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# THE COLONEL

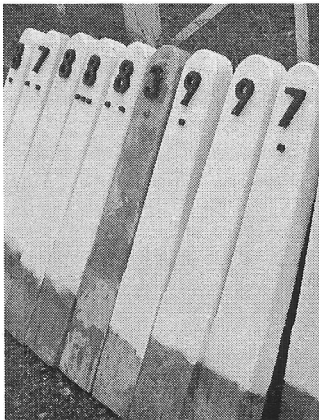
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**Number 80**

**Autumn 2005**

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**THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY**  
*for enthusiasts of the light and narrow gauge railways of*  
*Colonel Holman F. Stephens*

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**An Index to *The Colonel*** issues 1-78 is available on our Website.

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## Editorial: The Personality Cult

**O**ur Society is unusual, if not unique, in that it concerns the railways connected with an individual, rather than those located in a country or part of a country. After all there are, as far as I know, no societies which cater for the followers of – say Sir Herbert Walker of the Southern or Daniel Gooch of the Great Western. Hours of innocent amusement may be whiled away pondering the attraction of a man who was apparently something of a martinet and not at all modest about his abilities; a man who ran, or was associated with, a motley collection of at times ramshackle light railways spread around England and Wales. Furthermore, he was associ-

ated with rather more abortive schemes than those which actually came to fruition to serve their communities. Something the latter achieved, at least for a time, more successfully than their other objective; to reward their financial backers. It has puzzled many of us why, given undoubted attraction of him and “his” railways, that there has not so far been a definitive biography of the Great Man. Rumours of the imminent arrival of just such a work have surfaced over the years. But so far, no biography has seen the light of day. However, the next best thing in the shape of the latest Middleton Press book has arrived. *Les Darbyshire* reviews it on page 18. Enjoy!

Ross Shimmon

## Society News

### SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

**E**ach year, your Membership Secretary tries to think of new and clever eye-catching ways to remind you that it is subscription renewal time – and that means that it is time to renew yours. This year I will keep it simple. With this issue you will find your renewal form. Please complete and return it to me with your subscription as soon as possible: not next January!

The rates remain as before: £5 for UK members; £8 for joint members sharing their journal at one address; and £10 for our overseas members. As always, we are very happy to receive additional donations to swell the amount we give each year to support various Colonel Stephens related projects.

David Powell

### Society plans to exhibit at national show

**T**he Society will be returning to the NEC, Birmingham, for the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition, with a stand on 3-4 December. As some of you may know, last year we had to revert to a prototypical ‘care and maintenance’ operation on the Saturday owing to some unavoidable last minute problems involving stand stewards. This year we have 4 volunteers (2 per day), but another couple of names would help David Powell’s hair retention.

*Please contact our Membership Secretary if you can help.*

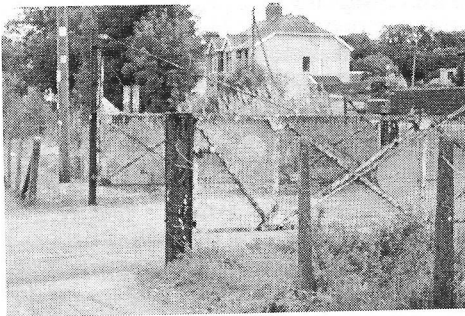
Cover photo: Replica 1930s style mileposts being prepared on the KESR Photo: Ross Shimmon

## Society News

### AGM 2006

#### goes west

**F**ollowing the huge success of this year's AGM, member Guy Hardy is investigating the possibility of holding next year's event at the Gwili Railway in Carmarthenshire. It is restoring part of the line which once ran between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth. But the attraction to us is that it looks as if we could combine it with a vintage bus tour of the remains of the Burry Port and Gwendraeth Valley Railway, which is of course one of the Great Man's lines! More details will be available in the next issue of *The Colonel* and, as soon as they are available, on our website. The date is not fixed yet but the smart money is on Saturday 6th May, so pencil it in your diary. ●



Site of Pontyberem Station, BP&GWVR,  
Sept 2005 *Photo: Albyn Austin*

### Locked Out?

*Some members of our e-discussion group found themselves locked out and unable to get back in. e-Discussion Group originator, Robert Kosmider, explains the problem and provides the solution.*

**I** was locked out because I had not accessed my email in four months. Logging in via Yahoo groups is not the way to go. You come up against an electronic stone wall. I logged onto the Yahoo main site and logging into my email account using original user name and password gave me the 4 month lock out message." There are two boxes you can tick which both reactivate your account. Ticking these gives instantaneous reactivation message. Log off and log on again to check your email is active. I then logged off and logged on via my Yahoo groups link page and I'm there as if nothing had happened. It's no big deal, you either access your Yahoo email or send yourself an email from Yahoo up to every four months or just reactivate it if not. ●

► *If you have not yet joined the Discussion Group, you can do so by opening a Yahoo account with a user name and password. After logging on to the Yahoo Groups.com link (not .co.uk), log on with same details if asked, search for ColonelHFStephens and follow the prompts to register. Recent topics include liveries of S&M coaches and of the many Terriers in the Great Man's empire.*

**Deadline for copy for the next issue of *The Colonel* is:  
10th November**

## Fascinating Film Snippet

The following exchange of postings recently appeared on the Colonel Stephens e-discussion list:

The following request was posted on the GWR e-list, can anybody shed any light on this? "Pathé has a silent newsreel showing a 'lady stationmaster' at a halt on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway near Shrewsbury in 1928. She is seen shifting a heavy basket with a barrow, turning the request stop signal to stop and giving the start signal to the driver of the railcar (which had no guard).

**Posted by Nigel Bird.**

This is the link for the S&M footage on Pathé website. If you go to the ITN archives Pathé news website and search for Eve's Film Review, issue 350, you can view it online, or go to the direct link:

<http://www.britishpathe.com/images//preview/00000000/00015000/00015062.WMV>

**Posted by Helen**

Having now viewed the S&M footage on Pathé News a few times, I am left wondering ... which station? Date? Why does the station mistress not have a uniform—was it purely for show? Or was she really the station mistress? A great bit of film.

**Posted by Nigel Bird**

Comparing the position of the station building, house and crossing, my guess is Maesbrook. None of the other stations had quite the same layout. There is a similar shot in the Middleton Press S&M book looking from the platform past the house to the crossing, but that was taken in late WD days with about 30 years more growth on the trees. As for dating, my guess is probably mid-to-late 20s. The railcar still has both headlights at the Llanymynech end, but the left hand one had definitely gone by 1931. The set is looking a bit worn, but not as battered as it did after the September 1930 derailment recorded in the railmotors book. The station also looks fairly tidy and well maintained, which would suggest a date some years before the end of passenger services.

**Posted by Chris Jackson**

I have now found out about the lady on the station platform on the SMR from the Colonel Stephens Museum website <[www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk](http://www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk)> "Proceeding towards Llanymynech, at Maesbrook there was the station mistress, Mrs Watkins, referred to in the *Railway Magazine* of December 1926". So she

was the station mistress. The station was Maesbrook (near Llanymynech) and the date was 1928.

**Posted by Nigel Bird**

The Pathé website gives the date as 1928, so your guess is spot on. It does look like Maesbrook. Interesting that there is no sign of the horn or any boxes on the footboards. Since they are on a picture dated in 1931 in the Railmotors book, might this suggest they were added when repairs were made in 1930/31? The notice on the front windscreen would make a nice touch on a model - it highlights the fact that the driver sat in the centre.

**Posted by David Churchill**

Finally Nigel Bird conveys this tale from the Leslie Oppitz book *Shropshire's Lost Railways*: "When Joan and I moved to Shropshire we found a stone cottage in Maesbrook, near Shrewsbury. I had a study that overlooked a field towards an old station. I am told that this is why we had to buy the cottage. But this station was on the former Potts line which closed to passengers in 1933. There's a tale from the time it re-opened for WD use. An elderly lady operated the poles forming the barrier at the level crossing. One morning a farmer found one pole up and one down. When he asked why, she told him she was half expecting a train." As Nigel says you can't argue with that. ●

### MINI - EXHIBITION

**Kerry Bayliss** is still working on the idea of one or more mini-exhibitions, within major shows, of Colonel Stephens layouts based on real or imaginary locations. Anyone willing to offer their layout, or indeed static models, should contact Kerry at: 80 Alexandra Rd., Hull HU5 2NT 01482 342506 [kerry@thetrackside.karoo.co.uk](mailto:kerry@thetrackside.karoo.co.uk)

## Dispatches

Letters to the editor

# A Wild Investment?

I am continually fascinated by David Powell's labour of love in transcribing the Ward Green Papers, and have just read part 3 in *Colonel 79*. (By the way David your patience is appreciated I am sure by many other readers).

Two things strike me, firstly on page 15, top right, Stephens writes: "Montgomeryshire District Council and the Forden Rural District Council are expected to subscribe at their meeting £1500 and £500 respectively." Not only are these substantial amounts in 1910, but why would Forden RDC pledge this money? Assuming it is the Forden located between Welshpool and Newtown on the line to Machynlleth, it is miles from the S&M. What would be the thinking here I wonder to "invest" this sort of money, surely the equivalent of about £10,000 at today's values?

I also note Stephens's attempts to obtain grants and loans to continue operating this line. I do wonder, if the great man were operating today, whether he would be trying to obtain money for his lines from the Lottery. I think he would be first in the queue. As many of his lines could be considered "a lottery", it would be very appropriate!

Nigel Bird

**David Powell replies:** *Although the village of Forden is indeed located between Welshpool and Montgomery, the Rural district extended over a large area and included the important revenue-earning and employment generating quarries at Criggion. Without a map to hand, I suspect that the Rural District was bounded by the River Severn and so would have included Crew Green. Indeed, on 24th March 1910, Charles Pryce, the solicitor to the Forden RDC, wrote to Stephens (Doc 120A) advising that; "... after you left yesterday the District Council passed the following resolution: That in consideration of the question of an advance by this Council to this Light Railway be deferred until the Breidden Branch is Commenced."*

*At first glance one might also wonder why the Rural District Council of Atcham, a village some 7 miles east of Shrewsbury on the way to Wellington would also be willing to put up £500. In fact, like Forden, the Atcham Rural district covered a large area of Shropshire, in this case to the east and south of Shrewsbury, including Meole Brace (where I first went to school) and from memory Hanwood and possibly even further west along the line of the railway.*

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## Remains of the BP&GVR

A visit to the Gwendraeth valley above Llanelli on 18th September 2005, showed that the track of the old railway was still in situ although it has now been shut for nearly ten years. A footpath seems to run beside the rails, which for much of the upper section from Pontygates to Cwm Mawr parallels the main road along the side of the valley through, Pontygates, Ponthenry and Pontyberem.

Albyn Austin, via email

## Test Les

We have a variety of teasers for Les Darbyshire in this issue, starting with the seating arrangements in those railcars.

**Q** *What sort of seating arrangements did the Ford and similar railcars have? Photos appear to show wooden slatted seats with reversible tram-style backs. Double seats with a central gangway?*

**Albyn Austin**

**A** Internal photos of the railcars are rare indeed, but I think 2 + 2 seating with a central gangway was probably common to all the cars. The generally accepted view is that the seats were reversible, and this is backed up by Monty Baker's description of the KESR Ford cars in the *Tenterden Terrier* (repeated in the new Middleton Press book). However, the picture showing the interior of the second KESR Ford set on page 24 of Stephen Garrett's *Colonel Stephens Railmotors* contradicts this. A close examination shows slatted seats arranged in pairs, facing alternately forwards and backwards, with each pair of double seats sharing a fixed, double-sided backrest. There appear to be two of these double sets each side of the gangway, giving a capacity of 16 passengers and they seem to be tightly packed, so quite how the earlier Ford cars achieved their claimed capacity of 20 and the later KESR Shefflexes 23 and 25 respectively, I do not know. They must have been tighter packed than a charter to the Costa Packet! The odd numbers in the Shefflexes suggest some seating alongside the driver. So how do we reconcile this picture with Monty's recollection? Perhaps Monty was thinking about the Shefflex cars, or (perhaps more likely) that the seating arrangement in the Fords was changed between 1924 (when the

picture was taken) and 1933 when Monty joined the KESR. Maybe the rolling gate of the cars produced unpleasant effects on backwards-facing passengers! I am attaching a blown-up extract of the picture referred to, in the hope that it will reproduce well enough to provoke some comment.



**Q** *Is there a 4mm kit of Col Stephens railcars?*

**Paul Scrivens**

**A** Not to my knowledge. Branchlines do one in 7mm but I don't think they have done it in 4mm.

**Q** *The cattle fair at Biddenden features extensively in KESR folklore; tales of 146 wagons in one day; Hecate being roused from its slumbers, etc., but when exactly did it take place? How long did it last? Was it purely for cattle? Is there any documentary evidence of additional fair services between Tenterden and Headcorn, using the loop at Biddenden to pass trains rather than simply for shunting.*

**Chris Jackson** ▶



## Test Les continued from page 7

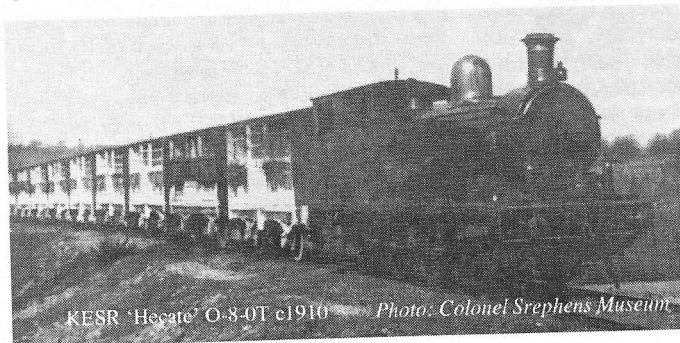
**A** This one stumped me, so I asked **Brian Janes** of the Colonel Stephens Museum, Tenterden, if he could find the answer. Here is his reply: "The cattle fair was an annual event held in a field adjacent to the loop platform at Biddenden. The platform was used to unload cattle. I do not know what exactly went on at the fair but it would certainly have been a cattle market and social gathering. Horsmonden still has a similar horse fair every year. I cannot remember at what time of year the Biddenden fair was held, but there is a poster in the Archive which John Miller is digging out for me that will tell us. I will let you know. John thinks the fair ceased in the 1920s. I have known this area since about 1955 and there does not seem to be even a vestigial memory of it amongst locals.

There is much myth and little fact about **Hecate**. It was undoubtedly used on livestock specials and the attached photo, probably taken c1910 proves this (as far as we know all other KESR goods were in mixed trains). However, such specials were probably run more often for the monthly Tenterden sheep markets than for Biddenden. Clearly when you did run such trains you would use your most powerful loco (and also the only goods brake van). Interestingly, Lawson

Finch writing in the late 1940s says only of **Hecate** that Driver Webb ran her once a week on the Rolvenden to Headcorn run with no mention of specials. So far as we know the Biddenden loop did not need to be used in normal service, although I have never checked enough public timetables to be certain." I like the pic of **Hecate**. Very lavish use of lime wash on the cattle wagons which I presume are mostly SEC as the KESR didn't have that many. I wonder where the train originated?

"The lime wash does give great character doesn't it?"

**Brian Janes** replies: "I am afraid my expertise does not extend to cattle wagons, but Illustrated History of Southern Wagons, Vol.3 includes pictures which leads me to identify the first seven wagons as ex-LCDR (SR Diagram 1512), note the Mansell wheels. But I am just as likely to be wrong. The lime wash does give great character doesn't it? Such sights were of course normal until the late 1920s when more modern disinfectants came in. The KESR possessed only four cattle wagons at this date (nos. 11-13) and these seem to have been ex-GER and ex-NER. The location of the photo seems to be just north of St. Michael's tunnel. ●



KESR 'Hecate' O-8-0T c1910 Photo: Colonel Stephens Museum

Teasers to Test Les should be sent to the Editor at the address on page 2.

Not to the Membership Secretary please!

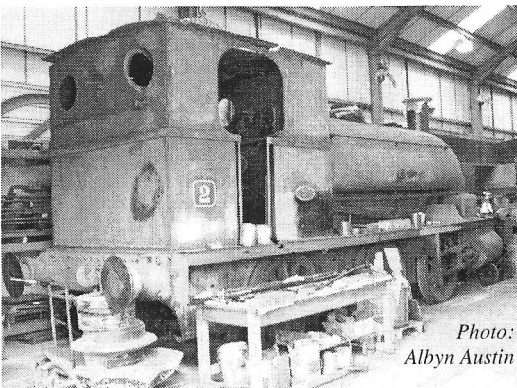


## A Brief History of the BP&GVR

*As a prelude the next year's AGM, which may be held in South Wales, combined with a trip to the remains of the Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway, ALBYN AUSTIN recounts the story of the line*

The railway was built up the valley in the 1860s mainly using the routes of canals and horse tramways. Coastal sections eventually ran to Kidwelly, Burry Port and Llanelli. The valley extends about ten miles NE from Burry Port rising from sea level to about 900 feet at Mynydd Mawr. The area is well wooded with green grass fields and ribbon developments along the roads. The lower section, formerly a canal, had a tendency to flood in places and had a restricted height under the old canal bridges. Some bridges had water gauges set in them. Crews were instructed to cease operations when the water reached 17 inches deep. The cost of conversion caused severe financial problems in the early years, but by the turn of the century the railway had become very prosperous. Passengers were being carried illegally on the trains and, following interest by the Board of Trade, the Colonel was called in to help convert the line to a passenger carrying light railway. He remained on the board until the GWR bought out the concern on generous terms at the Grouping. The restricted clearance on the line required the loco stock to be fairly low and the old locos remained for many years. GWR locos had to be light and low 0-60Ts. The company built special coaches for the line in the 1930s. Although old four-wheelers would fit under the bridges, more modern stock was too high. Passenger services continued until 1953.

Coal trains continued after dieselisation using specially cut down class 03 shunters. Attempts to use a diesel electric class 08 shunter with a cut down cab failed as the electric motors mounted on the axles did not like the water. Eventually the problem was solved by abandoning the lower section



*Photo:  
Albyn Austin*

of the line and reinstating a siding through a closed colliery to the Kidwelly line. This enabled standard class 08s to use the upper section and class 37s to haul trains from the washery lower down the valley and, I believe, the upper section too, until traffic ceased in about 1996.

The original locos were a couple of 0-4-0STs and then there were two freakish Fairlies. But from about 1890 conventional six-coupled saddle tanks were bought, at first second hand but, as the finances allowed similar new locos were obtained. Although these were fitted with vacuum brakes to work passenger services, they weren't really big enough for the job. Some were sold off, being replaced by larger side tank engines from Hudswell Clarke. One of the earlier saddle tanks, *Pontyberem*, survived into preservation and is now at Didcot under restoration (see the photo above). The other BP&GVR locos were cut up in the 1950s by Western Region of BR, although some had by then moved away from their home. Plans for an 0-6-0ST appeared in *Railway Modeller* for May 1989 and for a side tank in June 1990. ●

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# The Colonel in Cumbria

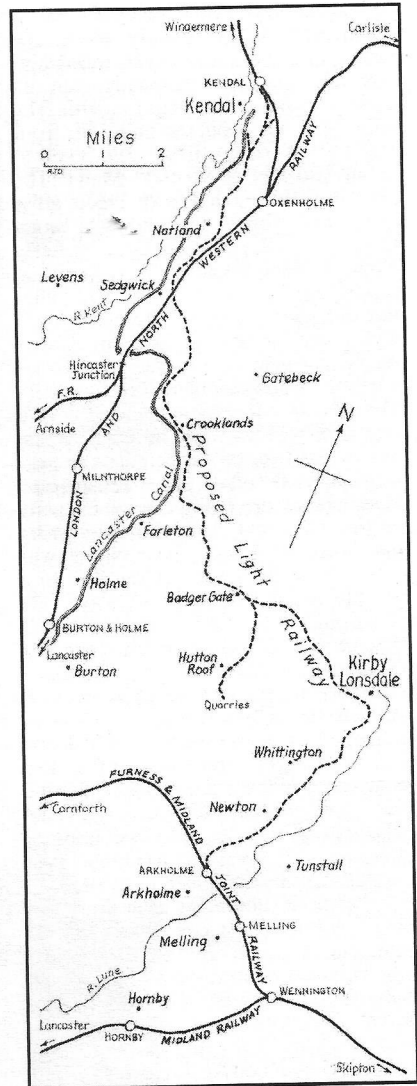
*Gordon Biddle outlines the little-known and abortive project to build a railway from Kendal to Arkholme on the joint Furness & Midland line in an attempt to break the L&NWR monopoly in Kendal.*

In 1897 Kendal BC appointed a Railway Extension Committee which, with the Chamber of Commerce, had the object of promoting a light railway to Kendal from Arkholm via Kirkby Lonsdale, a much smaller town of only about 1,200 inhabitants, wholly agricultural. The chairman of Kirkby Lonsdale UDC, F. Punchard, attended the meetings. Kirkby Lonsdale had a station on the LNWR's Ingleton branch from Low Gill, but it was 1¾ miles from the town and there were only three or four trains a day. A number of prominent Kendalians who held seats on one or both councils served on the committees. James Cropper, the paper manufacturer, was from a family which had early connections with the LNWR. E.W. Wakefield, fom a Kendal banking family, owned important gunpowder mills in the area and became associated with Wakefield's Castrol motor oil. John Somervell, shortly to become Mayor of Kendal, was one of the Somervell boot and shoe manufacturers.

In that year it was resolved to seek support from landowners and other parties. The Light Railway Commissioners were asked if they would recommend suitable engineers to carry out a survey, but they declined on the grounds that it was not their place to do so, going on somewhat quaintly to 'unofficially mention' four names. Several engineers, on hearing about the scheme, had already offered their services, including Everard R Calthrop who advocated a narrow gauge line employing his patent transporter wagons designed to carry a standard gauge wagon, which subsequently he adopted on the Leek & Manifold Light Railway in Staffordshire. Another was Procter of Lancaster, who had been assistant to W.H. Barlow, chief engineer of the Midland. Walter J. Tait, managing director of Railway Developments Ltd, pointed out that his company had been formed expressly to promote light railways. W. Harrison of Preston unsuccessfully canvassed the committee three times, emphasising his wide experience in surveying branches for the Furness Railway, as well as a line from Dudley to Bridgnorth and a 'Thames Tunnel Railway', neither of which had yet been built.

Quotations were sought from Calthrop, W.B. Myers-Beswick of Westminster, Charles Forman of Glasgow (engineer of the West Highland Railway), J. Mackay of Ealing, Harrison, Procter and Stephens. Fees ranged from 30 to 60 guineas, except for Stephens's figure which was 15 guineas plus hotel and travelling expenses or 25 guineas inclusive.

Stephens's survey report of March 1899 rejected a locally-supported route in favour of one with easier gradients and fewer earthworks. His line began at a passenger station to the north of Canal Head in Kendal



► close to the LNWR with which he proposed a junction, although if that company was not amenable he suggested an alternative site near his proposed goods yard on a short branch to the gas works alongside the canal. Thence his line followed the river Kent through Natland and Sedgwick, where there were gunpowder works, before rising to Crooklands where an existing tramway led to more gunpowder mills at Gatebeck. It then took an undulating course before descending to Kirkby Lonsdale. Thereafter the Lune Valley was followed through Whittington and Newton to a junction with the Furness & Midland at Arkholme station, a total distance of 17¼ miles. There were nine stations or halts, including two at Kirkby Lonsdale serving the upper and lower parts of the town. A two-mile mineral branch from Badger Gate led to limestone quarries at Hutton Roof which, according to the *Westmorland Gazette* in its report of a committee meeting in September, were despatching 10,000 tons annually through Arkholme and Burton & Holme stations (the latter was on the Lancaster & Carlisle line), an output which could well triple over the light railway.

Stephens estimated weekly traffic receipts of £12 per mile against total operating expenses of £120, producing an annual income of £12,000, presumably gross. He considered that £30,000 in debentures would produce 4 % return, and 5% on ordinary shares. Land and buildings he thought would cost £78,960. He gave no other figures. Apparently well satisfied, the two councils issued a public prospectus for setting up a company, undertaking to give the scheme active support if £10,000 was subscribed. Some £3-4,000 had already been promised in Kendal but when it came to making a firm commitment many people thought again and only twenty firm offers were received, all under £500. W.D.Crewson, another influential businessman whose family had been in the woollen trade and banking, refused outright, a crucial decision which could well have swayed others. Landowners along the route were either sceptical or resolutely opposed.

Nor did the response from Kirkby Lonsdale Materialise to the extent expected. Chief among Kirkby's doubters was a prominent local personality, Dr William Paget-Tomlinson of Biggins. He felt in some dilemma because he was a county councillor, divided between his duties to his electors, his interests as a landowner whose property would be severed, and what seems to have been a genuine concern about the environmental impact. He promised to give his support if there was a majority in favour, and to test public opinion he sent out, at his own expense, a questionnaire to voters; in those days, of course, householders. In it he said 'I find it taken for granted (I think on insufficient evidence) that Kirkby Lonsdale cordially approves the scheme and would give material financial support', which perhaps influenced the outcome.

From 77 responses, 36 were in favour, 36 were against, and 5 were 'neutral'. He noted in a somewhat disparaging tone that the supporters were 'tradespeople', while the opponents were what he called 'independent residents' (although ten of them were also tradespeople). The neutral respondents were mainly farmers. But the decisive factor was that only twelve were prepared to put up money. There was, he told the county council, complete lack of support from 'those upon whom we are accustomed to rely in this district for substantial help when public movement is put on foot'. The Lune Valley was home to a number of wealthy landowners, both ancestral and nouveau riche, none of whom was supportive, including Lord Henry Bentinck of Underley Hall. The *Kendal Mercury & Times* was more forthright in December 1898. 'Talking is cheap, even at Kirkby Lonsdale, and it is only with "self-help" that they can be expected to succeed'. A year later, the county council minuted that as support along the line of route was not forthcoming, 'falling very far short of £10,000', no further action should be taken. The committee continued to be reappointed until 1904 but did not meet. Kendal Borough Council, perhaps more realistically, quietly dissolved its committee in 1900. Fond hopes of a second railway to Kendal had faded away; the Kendal & Arkholme Light Railway was dead. ●

**Author's notes:** I am indebted to Robert Gambles who stimulated my curiosity by drawing my attention to a plan of the railway in Kendal Library and to Cumbria County Archives, Kendal, for their kind assistance.

#### Sources:

- *Westmorland Gazette* 1898-9
- Cumbria County Archives, Kendal for Westmorland CC and Kendal BC minutes and Kirkby Lonsdale UDC papers WSUD/KL/33
- Cumbria County Archives, Carlisle, for Westmorland CC Clerk's Dept file no 37
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- Bingham, R. *Kendal: a social history*, 1965

This is an edited version of an article which appeared in the *Journal of the Railway & Canal Historical Society*, Vol. 34, Part 10, November 2004. It is reproduced by kind permission of the author and the editor, Peter Brown. The Secretary, M. Sarle may be contacted at: 3 West Court, West Street, Oxford, OX2 0NP.

## THE WARD GREEN ARCHIVE - 4

*David Powell continues his mammoth task of deciphering the correspondence between Colonel Stephens and the leading Salopian Thomas Ward Green of Llanymynech, as Stephens explores every possible way of raising the cash, including the sale of brushwood.*

In the first three articles we concentrated on Stephens's efforts in raising funds from external sources to rebuild the S&M. In this article we examine how Stephens explores every other opportunity he can to fund the railway. The correspondence concerns the brushwood which had invaded the track bed since operations were 'suspended' on 22 June 1880. Assuming that Stephens had already surveyed the route, it is surprising that he had not made a note of this potential asset at the time because, on the 16th November 1909, Stephens dictates a note (Doc 80) to Thomas Ward Green:

*Dear Mr. Ward Green, Are there any trees on the Shropshire line which could also be sold. I should like to see the whole of the Brush Wood and the tall cuttings from the hedges sold throughout the whole line. Yours faithfully, H F Stephens*

This note includes a hand written annotation, probably by Ward Green: 2,500 3,000 1,000 [total -] 6,500 followed by 1,500, a shortfall? Presumably this was a tally of local fund raising as previous correspondence refers to '£2,500 from local land owners'. On the same date Ben Blowers, the Mayor of Shrewsbury, was writing to Ward Green discussing the need for a committee meeting to discuss the future of the S&M; in particular this note (Doc 81) includes the statement: "I have written to Mr Stephens telling him he must let me know something definite as to the lowest sum that would be

*of any use to insure the Railway being started."* Frustratingly, the Archive gives no indication of how Stephens responded.

SHROPSHIRE AND MONTGOMERYSHIRE RAILWAY.	
TELEGRAMS: REOPENED, TONBRIDGE STATION.	Engineer's Office,
TELEPHONE: G4, TONBRIDGE.	Tonbridge, Kent.
OUR REFERENCE: WS 410	November 16th 1909
Dear Mr. Ward Green,	
Are there any trees on the Shropshire Line which could also be sold. I should like to see the whole of the Brush Wood and the tall cuttings from the hedges sold throughout the whole Line.	
Yours faithfully,	
<i>H F Stephens</i>	
T. Ward Green Esqre.,	
The Wood	£ 2,500
Massbrook	3,000
Llanymynech	1,000
S.O. Mont.	<u>6,500</u>
	1,500

Meanwhile, Stephens obviously expects people to jump when he says 'jump'. Just three days later and another missive dated 20th November 1909 (Doc 83) is heading for Llanymynech:

*Dear Mr Ward Green, Have you got any more news re brushwood and timber? Yours faithfully HF Stephens*

Fride Hill,  
SHREWSBURY.  
16th November, 1909.

Dear Sir,

I had a letter from Mr Stephens, and I have seen Mr Wilther to-day. It is important that a Committee Meeting should be held, but it is difficult for me to know when to call it.

Do you know of any occasion when most of them will be in Shrewsbury? If so, please let me know.

I have written Mr Stephens telling him he must let me know something definite as to the lowest sum that would be of any use to insure the Railway being started.

Thanks for your congratulations.

Yours faithfully,  
*H F Stephens*

Mr Ward Green,  
"The Wood",  
Llanymynech,  
WUPTS.

These letters highlight the speed and reliability that people expected from their mainly rail-facilitated Royal Mail. It would appear that Ward Green did reply to Stephens as it produced this response:

*Dear Mr Ward Green, Thanks for yours of 27th inst: Could you tell me what the cutting of the timber etc. would cost? Yours faithfully HF Stephens*

TELEGRAMS: READING, TONBRIDGE STATION. **Engineer's Office,**

TELEPHONE: 21, TONBRIDGE. **Tonbridge, Kent.**

OUR REFERENCE:  *Nov. 20th 1909*

*Dear Mr. Ward Green.*

*Have you got any more news re brushwood and timber?*

*Yours faithfully*  
*Ward Green*

To this is appended a note in his own hand writing: *P.S. I note in subscription 'a bargain is a bargain' however when also asked for £12,000 you will understand moreover, as none of the money is to be used until the line is open for traffic it prevents our making terms with contractors we otherwise might do. Mind you, of course, I don't want to touch the money before the line is open but at the same time the scheme handicaps us. How near £12,000 are we do you think? HF Stephens*

So it would appear that a significant funding element is conditional on the S&M being open for traffic. Consequently, the money raised from private subscriptions or temporary bank loans will be essential to help fund initial expenses on making good the line. ●

**Brian Janes writes:** Readers might be interested in this verbatim snippet from the *Railway Gazette* for 29th August 1919, demonstrating Mr. Ward Green's long-term interest in railway promotion:

**Shropshire Railway Schemes:** *Mr T Ward Green, as Chairman of the Light Railways Sub-Committee of the Salop County Council Agricultural Committee, presided in Shrewsbury, on November 29, at a series of conferences with the promoters of various light railway schemes in the county. In respect to the proposed Bishops Castle, Montgomery, extension, there were representatives from Bishops Castle, Montgomery, Chirbourg and Forden Rural Districts. The Scheme suggested was to link up Bishops Castle (which is the terminus of the Craven Arms Bishops Castle railway) with the Cambrian Railways, somewhere in the vicinity of Montgomery, but going via Chirbourg. The distance is 12 miles and the route presents no engineering difficulties. The other schemes considered were a railway from the joint railways at Craven Arms by way of Covedale, 20 miles to Bridgnorth and thence 15 miles to Wolverhampton; and also a railway from Craven Arms to Newcastle in the Clun Forest Area, a distance of 12 miles. ●*



# H&MST: The SOUTHERN'S

## VERDICT: Part 4 Working

*We resume our coverage of the Southern Railway's report on the H&MST, submitted by Robert Kosmider. In this episode consideration is given to working the line and timetabling.*

The crossings of the various public roads are only provided with cattle guards and the usual notices but according to Section 17 of the West Sussex Certificate the Ministry of Transport at any time after the completion of the railway may require the Company to erect and maintain gates across the railway at each side of the road.

The Certificate further provides that the speed of trains within a distance of 200 yards from a level crossing over a public road without gates shall not exceed 10 miles per hour. About 1932 an accident occurred at the Stockbridge Road Level Crossing and the scene was visited by one of the Ministry's Inspecting Officers.\* The City of Chichester proposed that Colour light signals should be provided and actually an estimate was obtained from Messrs. Tyers & Co. Ltd. shewing how such signals could be provided at a cost £39.10.0. In view, however, of the financial position of the railway this course could not be followed and ultimately it was agreed that trains should actually come to a stand before crossing the road. This additional provision as well as applying in both directions at Stockbridge Road also applies in one direction at Hunston and in both directions at Ferry. Apart from certain other restrictions with regard to speeds on gradients and curves

the Certificate provides that otherwise the speed shall not exceed 25 miles per hour.

The line is nominally worked by staff and ticket, the crossing place being Sildlesham, the automatic brake is not employed and the mixed trains work without any goods brake van at the end, in fact, it appears that the line does not possess such a vehicle.

The present timetable is as shewn hereunder [*reproduced on the opposite page*] together with the connections from and to London. The whole of the service is worked by rail motors with the exception of the trip marked "Mixed". It will be observed that the connections with London are in a number of cases not satisfactory and the general goods traffic does not reach Selsey until the mixed trip arrives at 12.12pm. There is no Sunday service although this was tried a few years ago but the receipts did not cover the expenses.

### Speed

The average speed of the rail motor services is 14.7 miles per hour, whilst the mixed train travels at an average speed of 10 miles per hour. Despite these low average speeds the trains are not infrequently late. In Summer the service is increased to 7 trains each weekday and one additional on Wednesdays and Saturdays only, the total train mileage run in 1933 being as under:-

Steam trains	5,410
Motor trains	20,861
Total	<u>26,271</u>

\* The Inspecting Officer on this occasion asked why the line had never been inspected but was apparently satisfied with the explanation that it was a "tramway" not a "railway".



		WEEKDAYS.						
DOWN		a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
London	dep.	6.28	8.46	11.20	1.40	4.20	6. 0	7.20
Chichester	arr.	8.54	10.46	1.22	3.48	6.49	8.13	9.40
Chichester	dep.	9.15	11.30	2.10	4.10	6.30	8.30	10.30
Hunston	arr.	9.24	11.40	2.19	4.19	6.39	8.39	10.39
Chalder	"	9.29	11.46	2.24	4.24	6.44	8.44	10.44
Mill Pond Halt	"	9.32	11.49	2.27	4.27	6.47	8.47	10.47
Sidlesham	"	9.34	11.55	2.29	4.29	6.49	8.49	10.49
Ferry	"	9.39	12. 1	2.34	4.34	6.54	8.54	10.54
Selsey Bridge	"	9.44	12.10	2.39	4.39	6.59	8.59	10.59
Selsey Town	"	9.45	12.12	2.40	4.40	7. 0	9. 0	11. 0
UP		Mixed						
Selsey Town	dep.	8.10	10. 0	1.10	2.50	5.30	7.15	
Selsey Bridge	"	8.11	10. 2	1.11	2.51	5.31	7.16	
Ferry	"	8.16	10. 8	1.16	2.56	5.36	7.21	
Sidlesham	"	8.21	10.13	1.21	3. 1	5.41	7.26	
Mill Pond Halt	"	8.23	10.15	1.23	3. 3	5.43	7.28	
Chalder	"	8.26	10.18	1.26	3. 6	5.46	7.31	
Hunston	"	8.31	10.27	1.31	3.11	5.51	7.36	
Chichester	arr.	8.40	10.40	1.40	3.20	6. 0	7.45	
Chichester	dep.	9. 6	11.15	1.55	3.29	6.24	8. 6	
London	arr.	10.55	1.17	4.14	5.33	8.25	10.25	

If an up-to-date rail car were provided with good acceleration and braking power it might be possible, whilst observing present restrictions, to perform the journey between Chichester and Selsey, calling at the stations but not the halts, in 23 minutes. Although this estimate is on a mathematical basis it has not been submitted to the Locomotive Department. It therefore appears that it might be possible to run an hourly service over the line with such adjustments as are necessary to make connections with services at Chichester.

If colour light signals were provided at the public road crossings and the track put into a good state of repair, there is some reason for believing that the Ministry would sanction a speed of 40 miles per hour with a restriction of 10 miles an hour over the public road crossings.

The traffic in Summer tends to be heavy on those trips connecting with the principal London services and a fair quantity of accompanied luggage is conveyed, the special truck in the Shefflex unit being sometimes full to capacity. The following figures are extracted from the records for two Saturdays in August last year :-

TRAIN BY CHICHESTER			TRAIN BY SELSEY		
Time	No. of passengers		Time	No. of passengers	
	5th	12th		5th	12th
9.15	7	5	8.10	11	2
11. 5	53	31	10. 0	8	18
11.40	24	111	10.15	5	4
2.10	48	44	1.10	34	63
4.10	28	26	2.50	21	29
6.45	25	24	5.35	20	33
7.45	5	9	7. 0	8	5
10.30	4	4	9.45	-	2

## H&MST report *continued*

► *from page 15*

It should be pointed out that on these particular days three trips each way were worked by steam engine and there may be some difficulties at peak times if a Sentinel Rail Car were employed seating 44 passengers with only very limited luggage accommodation.

So far as goods traffic is concerned it is probable that provided the road were in good condition that a Southern Railway engine could be found to work a trip from Chichester to Selsey though additional staff expenditure would be incurred. ●

*The next instalment will deal with the rates and charges*

### THE COLONEL'S STORES

**Membership Secretary David Powell** reports: The item in *Colonel 79* about CSS branded ties, etc., attracted little interest - but if we don't ask we will never find out. So the gentlemen's outfitters initiative should be considered closed. On the other hand, the response did produce a new line of thinking; namely support for the Society's modellers. We have no wish to start running a postal model shop. However, there may be mileage in the Society sponsoring the initial production of an odd item. We know that POW Sides would be willing to do a wagon kit; for example, a S&M/BQC Granomac wagon, provided that they are given the appropriate livery master and colour details. Also, Fox would be happy to produce transfers, again provided someone can produce the masters. A loco kit is probably a step too far (witness Agenoria's experience with the *Walton Park* kit). Maybe we should stick to sending suggestions to Bob Kosmider for his new business for which we wish him every success. ● *Views on a postcard to the editor please, with offers of practical help.*

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT - 4

*In part four of his series, LAURIE COOKSEY corrects the text of The Rye & Camber Tramway compiled by C Judge*

**I shall go through each chapter in turn, starting with the Introduction:**

■ *The fishermen worked at the Keadle Net Fishery factory, where millions of mackerel were processed from the fleet of fishing boats that used Rye harbour.* This is of no direct relevance to the Tramway, but I feel it needs clarifying. There was no "Fishery Factory" at Rye Harbour, but there was "Kettle-net" fishing (sometimes referred to as "Kettle-net") at Camber, where nets were attached to stakes 11ft. Tall arranged in straight lines between high- and low-water marks. When fish encountered the obstruction they would swim seawards to be caught in a circular pound, the catch then loaded into High-wheel carts.

■ *However, many historians favour the idea that primarily the Tramway was constructed by the influence of wealthy locals who had just built the golf course and clubhouse on Camber Sands and needed some form of transport to reach the same!* Quite why the author should cast some doubt on this theory I do not know as in the following chapter he confirms: "However a stroke of luck came in 1894 when the Rye Golf Club and course was founded and was constructed within the sand dunes opposite the harbour on the north-eastern bank of the River Rother. This prompted a group of local influential citizens to consider sponsoring a tramway, which would not only link the town to the golf course but also provide transport for the fishermen to Rye village and also the Fishery factory nearby ..." In this chapter it is confirmed that the golf course was constructed in the Camber sand hills and not on Camber Sands, the best part of which lie ►

► approximately a mile to the east. "Rye village" should be "Rye Harbour Village" and, as already stated there was no fishery factory there.

■ ... the Tramway boasted a very frequent and reliable service to the growing 'bungalow village' that was appearing on Camber Sands. Its early years of success allowed an extension to be built further into the area of Camber Sands ... When the Tramway was opened in 1895, there were no houses in the vicinity of its southern terminus and even when the half-mile extension to Camber Sands station opened in the summer of 1908, Camber was only an agricultural and coastguard settlement of around 20 buildings. It was more popular as a venue for wild duck shooting than as a holiday resort. With the opening of the extension, the line still terminated ¼ mile short of the coastguard cottages and half a mile or more from the "bungalow village" that did not develop until the 1920s.

■ ... this unique light railway ... ran for 44 accident free years ... There were probably several accidents over the years, but one quite serious one concerned the Tramway's conductor, Charles Thatcher. On Thursday 8th October 1898, he was making his way along the train issuing tickets balancing on the full-length footboards provided on the platform side of both carriages for that purpose, when he lost his footing and fell from the moving tram. He was taken to his home where he lay unconscious for some time, but he finally made a full recovery.

#### Early History

■ ... Mancktelow Brothers ... set about laying 1¾ miles of track ... The length of the Tramway was a little under 1½ miles (I mile 31 chains 22 yards) as witnessed in John Symonds Vidler's letter (not Vidlez) to the Board of Trade, dated 17.4.1896, and reproduced on page 10. "This is all the trustees of Mr.G.Carters had power to grant." This is not an error made by the publisher, but it is strange that Vidler refers to Carters, as apart from the first 32 chains from Rye, the land was leased from the trustees of the late Rev. Thomas Curteis, whose family had possessed property in Kent from as early as the 13th century.

■ ... leaving yet a further contingent to travel on the second 'opening train.' With

only 12 first class and 20 second class seats in the solitary carriage, several journeys had to be made to convey all the invited guests to Camber.

■ ... The Rother Ironworks Co. Ltd., was commissioned to build a 25 seat, third class bogie coach based loosely on the Bagnall design. This locally was known as the 'Jones' coach, being named after E.P.S. Jones, who was the main carpenter involved in its construction. As noted in the captions section of this series, in all my researches I have never come across this vehicle referred to as the 'Jones' coach, and even E.P. Jones's great grandson, Richards (a Society member) has never heard of it. E. Percy S. Jones was the proprietor of the Rother Ironworks, not its head carpenter. ♣

*The next instalment will deal with the locomotives.*

### NEWS from the COLONEL STEPHENS MUSEUM

**P**apers and plans relating to the WC&P have been transferred from the North Somerset Museum, while two KESR registers have come from the National Railway Museum. A Potts debenture stock certificate issued in 1869 to Warden of All Souls has been acquired, as has a brass KESR uniform button from the 1920s. The museum now has examples of all three KESR button styles known to have been issued between 1904 and 1948.

A start has been made on enlarging the potted histories of the Colonel's railways on the museum's website. First to be added are the Snailbeach District and the Bere Alston to Callington section of the PD&SWJR. There is also an article by Brian Janes on the two ex-LSWR royal saloons which were acquired by Colonel Stephens.

\*\*\*

*You can reach the site via a link on our own website:*

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

*or direct:*

[www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk](http://www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk)

## Reviews

### The Colonel Captured!

Despite the number of books written about the various railways in the "empire" of Holman Fred Stephens, very little has been written about the man himself. There has been no attempt at a serious biography of the Colonel and when I heard on the grapevine that this book was to be published, I rather thought that this was about to be remedied. However, the present book is not a biography, nor does it profess to be. Rather it is a collection of writings originally published in the pages of the *Tenterden Terrier*, the house journal of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, over the past thirty years.

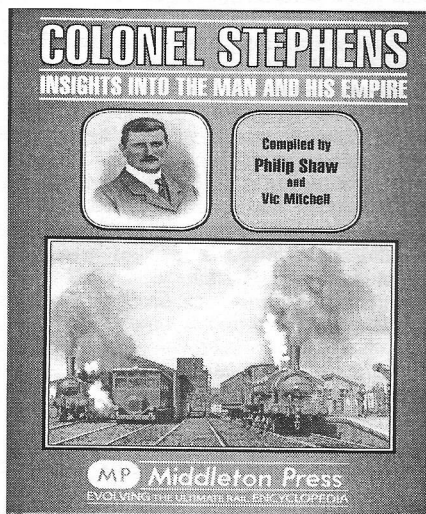
The book is in the familiar Middleton Press binding, but rather thicker than their usual Branch Lines series. The cover is enlivened by a reproduction in colour of a George Heiron painting of Rolvenden in 1932, a large print of which is on the wall before me as I write these notes. The articles have in general been reproduced verbatim and were written by a variety of authors. They are complete in most cases with their illustration, though in some cases different ones have been included and some originals

dropped. Where a comparison can be made, the reproduction in this volume is generally better than in the original, reflecting the larger page size.

As may perhaps be expected from a collection of articles over such a long period, the mixture of topics is somewhat eclectic, but taken together they do provide insights into the man and his empire - exactly what it says on the cover! There are four articles on the Colonel himself, covering his childhood, early professional career, Army activities and his twilight years. His assistant and successor, W.H. Austen, is dealt with in another chapter and two more describe the Salford Terrace offices from where the empire was controlled. William Rigby, his contractor on several lines, also merits a chapter, as do the Light Railways Act and the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden. The remainder of the book is concerned with various aspects of the lines themselves, their construction, operation and stock. Some proposed, but not built, lines are also covered. Inevitably perhaps, bearing in mind the origin of the material, the KESR is prominent in many articles, but most other lines are included, so most members should find something on their favourite line.

All in all, I think that it is an excellent book. The material is well chosen and it is good value for money. If I had to make any adverse comment at all, it would be that some of the earlier articles could perhaps have been brought up to date in the light of more recent knowledge, but that is really a small gripe. And there is a rather (to me) glaring error in the caption to the photograph on page 76. It shows the Selsey Tramway Ford railcars, not the second KESR set - though in mitigation, it is pictured at Tenterden! I would strongly recommend this book to all members of the Society. •

Les Darbyshire



*Colonel Stephens: insights into the man and his empire*, compiled by Philip Shaw and Vic Mitchell. 191 pp, hardback.

Middleton Press, 2005. 1 90447 62 4

Available from:

Nigel Bird (Books), address on page 6, £18.95 plus £3 p&p

## Press Digest

The summer 2005 issue of the KESR's **Tenterden Terrier** carries a number of articles of interest to members, including the Colonel's involvement in the abortive Newport & Four Ashes Light Railway in Shropshire, recounted by Tom Burnham. In the same issue Brian Janes unravels the story behind the Great Man's involvement in an association representing minor railways and their struggle to avoid absorption into the larger companies. Both make an excellent read. Elsewhere in the same issue we learn that a start on the restoration of the SECR Birdcage coach has begun. Work on the bodywork and bogies is now progressing. I wonder if it might ever be possible for the KESR to borrow the Bluebell's O1 when the birdcage is finished to recreate the train often pictured on the Headcorn section? It is a mouthwatering prospect.

At the other end of the line, we learn from **Phoenix**, the Journal of the Rother Valley Railway Supporters Association, that trackwork from the former Betteshanger colliery site had been acquired because the East Kent Railway had been unable to remove it in time. The RVR has also acquired the complete workings of an eighteen lever signal box from Staplehurst on the Tonbridge-Ashford line. It is to be re-assembled in the station area at Robertsbridge and will control all points and signals in that area. Renewed planning permission has now been received for the Robertsbridge to Bodiam section, subject to two proposals lodged by the Environment Agency.

Meanwhile, still in the south east **Heritage Railway**, October 2005 reports that a half-mile extension to the East Kent Railway was opened by local MP Gwyn Prosser. The extension runs from Eythorne to Wigmore Lane. A further extension is planned to the site of the former Tilmanstone Colliery. Several magazines report on developments on both parts of the Welsh Highland Railway. The August issue of **Railway Magazine** reports on the Peter Thomason legacy of £193,000, £53,000 of which will go towards restoring the Baldwin 4-6-0T, to be completed as no. 590.

This is a project to which we have contributed. Another legacy reputed to amount to half a million pounds is reported by **Heritage Railway** for September which will go towards building new coaches for the WHR. Alan Cliff in his regular column in **British Railway Modelling** gave us a nice little plug in the October issue, while there was a delightful feature on the late Les Sprat's Ripple Road layout in the September issue, with some lovely evocative photos by Tony Wright. If such photos inspire you, then don't miss **Model Railway Journal** 160. It contains an article on Leysdown, a P4 layout inspired by the Sheppey Light Railway, by Uckfield MRC member Martin Harrison. By the way, if any member knows Martin, our exhibition coordinator, Kerry Bayliss would like to hear from them. His address is on page 5. Member John Simmonds has drawn our attention to the newsletter of the **Sussex Archaeological Society** which has an article on Our Man and his railways in issue no. 127 (July). Another eagle-eyed member, Philip Chadwick, points out that we omitted to mention in the last *Colonel* that the May 2005 issue of **Railway Magazine** included a letter on the WC&PR's traffic lights. An anonymous correspondent has sent in a bunch of press cuttings from the Shrewsbury area indicating that the restoration of the Abbey station is a step nearer. The deputy mayor Cllr Roger Evans unveiled a project display board on the site and former Manchester United footballer Sir Bobby Charlton gave his backing to the restoration. The **Shrewsbury Chronicle** reveals that he was based at the Nesscliffe army camp during his national service days and travelled by train to Shrewsbury for nights out using the Abbey station. What happened during these nights out is not reported. ●

► News items for inclusion in the Press digest column should be sent to the Editor at the address on page 2.



## Jackson's Jottings

# BELGIAN DELIGHT

*No, not chocolates, but what the Railway Gazette understandably regarded as a more enlightened attitude towards the planning of light railways in that country. Chris Jackson continues his browsing.*

December 3 1909

**Handicaps to Light Railway Construction**  
Belgium is the country, *par excellence*, of light railways, and what especially strikes the British railwayman in connection with the system of that country is the absence of station buildings and signals. The typical Belgian light railway is mostly single line, with occasional passing places, and runs for the most part along public highways which, except in populous areas do not need to be widened. Viewed from the usual British standpoint, this simplicity of construction is not in the interests of public safety, but statistics prove such a view to be incorrect. The relatively low speed of the trains, and the exceedingly noisy gongs or whistles with which the locomotives and motor vehicles are provided, prevent the light railways from being a danger to road users, and after all, we do not insist in England on having tramways fenced in, or, unless in exceptional circumstances, on their being provided with signals. To all intents and purposes, the majority of Belgian light railways are tramways on which merchandise is conveyed, and on which more vehicles are at times coupled up together than is customary

on an English tramway.

In England we appear to view light railways from a wrong standpoint, by regarding them as railways, and as such dangerous to the users of public highways, instead of merely considering them as an adaptation of the tramway. To some extent, the regulations of the Board of Trade may be blamed as more stringent than necessary, but as pointed out by Colonel Yorke before the Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways, light railway promoters frequently show in their plans more elaborate and costly signalling installations than are required by the Board. In any case, whatever may be the reasons, the light railway proper in the United Kingdom may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and of "secondary" or industrial railways, which aid the German and French farmer and manufacturer so much, we have none save private lines on private property. As the public regards, on the whole, with equanimity the spectacle of huge motor omnibuses and high-speed motor cars on ordinary thoroughfares, it need surely have no fears of the danger of narrow-gauge lines, with suitable speed restrictions being laid down on country roads even if signalling be dispensed with except at crossing points and where required by general traffic conditions. ●



## ESOTERIC KITS and RTR

Modelling The Colonel's Railways ?

Selsey Tramway - ex-Lambourn & Falcon Coaches, 7mm

See our Web Site for further details

(No e-mail ? - Write us and we'll give you a call!)

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