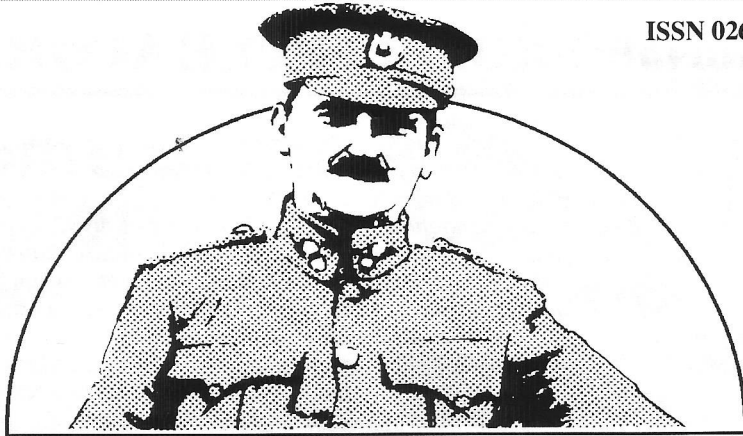


# 20th Anniversary Issue

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# THE COLONEL

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**Number 78**

**Spring 2005**

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**Memories of the WC&P - 6, *plus*:**



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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: FROM LITTLE ACORNS

**W**hilst not claiming that our Society is a mighty oak, it is a remarkable achievement; probably well beyond the expectations of its founders. In this issue, one of the co-founders, Jon Clarke, reminisces on the modest beginnings; the simple letter to the Railway Modeller that led to a number of people interested in Colonel Stephens and his collection of characterful, but largely decrepit, small, local railways, forming a self-help interest group. Stephen Hannington, another member there at the beginning, records the successes; a membership of around 300, a quarterly journal, a source list of publications on the Colonel Stephens's standard gauge lines. As Stephen says:

'The Colonel would be proud of us. Who could ask for more?'

In the course of my career as a librarian as well as in my leisure activities, I have had to endure many annual general meetings and similar events required by statutes and constitutions. Last year I attended my first CSS AGM at Tenterden. To my amazement, it was fun! We had an interesting talk on the RVR's plans to complete the missing link between Bodiam and Robertsbridge, the business was conducted briskly and with good humour (in a pub) and the day rounded off with a ride on the KESR. Who, indeed, could ask for more? Join us at Bitton in April, to see if you agree.

Ross Shimmon

Cover : WC&P locomotive hoist surviving in Clevedon Council yard, 1977.  
Photo: Christopher Redwood

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## Society News

# Come to the AGM, explore the WC&P *and* take a brake van ride

**T**he Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 16th April at the Avon Valley Railway, Bitton Station, Willsbridge, South Gloucestershire. We hope that there will be a bumper attendance, because apart from the AGM itself there will be opportunities to explore the Avon Valley Railway, take a brake van ride and, best of all, tour the remains of the legendary line with the infelicitous initials; the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Light Railway.

The programme for the day will be:

**11.30 Welcome and AGM**

**12.30 Buffet**

**1.30 Bus tour of the WC&P**

**5.30 Bus arrives at Bristol Temple Meads**

**6.00 Bus returns to Bitton station**

The Avon Valley Railway will not be operating a train service that day, but member Mark Bladwell, who is organising the day, reports that they are operating a driving course and brake van trips may be available during the lunch hour at about £2.50 per person.

The Colonel Stephens Society will provide the AGM, the buffet and the cost of the bus tour. Mark says: "I am required to inform members that any additional food purchased, train rides or other extras will be at members' own costs." He adds that there will be, of course, a silver (and gold) collection on the bus to help defray the cost. ●

## AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Actions from the last AGM  
*(Report of the last AGM appeared in Colonel 75)*
3. Committee reports:  
Chairman  
Secretary & Publicity Officer  
Treasurer  
Membership Secretary  
Editor
4. Election of Officers 2005/6  
*(see profiles on page 11: all are willing to serve again, but nominations can be made on the day)*
5. Subscriptions 2005/6
6. Donations to related organisations
7. Publicity budget
8. Attendance at exhibitions  
*(see Despatches page 8)*
9. Any other business  
*For transport directions, see page 4*

### FOR BUS ENTHUSIASTS:

Mark Bladwell informs us that the bus in question is a 1948 Bristol L5g with a rare Bristol BBW body, registration LHT 911. It is owned by Kelvin Amos, whose father bought it in 1973.

## Society News

# How to get to the AGM

*Members who, after all are transport enthusiasts, should have no difficulty in getting to Bitton Station for the AGM. However, Mark Bladwell has kindly prepared a guide - just in case.*

### By train:

The easiest way to get to the AGM is to alight at **Bath Spa**. The bus station is adjacent to the railway station. Catch the number 332 or 319 bus to Cherry Gardens, Willsbridge. Journey time is 20 minutes.

332 buses leave Bath at 35 minutes past the hour and the 319 leaves at 17 minutes past.

At the end of the tour of the remains of the WC&P the special bus will drop you at Bristol Temple Meads, so you are advised book your rail ticket to Bristol TM (if you are coming from the east). It should not cost any more. If you are coming from the west or Wales, book to Bath Spa (i.e. book to the furthest point).

Alternatively, if you want to arrive at **Bristol TM**, catch a number 8, 8A, 9 or 9A from there to Rupert Street, where you should change to a number 332. The 332 leaves at 35 minutes past the hour. Journey time to Rupert Street is 10 minutes, and about 30 minutes on 332 to the AVR. If you want to arrive at **Bristol Parkway**, catch a 318 (Keynsham) or 319 (Bath) from outside the station. The 318 departs on the hour and the 319 on the half-

hour. Alight at Cherry Gardens (319) or Willsbridge, Keynsham Road (318). Journey times 41 minutes (319) and 50 (318).

Finally, there is a local station at **Keynsham**. The 318 passes at 3 minutes past the hour from the bus stop across the road. Alight at the end of Keynsham Road in Willsbridge (journey time 3 minutes). Walk along the A420 (turn right) for 5 minutes to the AVR. Alternatively you can walk from Keynsham Station in about 25 minutes.

### By car:

Bitton station lies on the A431 Bath-Bristol road. From the M4, leave at junction 18, head for Bath on the A46 until you meet the A420 and turn right. Go through Wick to Bridge Yate, where you turn left. AVR is sign-posted (brown signs). Parking is available on site. ●

### Further information:

The following websites will provide more info:  
[www.avonvalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.avonvalleyrailway.co.uk)  
[www.firstbadgerline.co.uk](http://www.firstbadgerline.co.uk)

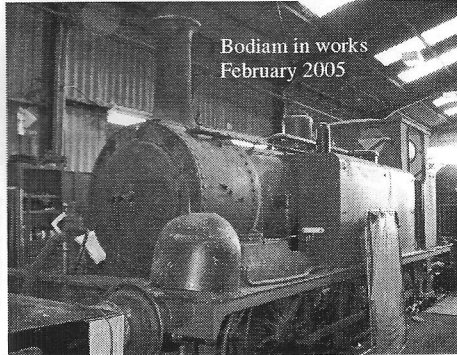
## 'Bodiam' back on track soon?

**Stephen Hannington reports on progress to restore the K&ESR Terrier 'Bodiam' which may lead to its return to steam later this year.**

The only surviving standard gauge loco dating from the Colonel's time still in working order, K&ESR no.3 *Bodiam*, has been undergoing major over-haul for several years. But according to the latest report from the Terrier Trust, which owns the engine, it could be back in service by October this year.

Its side tanks have been refitted and connected, the steam heating system is 90% complete and new cladding has been fitted to the backhead. Train vacuum pipes and drain cocks are also now in place.

"There remains quite a bit more work to be done," the Trust's latest newsletter reveals, "but the general consensus is that the loco could emerge from Rolvenden late September/early October



Bodiam in works  
February 2005

this year to begin its running trials."

If the trials are successful, a members-only special train will be run. Our Society became a life member of the trust by donating £150 towards *Bodiam's* restoration in 2000/01, so we can expect an invitation. ●

*Photo: Ross Shimmion*

## Baldwin 778 could be back a year early

RESTORATION of Baldwin 4-6-0T 778 could be completed a year earlier than originally planned, if a new fund-raising scheme is successful, reports Stephen Hannington. By contracting out more of the work, the completion date could be moved forward to 2006. This would entail raising another £25,000 to add to the £96,000 already raised by the loco's owner, the Greensand Railway Museum Trust.

The idea has received a big boost from heritage railway supporter Alan Moore CBE. He has promised to match every pound donated up to £10,000, producing a grand total of £20,000 if the appeal succeeds.

"With just one more big effort, we can make this happen", writes Sir William McAlpine in an appeals letter. "Please be generous, take up Alan's challenge and we can all meet at Page's Park soon to ride behind No. 778." The work required includes chassis restoration, a new boiler and ashpan, and replacement of some plate-work. The new boiler is currently being built and will be fitted by a contractor at Page's Park on the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway.

Our society donated £100 in 2001 towards this project. ●

# MEMORIES of the WC&P

*Author of a detailed study<sup>(1)</sup> of the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway, Christopher Redwood, recalls a visit to the area served by this charismatic line as a prelude to our visit in April at the AGM*

**H**aving been born and bred some eighteen miles from the southern terminus of the WC&P, its name was not unfamiliar to me as a boy. From time to time I saw one of its engines, the former no. 2 *Portishead* (ex-LB&SCR no.43 *Gipsyhill*) shunting at Taunton and once even hauling the daily pick-up goods to Highbridge. Strangely though, my otherwise knowledgeable band of locospotter friends were unable to tell me where Weston station had been; some of them even believed it was one of the other Westons that exist in Somerset!

It was not until I was living in London in the early 1970s that I acquired a copy of Colin Maggs's paperback<sup>(2)</sup> on the line. As soon as I had read it I determined to visit Clevedon the next time I was in Somerset. The cover showed an engine crossing the Triangle there and I thought I might take a 'then and now' picture from the same spot. A nice idea, but it was a Saturday afternoon in July and the whole area was clogged with parked cars and lorries. As I stood there, wondering what to do, suddenly all the drivers got into their vehicles and moved off, as if obeying some command from on high. All except one car, whose driver was sitting at the wheel.

## The 'old light railway'

I fixed him with a beady stare and, taking the hint, he drove off—only to return to the same spot a few minutes after I had taken my picture. He came over and asked if I was interested in the 'old light railway' (I was to learn that they call it nothing else down there). He had a frightful stammer, but I gathered that his father had been the last station master. We talked for an hour or more, after which he took me to meet one of the former guards, a man who also appeared in that cover picture. Hale and hearty at 79, he told me more interesting tales and gave me his address. I promised to write to him.

This I did a couple of months later, only to be devastated when my letter was returned with the word "deceased" on the envelope. That experience jogged me into writing down all I could remember from my conversations with the two men. I returned to Clevedon on numerous occasions thereafter.

## Receivership

When the WC&P closed it had been in receivership for many years and no rightful owner could be identified. Consequently much of the land passed into ownership of local councils. Clevedon Council decided to make the station site the headquarters of its Refuse Department. A hoist which had originally stood at the entrance to one of the engine sheds had been allowed to remain and a nearby building bore a sign to "the station",



although it was not long before that disappeared. I might have taken more pictures of the yard had I guessed that it, too, would disappear for a supermarket to be built in its place. A sculpture incorporating some rails is the only clue for today's visitor.

## Wick St. Lawrence

Further down the line towards Weston the wharf Colonel Stephens had built at Wick St. Lawrence could still be seen, although it had subsided considerably. I shall be very interested to see how much remains on 16th April. In other places one could identify low embankments on which the line had run and trace the track-bed for a few hundred yards out of Weston station. I thought it appropriate that a florist's shop specialising in funeral wreaths had opened just about where the station once stood.



## Dispatches

*Letters to the editor*

### Representing the CSS at the NEC ...

I think that this is the third year I have spent a day representing the Colonel Stephens Society at the National Model Railway Exhibition at the NEC. This time I was accompanied by my partner Terri and we were relieved by Ron and Roy - two other local members. All four of us agreed that we could improve the service provided at such events. The stand itself needs to be a lot more attention-grabbing. Very few people pause to look at our photographic display and our hero's name is not well-known enough to provoke many enquiries. We also need a welcome pack to offer any folks who might be persuaded to join on the spot - to give them something to take away and study.

We managed to enrol three new members on the Sunday. I gather that the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association also enrolled three new members - so it seems to be the "going rate".

Most interesting of all was a visit by one of the co-authors of *An Illustrated History of Southern Wagons*. He wasted no time in telling us his opinion of the Colonel-but could not be persuaded to put his views in

writing so that they could be discussed in *The Colonel*.

He had been to Glasgow University to inspect the archives of Messrs Pickering's, the rolling stock manufacturers. Has anyone done this with a view to adding to our knowledge of the Colonel's activities? It sounds as if it might be interesting.

We also received thanks from the WHR people and greetings from a RVR manager. (Both organisations are recipients of our donations -Ed.)

Time can pass quickly while promoting the Society, but I think it is time to rethink how our stand should be presented—to make life more interesting for everybody.

**Ned Williams, by email**

*Ned's letter has been considered by the Committee by email. It was agreed to raise the issue at the AGM in April - Ed.*

### ... and at Dartford

Thanks for the page 3 notice for the Erith show at Dartford in the last issue of *The Colonel*. We had some 1,600 plus attendees and record takings thanks to your help.

The Ffestiniog, East Kent Light and the Kent & East Sussex were in attendance and all did well. I distributed some 100 leaflets and would like some more. I will be at Alexandra Palace on Sunday 3rd April if that helps.

**Alan Bone, Bexleyheath**

*Thanks Alan. Your request for more leaflets has been passed on to Membership Officer, David Powell - Ed.*

#### WC&P 'Clevedon' was a Dubs product

*Colonel 74* carried an illustration of Andrew Ulyott's model of ex-WC&PR 'Clevedon', describing it as an 'ex-Furness Railway Sharp, Stewart of 1857.' In fact it is the 1879 Dubs locomotive which came from the Jersey Railway.

**Christopher Redwood, by email**



Letters to the editor

## Dispatches

# That Mysterious Contractor's Loco

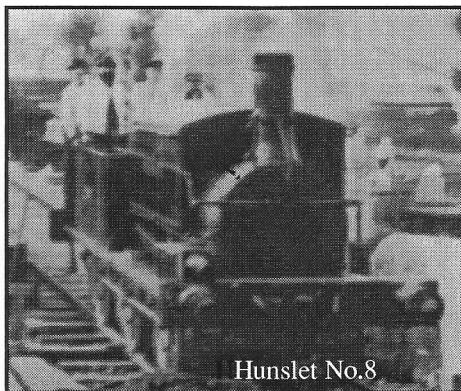
*The query from David Powell to Test Les in the last issue gave rise to an interesting exchange of email messages. Edited extracts appear below.*

**L**es Darbyshire's response is fully in accord with Tonks's history and those that have followed him. But, following some research, I believe that our assumptions need to be questioned. The mysterious contractor's loco was the first engine to arrive before the reconstruction, which was undertaken from the Lanymynech end, had really commenced. I concluded some time ago that the loco was not a Manning Wardle but an early Hunslet. The companies' standard designs were very close for a while and the higher bunker, larger side sheets, chimney and safety valve cover are nearer to Hunslet than MW practice.

I agree with Les that Rigby was probably involved in some way as a subcontractor. However, the contractors were Stephens himself and F C Matthews, a solicitor and associate.

**Brian Janes,  
Colonel Stephens Museum, Tenterden**

I support your conclusion that the loco is at Lanymynech immediately prior to reconstruction. Is it my imagination, but the station building looks as if it has already had a repaint? I am still not sure about the loco.



Hunslet No.8

To me the jury is still out as I think it could be a large Manning Wardle with a locally manufactured cab. The saddle tank, wheels, raised buffer beam all say MW.

**David Powell**

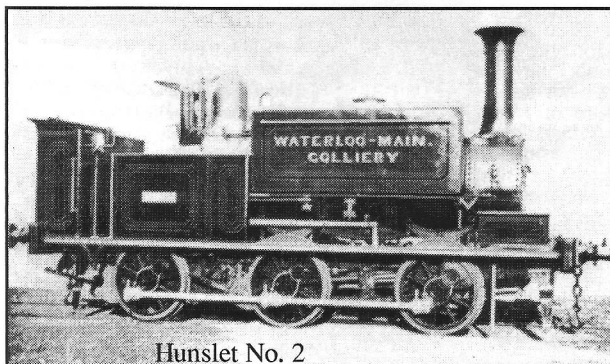
One always repaints the office building first! (I suspect it was the contractor's office). Be careful about looking at wheels, etc., to differentiate between early Hunslet and MW. The attached photos might illustrate the problem.

**Brian Janes**

Brian Janes's comments on the SMR loco are interesting. He could well be right. I don't know enough about the subtle differences between early Hunslets and a contemporary Manning Wardle.

**Les Darbyshire**

*Photos from the Colonel Stephens Museum Collection, Tenterden*



Hunslet No. 2

## Dispatches

Letters to the editor

### The Criggion Wreck

R W Kidner's Letter and photo of loco remains at Criggion (*The Colonel* 77, page 7) were very interesting. The Photo seems to show the tank of a Manning Wardle; either an 0-4-0ST or a small 0-6-0ST. However, I believe the only other

standard gauge loco recorded at Criggion Quarry before the Sentinel was the ex-ROD Baldwin (although what was used, if anything, before that arrived in 1917?). The narrow gauge Bagnall was very distinctive. So the origin of the engine remains photographed by Mr. Kidner are mysterious.

Brian Janes

## Liveries, liveries, liveries

Phil Scoggins, in the last issue of *The Colonel*, sent the following teaser to Test Les: "What were the liveries of the three terriers used by the S&MR in the 20s and 30s." This gave rise to another fascinating exchange.

I accept that there may be contemporary reports of No. 7 *Hecate* still in LBSCR umber in 1923, but the other two? L O Malloy in *The Colonel's Terriers, Railway Bylines*, v 5, no.3, mentions a report of no.9 *Daphne's* LBSCR livery 'showing through' at Eastleigh. Showing through what?

*Hecate* was at Inverness from 1918 until bought by Stephens in 1921. But the other two were at Invergordon working for the Admiralty from 1918 until 1923; a full 5 years. My experience of working with the Navy includes: if it is near salt water, paint it to protect the metal; second, uniformity is a good thing. My gut feeling is that these two could well have finished up with a healthy coat of dark navy blue. This would probably have been acceptable to Stephens, with his liking for blue locos. In which case, might not have no.7 have acquired a coat with the arrival of her sisters? This would fit in with the picture of *Hecate* (Tonks, page 68) where water spillage (or the photographer) has cleared the grime around the nameplate, revealing a dark livery of some sort. In none of the other photos of the Terriers is there any hint of LBSCR livery.

David Powell

Livery is a fraught area. To show the problem *Dido* and *Dapne* were noted in 1921 at the government depot in Dalmauir 'in Brighton livery' but before they were

sold. One was black, the other umber. Stephens would not tolerate old company lettering so a quick repaint would have happened. Certainly when Casserley photographed them in the mid twenties they had all been repainted.

*Hecate* was reported in *The Locomotive* for May 1923 as being in 'LBSCR style' with cast name plates (where LB&SCR would have been) so probably had a partial repaint in umber after delivery in August 1921 and stayed that way for a while.

Other livery points include that the 0-6-2Ts were painted 'like LSWR locos of some years ago' (*The Locomotive*, October 1911). Although Tonks is positive that the two Ilfracombes delivered in wartime were blue with red lining, I have no confirmatory notes. Bradley says that *Pyramus* was dispatched from Eastleigh in LSWR livery 'repainted in SMR livery and renumbered' by 17th May 1915, but is silent on the other engine and the colours used. My suspicion is for green. I can find no contemporary reference to colours of the Terriers.

Brian Janes

## WHO'S WHO in the SOCIETY

**A**s a correspondence group, the main source of contact in our Society is The Colonel, supplemented by the website and, now, the e-discussion group. Some of us meet at the AGM, but otherwise direct contact is haphazard and coincidental. So, on the basis that it's good to fit a face to a name, the editor asked each serving officer to provide a picture and some background info. This is the result.

### The Chairman: Derek Smith (pictured right)

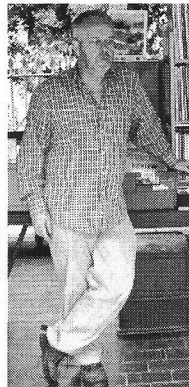
Derek was born in 1926. A life-long railway and Col. Stephens enthusiast, he served in the coal mines from 1944-46 as a 'Bevin Boy'. He joined BR in 1950 as a plant fitter in the Civil Engineer's Dept. (WR). Derek was appointed Mechanical Supervisor (Work Study) in the CM&EE, Swindon in 1958. He was Supervisor at the Hookagate Rail Welding Depot from 1960 until closure in 1986. They had a small section of SMR rail when he was there. Derek travelled on the SMR in 1930, and 1934 /5.



**Treasurer: Nigel Bird (right):** Nigel developed, alongside a passion for standard gauge, an interest in narrow gauge and odd-ball lines like the Bishops Castle and the SMR. He joined the Welshpool & Llanfair in 1966. He found that the Great Man's name kept cropping up, so joined the embryonic CSS shortly after it was formed. Very soon

he became Secretary, then Treasurer. His special interests are the SMR, Snailbeach, KESR and the WHR. Nigel is one of those fortunate people who are able to combine with hobby, as he earns his living selling railway books.

**Membership Officer: David Powell (left)** David's first contact with our man was at the age of 5 via the daily walk to school past the S&M Meole Brace station. His first cab ride was on *Countess* from Llanfair prompting a lifetime's love of the narrow gauge. Highlights in his career in RAF logistics included walking on the Falklands narrow gauge and visits to Hell in Norway and Paradise in Pennsylvania. Current work includes narrating TVP's Video-Track magazine. Apart from keeping an eye on the Society's membership of around 300, he is attempting to build a 7mm layout based on a imaginary extension to the Criggion branch.



### Publicity Officer: Stephen Hannington

Stephen says that he has said all he wants to say about himself in *The Colonel* already. He's a journalist, now a press officer for Medway Council. He has built a splendid (*my words -Ed.*) EM layout of the KESR 'Rye Town' which many members have seen at exhibitions. He says that he doesn't have any current photos of himself that he's willing to have published.

### Editor: Ross Shimmon (right)

I said it all in *The Colonel* no.74, when I stood for election as Editor. In the event I was the only candidate. In retirement, amongst other things, I am just starting as a volunteer on the KESR.



## ORIGINS OF THE CSS

*The Colonel Stephens Society was set up in 1985, to promote interest in the light and narrow gauge railways of Colonel H.F. Stephens. But just how did it get started? Jon Clarke, co-founder, recalls the early days.*

**B**ack in April 1985 a letter from a Northumberland policeman, Andrew Emery, was published in *The Railway Modeller*, asking if there was any interest in forming a society based on the railways of Colonel H F Stephens. Having been an enthusiast of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway for several years, I quickly contacted Andrew. Rather than write, I got his phone number and rang him. We discussed our interests and what roles we could play in developing a society.

Over the next couple of weeks Andrew received over 30 replies. He decided that he would send out a standard newsletter to all those interested, explaining how we thought the society should be set up. A membership questionnaire was also included. As instigator, Andrew assumed the role of Chairman and took on the role of publicising the newly christened *Colonel Stephens Society*, and was also the membership secretary. I took on the role of archivist and also of developing a regular newsletter. I remember Andrew visited me a few weeks later in Chester, en route from his home to his in-laws in Shropshire. Before leaving he dumped a large box of members' envelopes with me. In those days membership was free. Andrew had decided that there was more chance of getting people to join if it was free. In place of a fee he asked for a number (I think it was 6) SAEs to be sent in per year to be used to post out the newsletter.

### "The Colonel"

I decided that the original newsletter (annotated No.1) was inadequate, so I cre-

ated *The Colonel*, along with the slogan *The Journal of the Colonel Stephens Society for enthusiasts of the light and narrow gauge railways of Colonel Holman F. Stephens*. I registered the title for its International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). I drew the original artwork of the image of the Colonel as used on the first few editions. *The Colonel* no.2 was in fact the first edition and the original three page newsletter was no. 1.

**" Before leaving he dumped a large box of members' envelopes with me. In those days membership was free."**

Thus you can't get back copies of *The Colonel 1*. (Although Les Darbyshire can supply you with a photocopy of the newsletter— Ed.)

### Production

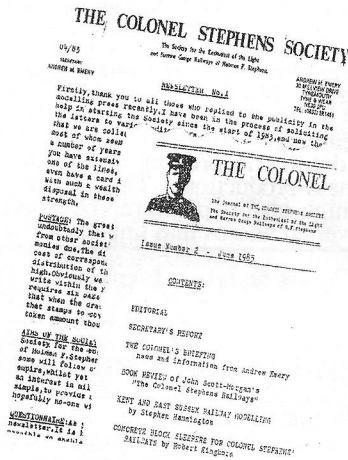
Production in those pre-personal computer days involved me typing an article or photocopying an original article sent in, then cutting and pasting where necessary. The journal was produced to A4 size and then photo-reduced to create the A5 format. During my period as Editor, I paid to have 50 to 150 copies run off. All I then had to do was sort and staple the lot before posting in the SAEs.

### Volunteers

While *The Colonel* was in development, Andrew conscripted volunteers for various other roles in the Society, as archivists or research officers. The idea was to nominate individuals to concentrate research on allotted lines and for the archivists to provide

articles for the journal. It even worked sometimes! Stephen Hannington and I were the Archivists, while the two of us, plus Hugh Smith, Tony Cleford, Brian Wharton, John Keylock and Mike Green were the Research Officers. In addition, Field Officers were appointed to cover some lines in more depth, providing on-site research. In this role Stephen and I were joined by Mike Green, Graham Bessant and Neil Rose.

producing *The Colonel*. Andrew took over. In time new faces came to take on roles in the Society, including Stephen Hannington the editorship and making an excellent job of it. Andrew Emery's interest ceased a couple of years later when he decided to concentrate on his first (railway) love, the Highland Railway. I remain a fan of the SMR and have continued as a member of CSS. In 2002 I completed a 14-year project; the production of *The Colonel's Guide-a Source Guide to Books, Magazines, Models, Videos and Films of Colonel Stephens Standard Gauge Light Railways*, published by the Society and issued free to all members. Needless to say I am very proud to see how both the Society and *The Colonel* have developed since the CSS was founded. It is amazing how a simple letter in a modelling magazine could grow into such an established railway society. The pages of *The Colonel* have revealed an incredible amount of new information over the last twenty years. No doubt there is much more yet to be revealed. ●



**The first two CSS publications**

**Advertisement**

The existence of *The Colonel* was a great boost to interest in the CSS and Andrew contacted Bob Barlow at *Model Railway Journal* to arrange for a very inexpensive series of adverts to be included in that magazine. Andrew obtained some professionally drawn artwork of several images of the Colonel (I think by a CSS member). Subsequently I used one of these on the front cover and it is still in use.

**New Faces**

In December 1986, around the time of producing *Colonel 8*, my 5 week old daughter, Hayley, sadly died from meningitis. The resulting loss of interest in just about everything meant that I felt unable to continue

**e-Discussion Group**

Member Robert Kosmider has set up an electronic discussion group for those interested in the Colonel's railways. "I want it to be low key, a service for like-minded CS fans," Robert says. As moderator, he will intervene only if necessary, otherwise it will be maintenance free. To join you need to:

1. Open a Yahoo Account with a user name and password (or use your existing one)
2. After logging on to Yahoo, go to the Yahoo Groups link and log on with same details if asked.
3. Search for "ColonelHFStephens" and follow the prompts to register.
4. You can set up a special inbox if you wish
5. Send your emails to: ColonelHFStephens@yahoo.com and they will go to all registered members.

**Cool or what?**

# Twenty years of *The Colonel*

*Former Editor Stephen Hannington offers a personal view of some momentous events in the Society's history*

**L**ooking back at one of my earliest editorials for *The Colonel*, dating from late 1987, I find myself referring to the "rough-and-ready organisation, or lack of it that underlies our society". This appears in *Colonel 10*, only the second issue that I edited and was prompted by the late dispatch of that issue: something that I have always considered to be unacceptable.

## First AGM

Therein lies a tale, but I mention it mainly because it demonstrates how far we have come as a society. Shortly after the above remarks were published, the society held its first AGM, on 23 April 1988, roughly three years after it had been founded. I can claim joint credit with railway author John Scott Morgan for putting the society on a sound footing by organising this event and drawing up the constitution that the AGM adopted. The latter defined the committee structure and the society's role and has served us well for 17 years. I regard that first AGM as the occasion of the true birth of the Colonel Stephens Society as we know it today.

## A proper head of steam

About that time, Nigel Bird also made a landmark contribution by putting our finances in order, through the simple expedient of opening a bank account and putting our money in it. Well done that man! At a stroke this eliminated the cause of the 'printing' and distribution problems that had dogged *Colonel 10*, and - if nothing else - resulted in the far

more optimistic tone of subsequent editorials as the Society at last got up a proper head of steam.

## Technology

Technology has been our friend over the years. My first *Colonels* were produced on what would now be considered a 'steam-age' computer (an Amstrad), with dot-matrix printing and photocopied mass-production. This did not favour high-quality photo reproduction, so I converted photos into line-drawings by

**"The Colonel would be proud of us. Who could ask of more?"**

simple tracing and inking. I think they have a certain charm, though I must confess that I no longer have the originals, due to an over-enthusiastic clear-out session many years ago. Alan and Mary Garner were absolute stalwarts in that era, as they remain to this day. We should be grateful to Alan for putting the rocket under the Society that led it being put on an even keel in 1987. And to both Garners for the pivotal role they played in producing master copies, bulk photocopying and mailing-out *The Colonel*. I am pleased that they continue to be largely unsung heroes by mailing our journal with unflinching reliability and enthusiasm. Technology has now relieved them of the chore of photocopying.

## Real photos

I well remember a breakthrough committee meeting in 2000 at David Powell's home - the only formal committee meeting we have ever had, incidentally - at which I revealed proofs of *The*

*Colonel* that I had printed at home. Home computers had by then advanced so far that I could produce computer-generated proofs with real photos on them (Les Darbyshire was the first to do this, during his stint as editor). Bulk copies were still photocopied, however, with consequent reductions in quality. But at his first sight of the far higher quality of the proofs, Nigel Bird almost leapt out of his seat, declaring: "Yes! We want *that!*" Archivist Stuart Marshall then quietly confessed that he was employed by a printing company that could mass-produce the journal from the original computer files, enabling every member to receive a high quality, first-generation copy. Thus the 'Digital Colonel' was born, no.61 being the first to hit the streets. At last we could publish clear photos with good detail; a vital aspect of our research-sharing role.

### The Internet

Another aspect of technology that has worked to our considerable advantage is the Internet. This has vastly improved the committee's ability to discuss and decide on issues vital to the running of the Society, through what David Powell has aptly described as 'virtual committee meetings'. We are in constant touch via email, which has the great advantage over the Post Office method in that a single correspondence can be sent to everyone at the same time and responses can be back within hours if not minutes. This led David to remark that we have been participating in a single, never-ending virtual meeting for years. And he's right. This has worked wonders for our organisational effectiveness - as well, no doubt for BT's profits.

### The weekend trip AGM

In 1998, Nigel introduced a thoroughly rejuvenating aspect of the Society's activities: the weekend trip AGM. We take it for granted now that our AGM is much more than just a meeting; it may also include a ride on a railway-one of The Great Man's where possible-and an exploration of Colonel-related remains and localities. This is a great improvement on the early, Keen House days as attendance numbers prove. Hats off to Mr. Bird - again.

### Donation programme

And it was in the year 200 that another significant new activity emerged; that of donating money to Colonel-related heritage projects. As was reported in *Colonel 76*, we have since given away a grand total of £2700 over the last five years. There can scarcely

be a Colonel conservation or preservation cause that has not benefited from members' generosity by now. And this has justly earned us recognition in *Heritage Railway* and *Railway Modeller* magazines recently, garnering useful publicity for our Society.

### All for a few quid

So we have indeed made great strides since those dark days of 1987. We have a stable and effective organisational structure. We have remarkably healthy finances. Membership has trebled. We have well-attended AGMs that are fun. We have a high quality, reliable newsletter. And we have funded a huge range of Colonel-related projects, gaining friends along the way. All this for just a few quid a year. The Colonel would be proud of us. Who could ask for more? ●

## Despatches extra

### Letter to the editor

May I make a contribution to the discussion on Criggion Quarries? Keith Patrick's letter (*Colonel 77*, page 6) had me confused, surely GRANOMAC is a trade name for tarmac, not a company name. Some wagons were also branded GRANOPHAST, eg no.420. Referring to the Industrial Railway Society's excellent Pocket book F, the quarry at Criggion was owned by Pyx Granite Co. until 1913, then Granham Moor Quarries up to 1925 when it became Ceiriog Granite, until the creation of the BQC organisation in February 1929. It is now part of the Hanson empire. A reasonable photo of a Granham Moor wagon is no.49 in the Middleton Press book on the SMR.

How was the tar transported to Criggion, I haven't seen a photo of a tar wagon on the SMR? The Criggion Baldwin was similar to the one at Clee Hill, both being ex-ROD 0-4-OSTs. See Photomatic print N1109.

**Mike Rhodes, Farnborough**

## THE WARD GREEN ARCHIVE - 2

*The Ward Green Archive includes correspondence between Colonel Stephens and others and a leading Salopian, Thomas Ward Green of Llanymynech. The letters of particular interest to us are those dating from 1907 to 1911, concerned with the establishment of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway. David Powell has painstakingly deciphered the letters for us. In this instalment, David follows Stephens's aggressive pursuit of funding.*

**T**he first document (right) is dated 15 May 1908 (A36). Stephens writes personally to Ward Green:

*My Dear Mr Ward Green*

*Many thanks for your letter. The Treasury can advance an equal amount to the sum subscribed by the local authorities if they so think fit. Hence, I want the Chancellor tackled on this point. We should gain interest as the Treasury would only ask for 3½%. Can you get someone to write to Mr Lloyd George & interest him? It is urgent that we put this discussion before the Order is finally settled as we may want a new clause. The Shrewsbury Corporation talk of £500, this is good but £1000 or £1500 would be better. Can we get an amendment proposed. The more we get the local authorities the more we can get ex-Treasury if they so decide. Please see the attached note. Yours sincerely H.F. Stephens.*

The attached note (Doc A35, see next page), a hand-written copy—but not by Stephens, to E C Peele Esq., Clerk to Salop County Council dated 25th February 1908 reads as follows:

Dear Sir

North Shropshire Light Rly Order

*May I urge the importance of this undertaking of a Resolution expressing approval of the insertion in the above-named order of a clause authorising the*

NORTH SHROPSHIRE RAILWAY.	
TELEGRAMS: STREDS., TONBRIDGE STATION.	ENGINEER'S OFFICE,
TELEPHONE: 25 TONBRIDGE.	TONBRIDGE, KENT.
OUR REFERENCE: <input type="checkbox"/>	May 15 1908
<p><i>My dear Mr Ward Green</i></p> <p><i>Many thanks for your letter</i></p> <p><i>The Treasury can advance an equal amount to the sum subscribed by the local authorities if they so think fit. Hence, I want the Chancellor tackled on this</i></p>	

*Council hereafter (if they think fit) to advance the Light Railway Company any sum not exceeding a special amount, I suggest this sum might be £5,000. It binds the Council to nothing, but the moral support is of great advantage to the undertaking. £5,000 at 4% is only £200 per annum, not a very large liability for opening up 20 miles of the Council's district bearing in mind the heavy haulage saved over roads etc. If you can see your way to put me in order herein I shall be extremely obliged to you. Yours faithfully, H F Stephens*



July 20/1909

J. P. Peck Esq  
 Clerk to Salop. C.C.  
 Shrewsbury  
 Shrewsbury

Dear Sir

South Shropshire Light Rly Order

May I urge the importance to the undertaking of a Resolution expressing approval of the intention in the above-named order of a clause authorizing the Council (except if they think fit) to advance to the Light Railway Company any sum not exceeding a special amount, I suggest this sum might be £1000. It binds the Council to nothing, but the moral support is of great advantage to the undertaking of £15,000 at 4% is only £200 per annum, and a very large liability, opening up 20 miles of the Council's district, leaving in mind the heavy haulage, water, and roads etc. If you can see your way to put me in order herein I shall be extremely obliged to you.

Yours faithfully  
 J. P. Peck

County of Salop.

In Re The Light Railways Act, 1896.

**Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway Order, 1909.**

Sir,

I hereby give you notice in pursuance of section 3 (c) (a) of the Light Railways Act, 1896, that at the next meeting of the Council, which will be held at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury, on **SATURDAY, the 24th day of July, 1909, at 11.30 o'clock a.m.**, a Motion in the following terms or to the like effect will be proposed, viz.

"That in pursuance of Clause 21 of the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway Order, 1909, the sum of Ten thousand pounds be advanced by this Council to the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Light Railway Company by way of loan to be secured by the issue of prior Charge (Preference) Stock of the Company, bearing interest at the rate of 4½ per centum per annum."

By Order of the Council  
 J. P. Peck,  
 Clerk of the Salop County Council.

Your obedient Servant,  
*J. P. Peck*

Shirehall, Shrewsbury,  
 22nd June, 1909.

Points of interest include Stephens's use of the bait of the Council borrowing Treasury money at 3½% from the Treasury to advance to the Railway at 4% (in fact the actual Council motion (Doc A530 quotes 4½%), and his fishing for a personal contact direct to Lloyd George.

This potential income for Shropshire Council assumed that the Railway would be able to meet its debenture obligations! Also, we now see that the Tonbridge Office has printed up some headed stationery for the North Shropshire Railway, Engineer's Office. ●

## PRESS DIGEST

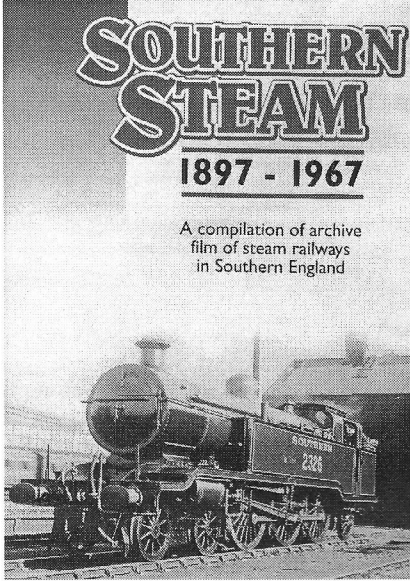
The **Worthing Guardian**, on 28 January, reporting on the DVD reviewed on the next page refers to the Selsey Tramway as "noisiest and most rickety line in England" and "this antiquated one-track railway which twisted its way across the Selsey Peninsular." (Thanks, John Simmonds). Laurie Cooksey has extended his mission to set the record straight to the pages of the February **Railway Modeller**. He corrects a number of inaccuracies in the piece by John Golding on his G scale Rye & Camber models. On the same page, prompted by the Golding article, there is an interesting piece on the orientation of smokebox door handles, believe it or not. **Heritage Railway**, February issue, features the construction at Boston Lodge of a replica

of Charles Spooner's legendary inspection car which looked more like a boat. There is also a long article on the WHR(P), including a nice shot of *Russell*. The **Shropshire Star** gave extensive coverage in January to the plans of the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust to develop the derelict SMR Shrewsbury Abbey Foregate station into a visitor centre. Architect Mary de Saulles is also reported to be considering an oral history project to supplement the building plans. "So many of them [town residents] have lovely memories and interesting tales and we are going to apply for another grant to help us do recordings." ●

**Contributions to *Press Digest* are welcome. Please send them to the Editor at the address on page 2.**

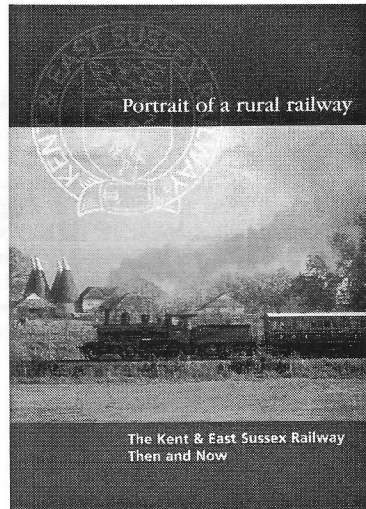
## Video & Book Reviews

The best clip in this fascinating DVD, produced by West Sussex Record Office, is a mere one minute long. It features the HM&ST Ford and Shefflex railcars. The introduction includes some familiar still shots of *Morous* and *Sidlesham*. But there is wonderful footage of a man in a long coat coaxing the railmotor to start by climbing behind the flimsy buffer beam to wrestle with the starting handle (remember them?). Eventually he stands on the handle and the engine presumably bursts into life (no sound). There is also a memorable image of a well-dressed man *standing* in with all the cases in the luggage wagon as the set moves off, followed by its arrival at Chichester station packed with holiday makers. If only the sequence were longer! Is the video worth £15.50? Only you can say, but these may be the only moving images of the H&MST. I loved the longer clips of the Terriers on the Hayling Island Branch and the O2s on the IoW. There is also a fascinating shot of an LBSCR *Gladstone* arriving at Hove in 1895. Bliss! RS **Southern Steam 1897-1967**. West Sussex Record Office and South East Film & Video Archive. 60 minutes, B&W and colour. £15.50 inc p&p from: West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RN.



Most preserved railways produce a guide for the casual visitor. The KESR is no exception. But this is an exceptionally good example. It is a glossy, full colour, A4-size publication. It includes a substantial section dealing with the line's history, including full credit to the Great Man. There is an explanation of what is meant by a 'Light Railway' and reproductions of the BR closure notices. The re-creation of the Colonel's office in Tonbridge is pictured, accompanying a description of the Colonel Stephens Museum. Stations and current rolling stock are well described as well as attractions along the route. A snip at £3. RS

**Portrait of a Rural Railway: the Kent & East Sussex Railway Then and Now**, by John Miller. [2004] No ISBN. 26pp. From the shop at Tenterden Station, £3.



## Laurie's Quest

*Sources of key photos required for a new history of the Selsey Tramway*

I am just putting the finishing touches to what I hope will be the definitive history of the Selsey Tramway, due to be published later this year. I wonder if any members could provide me with copies of some photos that appeared in the Magic Box Productions video *The Selsey Tramway* of 1997. I've been in touch with Tom Loftus, the producer, but he can't remember where he got them from, and has long since returned them. The photos I require are:

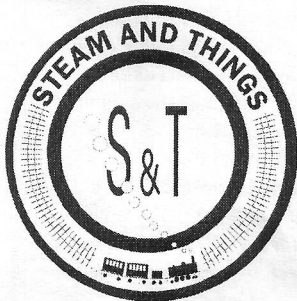
- 13: Opening day at Chichester station without train
- 14: Opening day at Chichester station with train
- 19: Chichester station from field
- 27: Shefflex Railmotor with calf being unloaded from truck at Selsey
- 28: Loco in distance running round carriages at Selsey
- 33: The approach to Ferry station looking south
- 34: *Selsey* with two ex-LCDR 4-wheel carriages approaching Ferry
- 37: Shefflex Railmotor off the line at Ferry level crossing
- 63: Selsey station after closure
- 78: Shefflex Railmotor arriving at Selsey
- 87: Ford Railmotor body without chassis after closure at Selsey
- 94: *Hesperus* with three carriages heading south at Sidlesham station.

Although some of these are credited to Middleton press, they have advised me that the photographs are not theirs! Apart from these photographs, does any member know the whereabouts of Edward Griffiths's photograph collection on the Selsey Tramway? It was he who wrote the excellent booklet on the Tramway in three editions published in 1948, 1968 and 1974.

If any member can help with these or any other unpublished photographs of the Selsey Tramway, please contact me at 12 Brunswick Court, Hardres Street, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 8QL. It goes without saying that I would pay all reasonable expenses.

Laurie Cooksey

**Editors' curse** - pressure on space - has forced the exclusion of the latest instalments of the Southern's report on the HM&ST and Laurie's crusade to 'Set the Record Straight'. Have no fear, they will both be back in the next issue.



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## Jackson's Jottings

# AS OTHERS DO IT

**Chris Jackson browses through more clippings from the Railway Gazette**

Year after year, the *Railway Gazette* reported critically on the workings of the Light Railways Act and the role of the commissioners and the Board of Trade which laboured mightily in passing order after order which never came to fruition. In many cases the editors attributed this to the requirements surrounding applications for Treasury funding and the parsimonious amounts made available. On several occasions the magazine looked in more detail at light railway promotion in continental Europe, notably Germany and Belgium, to try to show why the concept was more successful on the other side of the Channel.

### August 6 1909: State Aid for Light Railways

As is well known, Mr Lloyd George's Budget provides for a development fund, which is to be used, *inter alia*, for the encouragement of light railway development. It is possibly not without significance that the policy adopted by the Prussian Government in aiding light railway construction was a matter specially reported on by the late Board of Trade Railway Conference. By a law passed in 1885, a fund of £250,000 was set at the disposal of the Government for the building of *Kleinbahnen* or "little railways", and subsequent legislation has made provision for further contributions.

General conditions have been laid as to the terms under which the State aid may be granted, which may be briefly summarised as follows: The proposed railway must serve the interests of the general public; its cost must bear a reasonable proportion to the expected benefits; interested parties must give the land free or provide the means of acquisition, and local authorities are also required to contribute financial assistance, shares. The governor of the province traversed by the proposed line has to approve of the application for State aid, and also supply the authorities with the necessary information concerning the anticipated traffics and the financial status of the promoters &c.

Up to 1907, State aid had already been granted to the amount of about £4,168,850, a total brought up to £4,638,500 by the inclusion of proposed grants and additional applications. In addition to the subsidies of three tramways, this money was contributed to the funds of 165 distinct light railways, mainly agricultural lines, with a total length of 4,173 miles. These figures certainly show the beneficial influence of well-organised State aid. •

## Nigel Bird Books

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Website: