

---

---

# THE COLONEL

---

**Number 63**

**Summer 2001**

---

## CONTENTS

2 - Editorial

3 - News

6 - Letters

8 - AGM 2001 Report

11 - The Colonel and

Mister Kipling, part two

15 - Signalling the Callington

Branch, part three

19 - Book Review: Light

Railways Explored

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY  
FOR THE ENTHUSIAST OF THE LIGHT AND NARROW GAUGE  
RAILWAYS OF COLONEL HOLMAN F. STEPHENS

## Editorial: a sense of purpose

---

Another AGM has come and gone, and this time a particularly successful one, if attendance numbers are anything to go by. Tenterden is proving to be a popular venue for us, not least because of the unique opportunity to travel twenty miles there and back along the route of one of the Great Man's very own railways.

Those of you for whom the journey 'dahn sahf' was too much or too inconvenient to contemplate, and who are maybe feeling a bit left out, should take heart from the fact that the next AGM will once again move north, with the possibility of something involving the recently re-opened Welsh Highland Railway on the cards.

Personally, I draw particular satisfaction from the fact that this year's AGM chose to not only continue donating our money to worthwhile causes, but also opted to increase the funds available from £200 to £500.

This will enable us to do some real good out there where people are shedding blood, sweat and tears on reviving, renovating and restoring the Colonel's heritage. Last year's

donations won us friends in various organisations, helped to get some valuable work done, and began to give us a wider sense of purpose.

There have been criticisms in various quarters that our society talked a lot but did very little: particularly in the context of AGMs, where the same debates seem to take place year after year, to no noticeable effect.

I like to think that that is no longer the case, and that this year we saw some real progress made, not least because of the donations we made and the fruits they bore. We can, for example, watch *Spitfire* chugging up and down the East Kent Railway with some pride, knowing that we did our bit to help make this happen.

The AGM was reluctant to make donations a formal, ongoing policy. While that's understandable, I think it's a shame. What better use could we make of our money? Answers on a postcard, please. *SH*

---

## Staff Officers

[www.colonelstephenssociety.org.uk](http://www.colonelstephenssociety.org.uk)

---

### CHAIRMAN

**Derek Smith**

30 Upper Road, Meole Brace,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9SQ  
Tel: 01743 249088

### EDITOR

**Stephen Hannington**

131 Borstal Street, Rochester,  
Kent ME1 3JU  
Tel: 01634 830370  
Email: [steveh@tivoli.demon.co.uk](mailto:steveh@tivoli.demon.co.uk)

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

**David Powell**

Gateways, Bledlow Road, Saunderton,  
Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 9NG  
Tel: 01844 343377  
Email: [DJPowellLtd@compuserve.com](mailto:DJPowellLtd@compuserve.com)

### TREASURER

**Nigel Bird**

Bryn Hir, Llanio Road, Llwyn-y-Groes,  
Tregaron, Dyfed SY25 6PY  
Tel: 01974 821281  
Email: [nigelbird.books@virgin.net](mailto:nigelbird.books@virgin.net)

### ARCHIVIST

**Stuart Marshall**

53 Peasland Road, Saffron Walden,  
Essex CB11 3ED. Tel: 01799 500528  
Email: [chrisstu66@compuserve.com](mailto:chrisstu66@compuserve.com)

### PUBLICITY OFFICER

**Julia Hastings**

4 Coronation Cottages, Robertsbridge,  
East Sussex TN32 5PE  
Tel: 01580 881711  
Email: [juliajekyll@madasafish.com](mailto:juliajekyll@madasafish.com)

---

## Society News

---

# AGM 2001 freezes fees for yet another year

With 24 members attending, this year's AGM in Tenterden was one of the most popular ever, beaten only by the last time we met at Tenterden and 28 showed up. Of this year's crop, 17 embarked on the society-funded trip over K&ESR metals to Northiam and back in our chartered SE&CR saloon. Much fun was had, despite the dull, drizzly weather.

The committee was re-elected *en bloc*, with no posts contested. A proposal to raise membership fees was defeated, with the exception that overseas subscriptions will be raised to £10 a year to cover costs.

Our kitty remains well-stocked, with almost £4000 in hand as of the end of March. The meeting voted that £150 of this should be spent on publicity, including advertising.

A further £500 is to be given in donations to Colonel-related preservation projects, following on from the £200 donated last year. The committee is to meet to decide who the beneficiaries are to be.

Membership numbers are up again, with 220 on the lists at the time of the meeting, which is 35 more than at the same time the previous year. This included our first recruit via our Web site: welcome to John Peet, number 502 of Northampton. Two more members have joined us since the meeting.

As a result of discussions at the AGM, the society has opted to join Railway Associations In London (RAIL), a 'society of societies' that brings together representatives of railway-related organisations in London and the South East to share information, contacts and publicity. Editor Stephen Hannington will represent our society at RAIL meetings. RAIL's Website is at [www.users.surfaid.org/~landiacb/rail](http://www.users.surfaid.org/~landiacb/rail).

A full report of the AGM's proceedings can be found on page 8. ●

---

## Membership contact list available

Enclosed with this issue is our first Members Contact List, which includes all those members who have agreed to their addresses, and optionally their telephone numbers, being circulated.

Some of you suggested that e-mail addresses be included. At the moment, membership secretary David Powell says he has had enough headaches interpreting and transcribing telephone numbers and post-codes, so this proposal is on hold for the moment.

"If there are any errors and omissions, for which I can only apologize in advance and blame on an excess of aspirin," said David, "you will have an opportunity to up-

date your details when we send out the subscription renewal forms in the autumn with the next issue of *The Colonel*."

David is considering adding some form of simple code so that members may indicate particular interests. For example: 'S&M, R, M7' would show particular interest in the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway, that the member has or is undertaking further research, and is modelling in 7mm scale. If any members have any further ideas about what else could be indicated, please contact David at the address shown opposite. ●

## News

# Collection of Colonel photos

Kidderminster Railway Museum, the Severn Valley Railway site that hosted our last AGM, has revealed that it has a significant collection of photographs of the Colonel's railways. Copies are on sale for personal or research purposes.

Photographic archivist Audie Baker supplied your editor with an impressive contact sheet listing of nearly 300 photos of subjects including the K&ESR, EKLR, S&MR, WC&PR, Welsh Highland and Festiniog Railways.

Many have already been published, but a significant number have not. Particular highlights include an S&MR horse-drawn delivery cart, and EKLR Radial Tank No.5 undergoing heavy overhaul. The collection includes photos by Eric Parker and John Adams.

Prints cost between £1.25 and £4

apiece, depending on size required: the latter price is for a 10" x 8". An extra £4 is charged if a copy negative needs to be made, which is the case for about half of the pictures.

Sheets of 'mini visuals', including small print-outs of images plus descriptions - 12 per A4 page - are available. Up to five pages are supplied free: any extra cost 20p each. From these you can select and order the prints you want.

You can contact Audie with your specific requirements, stating the subject areas you are interested in, at Kidderminster Railway Museum, Station Approach, Comberton Hill, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 1QX; or email him at [audie@krm.org.uk](mailto:audie@krm.org.uk).

Audie points out that the museum is holding a postcard/railway photograph open day on 18 August between 10.00am and 5.00pm. The museum's archive of 15,000 images will be available for searches, plus commercial dealers will be there. ●

## Tribute to Brent

In tribute to former CSS member and much-missed railway modeller Martin Brent, who passed away last July, Christopher Langdon, friend and organiser of the Missenden Abbey Railway Modellers Weekends to which Martin contributed so much, has produced a 48-page A4 booklet celebrating his work.

Titled *Martin Brent, Master Model Maker*, it includes descriptions of his 7mm scale layout *Arcadia*, reprinted from *Railway Modeller*, plus a series of practical modelling tips titled *Workshop Wangles* that he wrote for the Missenden courses.

Well worth a read, the booklet costs £4.95, including postage, from Christopher at 13 Lodge End, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 7EB. Cheques should be made payable to Missenden Railway Modellers.

The next Missenden Railway Modellers Weekend is scheduled for 15-17 March next year. Details are available on the Web at [www.chrasco.uk.co/rmwweekend](http://www.chrasco.uk.co/rmwweekend) ●

➔SEE ALSO BRENT'S BROWSINGS, BACK PAGE

## Volunteers wanted

The organisers of Brighton Modelworld have invited the Colonel Stephens Society to take a stand at the show during 15-17 February next year. Editor Stephen Hannington is prepared to organise this and help man the stand, but further volunteers are needed.

You need not attend every day, and you'll get a chance to see the show, which includes other modelling disciplines as well as railways, for free. We must confirm by mid July, so please contact Stephen - details are at the foot of page 2 - immediately if you are ready, willing and able to assist. ●

## Rare Camber pic revealed



Laurie Cooksey, author of the definitive history of the Rye & Camber Tramway, discovered this unique photograph of the short-lived terminus on the railway's deviation at Camber Sands, which was open between 6 April and 4 September 1939.

He discovered it in the collection of the late Ken Clarke, a local historian, which is now in the care of the Colonel Stephens Museum and Archives at Tenterden.

Laurie writes: "As at the original Camber Sands station (1908-1938), the track layout comprised just a run-round loop on the south (sea) side. I had been led to believe that the platform was sleeper-built, but although it boasted a neat timber facing, it was surfaced with gravel and was considerably wider than its predecessor.

"No shelter was provided and its only facilities for waiting passengers were two rustic bench seats. Access to the new station was via a quarter-mile-long footpath that passed out of the picture to the right and climbed steeply over the sand hills to reach

Rye road beside the coastguard cottages to the west of Camber village."

The place where sand was 'quarried' by the tramway can just be seen beyond and to the right of the train. The low embankment on which the station stood is still visible, and the remains of one of the wooden uprights was still in position at the eastern end of the platform mound earlier this year. ■

● *Anyone wishing to witness Laurie's alter ego as the Keith Moon-alike drummer of the superb '60s top-hits band The 6Ts (geddit?) can do so at the K&ESR's **Steam & Country Fair** at Northiam station on the weekend of 21 and 22 July. Steam engines, fun-fair, vintage vehicles, real ale tent and a flypast by Spitfires are among the other attractions: as well as steam trains from Tenterden, of course. Flares and tie-dyed T-shirts optional.*

# Dispatches

*Letters to the editor*

## Rye & Camber revival pipedream

*"An ambitious plan to build a light railway between Rye and Camber could ease summer season gridlock. Supporters of the idea say it would be a top tourist attraction for the area, as well as providing extra transport for local people. And it would provide a direct link to Rye for the hundreds of holidaymakers staying at Camber Sands."*

So reported the *Rye Observer* of Friday 4 May 2001 under the heading "*Rail Link Plan To Ease Congestion*". The article went on to say how there has been increasing traffic chaos during the summer season, and on one occasion last year, the police had to close Camber to traffic.

Christopher Strangeways of Iden believes that European funding for such a project would be available, and he now hopes to launch a feasibility study to look at costing, possible routes and planning constraints.

The original idea came from Steve Woods, a volunteer on the K&ESR, in 1998. The proposal captured the imagination of the government officer David Andrew when it was floated as a possibility in Rye's bid for generation money, but Rye Partnership shelved the idea after deciding it was too ambitious and too complex.

Now Mr Strangeways believes the time is right to re-look at the idea, stating that "the principal benefit will be to reduce pressure on the road system around Rye, particularly in the high season. It is also possible that a line could be used for freight transfer, which would have the effect of unlocking some of the potential of Rye Harbour, currently constrained due to the lack of road capacity.

"Communities at Rye Harbour and Camber would have improved connections with Rye and create a safe and reliable form of public transport." Rye Council voted to support the idea in principal, with the rider that it cannot afford to contribute financially.

Since my report in *The Colonel* number 54, Winter 1998, I was invited to attend a meeting on 6 September 1999, chaired by Christopher Strangeways, of those interested in providing a rail link between Rye and

Camber.

It immediately became clear to me that these gentlemen knew little or nothing about building or running a railway. They had not looked into possible routes for the line, had not spoken to any of the landowners, and were not even sure what the gauge should be.

I do not know if they had any more meetings, but possibly because I might have given the false impression of being against the scheme, I was certainly not invited! The main 'carrot' behind this proposal all along seems to have been the magic 'European Funding', but even if this could be secured, if we are honest, Camber does not need a railway.

OK, so the road had to be closed on just one occasion in 2000: it used to be closed many more times in recent years, but people visiting the sands are becoming fewer each year. And as for day-trippers leaving their cars in Rye, where are they going to park?

There are insufficient car parks for those visiting the 'Antient Town', and how many, realistically, would leave their vehicle in Rye to travel the last four miles by train? If those staying at the two holiday camps in the village wish to leave their cars and go into Rye, they are served by the "safe and reliable" Stagecoach bus service that passes their gates every hour.

More than anyone else, I would like to see a rail link between Rye and Camber, but let's be honest: it's never going to happen! And if these men want to 'play trains' that's fair enough by me, so long as they do not go wasting government and other officials' time.

*Laurie A. Cooksey,  
Camber,  
East Sussex*

## The Colonel, Seaton and Barry

Brian Hart may be of the opinion, with regard to Holman Stephens, that "it cannot be claimed that he was responsible for the Cranbrook and Paddock Wood Railway" and that he was, as the review in *Colonel 62* states, "essentially carrying out the instructions of the SER's chief engineer Edward Seaton, who should be regarded as the true architect of the branch".

Stephens was of another opinion! In his submission to become associate of the Institute of Civil Engineers in May 1894, which was proposed by Seaton and approved in December 1894, Stephens stated that:

"Since 1890 to date I have acted as Resident Engineer on the Cranbrook and Paddock Wood Railway, and assisted in the design of 20 small bridges, two short tunnels, six stations etc., and, in the capacity above-named, have been entrusted with the sole supervision of the works, including setting out the line etc."

Given the range of other activities that Seaton was involved in at the time, he would have had limited time to do more than ap-

prove Stephens proposed designs and offer guidance. I think that this goes slightly beyond Hart's description.

Maybe I can also add a little more about Arthur J. Barry [*mentioned in previous Colonels as the engineer for the proposed Robertsbridge and Pevensy Light Railway*]. He was clearly one of Stephens' closer engineering friends, and it is almost certain that they must have talked together about the Robertsbridge and Pevensy Light Railway and other matters of interest.

Barry was one of the ten members of the Institute of Civil Engineers who signed in support of Stephens' application to be transferred from the status of associate to that of member, received by the ICE in January 1914. Since the signatories were not in alphabetical order, he was presumably the fourth of the ten to sign his name.

Barry also put his initials against items in Stephens' resumé of which he had experience, including the West Sussex Railway, and the East Cornwall Mineral Railway. This suggests an association going back at least to 1897. Barry was transferred to membership from associate of the ICE in May 1893, and gave his address in 1914 as 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

I am on the track of more details of Stephens' engineering associates and, as my research proceeds, will have more details on Barry's career. Members will be delighted to know that one of these associates, Henry Percy Maybury, laid out the Glyn Valley Tramway and provides the link with the Dennis family who promoted both the Glyn Valley and the Snailbeach District.

*Tony Michell, East Grinstead,  
West Sussex*

### **Nigel Bird Books**

**RAILWAY BOOKS  
RARE, OUT OF PRINT,  
SECONDHAND AND NEW  
BOUGHT, SOLD AND  
SEARCHED FOR**

SAE for current catalogue to:  
Nigel Bird (Books)

Brynhir, Llwynygroes, Tregaron,  
Ceredigion SY25 6PY

Tel: 01974 821281 Fax: 01974 821548

Email: [nigelbird.books@virgin.net](mailto:nigelbird.books@virgin.net)

Website: <http://www.nigelbirdbooks.co.uk>

# AGM 2001 REPORT

In one of the best-attended AGMs in recent years, 24 members showed up at the Vine Inn in Tenterden on 29 April, of whom 17 subsequently enjoyed the society-funded train ride on the K&ESR to Northiam and back.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Chairman

*Derek Smith* sent this written report:

“What a big improvement in the new *Colonel*. At last we can see what the photos look like. Stuart Marshall has done a super job of the printing, and also Nigel Bird, who took over the filling of envelopes and posting.

“It’s good to see our membership is on the way up again. Thanks for David Powell’s efforts.

“Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the AGM for the first time since I became chairman. Over the weekend we will have our first public steaming at Coleham Pumping Station for 30 years. I have been involved in restoring one beam engine and one boiler for the past ten years. We are almost there. We did steam a little on 2 January to mark the 100 years since the station opened.

“I think it’s almost certain the *Colonel* knew the pumping station and may have visited, as it is quite near Shrewsbury Abbey station [on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway].

“I am sorry to miss the AGM and train ride. You will have a good day out, I know.

“I am willing to stand for re-election as chairman.”

### Treasurer

The society continues to remain in good financial heart with a small increase in our cash at bank position, despite the purchase of additional software for the new look, and much improved *Colonel* and donations to various *Colonel*-related projects.

However, I do feel that a small increase in membership fees is justified to offset the additional costs of producing the digital *Colonel* and ever-increasing costs of station-

ery for mailing and so on. I therefore propose:

UK single membership: £6

UK joint membership (one *Colonel* to same address): £9

Overseas (by Airmail): £10

Once again I suggest we spend some money on promoting the society via specialist magazines to attempt to increase membership. A set budget should be allocated and spent each year to these ends.

I am prepared to stand for re-election.

*Nigel Bird*

### Membership Secretary

As at the date of the AGM, society membership stood at 220, compared with 185 at this time last year. Over the year we have gained 40 new members and lost five, including three deceased. Included in the gains is the first member to join via the Website: welcome to Mr Peet, membership number 502.

A list of members was to be prepared for publication in the next issue of *The Colonel*.

*David Powell*

### Editor

The new digital printing process has created great improvements in *The Colonel*, and thanks are due to Stuart Marshall for his help in negotiating arrangements with our new printers, his employers Stephen Austin & Sons. The move to professional printing also open up the possibility of further improvements in future, such as the use of glossy paper.

Formal thanks were expressed to Alan and Mary Garner, who had photocopied, stuffed into envelopes and mailed all previous issues of *The Colonel*.

A formal vote of thanks was also carried for Dr Robert Kinghorn for helping to set up the society’s Website, which carries information on the society, a membership form, the index to *The Colonel* and a brief listing of the *Colonel*’s railways. A straw poll of the meeting revealed that about half the membership have access to the Internet. There is



plenty of potential for future development of the Website.

The *Colonel* now regularly runs to 20 pages, instead of the previous 16, and is likely to continue to do so. A lot of good material is in hand, though contributions are always welcomed. Correspondents to keep the society informed of developments on the Welsh Highland and Festiniog railways are needed to continue the current policy of covering the current preservation scene.

The editor also reviewed the results of donations to Colonel-related preservation projects, to each of which the society donated £50: Barclay 0-4-0ST *Spitfire* is back in service; Kerr Stuart diesel 4415 on the Festiniog is awaiting restoration; K&ESR Terrier number 3 *Bodiam* is still being rebuilt; and the new canteen on the Rother Valley Railway at Robertsbridge is now in use.

*Stephen Hannington*

### Publicity

Publicity officer Julia Hastings was unable to attend the AGM for health reasons. In a written report, she suggested that the society should try to interest the editor of *Heritage Railway* magazine in a story about the society. She also suggested that the society should advertise in the newsletters of Colonel-related societies such as the Rother Valley Railway Supporters Association and the East Kent Light Railway Society.

The society could also consider running an annual exhibition of model railways and sales stands.

Commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Colonel's death could include decking a locomotive at Robertsbridge in flowers, and possibly the appearance of a Colonel lookalike (Julia suggested her second cousin!).

Regarding advertising in the larger railway magazines, Julia had made some enquiries and concluded that it would be a waste of money, since it would cost between £63 and £90 a month for a 3x9cm display advert.

She had also succeeded in persuading the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden on the K&ESR to display a recruiting poster for the society.

David Powell has produced a publicity pack for the Warley model railway exhibition at the NEC.

### ELECTIONS

All the officers were prepared to stand for re-election. It was proposed by Les Darbyshire and seconded by Laurie Cooksey that the committee be re-elected *en bloc*. This motion was passed without opposition.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

<b>Balance brought forward</b>	<b>£1443.71</b>
<b>INCOME £</b>	
Subs received	1185.00
Donations received	19.00
Back issue sales	113.06
Interest received on current account	9.31
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£1336.37 +</b>
	<b>£2780.08</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE £</b>	
Printing/posting	
<i>The Colonel</i>	556.68
Committee expenses	82.24
Website costs	102.22
Software for <i>Colonel</i>	99.99
Donations	200.00
Corporate memberships	23.00
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£1064.11 -</b>
Balance	£1715.97
Plus unrepresented cheque	£45.44
<b>Balance as per bank statement of 30.4.01</b>	<b>£1761.41</b>
<b>On deposit inc. interest</b>	<b>£2202.80</b>
<b>Total cash assets</b>	<b>£3918.77</b>

Treasurer Nigel Bird proposed that subscriptions should be increased as detailed above. He said: "For the benefit of the policy we might be adopting of donations [to Colonel-related projects], I think £6 is appropriate." He added: "We are covering costs and still generating a surplus."

In particular, Nigel pointed out that the cost of mailing *The Colonel* to overseas members, of which we now have eight, makes the current fee uneconomic. He pointed out: "If the Website takes off, we may end up with 50 overseas members this time next year."

However, the meeting remained unconvinced that an increase in subscriptions was either necessary or justified, especially with reference to the surplus on deposit of more than £2000. After debate, Nigel modified his proposal to a £5 minimum plus voluntary donation for UK single membership, £8 for joint members and £10 overseas. This was seconded by Les Darbyshire and passed in the subsequent vote.

### DONATIONS

A proposal was put to the meeting that the society donate £500 to related causes this year, up from £200 last year. There were calls from the floor for a definition of the society's donations policy, and a general resistance to the idea of donations becoming an automatic ongoing policy of the society.

It was argued that the society should decide on making donations on a year-by-year basis. The proposal that the society should "continue its donation policy for one more year" was agreed. The proposal by Stephen Hannington, seconded by David Powell, that a total donation of £500 should be made was passed by the AGM.

The committee will meet at a date to be decided to agree which projects should benefit from donations.

### PUBLICITY BUDGET

David Powell proposed, seconded by Don Hillier, that a budget of £150 be set for publicity purposes. The motion was passed by the AGM.

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1) **Enamel Society Badges:** These have been sold out. It is believed that the manufacturer is still trading and, in view of continuing interest expressed at the AGM, Nigel Bird will look into the possibility of having

more made.

2) **Binders:** The committee will continue to look into the possibility of sourcing binders for *The Colonel* which, because of its format, presents some difficulties.

3) **Archives:** Archivist Stuart Marshall reported that people are reluctant to part with their archive material to create a society collection. He suggested instead that people could provide him with a list of the materials they hold instead, and that he could act as a 'middle-man' between those seeking information and those that hold it.

Lists would never be published, and enquiries would be forwarded by Stuart to information holders to enable them to decide for themselves how they wish to proceed. The meeting agreed this is a good idea.

It was pointed out that the Railway Librarians Association is behind the Tracking Railway Archives Project – code-named TRAP – that aims to compile a database of all railway archives in the UK, and that the society should get involved. Stuart agreed to investigate.

4) **Exhibition:** Following Julia Hastings' proposal to stage an exhibition, it was pointed out that this could prove expensive and would need a lot of organising. Volunteers were called for, with the committee to assess viability on the results.

5) **Back Issues:** Les Darbyshire said that he holds copies of almost all issues of *The Colonel*, and that the Hornby model Terrier of *Bodiam* in early K&ESR livery is now available.

6) **Study Day:** The proposal for a study day on the S&MR to be held at Llanymynech, including a visit to the remains of the railway, in September has yet to be confirmed.

7) **Colonel Anniversary:** The committee is to investigate the possibility of a memorial event to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Colonel's death in November. This could possibly be a wreath laying at the Colonel's grave in West Brompton cemetery in London.

*At this point the meeting concluded.* ■

# THE COLONEL AND MISTER KIPLING

**PART  
TWO**

*Tony Michell concludes his attempt to track down the friendship between the young Holman Fred Stephens and the great writer Rudyard Kipling. Tony is pre-*

The next possible encounter between Stephens and Kipling could have been on Kipling's return from the Boer War in 1900, after which he enthusiastically supported the recruitment of volunteers. Stephens writes that he recruited 600 men for the Boer war, although whether this number included only engineers or also other forces is not yet established.

If Stephens, by 1900 a captain, raised forces, it would probably have been through the Royal Engineers - Sussex Volunteers, and he thus would have been recruiting from Seaford and Eastbourne rather than Kent: close to where Kipling was then living at Rottingdean.

Kipling was enthusiastic enough to set up a rifle range and drill hall at Rottingdean where he lived in the Elms. But it is fanciful to imagine the two men discussing how to recruit the men in early 1900, for we know that no meeting took place until 1903. Again we cannot discount the influence of Kipling's extensive writings in the newspapers.

When Kipling moved to Batemans in June 1902, he came closer to where Stephens was involved with the Rother Valley Railway at Robertsbridge, with the prospect of building from there to Pevensey, past Batemans.

Stephens was well aware of Kipling's move to Batemans, but felt that he did not know Kipling well enough to call on him.

This shyness mirrors his attitude towards Lord Harris [see *Part One*]. Stephens did not want to find himself brushed off by his famous childhood acquaintance, whom he in his modesty thought might not remember him. He therefore asked his father to effect an introduction.

Stephens' father Frederic wrote to Philip Burne-Jones asking him to supply an introduction to Kipling. The letter caught up with Burne-Jones in the United States and he promptly penned a reply on January 27th 1903: "I enclose a card of introduction to my cousin Rudyard Kipling for your son and have much pleasure in doing so."

No record of the meeting survives. Stephens did not sign the visitors book at Batemans, and he may have sent the free pass for the K&ESR ahead of the meeting, along with Philip Burne Jones' note.

They might have met at a London club, or Kipling might have driven across to Robertsbridge, where Stephens frequently stayed, inspected the RVR, and had dinner there. They could even have met in Rye where Henry James settled in 1901.

Stephens was admitted as a director of the Rye & Camber Tramway Company in 1901 and would seem to have been admitted to the Rye Golf Club, though he was not an enthusi-

astic player. As Rye's attraction grew, Stephens transferred to the 2nd Cinque Ports Royal Garrison Artillery in 1905, which replaced a lengthy trip to Eastbourne with a more congenial trip to Rye.

From 1900, Kipling began to be driven about the countryside, first in a small one cylinder car that he leased by the week, and later in a steam powered Locomobile. He was a friend of Claude Johnson, the first secretary of the Automobile Club, whose father had worked with Kipling's father.

Stephens' interest in motoring dates from about the time of his meeting with Kipling in 1903. We cannot exclude the possibility that it was meeting Kipling and perhaps riding in his car that stimulated Stephens' interest in motoring.

In May 1903, shortly after the probable date of the meeting, Stephens proposed to the board of the RVR that they buy a motor car. At that moment Stephens was supervising the early work on the construction of the Headcorn extension. After traveling by train from Tonbridge to Headcorn, he was forced to take the horse bus from Headcorn towards Tenterden, driven by Monty Baker's grandfather, to an appropriate point for his inspection site and then walk across the fields. A motorcar would have helped.

Stephens is presumed to have been an early member of the Royal Automobile Club and, unlike Kipling, to have driven himself. No list of members of the club exists at this date, but in its early years it claimed 540 members.

From 1903 to 1914 the two men had many areas of common interest. For example, Stephens would also seem to have been an early member of the Royal Aero Club which was closely associated with the RAC at that time. Informally founded in 1901, the Royal Aero Club was originally interested in balloons and airships. It was not until 1909 that heavier-than-air craft became the main attraction.

Camber was at this time briefly a budding centre of aviation. In June 1909, Ogilvie and Seawright began flying their Wright biplanes from the Sands, and it is thought that Wilbur Wright visited Ogilvie at his home at Norton Cottage. It would be a nice thought that Stephens could have accompanied Wright on the tramway for his visit, since it had been extended to Camber Sands in 1908. If Stephens was interested in the latest in flying, he would have found it at the end of the railway he had himself built to Camber.

But aviation had already moved to the end of another Stephens light railway! In May 1909, JTC More Brabazon made a flight of 500 yards in his Voisin, a flight which is officially registered as the first flight by a British pilot in Britain. The location was Muswell Manor at Leysdown in the Isle of Sheppey, which was served by the Sheppey Light Railway.

Can it be coincidence that both flying grounds - Camber and Leysdown - were at the end of a Stephens' railway? It was in 1909 that the Royal Aero Club records show Major H.F. Stephens T.F. becoming a founder member of the club. This is the first occasion I am aware of in which he used a military title in civilian life.

Stephens was an enthusiastic volunteer soldier, and may have shared some of Kipling's ideas on a more permanent form of military service. Stephens had left the Cinque Ports Artillery to become a major in the new Sussex and Kent Fortresses Command of the Territorial Forces in 1907.

Here, he and Kipling would have soundly disagreed. Kipling, who favoured national service, felt cheated by the creation of the Territorial Forces. Stephens seems to have been highly enthusiastic, serving under colonel Bloomfield of Southborough, who took command of the Kent Forces, and thus he found himself at the beginning of World War One.

Kipling was later to write: "Most of my generation conked out in the Great War". Both Stephens and Kipling suffered severe emotional distress as a result of losses in the war. In Kipling's case it was the death of his son. For Stephens, it was the forced surrender of his military life after the wreck of the *Hythe* and 128 men, and the loss of the friendship of his colonel, whose son had died in the wreck of this converted SE&CR ship carrying troops to the Dardanelles.

We do not yet know how frequently Kipling and Stephens met after the war. We must presume that chance or planned encounters were the norm. Nevertheless, something made Kipling choose Stephens as the main character in a story he started drafting in October 1926.

Between 1926 and 1928 Stephens must have been aware of the progressive development of the condition which would lead to his death, *Polycythaemia Vera*. It is characterised by the over-production of red blood

cells, and often gives rise to a rather ruddy appearance: to be seen already in the 1925 photo of the opening of the Ashover Light Railway. A later medical opinion was that in this condition "the patient may complain of headache, dizziness and tiredness and indeed it is possibly not surprising that the Colonel, feeling far from well, may have seemed rude and lacking in patience in his latter days."

The Colonel therefore had some precognition of his condition at this time, and this became the basis of one segment of the Kipling story *The Woman in His Life*. While this reconstruction cannot yet be proved, it seems almost certain that Stephens was Kipling's model for *John Marden*, a story set about 1923-5 and written between 1926 and its publication in 1931.

The story was about how the love of a dog - the woman of the title - allowed the hero, John Marden, to overcome his fear of being underground. The hero was of course originally Kipling himself, devastated after the loss of his beloved son John, and for whom dogs helped him cope with his continuing sense of loss through the 1920s.

Part of Kipling's genius was in seizing the character of a person he had met or knew, and building real characterization into basic plots. He normally based his characters on people that he had known, usually mixing up two or three elements. Mrs Isabella Burton appeared as Lucy Hauksbee in more than one story, as an early example, and Hobden, a hero of poems, the Land and in Puck, is identified as William Isted, an expert on local lore at Etchingham.

In *The Woman in His Life*, I argue that Kipling mixed his own love of dogs, with Stephens' character and some miscellaneous elements to create John Marden. A reading of the text suggests that Kipling had written the basic story in October 1926, and then bolted Stephens character onto the first five or so pages.

In the absence of documentary proof, the following is circumstantial evidence. The fictional John Marden is deducably about 30 at the time of the story: he was just finishing his apprenticeship before the war started. Stephens was about 58, assuming that the characterization of the story was first written about 1927. The internal coherence of the story suggests that Marden should have been a considerably older man. Why would a young engineer of 30 be troubled about

death duties? But wasn't there every reason why men in their later 50s or early 60s, like Stephens and Kipling, should be?

The story starts with a doctor advising Marden to rest a bit after having 'a night so memorable that he looked up the nearest doctor in the Directory'.

The story continues with Marden's reply: "I've never tried"

"Haven't you any hobbies or friends then?" the doctor asks.

"Except the Works, none"

"Nothing-more important in your life?"

John's face was answer enough. "No! No! But what'll I do? What'll I do?" he asked wildly. 'I-I have never been like this before!'

"I'll give you a sedative, but you must slack off, and divert your mind. Yes! That's it. Divert your mind."

John went back to the Works, and strove to tell his secretary something about the verdict. The man was perfunctorily sympathetic, but what he wanted John to understand (he seemed at the other end of the world as he spoke) was that, owing to John's ignorance of finance, the whole of the Works stood as John's personal property. So that, if John died, they would be valued and taxed thirty or forty per cent for death duties, and that would cripple things badly. Not a minute should be lost before turning the concern into a chain of companies. He had the scheme drafted. It would need but a couple of days' study.

In the story, the Doctor had not actually warned Marden of health problems. Marden, a former Royal Engineer, had suffered a terrible night and later flash-back to the war and an episode where a mine had collapsed and hallucinations. Not exactly grounds for consideration of death duties.

Imagine rather that Stephens, having been feeling unwell for some time, had finally consulted his physician - presumably Sir Percival Horton-Smith Hartley, who treated him later - and had been recommended to rest. Stephens returned to consult with Iggulden at the Tonbridge office (who can be equated with the secretary) and got little support. Then, at some subsequent meeting in London, he ran into his old acquaintance Kipling or some other mutual acquaintance, and poured out the story.

If one wanted to stretch the comparison further, one might perhaps suggest that cor-

poral Vincent Shingle, John Marden's ex-batman, "systematically a speculator, intermittently a drunkard, and emphatically a liar", sounds just a little like Albert Osborne, Stephens' batman who became a gatekeeper at Salford Crossing and was reprimanded for drunkenness.

Why think that Kipling was thinking of Stephens in this story? Because a number of phrases sound like the replay of an actual conversation. And unlike Kipling, who loved the fact that in motoring "one never knows from one minute to the next what one will find", "running about in cars with no definite object bored John Marden as much as drumming under the clouds in aeroplanes."

This was undoubtedly why, after the war, Stephens was neither an enthusiast for motoring or flying. Few people would have fitted the bill of being an enthusiast about flying, motor cars and an engineer and a Royal Engineer with these kinds of attitudes, other than Stephens.

There is no internal evidence in the story that Marden had had a chance to fly, so the phrase "drumming under the clouds in aeroplanes" is an inconsistent element, only explicable if Kipling was closely modeling Marden on a real character.

Is this a partially accurate reconstruction of a glimpse of the private life of Lt Col Stephens? Unlike the fictional Marden, he did not take time off; did not, like Kipling, console himself with dogs; but worked on. He struggled with increasing periods of feeling unwell, until, after attending a function in London at the end of January 1930, he had his first stroke.

Polycythaemia leads to complications such as blood clots, which may reach the brain to cause strokes. Even partially crippled after the stroke, Stephens worked on, traveling almost every day from the Lord Warden Hotel in Dover to Tonbridge by train. Later strokes, which reduced him to an invalid who could not talk for the last year of his life, also did not stop him continuing to work.

In the story of John Marden, do we have, replayed as fiction, a genuine lost dialogue of Stephens and a character sketch from a contemporary? There are several avenues still to be explored, notably the search for early drafts of the short story itself, and clues in Stephens' early letters to his parents that may indicate reading Kipling and establishing further friends in common.

Most probable is the possibility of establishing that both men were present at clubs on particular days. I suggest that Kipling was an important influence on Stephens' early life and ideas, and that the two came closer together in the 1920s as the world changed. For both Kipling and Stephens, adjusting to the changed world of the Twenties was a challenge.

On a final note, Stephens did not consolidate his holdings as a series of companies, but held everything as his personal property on which death duties had to be paid. He left them equally to Iggulden, Austen and the Willard brothers. However, because of a spat with the Inland Revenue he had done the next best thing - but that is another story!

*If any reader has any information that might shed further light on the above, please contact the author via the editor.*

# SIGNALLING ON THE CALLINGTON BRANCH

**PART  
THREE**

*Chris Osment finishes his description, which first appeared in South Western Circular, the journal of the South Western Circle, in April 1994.*

Callington station was a conventional terminus with a single platform on the up side, several sidings, and a run-road loop at the approach to the station, so arriving trains had to be propelled back out from the platform for the engine to run round. As the main station of the Light Railway it also boasted an overall roof and there was a two-road engine shed, which was accessed originally by a connection near the end of the platform facing to Up trains.

The signal box (SB) was located at the Calstock end of the platform and contained a 5-lever frame. At the time of the 1908 Inspection Report (IR) this worked Home and Starting signals and some siding points, with a key to release a further one-lever ground frame (GF) working the east end loop points. The IR recommended dispensing with the locking between the key and levers 2 and 4 (probably the two sets of points which were facing to Up trains). The TST equipment was kept in the office.

An IR dated 27 May 1916 refers to the installation of a new connection on the Up side, east of the engine shed, and facing to Down trains, which led to cattle sidings. The Report states that *"these points, together with all the other siding connections in the station, are worked from ground frames of one lever each, which are locked by the electric tablet for the section"*.

It is not clear how to interpret the reference to *"all...connections"*, as the 5-lever SB was still in use at a later date, but it seems to indicate at least that the new connection was provided with its own GF, rather than being controlled by an extension of the original East GF.

Further changes took place in 1928 with the modification of various sidings and alterations to the connections to the main line. In particular the existing tracks into the western end of the engine shed were removed and a

new access provided from the eastern end.

The station platform was lengthened by 94 feet at the eastern end, which meant that the SB was moved one chain nearer to Gunnislake. It was probably at this time that the separate GFs at the eastern end of the layout were replaced by one 3-lever frame, as the relevant IR dated 13-May-1929 refers to only two GFs for the whole layout.

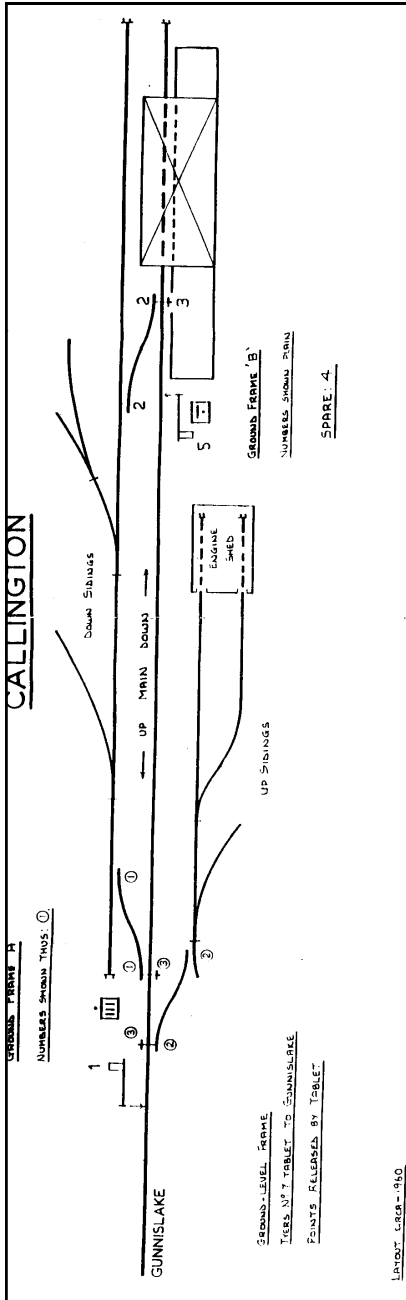
It is interesting to note that by BR days both the lever-frames at Callington were labeled as ground frames. The frame at the east end was identified as GF 'A' and the SB by the platform as GF 'B'. It appears that, by the time of the 1916 IR, the east GF (GF 'A') was unlocked by the tablet for the single-line section instead of a key from the SB (GF 'B') as originally installed.

It is curious that, in contrast to the arrangements at the other SBs on the line, the points worked from the SB itself were locked also by the tablet. In this connection the following Special Instruction appeared in the 1934 WTT Appendix:

*"Failure of tablet apparatus. A key, to enable the points leading to and from the sidings at Callington (which are normally released by the tablet), to be operated in case of emergency, is kept in the Station Master's office. This key must be used only in cases where, owing to a failure of the tablet apparatus or other emergency, the tablet cannot be obtained from the instrument in the ordinary way and working by Pilotman is in operation over the section affected.*

*"In these circumstances the key must be used only in the presence of the Pilotman, and after the necessary shunting movement over the connection affected has been carried out and the points replaced to their normal position, the key must be returned to the Station Master's office."*

The use of such a release key is unusual



and it is not known when it was introduced, although it is mentioned in the 1916 IR and may be linked to the conversion of the Gunnislake - Callington section to ETT working at that time.

When the branch was closed beyond Gunnislake in 1966, the SB at Callington closed as well, but the boxes at Calstock and Gunnislake remained open. There appears to have been no change to the signalling at Gunnislake at that time, so that terminating Down trains had to shunt to the Up platform in order to re-start as Up trains. The sidings were removed at Calstock, except for the loop next to the main line, and all except one at Gunnislake.

After the two SBs closed in 1968 the remaining sidings were removed, although curiously some box vans were left at Calstock marooned on an isolated length of track, perhaps as some form of rented storage. Thereafter the branch was in effect a long siding, with trains using the former Up platform at Gunnislake.

At Bere Alston in 1968, the branch now made a simple trailing connection with the former Up Main. The old 'main line' to St Budeaux was still double-track, but the direction was changed so that it was now 'Up' to Plymouth rather than 'Down'.

Down trains arrived at Bere Alston and stopped at the former Up platform, then pulled forward and reversed onto the branch - sometimes also stopping then on the opposite side of the same island platform!

In the return direction the Up train ran off the branch onto the old Up main, having perhaps first stopped at the branch platform, then reversed across a crossover onto the old Down main past the platform and on back to

*We are indebted for the photos opposite to Jim Jarvis, who took them in September 1955. Both show O2 Class number 30216 hauling a pair of ex-LSWR Gate Stock coaches on the Callington branch. The location of the upper picture is unknown, possibly Chilsworthy: the gate in the foreground is probably a clue.*

*The lower picture shows the same train at Luckett station, as featured in Colonel 58. Beyond the loco can be seen what is believed to be the original East Cornwall Mineral Railway station building, which was by this time serving as the station master's house.*





Plymouth.

On 7 September 1970 the SB was closed and the line to St Budeaux reduced to a single track, serving the former Down platform. The branch was re-aligned to make a new junction at the south end of the former Down platform, which is now the only one in use. The single point and facing point lock are controlled by a 2-lever GF, which is released by the OTW staff and worked by the guard.

In 1994 the old station at Gunnislake was closed and a new platform was opened a few chains to the east, on the Down side of the line on the site of the former coal yard once served by Perry Spear's siding. This alteration enabled the removal of the bridge over the A390 road, whose low headroom had been a source of trouble for many years.

There have been rumours also in recent years about a possible re-opening of the line from Bere Alston to Tavistock in order to serve the growing commuter traffic, but it is unclear exactly what might be the viability of such an extension, or how it is proposed that the line would be worked and controlled

in its new form.

These notes represent the extent of my current information about the signalling of the Callington Branch. Although research will continue, the progress has been slow and therefore I decided to publish the available information in the hope that it will prove of interest and perhaps encourage others to come forward with further details. Additional material would be welcomed on any aspect of the line and can be sent to me via the editor. ■

## REFERENCES

- \* PRO files: MT6/1715/3  
MT6/2521/6  
MT25 Vol 85
- \* BoT Inspection Reports: 6-Feb-1908  
7-May-1916  
13-May-1929
- \* Railway Magazine: 1898, Feb 1908, June 1914, Jan 1917, May 1951, July 1951
- \* *Callington Railways* by R. Crombleholme et al, Forge Books 1985
- \* *Plymouth, Devonport & South Western Junction Railway* by A.J. Cheesman, Oakwood Press 1967
- \* *Track Layout Diagrams of the Southern Railway and BR(SR)- Section 6*, GA Pryer
- \* *Industrial Archaeology of the Tamar Valley* by F. Booker, David & Charles
- \* *A Historical Survey of the Mines and Mineral Railways of East Cornwall and West Devon* by D.B. Barton, Bradford Barton 1964
- \* *Calstock Viaduct - an elegant lost cause* by G.R. Thomas (magazine article, source unknown)
- \* *Building Calstock Viaduct* by N. Parkhouse, *Archive* magazine issue 2, Lightmoor Press
- \* Signalling Record Society archives.
- \* Personal archives and private correspondence.

## Book Review

### UNSEEN PICTURES A 'MUST-HAVE'

Occasionally, but not very often, along comes a new book that is really new: new photographs never published before and an author who is fresh to publishing. When that book is on light railways and includes 11 of the Colonel's lines, it's a must.

*Light Railways Explored: A Photographic Diary 1931-38*, by John E. Simpson, is the result of the author's schoolboy and student explorations of what he calls "small, independent railways" during the 1930s, armed with maps, timetables and a camera.

It contains some 86 pictures, all previously unpublished, with 24 lines covered. These include the following of the Colonel's lines: East Kent, K&ESR, Selsey Tramway, Rye and Camber, WC&PR, FR, WHR, S&MR, Snailbeach, Edge Hill and Ashover.

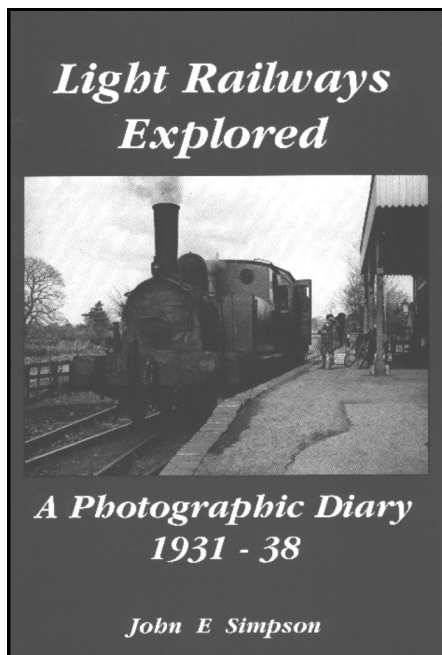
There are also new pictures of the Talylyn, Corris, Snowdon Mountain Railway, Wantage Tramway, Lynton & Barnstaple, Bishops Castle, Glyn Valley, and the Welshpool & Llanfair.

The photos are, of course, black and white, but are of a very high standard - the author was a photographer by profession at times - and are reproduced to a very high standard on art paper. They also include many unusual views, not only of locomotives, but also carriages, wagons and internal shed shots, which makes this book even more interesting.

There is a chatty, informative text that mentions the Colonel several times, although the author unfortunately arrived on the scene too late to meet the Great Man in person.

This is not a definitive account of any of the lines, but it is a really interesting pictorial record of those long-gone days when the author decided to visit as many extant light railways as he could over a seven-year period whilst they were still operating.

If you have an interest in the Colonel's railways - and being a member of this society you must have - this book is for you. With maybe three or more new photos of your favourite line, it is surely worth a tenner just for that alone.



I understand the print run is quite low, so don't wait too long to get a copy or you may regret it. I have copies in stock at £11.50, including postage and packing (UK), overseas at cost, but they are selling fast. **NB**

**Light Railways Explored: A photographic Diary 1931-38**, by John E Simpson. Published by Ross-Evans. 106 pages, card covers, art paper .

TO ORDER A COPY OF THIS BOOK, SEE NIGEL BIRD'S BOOKS ADVERT ON PAGE 7.



## Brent's Browsings

***Before he died, Martin Brent provided a series of historical notes gleaned from contemporary newspaper accounts. The following is the first instalment of what***

One of the joys of collecting old magazines such as the *Railway Observer*, published by the RCTS, is quietly browsing through them, picking up contemporary comment on our favourite lines.

Readers of this august journal may remember that an editor or two ago allowed me to summarise some of the comment in the *Railway Observer* for 1937 and 1938. Here, at long last, now that I have some spare time, is the next instalment, published as war clouds were gathering.

A word of caution: it has been demonstrated in the past that some of the comments, while good intentioned and wholly believed by those making them, are sometimes incorrect and often there is subsequent discussion and contradiction.

### East Kent Railways

A visit to Shepherdswell on May 17 revealed the following: Number 2 0-6-0T Hudswell Clarke, works number 8230 of 1908; Number 4 0-6-0T Kerr Stuart 3007 of 1917; Number 5 4-4-2T, ex LSWR 0488; Number 6 0-6-0, ex-SE&CR Number 372; and Number 100 0-6-0, ex-SE&CR number 383.

Number 6, the Stirling O Class 0-6-0, seemed to be in very good condition and exceptionally clean. Number 5, the LSWR Radial Tank, was outside the shed and had not been used for some time. Repairs were commenced that day on Number 4, the Kerr Stuart 0-6-0T.

Another writer, Mr K. Bates, stated that on 3 July 1939 the 4.45pm train from Shepherdswell to Wingham consisted of one old SR coach and three wagons hauled by 0-6-0T Number 2.

Although there were no passengers, the train stopped at all the stations so that the stationmaster at Shepherdswell, who also acted as shunter and guard on the trains, might affix new timetables to notice boards.

Water was taken in both directions at

Woodnesboro. At Staple, which seemed to have a fair amount of goods traffic, a considerable amount of shunting and general re-arranging of the contents of the goods yard took place with the coach coupled all the while. The train was 20 minutes late reaching Wingham, and the coach did not proceed beyond the goods yard.

On the return journey, the train, including a few wagons and a fruit van, left at 6.18pm and proceeded non-stop to Staple, where once again shunting took place. On the downhill stretch to Eastry, a speed of about 25mph was maintained for roughly two miles. More fruit was picked up at Eythorne, and Shepherdswell was reached a few minutes late at just after 7pm.

All locos were in working order except Number 4, the wheels of which were at Ashford being re-tyred. Two loco turns were in operation a day: a passenger and a goods.

Coal traffic was about 800-1000 tons a week and was expected to increase when a new deep shaft at Tilmanstone Colliery was completed.

Although cheap tickets were only advertised as being issued on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, the writer was issued with one on a Monday, although it was dated 1935!

A good head of steam had to be maintained for the prolonged use of the whistle at the many ungated level crossings. The writer noted that the line ran though quite pleasant rural scenery with distant views over Sandwich Bay to Ramsgate.

The Richborough branch was being used periodically to convey pit props to Tilmanstone that had arrived by boat. ■