

Trevor Charlton etched parts: the Editor has now received a list which will be published in "The Colonel" when the opportunity arises.

Jarvis photographs: these were offered to members during the year. They were an outstanding success and much appreciated by all who purchased them.

Photographs of the Colonel: Ivor Gothridge is progressing well in his search, but would welcome more sightings!

### **Chairman's Report**

Once again, I am pleased to report another successful year for the Society. Our membership is holding up very well, despite the long recession which has taken its toll of some other societies.

We will, I am certain, be looking forward to the light railway centenary in 1996 when it is hoped Stephens' role in promoting and building railways under the act will be fully recognised; this is an important part of the Society's activities.

This year we celebrate 10 years of the Colonel Stephens Society, and as one of the founding members I am pleased that we have managed to make the deeds of the Colonel known to a wider section of ordinary folk. What will the next ten years hold in store for us? I see a bright future, with more members joining and the message being spread more widely. Our "shoe-string" operations have brought a healthy surplus to our funds, in the best Stephens tradition.

What of other activities in the Society. Modelling plays an important part in many members' lives. I admire the work put in to produce these little gems which give so much satisfaction to us all.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the passing of W H Austen, the Colonel's friend and successor. Although somewhat overshadowed by the great man, Bill Austen was an important figure in the light railway empire built up in the early years of this century. Alas, by the time he took control on the Colonel's death, things had already started to go downhill due to the steady encroachment of road transport.

A special mention for our Editor, who has put together a good journal during the past year, also the Publicity Officer for his work in putting over the Society's point of view and recruiting new members.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve in the past three years, and I would be prepared to continue if that is your wish. Thank you very much.

*Derek Smith, Chairman*

### **Treasurer's Report**

As is evident from the tabled Accounts, the past year has been a very successful one financially, with an increase in funds of £826.16. The sale of photos to members proved very profitable.

Our funds were transferred to an interest-bearing current account during last year, and we have earned £22.85 in interest (currently 3.30%).

Once again I see no reason to increase membership fees.

I am prepared to stand for re-election.

*Nigel Bird, Treasurer*

### **Membership Secretary's Report**

Once again I am delighted to report an overall increase in members. The number of "paid up" members now stands at 183 (including 6 overseas), an increase of 12 over 1994.

Once again, new members have joined as a result of advertising or publicity (often free!) in the national magazines or via our show stand at model exhibitions. This activity should be increased to expand our membership, as the Colonel's lines appear to be very much "in vogue" at present. I am prepared to stand for re-election.

*Nigel Bird, Membership Secretary*

### **Election of Officers**

The Chairman, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Editor were prepared to stand for re-election, and there being no other candidates were duly re-elected unanimously.

Stephen Hannington had indicated that he did not wish to stand again as Publicity

Officer, and Ivor Gotheridge kindly volunteered to fill the vacancy. He was elected unanimously.

Stuart Marshall volunteered to stand for the position of Committeeman vacated by Ivor Gotheridge; he was elected unanimously.

### **Subscription for 1995/6**

The Treasurer's recommendation that this should be unchanged at £4.00 (£5.00 overseas) was agreed.

### **Publicity and Exhibition Matters**

Nigel Bird had offered to act as liaison link with the organisers of the Warley Exhibition, who are interested in having a Colonel Stephens/Light Railway section in their 1996 exhibition. Dave Sutton will carry out a similar role for the Brighton 1996 exhibition, and Ian Hammond agreed to act as link for the Newmarket 1996 exhibition which will have a Light Railway section.

A letter from Alan Brown was read out; in it he suggested the possibility that the Society produce a book on the Colonel. This was discussed at some length, and several suggestions made: a book on the Colonel himself; a booklet outlining his work and briefly covering each of his railways; a book on rolling stock and/or locomotives. All of these had major problems, particularly their need for an author and some finance. Ivor Gotheridge agreed to give the matter further thought.

The subject of film of the Colonel's lines was discussed. Several members knew of the existence of some, and it was considered that if they were to be made available on video there could be a market for them. Ivor said he would make enquiries, starting with Hillside who had some 8mm cine of several lines.

### Any Other Business

1. In response to a request, the Editor agreed to produce a label for use by members exhibiting at model railway exhibitions, reading "Layout operated by a member of The Colonel Stephens Society", perhaps with the Colonel logo.
2. The Editor reported on the proposed Colonel Stephens Museum, to be housed in an existing building opposite the

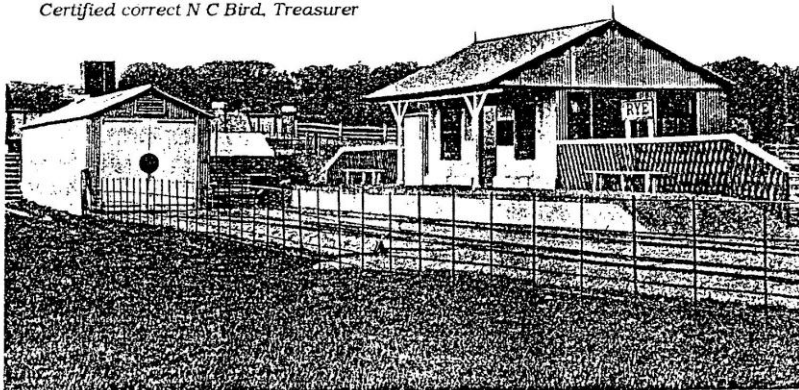
station at Tenterden. (See *News and Views - Ed.*) There was strong support for co-operation with this project, and it was suggested that this support could be both practical and financial. After discussion, it was agreed to approach the Museum authorities to offer such support, the financial part of it to be a donation to the museum funds of up to £250. Ivor Gothridge agreed to contact Philip Shaw at Tenterden.

### Financial Statement to 30.3.95

Balance Brought Forward		£1248.02
plus		
Subscriptions Received	£951.00	
Sale of Back Issues	£ 52.21	
Sale of Photographs	£641.50	
Interest Received	£ 22.85	
	£1667.56	£1667.56
less		
Room Hire (AGM)	£ 15.00	
Printing/Posting THE COLONEL	£510.25	
Other Postage	£ 30.33	
Purchase of Photographs	£239.00	
Return Cheque	£ 46.80 *	
	£841.38	£ 841.38
Balance per Bank Statement 30/3/95		£2074.20

Note \*: A further payment was received for this item and cleared successfully

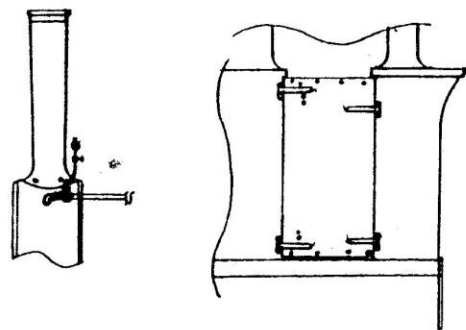
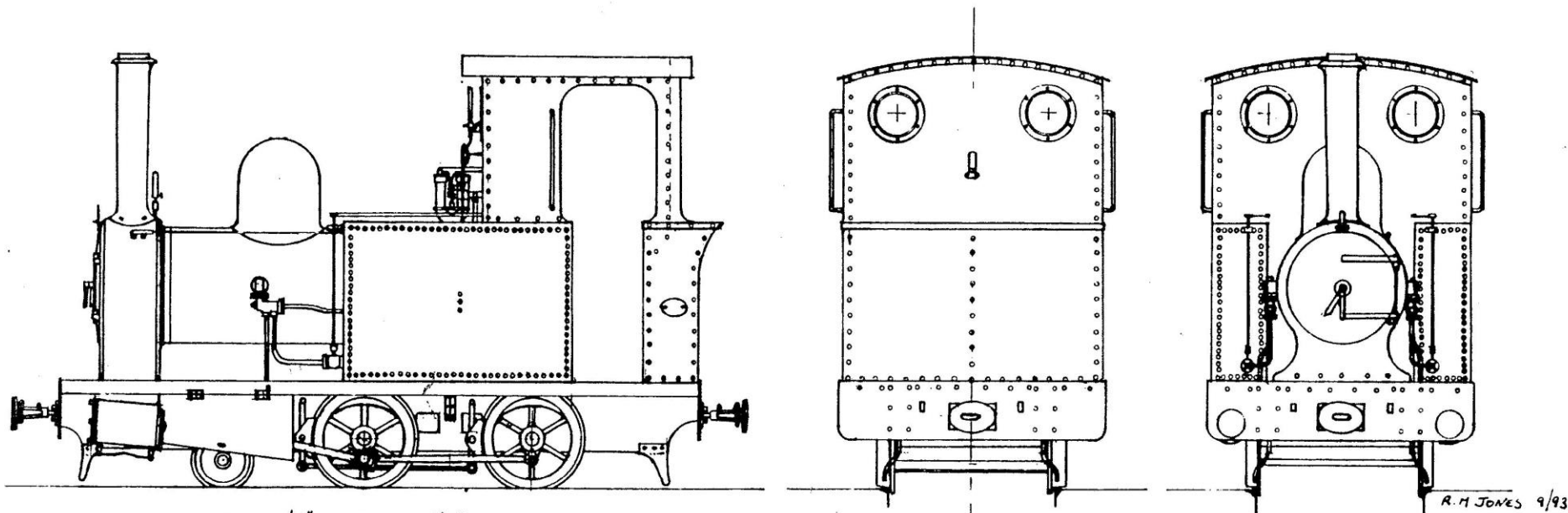
*Certified correct N C Bird, Treasurer*



A Rural Steam Tramway in Sussex—Station at Rye.

RYE & CAMBER TRAMWAY  
 W. G. BAGNALL LTD.  
 No.1461 BUILT 1895

CAMBER



8

NOTES

Holes cut in front buffer beam 1897  
 6 spoke leading wheel evident in 1909  
 Chimney cut down 1921  
 Cab 'door' on seaward side, as scrap view  
 Rear cab sheet is inset  
 Safety chains not drawn

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# A RURAL STEAM TRAMWAY IN SUSSEX

Member A R Nicholls submitted this early article on the Rye & Camber, from "The Railway World" for March 1896.

The ancient town of Rye has not yet lost its old-time characteristics. The contagion of the haste of modern life still leaves it untouched. Even its railway station is not altogether out of harmony with its ancient monuments, while its train service forcibly recalls the coaching age. The rash traveller who, without previous study of his Bradshaw, strolls over from St Leonards - a pleasant walk of some twelve miles - to examine the interesting historical possessions of the quiet town will probably complete his investigations just in time to miss the 1.30 p.m. train to Hastings, after which an interval of five and a quarter hours must elapse before another train may be expected. But if the traveller be interested in light railways, the time-card of the Rye and Camber Tramways Co., displayed in the railway station, will lead him, as it did the writer, to dispose of the interval by inspecting the one sign of nineteenth century energy that appears in otherwise supine Rye.

With the preliminary statement that the tramway is in reality a light railway, worked by a diminutive locomotive, with an independent track across the fields, the reasons which called this line - almost anomalous as far as England is concerned - into existence must be briefly given.

Modern Rye, or rather ancient Rye, stands on the same site as it did seven or eight centuries ago, but then, and for some hundreds of years later, the sea washed the stone walls of the town. But as time went on the ocean receded further and further from the walls of the town, whilst

the sand so silted the course of the river Rother, which at this point enters the English Channel, that none, save comparatively small craft, could reach the town. However, as the sea would no longer come to Rye, and since Rye could not move to the sea, in 1726 it was decided to build a new harbour at Camber, two miles off at the mouth of the Rother. In February 1851 the South Eastern Railway opened a line to Rye, and it also constructed a single line branch to the harbour, on the west side of the river; and we have heard that occasionally an engine and a few coal or ballast trucks are actually to be seen on this branch, but the 5000 inhabitants of the borough might as well be without the line to the harbour, so little use does the railway make of it. But as the burgesses and fishermen of Rye frequently go to the harbour, and have also to bring the fish, &c., from the boats to the town, some enterprising gentlemen recently decided to construct a tramway to connect the harbour with the town; the result being the incorporation of the Rye and Camber Tramways Co., Ltd., in 1895.

The Rye station is situated on the east bank of the river, close to the bridge carrying the highway from Hythe to Rye across the Rother, and consists of a platform and small waiting room, with booking office &c.; there is also a shed for the engine and passenger cars, in which is provided an inspection pit. The gauge is 3 ft., and the ordinary flange pattern steel rails are used, weighing 26 lbs. per yard; these are laid on transverse wood sleepers to which they are fixed by means of

spikes. The points are self-acting, lever weighted. The line is single, and is 1 3/4 miles long, laid upon the surface of the soil, which is of a light and sandy description. The steepest incline is 1 in 160 for a distance of 16 chains. The Rye and Camber stations are connected by a telephone. At Rye Harbour (Camber) the accommodation provided is similar to that at Rye, the platform, station buildings &c. being of the same style and proportions. The permanent way was laid out and the stations, buildings, &c., were constructed, by Messrs Mancklelow Brothers of Horsmonden, Kent, under the supervision of Mr H.F. Stephens, A.M.I.C.E., of Tonbridge. The locomotive and rolling stock were built by the well-known firm of W.G. Bagnall, Castle Engine Works, Stafford.

The engine, named "Camber", is mounted on six wheels, viz., a pair of swivelling leading wheels, solid metal 10 in. diameter, placed behind the cylinders; the driving and trailing wheels are coupled and 20 in. in diameter on tread. The cylinders are outside, and are 5 1/2 in. in diameter; the stroke is 12 in. The piston rods, slide blocks and "little end" are encased by a sheet iron box. The sandy nature of the track, and the nearness to the rails render this precaution necessary, otherwise the sand would get into the exposed working parts, causing them to become heated and damaged. For the purposes of lubrication access is provided to these parts by means of hinged sides. The fire-box is copper, and the boiler has brass tubes. The working steam pressure is 150 lbs. Both steam and hand brakes are provided. The side tanks hold 140 gallons, and the boiler is supplied with water by injectors on either side of the engine. The driver is enclosed by a comfortable, though not very roomy, cab. The rigid wheel base is 3 ft. This well-constructed engine runs very easily, and the frames are extra wide so that one can pass all round without difficulty, when travelling at a good speed. The small

size of the wheels preclude high speed. Eight minutes are usually allowed for the journey, and the average speed is about 10 miles per hour. But the train has covered the distance in about 4 minutes, which is at the rate of nearly 20 miles per hour. The engine can haul 60 tons on a level road, 31 tons up 1 in 100, or 15 tons up 1 in 45. The engine weighs 6 tons in working order, and both in appearance and power does credit to the builders.

The passenger car is carried on two four-wheel bogies, and is 24 ft. long; it is divided into two parts. The first class portion has accommodation for 12 passengers, and is furnished with cushioned seats, curtains &c. The second class part accommodates 20 passengers, and is provided with lattice seats and cork floor covering. The entrances are from the platform at each end, upon one of which the guard rides. Hand brakes are provided for the car. Neither engine nor car have buffers, and the connection is made by means of a patent central coupling. The car weighs when empty about 3 tons. The second class portion is provided with glass windows during the winter months.

The traffic has so far exceeded the original expectations that another second class bogie car, capable of seating 25 passengers, is now in course of construction at the Rother Iron Works, Rye. Arrangements are also being entered into for the supply of a second locomotive to cope with the large summer traffic, the splendid sands and beach at Camber being in great request as a holiday resort for the surrounding population.

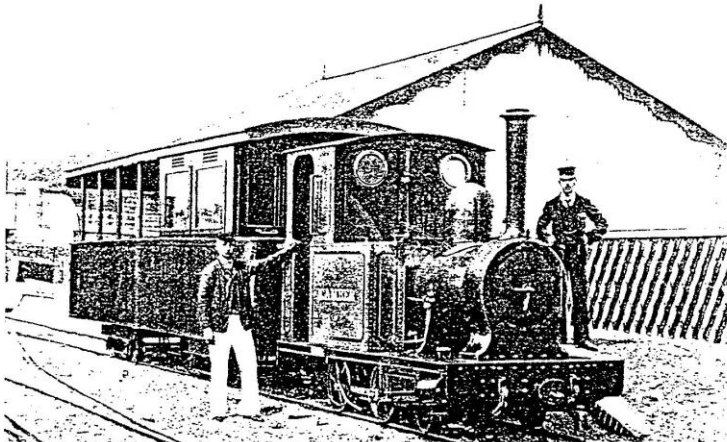
It is evident that anyone travelling by the tramway one way will require to make the return journey, and the fares are arranged accordingly. Thus, first class single, 4d., return 6d.; second class single, 2d., return, 4d. A very excellent arrangement, and one that should be well

patronised by the fishermen, is the issue of season tickets at 30s. per annum, available for the whole crew of the fishing boat, and as the men live in Rye and leave their boats at Camber, these cheap inclusive tickets should be a great advantage. Some 18,000 tickets have been issued during the first six months working. On August bank holiday the receipts amounted to £12 5s. 0d. The sands are among the finest on the South coast, and the visitors greatly appreciate the new means of reaching them provided by the tramway. The golf links are also a valuable source of revenue to the company, and to meet the convenience of golfers and others ordinary season tickets available by first or second class are issued at cheap fares.

Mr. H.G.Henbrey, the Secretary of the company, to whose courtesy we are indebted for much information relating to the line and for the interesting illustrations which accompany this description, states that since opening in July to December 31st last, the tram had run 7000 miles, at a total cost of about £200, including expenses of every description, which is approximately 7d. per tram mile. The cost of the entire line, including the per-

manent way, stations, fencing, engine and car, and engineering fees, has been about £2,300. With reference to the stations it should be noted that, although inexpensive, they are perfectly adapted to the needs of the line, which does not call for elaborate terminal facilities. In fact, to meet the convenience of a few regular passengers, a stop is made at a point near Camber, where no station is provided. A frequent service is maintained, and everything is done to meet the needs of the district; for the tramway undoubtedly fills an otherwise defective gap in the facilities for business and pleasure in Rye.

From these facts it will be seen that we have in Sussex without the aid of Parliament, local authorities or other public bodies, an unpretentious but eminently practical example of the way in which light railways - if strictly regarded as such - may serve the interests of semi-rural districts. In this case a few capable business men without flourish of trumpets have put into practice what has been talked of all over the country, and, while obtaining, we trust, a fair return for their enterprise, have conferred far greater benefits on the district.



The man in front of the coach is a very young W H Austen!

# R & C OPEN PASSENGER WAGONS

Laurie Cooksie provides definitive information

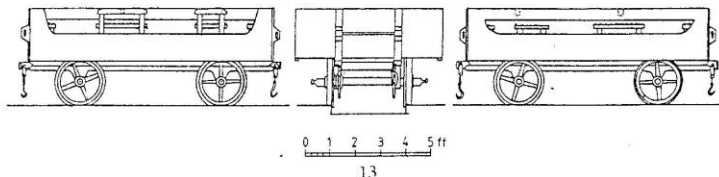
Re the Editor's note in "1938 Jottings" in "The Colonel", Issue 40? it would seem opportune to put matters right regarding the passenger rolling stock of the Rye & Camber Tramway. True, the Company only possessed two carriages (the Bagnall composite provided for the opening in July 1895 and the Rother Ironworks Third Class carriage of 1896) but from the first August Bank Holiday the two flimsy open wagons had to be pressed into service to cater for the large numbers of people travelling to the sands. In 1897 one two-plank and two four-plank open wagons replaced the earlier pair (for permanent way duties and sand traffic respectively) and fitted with carpeted plank seats the latter would be used to supplement the 57 seats available in the enclosed carriages.

In 1918 two small 4-wheel open wagons were acquired which were reported to have been used to carry ammunition on a trench railway during WW1. They were 9'6" long, 5'10" wide and the 2' high sides were extended downwards to mask the tops of the wheels on either side. Each chassis was extended at each end to form a buffing bar onto which side chains were fitted, these being the only means of attachment to the rest of the train! With no springing or brakes and a wheelbase of 5'6", the 1'9" dia. wheels were mounted on inside bearings, but their long protruding axles showed evidence of their having once been mounted in outside bearings.

The bodies were rebuilt to resemble those found on miniature pleasure railways of the time and, to take advantage of the small space available, they had an odd arrangement of two sets of wooden slatted seats facing each other with an additional row behind, giving a cramped seating capacity of 20 passengers per wagon. The 9" high seat backs were level with the top of the western side that had a cut out section with curved bottom ends that ran almost the length of the vehicle. Other than short arm rests that, for a while, were lined with leather held in place by copper rivets, the platform side was completely open.

Sometimes the passenger wagons would be marshalled at the Rye end of the train throughout the day, or else they would bring up the rear in each direction, involving a considerable amount of shunting at each of the termini. Most of the time the trucks worked together, but occasionally they would be operated singly when, with no fleet numbers or other distinguishing features, there would be no means of telling them apart. Both wagons were painted inside and out in the same dark reddish-brown livery to match the closed carriages, and they proved to be very popular with locals and holidaymakers alike. Both vehicles survived until 1947 but it would appear that both were scrapped on site by Messrs. M.E.Engineering in the Spring of that year.

OPEN PASSENGER WAGON c.1921



# PAMELA OLDFIELD & THE RYE & CAMBER TRAMWAY

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## Laurie Cooksey looks into a literary connection

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Reading Gordon Webb's interesting article in the 38th issue of "The Colonel" on Sheila Kaye-Smith's writings incorporating the Kent & East Sussex Railway into many of her novels, brought to mind another lady writer, happily still with us today - Pamela Oldfield.

I am sure that many members will be familiar with her superb book "The Station-Master's Daughter" (first published by Century in 1986, Arrow in 1987 and Warner Books in 1993) based at the fictitious village of Gazedown situated with its own station between Rolvenden and Wittersham Road on the K&ESR, in which her attention to railway details is very thorough. Considerable research has also gone into her descriptions of the Rye & Camber Tramway in "The Gooding Girl", first published by Century Hutchinson Ltd in 1985 and subsequently by Arrow Books from 1986, but with only limited (and not always accurate) information being generally available, errors, though by no means the fault of the writer, are bound to creep in.

Chapter 14 commences with a diary entry dated 28th April 1925 and the following day, a Wednesday, Julia, "*Emily, Ben and Leo met at the Monkbretton Bridge and made their way together to the tram station, a simple building constructed of wood and corrugated iron.*"

Opened on 25th April 1893, the Monkbretton Bridge carries the A259 trunk road between Hastings and Folkestone across the River Rother on the outskirts of Rye. Whilst it was being constructed, plans had already been made to build a golf

course in the sand dunes east of the river, and on 13th July 1895 the 1 1/2 mile Rye & Camber Tramway was opened, not just for the benefit of Golf Club members but for holidaymakers wishing to spend a day on the famous sands, and so fishermen could gain access to their vessels moored at Rye Harbour.

*"...They greeted the other passengers who were already in the carriage - a group of fishermen and a family of early holiday-makers. Going to Camber on the tram was all part of the day's fun and they soon settled themselves on the wooden seats with their picnic baskets between them on the floor. The other carriage was first class and was used almost exclusively by golfers."*

For reference it would appear that Pamela Oldfield gained her information from "The Rye & Camber Tram" by "Rye", that first appeared in "Rye's Own" magazine Volume 2, No. 11 in 1967, and the similarly-titled article by the same writer in the popular "Adams' Historical Guide to Rye Royal". Both articles served their purpose well in providing a brief introduction to the Tramway but, partly owing to a lack of space and more thorough research at the time, some important details have had to be omitted, thus giving an inaccurate impression of the line. Many articles featuring the tramway in the railway press, including one written as early as 1896, have contained several errors and regrettably, these have been perpetuated or misinterpreted by historians ever since! Julia and her friends would have been travelling in the 1896-built Third Class Rother Ironworks car-

riage, but although the original First/Second Class Bagnall carriage had been rebuilt as First and Third Class from June 1919, commencing at the beginning of April 1925 it had become one class only. Despite this, and as Miss Oldfield rightly points out, the few golfers that still patronised the tram at this time would have sought out the comparative privacy of the then cushion-less erstwhile First Class compartment.

*"There were seven fishermen in the carriage - crew of two of the boats moored at Rye Harbour who travelled each day with season tickets. Holiday-makers paid 5d. for a day return to Camber, and for their money would be shaken and jostled in the most delightful way along the two miles of narrow gauge track there and back, at a speed of ten miles per hour. The blue and yellow steam engine would pull two carriages and two open wagons, and the latter would be brought back to Rye full of sand. However Julia, Emily, Leo and Ben had bought single tickets, as they intended to return via the ferry at Rye Harbour."*

From 1919 the fares to Camber had become 4d. single and 7d. return, the equivalent of the Second Class fares that had been in force since the opening of the half-mile extension to Camber Sands in July 1908. The blue and yellow engine referred to is VICTORIA, but by 1921 her original faded paintwork had given way to an all over black livery. As the most powerful engine, it seems highly unlikely that she would have been in service so early in the season, particularly as the Kent Construction Company's little petrol locomotive, delivered in 1924, was already successfully handling all but the heaviest trains. A spur extended into the sand dunes for 6 chains beyond Camber Sands station, from where sand was obtained to sell to the local builders in Rye at 2/6d. per ton, this service being a useful addition to revenue until it ceased towards the

end of the 1920s.

*"... At that moment the engine whistled and with a shuddering jolt the train was off on its first run of the day..." (the 10.00 a.m. from Rye) "... and everyone stared out of the little square windows... The tram slowed down at the golf course to allow golfers to alight and then it continued and stopped again almost directly opposite Rye Harbour."*

The first stop mentioned was beside "Squatter's Right", a large house that had been built around a smaller property in 1895, which was accompanied in 1911 by "Gorse Cottage" one chain closer to Rye on the opposite (southern) side of the line. Although there was no platform, the tram would regularly stop here by request, mainly for "so-called reading parties of Oxford undergraduates" ("Rye Golf Club - The First 90 Years", Dennis Vilder, 1985) who would spend their vacations at "Squatter's Right", then known as "Golf View". A few golfers might have walked along the public right of way that bordered the links, but most would leave the Tram at the stop "opposite Rye Harbour" which was, of course, Golf Links station, from where the distance to the Club House was half that from the previous stop. Passengers wishing to visit Rye Harbour village had to cross the River Rother by a primitive rowing boat ferry.

*"... It was only a matter of minutes before the tram stopped for the last time at the terminus, a grand name for such a simple place. The platform was made of old sleepers and there were no buildings of any kind, but not too far away Thomson's (sic) cafe promised food and shelter."*

Both articles mentioned above state that the platform was "utterly devoid of shelter" (although more recent editions of Adams' Guide have been correctly amended) yet a small wooden hut had been

provided some time prior to the First World War. Messrs. Thompson's were to provide welcome refreshments for day trippers, together with buckets and spades for the children, until their business closed down in the mid-1930s.

This article in no way wishes to belittle Pamela Oldfield's delightful descriptions of the Rye & Camber Tramway, but it does serve to illustrate the many pitfalls that beset an unsuspecting writer basing their stories on an actual date.

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