

THE COLONEL

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

Editorial: TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

Various items in this issue once again prove the adage, coined by *Model Railway Journal* some time ago, that “research goes on to infinity”. This time round, we have the remarkable discovery of a major collection of letters concerning, and dating from, the very birth of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, including some from the Great Man himself.

As described in the news story opposite, we have yet to sift through this amazing find, but the next issue of *The Colonel* will hopefully reveal more details. I suspect it may take some time before this new original material can be properly analysed, interpreted and put into context, but we'll give you some tasters as soon as we can.

From the birth of the S&MR, we move, on page 9, to its threatened demise in the very current and still evolving story of attempts to save one of its last remaining relics, the station building at its Abbey terminus.

This is, so far, a heartwarming tale of enthusiasts rallying round to protect a memento that has triggered a number of fond

memories from local people, and to prevent the onslaught of blind bureaucracy.

Having said that, it does seem that, now that the sleeves are up, nobody really wants to smash it down, if only a use can be found for it. If the old building does find a new purpose in this new century - and the omens are good so far - it would not only be excellent news, but another testament to this tenacious railway's refusal to die.

And on page 15 we have another example of new information coming to light, in the form of Robin Fielding's unearthing of the origins of the East Kent Railways' ex-London, Chatham & Dover coaches.

Despite Robin's sterling efforts, though, some mysteries still remain: records show LC&DR coaches sold to the K&ESR that never appeared there, and whose fate is unknown. Fear not: Fielding is still on the case, and there is yet more to come. *SH*

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PUBLICITY OFFICER

Position vacant - offers invited

Society News

Time for renewals

Membership secretary David Powell writes:

“It’s membership renewal time. As usual your renewal form is included. And, as usual I am asking that you please use it promptly.

“The subscriptions are as agreed at the last AGM. These remain at £5 for UK members and £8 for joint members sharing one copy of *The Colonel* at one address and £10 for our overseas members.

“However, as in previous years, we are very happy to receive additional donations. And please note that the form provides an opportunity to highlight any amendments or corrections.”

As announced at the AGM, member-

ship now stands at 262, a net increase of 22 on the previous year, and yet another all-time high. Income from subscriptions was £1331, while donations received amounted to £419: a tidy sum indeed.

The idea of donations was adopted as an alternative to increasing subscriptions, for which no real justification could be made. Instead, members were invited to voluntarily add any extra they felt like.

The result appears to be that we have achieved a 30% increase in income without raising subs! Many thanks for your generosity. ●

Colonel letters treasure trove

New light is about to be shed on the birth of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway in 1908 and the background to reopening of much of the abandoned Potteries, Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway in 1911. This is the result of the recent discovery of a significant collection of letters between the first chairman of the S&MR, Thomas Ward Green, and key individuals, including several letters from Colonel Stephens.

News of this treasure trove first reached membership secretary David Powell via a phone call from a Mr John Davies of Shropshire, who owns the letters, which David described as a “jaw-dropping”. Mr Davies is the grandson of Ward Green and his writing a biography of his grandfather, which led to the discovery of the documents among his grandfather’s papers.

He contacted the society in an attempt to track down other collections of Colonel-related material that might include correspondence from his grandfather. We have

pointed him in the direction of Phillip Shaw of the Colonel Stephens Museum in Ten-terden, Kent, which has a huge archive of such original material.

Mr Davies has kindly allowed the society to make copies of his documents, which comprise around 80 items, including several letters from the Great Man himself, and others from such key individuals as the Earls of Powys and of Bradford about the reopening of the Potts railway.

“They obviously provide additional and important primary sources on the Colonel’s character and his approach to business,” said David.

More details of this important collection and its insights will be included in future issues of *The Colonel*. Meanwhile, the lesson for us all is that there is still material out there waiting to be discovered. ●

Society News

Help wanted for Warley show

The society will once again be represented at the National Model Railway Exhibition at the Birmingham NEC on 6 and 7 December. It would be useful if we could have another couple of volunteers to help spread the load of manning the stand.

Please get in touch with the membership secretary David Powell (contact details on page 2) if you can help. During the exhibition he can be contacted through the Exhibition Information Desk (he spends the show hiding in the control office), and treasurer Nigel Bird will be there with his well-stocked bookstall.

Our presence at the show is masterminded by Les Spratt, without whose tireless devotion to duty we would lose what David described as “this high-visibility opportunity of promoting the society”. As

exhibitors, we get two free tickets per day for stand stewards.

However, as David reported to the AGM: “If we have more than two members on duty each day, we will fund the additional stand steward entrance fee. We will also cover the steward’s car parking charges.”

This year the NMRE will feature 69 layouts and 130 traders in 14,000 sq m of exhibition space. The full-size highlight will be the NRM’s Beattie 2-4-0T Well Tank, recently restored to working order, along with its former driver and fireman Roy Wilce and Tony Hallworth. ●

Donations agreed for Abbey station and FR’s ex-Ashover diesel loco

The beneficiaries of this year’s £500-worth of society donations are the Shrewsbury Abbey station building of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, which has been earmarked for £250; and the former Ashover Light Railway diesel *Ashover*, also for £250.

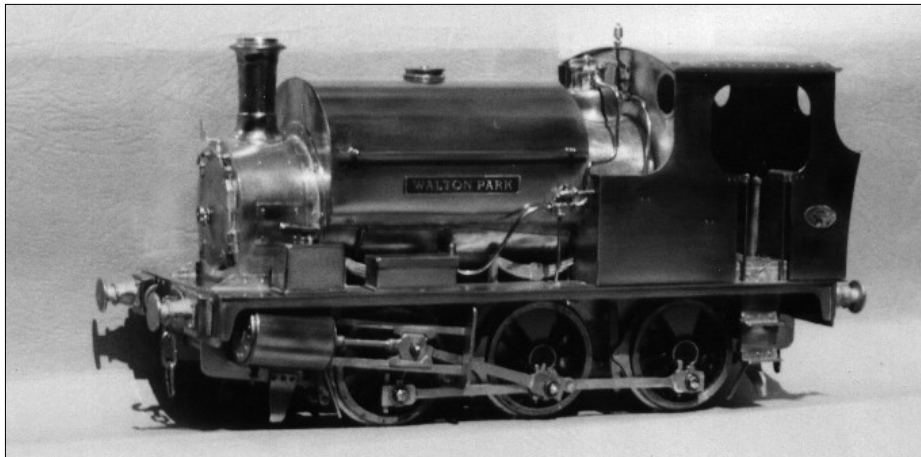
Abbey station is the subject of a rescue bid (*see page 9*) that, if successful, will receive our money towards the estimated £27,000 cost of repairs. The latest news is that a scale drawing has been made of the building by the architect father of member Phil Scoggins. It is to 1:50 scale and is with the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust, which hopes to use the building as its HQ.

Phil reported: “1:76 plans will hopefully shortly be available to the CSS. But beware: parts cannot be entirely accurate because some parts of the building were breeze-blocked off!”

The diesel loco is a Planet type built by

F.C. Hibberd & Co Ltd for the Clay Cross Company in 1948 for use on the ALR for the last 18 months of the railway’s life. It made its way via George Cohen, Sons & Co Ltd and the East Anglian Transport Museum to the Festiniog Railway in 1981, where it now awaits repairs at Boston Lodge. The aim is that it should become the works shunter.

According to Keith Holland, who is involved with the project: “Whilst the Colonel’s involvement with the ALR and the FR had long since ceased by the time *Ashover* appeared, it nevertheless provides an interesting link between two parts of the Stephens empire. Indeed, restoration to running order will eventually provide the prospect of the locomotive’s use on the Welsh Highland Railway, so make that three.” ●



This is the latest offering from member Pete Stamper's Agenoria Models, purveyors of highly-regarded loco kits. It is a Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST, one of which ran on the East Kent Light Railways as Walton Park, for which nameplates are included in this 7mm scale kit. It costs £125, plus £64 for motorising components. It has an etched nickel silver chassis and brass body with pre-formed tank, boiler and so on. Further details are on the web site www.agenoria.co.uk, or you can write to Agenoria Models, 18 St Peter's Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 0TY. Tel: 01562 886125 or email agenoriamodels@yahoo.co.uk

News in Brief

◆ The rebuilt **Welsh Highland Railway's** extension from Waunfawr to a new Ryd Ddu station at the foot of Mount Snowdon was opened on July 30 by HRH The Prince of Wales. The extra 5½ miles gives a total route of 9 miles via Snowdon Ranger to a new-build station alongside the car park that now occupies the original station site.

◆ New hope for plans to revive the former **Rother Valley Railway** between Robertsbridge and Bodiam has been given by two local councils agreeing to respect the trackbed in any future development plans. This could include rebuilding the A21, if a dual carriageway proposal goes ahead, which currently blocks the trackbed just outside

Robertsbridge and is a major obstacle. A decision on this is expected soon.

◆ £50,000 has been awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the £100,000 restoration of narrow gauge **Baldwin 4-6-0T** No. 778, which received a donation from us last year (see Colonel 71). A further £50,000 is needed, of which owner Greensand Railway Museum Trust has already raised £37,000.

◆ Former K&ESR loco **Bodiam** is now expected to return to service early next year. The CSS is a Life Member of the loco's owner, the Terrier Trust, following a donation of £150 towards its repair. Latest news is that one side tank has been fitted, with the second ready to go on during final re-assembly at Rolvenden.

Dispatches

Letters to the editor

Bere Ferrers visitors' centre

One of the members of our support association, The Tamar Belle Heritage Group, recently passed me a copy of the Autumn 2002 *Colonel* which interestingly contains various snippets about the Plymouth, Devonport & South Western Junction Railway.

We have recently established a visitor centre at Bere Ferrers station on the former PD&SWJR main line, utilising a former LMS 12-wheel sleeping car as an exhibition coach to show the history of the lower Tavy and Tamar valleys, of which both the main and branch railways form an intrinsic part.

Our site also contains a demonstration siding where we are able to provide short rides in our LNER BT carriage, with opportunities for mixed train running (in Colonel Stephens style) utilising our two wartime Hunslet diesels. Many of the materials used on site have been recycled from former railway locations, so with

nothing wasted, the Colonel would, I am sure, have been proud of us!

As our local branch at Gunnislake probably forms the only remaining passenger line in the UK which operates under its original Light Railway Order, and with which the old Colonel was associated, I am wondering whether you might be interested in raising awareness of our activities amongst your membership.

We have recently laid within our site a short section of 3ft 6in rails to indicate for comparison the East Cornwall Mineral Railway prior to its gauge conversion. I am wondering whether you might also be aware of plans for a new narrow gauge 2ft miniature railway based at Seven Stones?

Chris Grove, Bere Ferrers, West Devon

Ford railcars made "a hell of a noise"

Getting *Colonel* 71 in the mail prompted me to write what happened a few weeks ago. You may recall that a letter of mine appeared in *Colonel* 66 with a photo of my Selsey shed model. I decided to write a full blown article for our local society, the British Railway Modellers of Australia, to appear in our quarterly journal *The Clearing House*. This article appeared, and in the next issue reader and member Ken Webb wrote:

"I too spent a holiday at Selsey Bill in about 1930. My parents had a cottage there for a week and I can recall it quite well. The place had a lot of old carriages which were used as holiday homes. About four years ago I decided to visit the place again but most had gone.

"However, the reason for the letter is my parents took me to Chichester on the tram-

way; at that time the mode of transport was by a bus that ran on the train track. I believe the bus had a Ford engine in it and I can still remember it made a hell of a noise."

Well, I thought: an article for *The Colonel* here, so I wrote to Ken, sending photos of the Ford, Shefflex and an interior of one of the railcars. I requested an article or, if this was not possible, I offered to meet him in Sydney next time I was there: interview him on tape and then write up an article. Unfortunately Ken doesn't remember much as he is now approaching 80 and was five years old at the time! Well, I tried!!

*Robert Kosmider, Modbury Heights,
Australia*

Kipling's handwriting deciphered

Many thanks for the complimentary copy of *The Colonel* No 71 [containing the Kipling letters]. It was a pity that you couldn't have reproduced the original handwritten letter with the Burwash Telegraph Office and Etchingham Railway Station notepaper.

The second paragraph reads: "So please tell the Ellentines how sorry I am. I know something of the work the club is doing (I wish, by the way, they'd pronounce against aliens being allowed to hold any kind of real estate in England. that will be the next thing to take in hand) come on with your grilse [*A two-year-old salmon. Ed.*]! You can't 'inflict' too often or too oppressively in that line."

Colonel Stephens was well known to

make presents of salmon, Welsh lamb and so on to his friends. The salmon came from a boatman in Oban and the lamb from Llanidloes. This I had on good authority from the late Arthur Iggulden of the Tonbridge office.

Unfortunately I can't help re the Ellentines, but we know which clubs H.F.S. belonged to: the Royal Automobile and the Eccentrics. There may have been others, but Arthur Iggulden told me these were his main clubs.

Michael Davies, via email

Kipling's son: a correction

In the Editor's Note on page 16 of *Colonel 71* [a postscript to the Kipling letters] you put the Battle of Loos in 1917. It actually commenced on 25 September 1915. John Kipling went missing, presumed killed, on the 27th: just one of over 60,000 British casualties, killed or wounded, of this horrific and largely futile battle.

I have no idea what club "the Ellentines" refers to. An Internet search on the word doesn't find a single reference. Kipling was certainly a Freemason, and I would not be surprised if Stephens was also, but if he was referring to the Masons wouldn't he have used the word 'lodge' rather than 'club'? I pass on this one!

Les Darbyshire, Bracknell, Berks.

Thanks: and what do you think of the models?

Just a quickie to say that whilst I was at Firerail 2003 I bumped into Les Spratt and his new layout. Not only is he a friendly sort, but he also let me operate, albeit briefly his layout. All in all, a most worthwhile exercise. If you could pass on my thanks via the *Colonel* I would be most grateful. It's not a bad layout either! Once again, thank you.

Bob Taylor, via email

Membership secretary David Powell adds:

Would it be possible to couple Bob's letter with a note asking for feedback on what other Colonel Stephens genre layouts are out there on the exhibition circuit at the moment, including Rye Town of course?

See page 14 for details of Andrew Ulyott's WC&PR layout's show debut.

Dispatches

Letters to the editor

Kinnerley wagon and coach info

You requested further info on two matters in Roger Kidner's article. First the PS&NWR wagon at Kinnerley. Eric Tonks discussed the disposal of PS&NWR stock in his *IRS Shropshire & Montgomeryshire* book and included the following sentence:

"When all the stock at the Shrewsbury end had been sold, the party moved up the

With reference to the request for further information about the PS&NWR wagon mentioned by Roger Kidner in *Colonel 71*, there is an F.E. Fox-Davies photo of it taken in November 1902, during the railway's period of dereliction, in the first edition of Eric Tonks' *Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway* book. At this stage it looked in quite good condition. Eric Tonks' caption states it was later repaired and used on the S&M.

Phil Scoggins, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Casserley's dog was

Editor's Note: In the noble quest for a complete identification of the subjects in a photo published in *Colonel 69*, the photographer's dog's true identity can at last be revealed:

I received the latest *Colonel* today and had to ring Richard Casserley [son of the famous photographer H.C.] about another matter, so I asked him the name of his father's dog. He replied that it was *Tinker* – with an 'n' for Nellie – and there are plenty of photos of it. It died about 1940, being replaced by a terrier named Pip, which was Richard's. So there you have it!

Colin Pealling, Walsall, W. Midlands

line to the various stations where wagons had been stranded at the closure; and by the end of the day, all the rolling stock of the 'Potteries' had been sold save for one 6-ton wagon at Kinnerley (one of half a dozen here) which remained until the coming of the S&MR."

He doesn't give much more detail except that the PS&NWR goods stock comprised 211 wagons at opening, increased to 373 in the middle seventies, but had fallen to 265 by closure. He wrote: "All, of course, have long since disappeared, though one lasted long enough to bear an S&M number."

Your other query: the carriage in the background of the Kinnerley photo looks like one of the three LSWR four-wheel, five-compartment thirds obtained from the PDSWJR.

Stephen Garrett, London

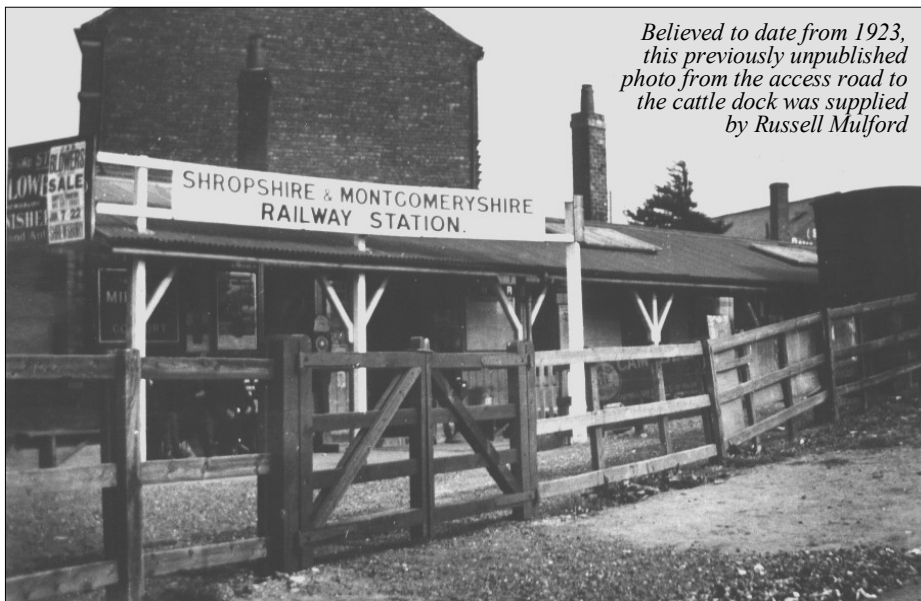
The latest *Colonel* asks us to identify the coach in Kinnerley yard. I have another photo of this coach, a close-up in the same location parked next to an ex-MR goods van. My photo came from the Jarvis collection: it shows a five-compartment, four-wheel coach.

As it definitely is not one of the ex-North Staffs. four-wheelers, it must be one of the three all third compartment four-wheelers ex-LSWR acquired from the Plymouth, Devonport and South Western Junction Railway. From my photo it appeared to have been stripped back to bare wood before being varnished (now long gone), the so-called buff livery.

David Powell, Princes Risborough, Bucks.

THE FIGHT FOR ABBNEY FOREGATE

Stephen Hannington reports on efforts to save what remains of the Shrewsbury terminus of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway



Believed to date from 1923, this previously unpublished photo from the access road to the cattle dock was supplied by Russell Mulford

When member Phil Scoggins raised the alarm that the local council wanted to demolish the remains of the former Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway station building at Shrewsbury, it was all hands to the pumps. Letters were written and meetings hastily convened. A reprieve has been won: the initial skirmishes were victorious, but the battle continues.

Phil is also chairman of the planning committee of the Shrewsbury Civic Society, and was alerted by his local councillor Miles Kenny to the danger to the station back in February of this year. All that remains of the S&MR's Abbey station, with its spectacular

backdrop of the Abbey church, is the platform and most of the brick-built station building: the rest of the site was converted into a car park about ten years ago.

The building itself, which became council property when British Rail sold off the site, had been in poor condition for many years. Miles had spotted that the end wall was being propped up by scaffolding, the roof having collapsed some time ago. Knowing the building's history, he raised the issue with Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council.

The council's property services manager Geoff Trantham surveyed the site and concluded that the building should be demol-

Potted history of 'The Potts'

by David Powell

The original Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway opened in 1866 as part of a grand, if doomed, scheme to link the Potteries with the Welsh Coast and Ireland.

'The Potts' line, as it came to be known, closed in 1888. There was an effort to reopen it in 1891, which came to naught. Then in 1908, Colonel Stephens became involved and the route reopened as the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway in 1911.

As the S&MR, it ran for some 18 miles from Abbey Foregate to Llanymynech, with a six-mile branch from Kinnerley to the Breiden Hill quarries at Criggion. It survived as an independent light railway until 1941, when it came under Army control, and finally succumbed in 1960. ●

ished on public safety grounds. The local paper, the Shropshire Star, was tipped off and ran a news story on 10 February, describing the building as "one of the most prestigious pieces of Shropshire's railway heritage".

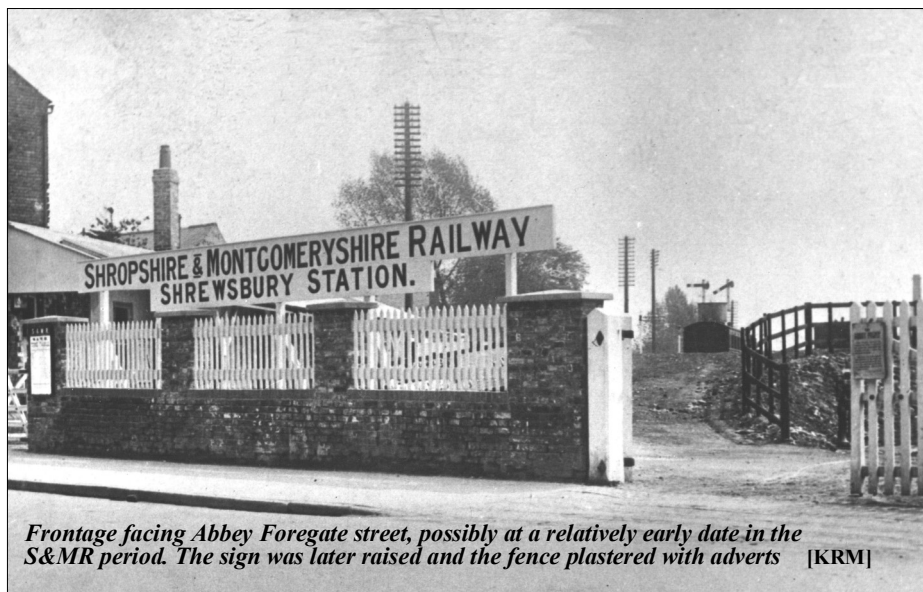
So began the campaign to save the 'Old Potts Station', as it is affectionately known. The issue was to be decided at a council meeting on 16 June, and Phil invited the Colonel Stephens Society to join the fight to convince the council not to accept Trantham's recommendation. We sent a letter, signed by chairman and local resident Derek Smith, to the council's chief executive, pointing out the building's significance as one of the few surviving relics of the S&MR, and placing it in the historically important national context of the Colonel's empire.

Membership secretary David Powell also defended the station in a timely interview with local BBC radio station Radio Shropshire on 13 June, and emailed all the council cabinet members, saying:

"We believe that the council should honour its obligations as custodians of this important part of our heritage because: firstly, the booking office, built in 1866, is a tangible reminder of the convoluted history of Victorian railways in the West Midlands and Wales; and secondly, it is the last sur-



*The famous early picture of the station in PS&NWR days
[Kidderminster Railway Museum]*



Frontage facing Abbey Foregate street, possibly at a relatively early date in the S&MR period. The sign was later raised and the fence plastered with adverts [KRM]

viving relic of the 'Potts', the S&MR and Colonel Stephens in Shrewsbury."

It's likely that the cabinet would have been surprised by the level of interest stirred up. It was petitioned not only by local residents, many of whom came forward with memories of travelling on the S&MR, but also by the Civic Society, the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shrewsbury Past and Present Model Railway Society, the Abbey administrators, a local museum Steam Trust and the Shropshire Railway Society.

The latter's involvement is significant. For when the cabinet decided at the June meeting not to demolish the building, it called for detailed proposals for possible future uses of the building should it be restored, and it is the SRC's proposal that our society is backing.

This came about at a hastily convened meeting – for which Phil deserves the organisational credit – on 25 June, when I just happened to be in the area visiting friends. Present at the meeting were representatives of the Civic Society and the SRC, as well as councillors Miles Kenny and Mansel Williams, who is also an SRC member.

This informal congregation dubbed itself 'The Potty Group', for which we can blame

Mr Scoggins. The upshot was that delegates of the SRC, which was in the process of transforming itself into the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust (SRHT), proposed that the new trust might adopt the transformed station building as its headquarters, instead of buildings at Shrewsbury Station, as had been originally envisaged.

This idea was agreed by the Potty Group and formally adopted by the Trust at a meeting a few days later. Our society's support was founded on two principles: firstly, that the building should be preserved in line with our constitutional commitment to the Great Man's heritage; and secondly that there should be a museum display explaining the building's significance as a major surviving artefact of the S&MR and the Great Man's work. Chairman Derek Smith and SRHT director Russell Mulford - a major driving force behind the 'Save The Station' campaign - have both offered ex-S&MR relics as potential museum exhibits.

Russell spent much time reporting on military activities at Abbey station in 1956 in connection with the Suez Crisis, during the period when the line was being used by the Army to serve ammunition dumps.

The editor of *Railway Heritage* magazine

has also been tipped off about the story in the hope that he might want to publish something about the goings-on.

Phil summarised the way forward thus: "The railway society/trust will soften up councillors and the public with big feature articles on Colonel Stephens, S&MR etc in the local press, and each councillor will receive similar information personally.

"There will be a small display at Civic Society HQ. Geoff Trantham of Borough has been positive about the prospects for a museum in meetings with the Trust. The Shrewsbury Museum boss has also been very helpful. A business plan is to be prepared. The formal launch of campaign/fund-raising has been tentatively earmarked for September."

The key factor, of course, is money. We have offered £250 from this year's donations pot, authorised at a total of £500 at our AGM in April. And the Civic Society has pledged up to £3000 towards the restoration, which has been estimated as costing £27,000. It is hoped that the £10,000 of public money that Mr Trantham advocated would need to be spent on demolition might instead be used to put the building back together.

The council's deadline for receiving

proposals for the station's future use is December. The Abbey administrators are believed to be considering a rival bid to convert the building into offices for their own use, and would have considerable funds at their disposal to do so. So a railway-related future for the Old Potts station is by no means assured. Keep reading *The Colonel* to find out what happens next.

■

● *The best historical account of the Abbey station, by Roger Carpenter, was published in British Railway Journal number 23 in autumn 1988. It runs for nine pages and contains 16 photos and a 1926 map.*



The sorry remains of the building, snapped by Derek Smith on 14 January 1990

I Was There

RAINY DAY TRIP TO CLEVEDON IN THE '30s

Mark Bladwell introduces us to an old family friend and his endearing tale of a childhood adventure on the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway

Edward (Ted) Otridge, a very old friend of the family, and his wife moved to Portishead a few years ago after living in Bath for the previous 75 years. During one of our recent conversations, I was talking about the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway and he informed me that he had travelled on it. I insisted that he wrote an account of the journey, if only to serve as a memoir. This is as he wrote it:

“When I was a small boy in the early 1930s, my parents would arrange with our chimney sweep to rent his caravan for a week, sited at Uphill at the top of the access slope to a lime kiln. We would travel on a train, our home being near the Oldfield Park station [in Bath], to Weston-Super-Mare.

“When we were at the caravan and wanted some hot water, we made use of the lime kiln by lowering a flat-bottom kettle with water in it down into the limestone as it burned.

“One day, after spending some time on Weston beach, we went to Ashcombe Road railway station [the WC&PR’s Weston ter-

minus] to board a train to Clevedon. I had my bucket and spade and sat with my parents, looking out at the scenery.

“The journey started, but it didn’t seem long before we were stopping. Some people would look out to see what was happening and report to the others in the carriage (it could be gates to be opened and closed), then we would move on again for a short time, then another stop.

“This kept happening: slow down to stop, then start again. Occasionally someone would climb down on to the side of the track whilst the train was stopped. It must have started to rain as we travelled along, and drops started to fall from the carriage roof, so I tried to catch them in my bucket.

“At Clevedon we got off the train and whilst we were wandering about in the rain, somebody must have called to my parents to come and shelter in their large workshop (or so it seemed to a small boy), and the owner produced something for us to eat and drink.

“I do not remember the return journey

THE ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY

————— ∞ —————
Robertsbridge station, East Sussex TN32 5DG

REBUILDING THE K&ESR FROM ROBERTSBRIDGE TO BODIAM

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For membership, telephone: 01580 881833, go to www.rvrsa.co.uk
or write to: RVRSA, 375 New Hythe Lane, Larkfield, Kent ME20 6RY

back to Weston, then on to Uphill, but it had been a special day, travelling on the small railway.”

Mark adds the following postscript to Ted's tale: I have since shown Ted a photo of the WC&PR works at Clevedon, and he is sure that this is where “the owner” supplied

some food and drink for his family. ■

And furthermore...



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Mr Otridge might recognise the above scene: it's the WC&PR's Ashcombe Road terminus at Weston-Super-Mare, where he boarded the train for Clevedon all those years ago, modelled in 4mm scale, EM gauge by CSS member Andrew Ulllyott.

His layout will be making its public debut at the Great Western Study Group's Model Railway Exhibition (GWEXPO) on 25 and 26 October 2003 at the Parish Wharf Leisure Centre in Portishead.

"GWEXPO is going to have a strong CSS presence," he wrote, "because not only is there another WC&PR layout due to attend (Bleaden in 7mm as featured in MRJ number 91 a few years ago), but Nigel Bird is also on the list of traders.

"Parish Wharf Leisure Centre is easy to find, being signed. Follow the A369 from Junction 19 on the M5 towards Portishead." ●

LC&DR CARRIAGES ON THE EAST KENT LIGHT RAILWAYS

Robin Fielding shares the results of his extensive research into the origins of EKR coaches, and reveals that several vehicles remain mysteriously unaccounted for

For some years past I have been collecting photographs, drawings and any other information I can gather in an effort to research further the carriages used on the East Kent Light Railways. What I now write is a combination of material obtained from published sources and assistance given to me by others.

In particular I wish to record my appreciation of the information and assistance received from fellow members of the South Eastern & Chatham Railway Society. I have also used information published in the society journal *Invicta* and its newsletter *Onward* as a basis for some of my conclusions and deductions, particularly in relation to LCDR and SECR livery. However, what follows is all my own work, interpretation and conclusions. Responsibility for errors or omissions is mine.

First it is necessary for me to set out information given to me by Phil Coutanche, the membership secretary of the SECR Society. Over many years he has recorded details from official records to accumulate a vast store of data concerning the SECR and its constituents.

He has provided me with the following list, which is the information he has on ex-LCDR four-wheel carriages sold to the East Kent and the Kent & East Sussex Railways. He believes that none of these carriages ever ran on the K&ESR. I have no information to suggest any of them ever did.

The list shows, in respect of each vehicle, the LCDR number, year of construction, overall body dimensions, SECR number and details of sale.

1) First class No. 14, 1878, 25ft x 8ft x

7ft 2in, SECR No. 2410. Sold to Colonel Stephens, KESR 1921.

2) Second class No. 1, 1886, 26ft x 8ft x 6ft 10in, SECR No. 2737. Sold to Colonel Stephens, KESR 1921.

3) Second class No. 35, 1883, 26ft x 8ft x 6ft 10in, SECR No. 2771. Sold to Colonel Stephens, EKR 1920.

4) Second class No. 161, 1879, 26ft x 8ft 6in x 7ft, SECR No. 2888. Sold to Colonel Stephens, EKR 1920.

5) Third brake No. 314, 1879, 25ft x 8ft 6in x 6ft 10in, SECR No. 3268. Sold to Colonel Stephens, EKR 1920.

6) Third class No. 195, 1893, 25ft x 8ft x 6ft 10in, SECR No. 3149. Body only sold to Colonel Stephens, 1921.

7) Third class No. 362, 1887, 25ft x 8ft x 6ft 10in, SECR No. 3314. Altered to brake third pre-1910. Body only sold to Colonel Stephens, 1921.

Phil added that while the carriages at 6) and 7) are shown as "body only", it may be that complete vehicles actually changed hands.

From published sources and study of photographs in my collection, I can only positively identify three ex-LCDR four-wheel carriages running on the East Kent:

EKR number 7. Photographs show this to be a four-compartment vehicle with oval panels on each door. The style of panelling suggests construction prior to 1886. Oval door panels were peculiar to first class vehicles. I therefore believe that this carriage was ex-SECR number 2410, listed at 1) above.

EKR number 8. Photographs show this to be a four-compartment vehicle with a style of panelling suggesting construction

after 1885. I therefore believe that this was ex-SECR number 2737, listed at 2) above.

EKR number 9. Photographs show this to be a three-compartment brake vehicle with a raised 'birdcage' on the roof at the brake end. The style of panelling suggests construction prior to 1886. I therefore believe that this carriage was ex-SECR 3268, listed at 5) above. In *Invicta* there has appeared a drawing and notes on LCDR second and third class brake carriages 1879-1880. Apart from the doors, the panelling shown on the drawings corresponds with that seen on the photographs I have studied of EKR number 9.

The notes accompanying the drawings show an LCDR third brake number 314. SECR Society member Geoff Lines was the author of the *Invicta* article and produced the drawings using official drawings as his source. He has seen my photographs of EKR No. 9 and confirms that it does appear to be one of the subjects of his article. As he pointed out, the panelling may not have been constructed as drawn, or may subsequently have been altered.

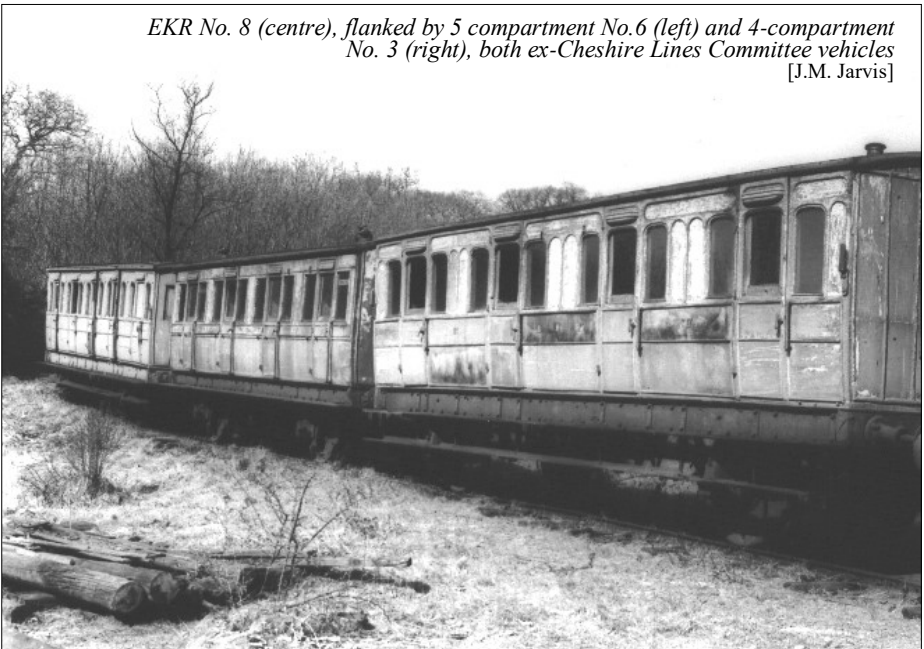
The notes show the brake carriages as

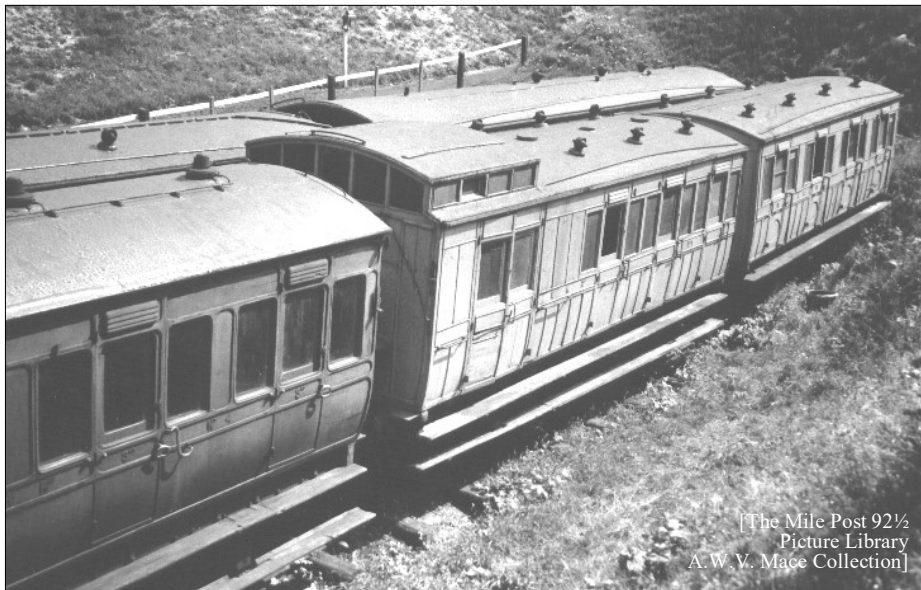
***“Access from ground level
without a proper
step-board would have re-
quired some athletic pro-
w-ess”***

close-coupled vehicles. As such, they would have had very short buffers at the compartment ends. The photos of No. 9 show standard buffers at both ends. Presumably it was fitted with standard buffers at the compartment end before or on sale to the EKR.

According to the Colonel Stephens Museum website, EKR coaches 7, 8 and 9 were obtained for workmen's trains. In this respect it is interesting to note that photographs show No. 9 had lower step-boards, and numbers 7 and 8 had replacement com- mode handles that extended from the waist to the bottom edge of the carriage side beside each compartment door.

EKR No. 8 (centre), flanked by 5 compartment No.6 (left) and 4-compartment No. 3 (right), both ex-Cheshire Lines Committee vehicles
[J.M. Jarvis]





[The Mile Post 92½
Picture Library
A. W. V. Mace Collection]

EKR No.9 (centre) is the ex-LCDR birdcage brake 3rd No. 314 of 1879, while beyond it is No. 7, former LCDR first No. 14, built in 1878 and later becoming SE&CR No. 2410.

I raised the question of the long, non-standard handles with Phil Coutanche, and he said they were fitted to enable access to and from low or non-existent platforms. I assume this was probably not considered necessary when the coach had a lower step-board, as with No. 9.

I suggest this tends to support the assertion that these carriages were obtained for use in workmen's trains, where some access was presumably required away from proper passenger platforms. Mind you, I think that access from ground level without a proper step-board would have required some athletic prowess, even allowing for the longer commode handle. Come to that, access using the lower step-board, but only a standard commode handle would probably have required a good deal of physical agility too.

What of the other carriages, listed at 3), 4), 6) and 7) above? I regret I can throw no more light on these vehicles. As already indicated, I have no knowledge of ex-LCDR carriages going to the K&ESR, and Phil Coutanche has told me the four-wheel ex-LCDR coaches that went to the Hundred of

Manhood and Selsey Tramways Company are a separate issue. Investigations continue regarding the Selsey vehicles.

On all the photographs I have examined in respect of both the EKR and K&ESR, I have only been able to identify one other ex-LCDR four-wheel carriage, either on wheels or as a grounded body: the body on the platform at Staple on the EKR. The vehicle is present in a photo I have recently purchased that was taken on 2 September 1938. Having seen the photo, Phil Coutanche believes it may be a composite converted to a fruit van. Apparently a number of such conversions were made. Enquiries are continuing to try and identify the vehicle.

I should make it clear that this is a completely different carriage to the ex-Cheshire Lines Committee one shown in plates 103, 106, and 107 of the Middleton Press publication *The East Kent Light Railway*. It does, however, seem to occupy much the same position and it would therefore seem likely that the ex-CLC vehicle may have replaced the original ex-LCDR one.

Does anybody have any photographic or

documentary evidence of what might have happened to the carriages listed at 3), 4), 6) and 7) above?

LIVERY

I have no conclusive evidence of the liveries carried by the three carriages I have identified during their service on the EKR. Prior to coming to the railway they would probably have carried a variety of liveries. Immediately prior to the creation of the SE&CR they would most likely have been finished in varnished teak.

Once the SE&CR came into existence, the livery for carriages became a dark lake colour, which has been described as similar to Midland crimson lake. From 1910 onwards a lighter shade of lake was applied and it seems from accounts this was rather a 'muddier' colour.

From 1916, apparently as a wartime measure, brown was the colour applied, and this has been described as close to the LBSCR umber. The brown continued to be applied to general service carriage stock until the Grouping. No lining was applied to ex-LCDR carriages during the life of the SE&CR.

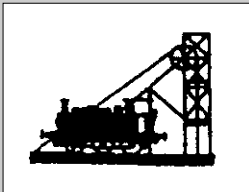
I do not know how often the SE&CR repainted carriages, but given the financial state of the company, I would not have thought it to have been too frequent. Given all the circumstances, I would think it likely that the ex-LCDR coaches mentioned above were finished in the later lake or the brown at the time of their disposal.

What happened then I do not know. They could have been repainted by the SE&CR at the request and expense of the EKR before delivery, in colours specified by the latter. I think this unlikely, but it must be considered as a possibility. They could have been completely repainted by the EKR on their arrival. This is perhaps more likely, but I have not seen any information that this was or was not done.

A cheap and easy option would have been to patch paint the vehicles to obliterate the SE&CR identity and then apply marking to show the new ownership. This approach certainly seems to have been adopted on the Selsey line. During 1931 two former LCDR six-wheel carriages in Southern Railway livery were purchased. The word 'Southern' was painted out and 'West Sussex' substituted.

I hope someone may be able to produce some verifiable evidence of EKR liveries, particularly carriages and goods stock. Locomotives seem to be better described, but even here there seem to be some differences in published accounts. None of the sources I have been able to consult to date has shown the origin of the livery details given for carriages and goods stock. ■

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TALES OF THE K&ESR: No 8 TAKES A TUMBLE

Former Kent & East Sussex Railway employee Monty Baker continues his anecdotes about the antics of his former colleagues on the railway

It was a dark, dismal evening in the winter of 1935. The 4.25pm Tenterden to Robertsbridge train had arrived at Rolvenden and stood in the platform awaiting departure. The one-coach train was headed by No. 8 *Hesperus* with Jimmy Webb and Bob Blair on the footplate.

In the shed road I was making up the fire on No. 2 *Northiam* while Nelson Wood was oiling round in preparation for the 5.10pm Tenterden to Headcorn trip. The Rolvenden gang of platelayers had arrived back from work on their section a quarter of an hour previously, taken their tools to the hut by the Hay Road, then stood talking prior to going home.

We did not know that our routine day was about to take a dramatic turn for the worse in the next few seconds as No. 8, with a blast on the whistle and a nice crisp bark in her exhaust, accelerated out of the platform towards Wittersham.

Alas, they had only travelled 100 yards or so when there was an almighty crash, sparks were flying, and No. 8 came to an ignominious halt. Nelson and I grabbed a hand-lamp each and ran to the scene. No. 8 had eventually come to a stop near the cross-over into the goods yard. A cursory inspection revealed the leading wheels derailed and a by now very compact platelayer's trolley jammed under the front axle and motion.

It was Cyril Packham's allotted job as platelayer, prior to his later elevation to guard, to remove the trolley after unloading to its stand adjacent to the track. Cyril swore he had done this, but no doubt he got talking and forgot.

Luckily the platelayers were still there and, with re-railing equipment close by, No. 8 was soon ready to be pulled back off the debris by No. 2, which had been coupled to the rear. A quick check revealed no great

damage, except to the trolley, and the train's tail-lamp was soon fading away in the distance.

This calamity had to be reported, and Cyril was soon the recipient of the dreaded Memo from 23 Salford Terrace [the Colonel's head office], personally autographed by Billy Austen, sentencing him to three days' suspension. Three days' platelayer's pay did not go far towards a replacement, second-hand trolley, but did encourage one not to forget in future.

There were not many ways to supplement one's pay to make up for suspension. One was catching and selling rabbits, a monopoly held exclusively by gangers and platelayers; or flogging coal by loco staff. The latter unfortunately never led to a repeat order, as Tilmanstone coal was more efficient at putting out a household fire than a bucket of water, unless you had a blower fitted to the chimney of your house.

Now Cyril Packham was an entrepreneur: as an amateur barber he cut the K&ESR employees' hair in his spare time, which mainly coincided with company time. His salon was either the platelayer's hut or the guard's compartment.

Everyone recognised a Packham trim; trim possibly being an understatement. He achieved a wavy, pudding-basin effect for 4d without using a basin, and with a concerted effort during his suspension was able to overcome his cash-flow problems.

Sadly, Cyril is no longer with us, but you can be sure there are angels up there sporting the Packham Fourpenny. ■

TRAMWAY TO OXFORD

Stephen Garrett explains the background to the Colonel's involvement in plans to extend the Wotton Tramway to the 'City of Dreaming Spires'

At our recent AGM at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre our chairman's address regretted that we were not meeting at the site of one of the Colonel's railways. However, Quanton Road and the Wotton Tramway to Brill were not entirely outside the Colonel's plans.

It is well known that Stephens completed his engineering studies under J. J. Hanbury at the Neasden Works of the Metropolitan Railway from 1888 to 1890. In the following years he did not lose touch with the Metropolitan and assisted with alterations at Baker Street and construction of the Kings Cross subway while working on the Cranbrook and Paddock Wood Railway.

Stephens must therefore have been well aware of the Metropolitan's acquisition of the Aylesbury & Buckingham Railway in 1891 in advance of their own line reaching Aylesbury in 1892.

Midway along the Aylesbury & Buckingham Railway at Quanton Road was a junction with the Wotton Tramway from Brill. This had been opened by the Duke of Buckingham in 1872 primarily as an estate railway, but also offered a passenger service to Quanton Road. Admittedly the service had its inconveniences: the line's chain-driven Aveling & Porter locomotives took over an hour to travel the line's six miles.

In 1883 an Act was passed to rebuild the tramway as a double track mainline and to extend it to Oxford. This scheme failed to attract sufficient capital to proceed, but in 1888 a new scheme for an Oxford & Aylesbury Tramroad was approved along the same route. With a proposed speed of 12 m.p.h. this proved little more popular to investors than its predecessor, but sufficient interest was aroused for an extension of time to be granted in 1892. Enough money had been raised by 1894 to purchase the Wotton Tramway but not its freehold. Work began on reconstructing the tramway in the hopes that funds for the extension to Oxford might yet materialise.

Unfortunately the funds were not forthcoming, but rescue of a sort came with an agreement between the tramroad company and the Metropolitan Railway for the latter to work the line until such time as Parliament would allow the Metropolitan to purchase it. It was against this background that Stephens approached the Metropolitan in 1901 with the proposal that the Oxford Extension be built as a light railway.

There is no record of Stephens submitting any actual plans or surveys for his proposal and he may well have intended to make use of the existing tramroad plans adapted as necessary for the higher 25 m.p.h. permitted by the Light Railway Act.

The Metropolitan did little more than note Stephens' suggestion. The GCR had made its junction with the Metropolitan at Quanton Road in 1898 and had begun its services to Marylebone in 1899. The Metropolitan's line was consequently operating at full capacity already and fitting an Oxford service into its schedules would have been difficult.

The Metropolitan never actually completed its purchase of the tramroad company, but continued to lease the line until its closure in 1935 though by this date, of course, London Transport had taken over the Metropolitan. The tramroad company was finally wound up in 1940.

Two locomotives associated with the line may be seen in the London Transport Museum, and a replica of one of the early carriages has been constructed at Quanton Road. A proposal by the Buckingham Railway Centre to rebuild part of the Wotton Tramway is on the back burner at present, but should it ever proceed it will presumably operate under the current equivalent of the Light Railways Act – a century and more since Stephens' proposal. ■