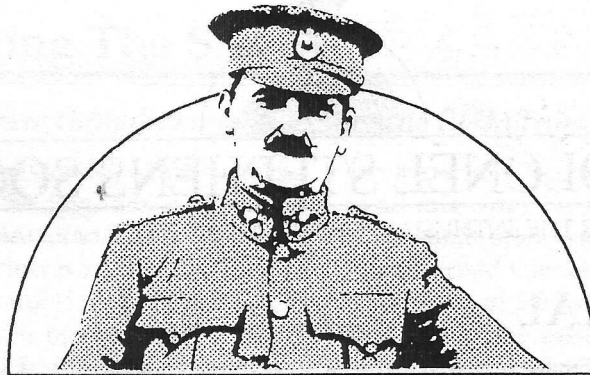


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• THE COLONEL •

Number 51 Winter 1997

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THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY

The Society for the Enthusiast
of the Light & Narrow Gauge Railways of
Holman F. Stephens



THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ENTHUSIAST OF THE RAILWAYS OF HOLMAN F. STEPHENS

EDITORIAL

So, we now know that the 1998 AGM of the Society will be held in the delightful surroundings of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden.

This should be a welcome change from Keen House - after all riding up and down on a vintage steam train must be a better and more interesting way of conducting the essential business of an Annual General Meeting than in the shadow of Pentonville!

From the Agenda printed elsewhere in this issue, the whole affair looks very inviting and it is expected that there will be a good turnout of members.

If you are planning on staying in or around Tenterden, I have a copy of the *Ashford & Tenterden Holiday Guide 1997*, kindly sent to me by David Sutton, and this has details of accomodation of varying luxury - and cost.

I hope to see you all there!

This issue has slipped behind schedule - grovel, grovel, etc. However, I have still dated it in sequence, hence Winter 1997 on the cover! May I again appeal for articles for the next and future issues of *The Colonel*. I have some interesting oddments from various sources - but the interesting articles seem to be few and far between.

Dick Ganderton

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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.

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Modelling The S & M

Here are a few thoughts on modelling the S&M from Albyn Austin.

The 'Ilfracombe Goods', which were the mainstay of the line, are available as 4mm kits from 'Branchlines' at about £100 a time. However, I'm told they're reasonably straightforward to build and make a nice little model.

Kits of the L&NW coal locos are also available. Ratio Midland Railway coaches could be pressed into passenger

service, while Peco may still have sides available for the Criggion Branch 'Granomac' store wagons. I'm sure our more learned members could add a few more items to the list. The S&M is probably one of the easier of the Colonel's railways to model, after the K&ESR. Perhaps the kit of the railcars may reappear or even one for *Gazelle* and her trailer!

Brighton International ModelWorld '98

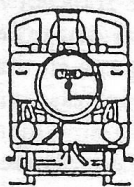
20 - 22 February 1998

Stewards are required for the Colonel Stephens Society Stand.
Contact David Sutton on (01293) 541224.

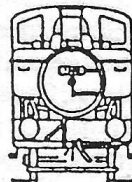
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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Derek Smith

With the festive season once again behind us, I have been wondering how they celebrated the special day on the Colonel's lines, as well as at his headquarters at 23 Salford Terrace. It was, of course, a normal working day on the big four railways, and this was still the case even in 1950. The shop grades had the day off - without pay.

Did Stephens give his staff the day off with pay? Or did he follow the precedent set by the other lines. I would like to think the great man might have called the staff of 23 Salford Terrace to the inner sanctum on Christmas Eve to share a glass of his special whiskey. Or is that just wishful thinking on my

part? I expect some form of record was kept, and might even be in the archives.

Lastly, a large mural has been painted on what is left of the Old Abbey Station building. A new car park has replaced the old track bed and goods yard. The new mural can also be seen from the roadway. However, a section of the platform is still intact.

May I take this belated opportunity to wish all our members a Prosperous New Year. We are looking forward to the new venue for the AGM, when I hope to meet many of you for the first time. I am certain 1998 will be a good year for our Society.

LETTERS

Dear Sir

With reference to David Powells's report on the Aylesbury Show, I would like to comment on the reference to Cyril Freezer. I do not wish to belittle Cyril's effect on the model railway movement as it is today, but to refer to him as a 'founder' is to belittle the effects of others.

Some that come to mind are: John Ahern, who's *Much Madder* was the forerunner of the branch line concept. Malcom Carlsson, all his life the protagonist of H0; P.D. Hancock, surely the father of the narrow gauge modelling. I could go on, Percival Marshall, Reidpath, A.H. Walnely, etc.

Dear Dick,

I wish to refer to Mr Redwoods' note on page 5 of *The Colonel* No. 50 and particularly his request for photos if his book project proceeds. Several years ago I provided prints, mainly portraits of most of the Col Stephens

Cyril Freezer was a recorder, a scribe, bringing the words and work of the real founders to the model railway fraternity following in the footsteps of the editors of M.R.N. from 30 years before. Moving on from that, opening *The Colonel* at page 11 tempts me to open the file of 'What's New?' A recent visit to the Peat Moors Museum near Glastonbury revealed to me that our Iron Age ancestors were living very comfortably in huts similar in size and shape, and to a certain amount, construction some 4000 years ago. There's a prototype for everything?

Doug Ware

locos, taken by my late brother R.G. Jarvis and myself in the 1930s and a few in the 1940s. The scheme was to raise funds for the Society who had virtually all the proceeds.

In the event, the response was very good

LETTERS

and members ordered a considerable number of prints, the orders and distribution being nobly carried out by Les Darbyshire. In addition to the locos, a moderate number of carriage photos plus a few scenes were included. I wonder whether Mr Redwood is aware of those photos, as they are high quality on glass plates taken on a tripod mounted camera. Few have been published, so they may help him, so long as they are credited. I would be happy for him to use them for the book.

My brother's negatives have now passed to the Midland Railway Trust, who would

need to be acknowledged. They have agreed for some photos being published without charge, so long as they are credited, as it gives them some advertisement. However, as the book's publication will obviously be some way off, their latest view should be sought nearer the time, which I am prepared to do.

I gather the Society was retaining a full set for its records, which, no doubt, Mr Redwood should be able to examine. Whilst I still hold spares of a number of the pics, I couldn't supply a full set. Hoping this will be of help.
J. Jarvis

An Short History of the S&M Light Railway

This is a summary of Derek Smith's presentation at the GVT Study Day, with additional details taken from the *GVT Study Pack*.

The original line from quarries near Llanymynech to Shrewsbury was promoted by the quarry owner as part of a double track mainline that would link the Potteries with ports on the North Wales coast. The line opened and close in 1866 when the owning company became bankrupt. The hugely expensive embankment across the Severn flood plain to gain access to Shrewsbury, together with lack of co-operation by the LNWR and the GWR with the 'Potts' company, caused the problems. Most quarry traffic was diverted onto the Cambrian at Llanymynech, in any case.

The line reopened in 1868 with branches to the Criggion quarries and to Nantmwr, but again bankruptcy caused a second closure in 1880. The Cambrian took over the Nantmwr Branch, but various schemes to re-open the rest of the line were unsuccessful until Holman F. Stephens masterminded a re-opening in

1911. Passenger traffic was always sparse and stone traffic off the Criggion Branch was the major source of revenue.

By the 1920s, bus and lorry competition began to badly erode what traffic there was for the railway. The railcars prolonged regular passenger services until 1933 and bank holiday specials were run until 1937. By this time, the line and its two viaducts over the Severn were very run down. A daily goods struggled on, with store traffic being gently edged over Molverley viaduct by the quarry Sentinel shunter.

Military take-over was just in time to save the railway from complete closure. Derek Smith remembered childhood trips on the line including journeys in the railcars, which were very noisy and rough riding. He recalled you could hear the squeal of their wheels long before they came into view. The line was mostly shut in 1960, after military use ceased, but the oil depot at Shrewsbury kept a short section of the line open until 1988.

Albyn Austin

Colonel Stephens Society - Notice of 11th AGM

The 11th AGM of the Colonel Stephens Society is to be held on **Saturday, 25th April 1998** at the Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden. The planned agenda is:-

11.00am

Members to meet at the Colonel Stephens Museum (over the level crossing at Tenterden (KESR) Station). Cars should be parked in the railway car park, which is in the adjacent field. Coffee and biscuits will be provided on arrival. There will be a special tour of the Colonel Stephens Museum, etc.

12.50pm

The AGM will be held on board the 12.50 departure to Northiam in the reserved saloon *Petros*. A buffet will be served *en route* with sandwiches, cakes, tea or coffee. The special saloon will return at 2.22pm.

AGM Agenda

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Actions from the last AGM
- 3) Chairman's Report
- 4) Treasurer's/Membership Secretary's Report
- 5) Election of Officers
 - a) *Treasurer*
 - b) *Membership Secretary*
 - c) *Editor*
 - d) *Publicity Officer*
 - e) *Committee Man.*
 - f) *Committee Man.*
- 6) Subscriptions for 1998/9
- 7) Publicity and Exhibition Matters
- 8) Any Other Business

3.00pm

Visit to KESR Carriage Shed, Tenterden.

4.20pm

An optional extra return trip from Tenterden to Northiam on the Victorian Train - very much in the Colonel Stephens tradition - returning at 5.32pm.

The events for the day of the AGM are subject to last minute alterations.

AGM

Sunday April 26th

About 10.30am

If sufficient interest is shown, a trip to the East Kent Railway and maybe the remains of the Rye & Camber can be arranged. Final details will be arranged on the Saturday. Alternatively, members can have a day on the KESR or visit other local attractions.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Costs

The Society will pay for **Members'** train fares for the AGM train and 4.20 'Victorian Train' The Society will also pay for the buffet for **Members**. Non-members, i.e. spouses/partners, will be most welcome except to the AGM (which is members only. But why not enrol them as members? For a mere £5 they get two train rides and a buffet - a bargain by any criteria!).

**PLEASE BRING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD ALONG TO GAIN
ADMITTANCE TO THE AGM**

Travel/Accommodation

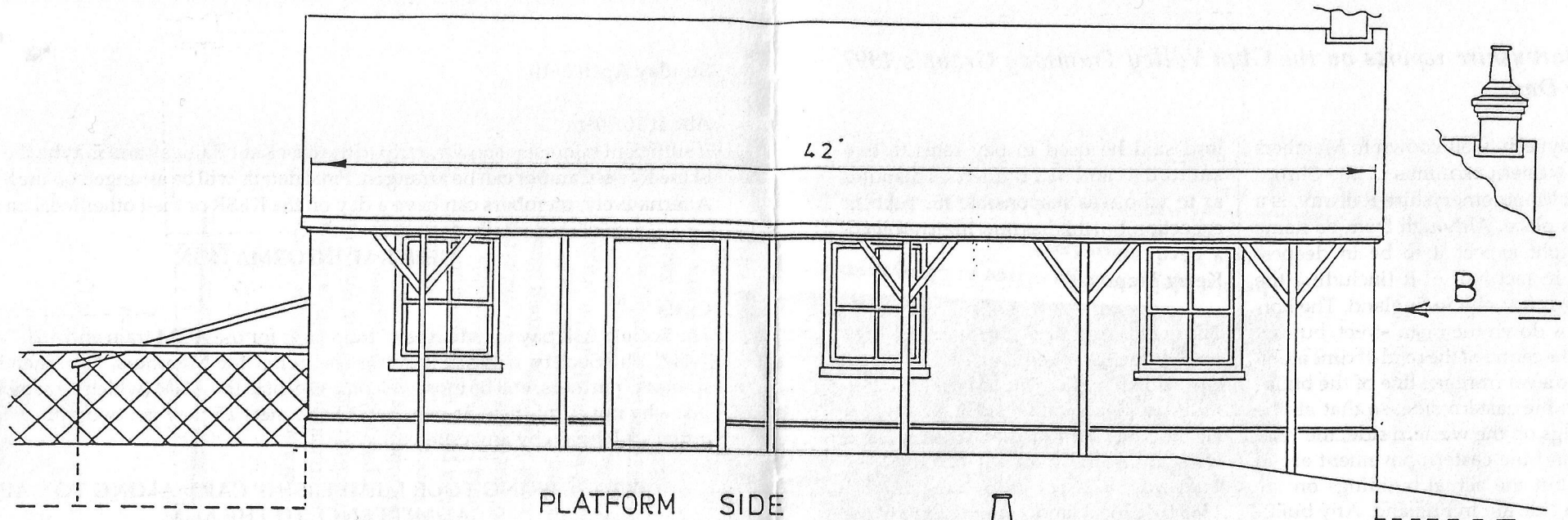
Members should arrange their own travel and accommodation, which appears to be plentiful, either via the Tourist Information Centre at Ashford, Tel: (01233) 629165 (0930-1700 Mon - Sat). (Tenterden TIC is closed until April) or send an s.a.e. to me at the address below for a brief list of telephone numbers/costs of B&B in and around Tenterden, and telephone numbers of bus/rail operators.

AND FINALLY AND MOST IMPORTANTLY

Naturally, the KESR require passenger numbers for the journey and buffet. **Will all members intending to attend please advise me no later than 10th April by 'phone/FAX or letter, otherwise space in the reserved saloon and a buffet meal cannot be guaranteed.**

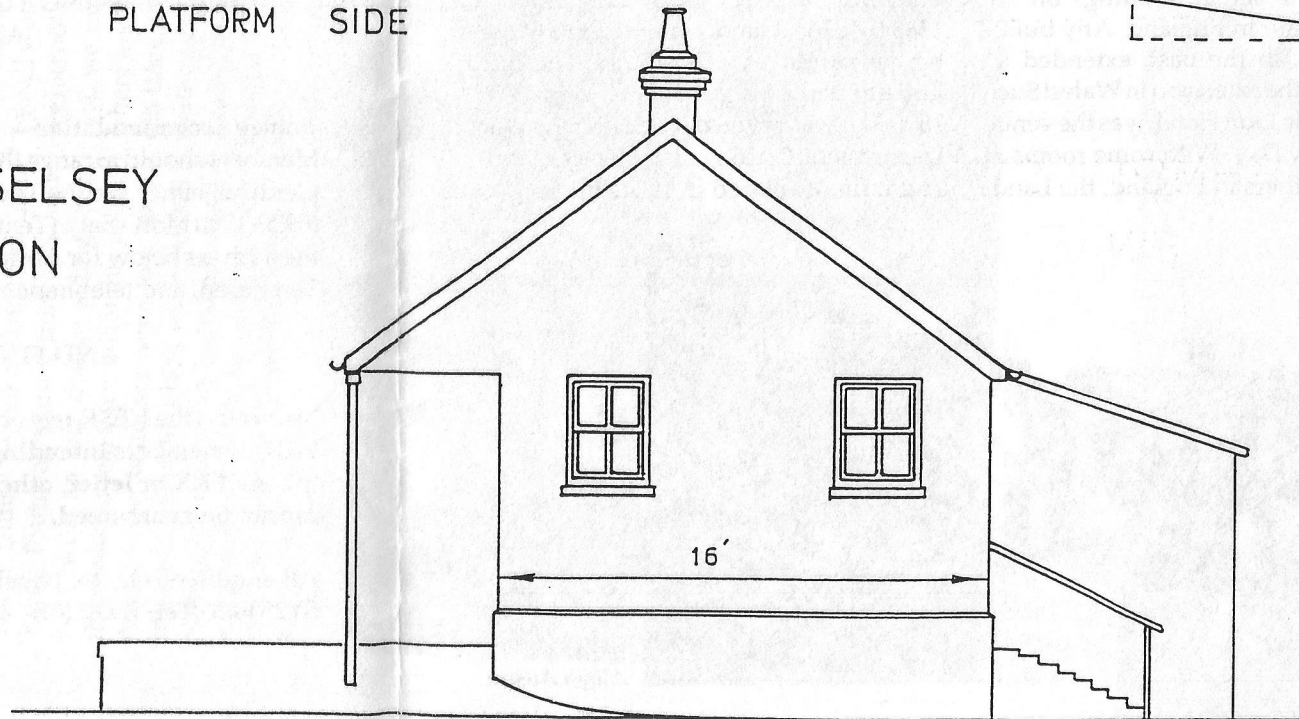
All enquiries, etc. to: Nigel Bird, Bryn Hir, Llwyn-y-Groes, Tregaron, Ceredigion SY25 6PY. Tel/FAX: (01974) 821281.

RON MANN'S DRAWINGS of THE HUNDRED of MANHOOD and SELSEY TRAMWAY



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VIEW ON ARROW B

RON MANN. FEB '93

A WEEKEND AT LLANYMYNECH

Les Darbyshire reports on the Glyn Valley Tramway Group's 1997 Study Day.

Llanymynech, well known to Members as the western terminus of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, is a curious place. Although from its name you might expect it to be in deepest Wales, in fact half of it (including the station) is actually in England. The border runs down the main street, but not down the centre of the road. It runs along the medieval frontage line of the buildings on the eastern side, so that all the buildings on the western side, the road itself, and the eastern pavement are in Wales but the actual buildings on the eastern side are in England. Any building that has, in the past, extended its frontage has the extension in Wales! Such a building, the Lion Hotel, was the venue for our Study Day. With some rooms in Wales and others in England, the Land-

lord said he used to pay rates to two authorities and had numerous disputes as to who was responsible for rubbish collection, but this has now been resolved.

Kerry Tramway

The organised activities were to be held on Sunday 14th September, but I travelled down on the Saturday morning in order to join another event that Bryan Heatley had told me about. This was a walk along the trackbed of the Kerry Tramway, a 2-foot gauge line built in 1888 by a local landowner to exploit the timber resources of the area. The line initially had a very short life, closing in 1895, but was revived in 1917 by the War Department. Once again its life was short, and it finally closed in 1922.



In the Welsh countryside near canal and railway junction.

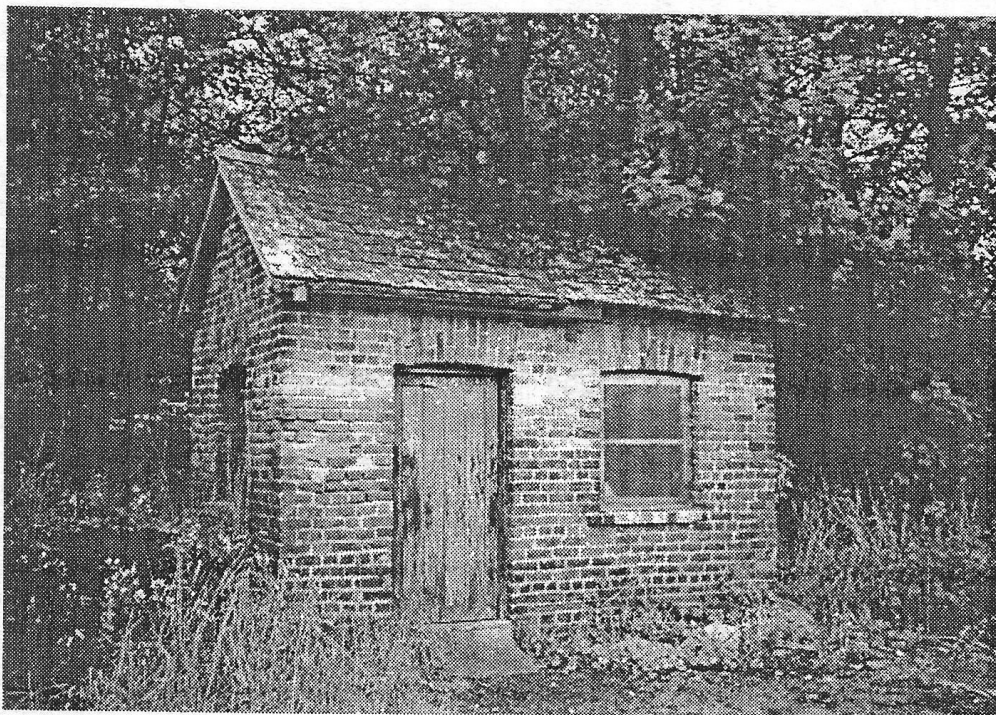
Albyn Austin

A WEEKEND AT LLANYMYNECH

We started with a look at Kerry station which was the terminus of a standard-gauge Great Western (previously Cambrian Railways) branch from Abermule on the Welshpool - Newtown line. The station still exists in private hands, as does the GWR loco shed, a rather flimsy wooden structure. The Kerry Tramway started from the yard here, with an interchange siding, but there was no real trace of it at this point. After a short walk, we came to a clear stretch of trackbed which we followed, passing the Tramway's loco shed which was a well-built brick structure, in complete contrast to the Great Western one seen earlier!

The trackbed climbed steadily, pass-

ing the site of a one-time triangular junction with a branch and crossing a bridge. After a stretch of road walking where the line was impassable, we regained the route and followed it for some time, climbing very steeply all the way, until we came to a point where continuation by rail would have been impossible. As we have not reached the known end of the line, we must have gone wrong somewhere and lost our way! In fact, a modern track had wandered off the original route and we had been following that! A scramble up a steep and brambly slope brought us back on to the track again, and we followed it to a point where we could return in more comfort along a road. It had been an interesting after-



The old weighbridge office at Llanymynech Goods Yard. *Albyn Austin*

A WEEKEND AT LLANYMYNECH

noon's walk; we had certainly got the 'feel' of the line, even though little remained after 75 years of closure.

Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway

The next day, having slept in Wales, but breakfasted in England, I found that a large body of enthusiasts had assembled at the hotel, including a substantial proportion of Society members. After the usual welcome by the GVTG's Chairman, Bernard Rockett, and their Treasurer and event organiser, Bryan Heatley, the proceedings commenced with a talk by our own Chairman, Derek Smith. He outlined the troubled history of the Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway and its eventual revival by Colonel Stephens as the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire. He took us through its decline and its war-time resurgence under War Department control, ending with its final closure in the Sixties.

Quarrying

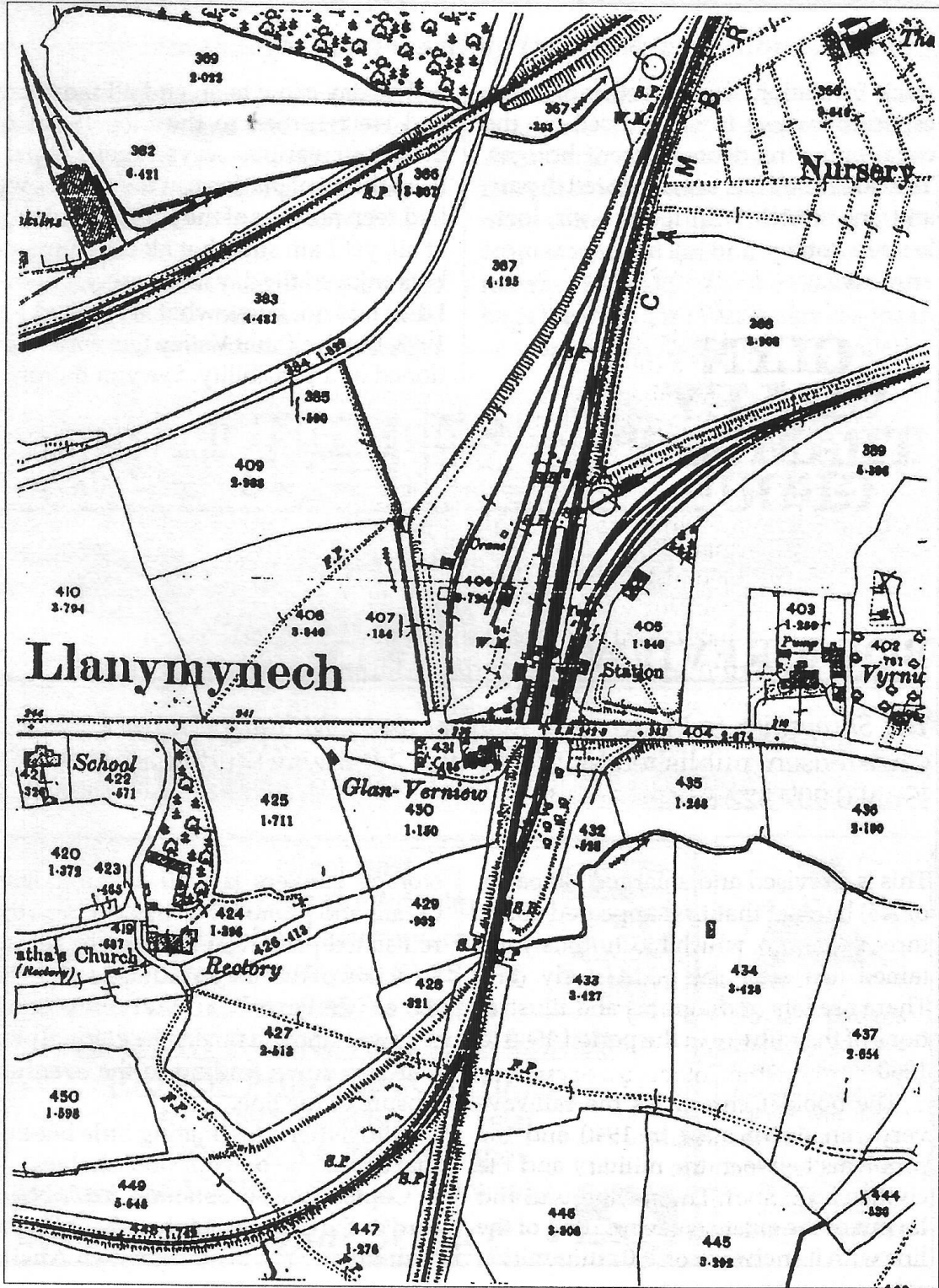
The second talk of the day was by a local historian, John Humphreys, and was entitled "Railways and Industries around Llanymynech". Those who thought that the railway history of the district revolved around the Colonel's works could not have been more wrong. The whole area teemed with industrial activity long before the Colonel was born! Much of it was connected with quarrying, and the scars on the hillsides around the town provided evidence of that. The

Montgomery Canal (later part of the Shropshire Union) passed through the town, and several tramways were built to connect the quarries to the canal and to limekilns. The Oswestry - Welshpool section of the Cambrian came through much later, followed by the planned trunk line of the 'Potts'. When the latter closed, the Cambrian utilised part of its route to realign their Llanfyllin branch, which previously had had a most unsatisfactory trailing junction with the main line. It was a complex story, but John got it over well with the aid of some excellent maps.

Walking Tour

After lunch, we went on a walking tour of some of the sites mentioned during the morning's talks. We started at the station, where all the lines had long been closed. The site was quite large, reflecting the one-time importance of the station, and the 'main line' of the Cambrian could be seen stretching into the distance in both directions. There were a few remains - platforms, including the curved one for the S & M, a weighbridge office and a GWR van body, but little else. All very sad. The rest of the afternoon was spent exploring some of the tramways, the canal and the remains of the complex of standard gauge lines that we had seen on the maps in the morning. This was fascinating, with little imagination being needed to picture what it must have been like 100 years or more ago. In particular, the trackbed of the 'Potts' line, built to main line standards with double

A WEEKEND AT LLANMYNECH

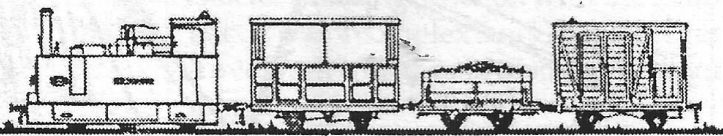


A WEEKEND AT LLANYMYNECH

track formation, was most impressive especially where it was crossed by the canal and a road on adjacent bridges. The canal itself has been restored in part, and one stretch with locks, weir, lock-keepers cottage and toll house was most attractive.

The day came to an end all too soon, and we returned to the Lion Hotel to make our various ways home. Apart from the bit of platform at the station, we had seen nothing of the Colonel's works at all, yet I am sure that all of our members enjoyed the day immensely. I know I did! I do not know what is planned for 1998, but the Tanat Valley line was mentioned as a possibility. See you there!

**GLYN
VALLEY
TRAMWAY
GROUP**



BOOK REVIEW

The Shropshire & Montgomery Railway under Military Control by Mike Christensen, published by World War 2 Railway Study Group, £4.95, ISBN 0 907 322 65 4.

This is a revised and enlarged (40 pages of A5) booklet that first appeared about three years ago, which I fortuitously obtained just after the S&M study day. There are lots of diagrams and illustrations of the railway in the period 1940 to 1960.

The booklet chronicles the railways very run down state in 1940 and the problems between the military and the civilian S&M staff. The background and layout of the extensive rebuilding of the line with its network of 200 ammunition

storage bankers is well covered with details and photos of train workings, the reinstated passenger service, the reconstruction of the line's viaducts across the River Severn at Melveley and Shrawardine and finally the gradual post war run down leading to the eventual closure of the line.

Altogether a fascinating little booklet that should be on your bookshelves.

Copies can be obtained from Nigel Bird or the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenderden. **Albyn Austin**

FOR THE LIGHT RAILWAY MODELLER

The Society, while not specifically aimed at those who model the light railways of Colonel Stephens, does have modellers among its members. This section caters especially for them.

A BETTER CHASSIS FOR TENTERDEN

In the light of the recent rekindling of interest in kits for the K&ESR Hawthorn Leslie 2-4-0Ts, members might be interested in Stephen Hannington's (004) experience in building the 4mm scale version, currently being sold by Roxey Mouldings.

The origins of this kit go back to 1989, when it was first developed and sold by a chap called Iain Young. He now trades as Sans Pareil and retails of the 7mm version of the kit.

My own 4mm sample was one of the earliest batches, bought before Roxey Mouldings added it to its roster. Interestingly, Roxey was still selling its version in 1995 - the latest price list I have - for the same price I paid in 1990, just over £60, including gears.

Doubts

I wrote a preliminary report for *The Colonel*, published in Spring 1990, in which I assessed the as yet unbuilt kit. Then I expressed some doubts about the chassis design. These doubts were confirmed, and I wrote about the finished model in the description of my *Rye Town* layout in the June 1994 *British Railway Modelling* - that it was "a somewhat temperamental runner".

The problem was due to the driving axles being carried in a sub-frame that pivots between the mainframes. The unpowered axle ran in sprung hornblocks, as did the pony axle mounted

in the mainframes proper (Fig. 1).

Once the pick ups were fitted - wipers bearing on the tops of the wheel rims - the sub-frame no longer pivoted freely. Neither did the sprung hornblocks work. The result was a chassis that tended to simply go out of true and stay that way with monotonous regularity.

Fig. 1: As supplied.

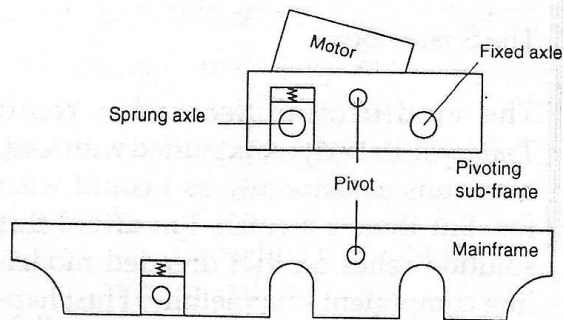
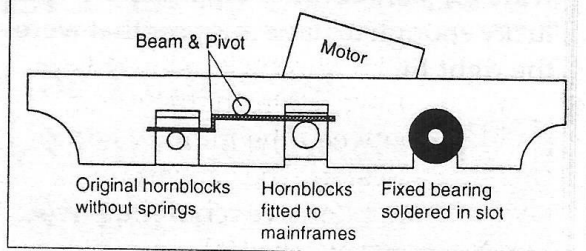


Fig. 2: As modified.



FOR THE LIGHT RAILWAY MODELLER

Beam Compensation

The solution is shown in Fig. 2, in which conventional beam compensation was used. For the fixed, driven axle, bearings were soldered into the oversize slots in the mainframe. Slots for the other driving axle were filed out square and the original hornblocks, minus spring, fitted in place. The pony axle arrangement simply had its springs removed.

A beam was fitted with the pivot halfway between the pony and the leading driver. Half of the sub-frame was retained as a motor/gear mounting. The other half was hacked away. The modified sub-frame was kept in place by the original pivot and prevented from pivoting, of course, by the new fixed bearings.

The Spares Box

The modification worked a treat: *Tenterden*, its bodywork stuffed with lead, now runs as smoothly as I could wish for. But there's a catch. I'm afraid this solution relies on that dreaded modelling component - "something I just happened to have in the spares box!" In this case, it's the bearings for the fixed axle. The slots in the kit's mainframes are too wide for standard top-hat bushes. I was lucky enough to have this pair that were the right fit.

Tight Clearances

The other point to look out for is that if, like me, you choose to build the bigger-wheeled *Tenterden*, you will need to make cut-outs in the footplate to clear the larger driving wheels. The prototype's clearances must have been pretty tight.

Also, watch out for clearances around the crosshead. In EM Gauge, it runs pretty tight between the footsteps and the pony wheel.

And pick-ups on the pony wheel are a good idea, too. I used curved phosphor bronze strip attached to a piece of printed circuit board (p.c.b.) sleeper. This was then fitted between the frames and permanently fixed in place using Araldite.

Aside from all that, the body went together very nicely indeed and gave no cause for complaint at all. Incidentally, I use Humbrol No. 96 RAF Blue for all my K&ESR bodywork, as it gives a nice rendition of well-faded Oxford Blue, the original K&ESR colour.

And finally, I have been unable to get in touch with Roxey's proprietor David Hammersley, so I don't know if the kit's design has been modified since I bought it. But these notes might be of help to anyone that has a pivot frame kit but has not yet built it. You should find it somewhat easier to modify - I had to do mine after I'd built it!