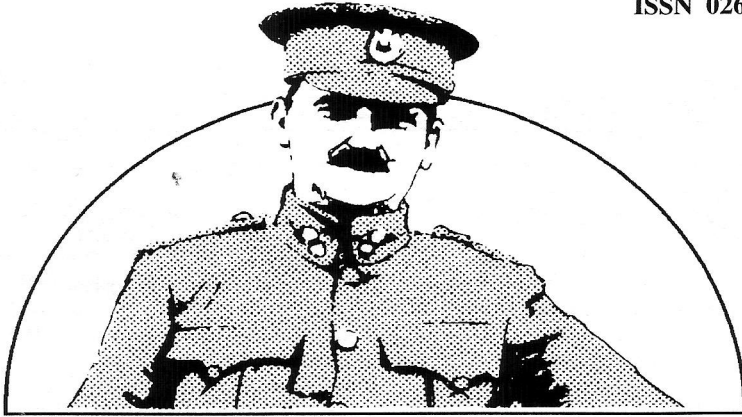


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THE COLONEL

Number 87

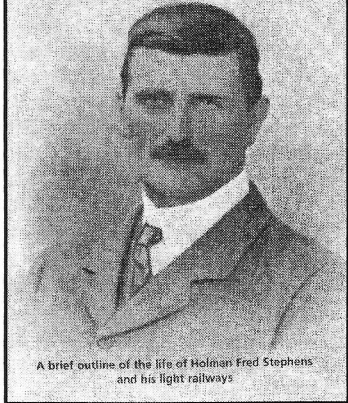
Summer 2007

New Book on the Colonel - 16
Members' Day Report - 4
A WC&P Centenary - 6
Minerals report - 8
WHR Head of Steel - 10

Full contents on page 3

Colonel Stephens

- A CELEBRATION -



A brief outline of the life of Holman Fred Stephens
and his light railways

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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Subscriptions *The Colonel* is distributed to members of the Colonel Stephens Society only. Membership of the Society costs £5 annually in the UK. Joint membership for two people, one *Colonel*, same address, is £8. Overseas membership is £10. (Modestly increased rates will apply from September 2007). Applications should go to our Membership Secretary (address above).

An Index to *The Colonel* issues 1-86 is available on our website (see below).

Back numbers of *The Colonel* from 2 to the latest issue are all in stock. They are available from our Chairman (address above). Price to members is £1 per issue, including UK postage. Discounts for large orders: 21-40 issues 90p each, 41 and more 80p each. Excess postage for overseas orders will be charged at cost. Issue 1 was a single sheet. It can be supplied on request free of charge with any other order, or separately on receipt of an A5- size stamped addressed envelope.

Binders Smart dark blue 'Cordex' binders for *The Colonel* are available from our Secretary (address above) at £6.30, including postage. Each binder takes 12 issues.

Badges Chic Colonel Stephens Society badges may be purchased from our Membership Secretary (address above) at £3, including postage.

The Colonel's Guide A reprint of the source guide to publications and models of the Colonel's standard gauge railways by Jon Clarke, is available from our Membership Secretary (address above) at the members' price of £3, including p&p.

Cheques In all cases please make out cheques to "The Colonel Stephens Society".

Discussion Group Enrol for the Colonel Stephens e-Discussion Group 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.

Visit our WEBSITE: www.colonelstephenssociety.org.uk

Editorial: Was He Or Wasn't He?

Elsewhere in this issue, Christopher Mitchell argues that we should not refer to Colonel Stephens as the 'Great Man' our 'Our Hero'. Doing so, he says, turns people off. Our Chairman, Les Darbyshire, in an eloquent address given at the lunch commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Colonel's death, suggested that, whilst he was not in the sane league as Stephenson, Watkin, Brunel, Felix Pole or Herbert Walker, he was nevertheless a man of extraordinary and diverse ability who happened to be around at the right time to exploit his particular skills. In the introduction to the excellent new booklet on the Colonel (reviewed on page 16), Brian Janes argues that the com-

mon view of the Colonel had been distorted by enthusiasts visiting his lines, observing them after they had ceased to be prosperous. A legend grew up as a result of ramshackle and poorly-built lines and hand-to-mouth operation. Janes believes that this view is now largely in retreat and that "our perspective has clarified and we can now better see the man and his achievements". As one who has used the epithets in question, I think there is often a slight touch of irony intended, and a wish to vary the references to the man, but certainly not uncritical hero-worship. Does it really lead us to be regarded as 'weird' as Mitchell suggests? What do you think?

Ross Shimmon

CONTENTS

Memorable Day at Tenterden	- 4
WC&PR extension centenary	- 6
WC&PR remains	- 7
Minerals report	- 8
Snailbeach revival	- 9
News	- 9
WHR Head of Steel	- 10
Test Les	- 12
AGM report	- 13
Subscriptions 2007/8	- 13
Treasurer's Report	- 14
Society News	- 15
Reviews	- 16
Dispatches	- 17
Setting the Record Straight	- 18
Press Digest	- 19
Jackson's Jottings	- 20

Special Offer

Nigel Bird (address opposite) is selling the new booklet *Colonel Stephens - A Celebration* at £4.50, including postage and card-backed envelope, to Society members. All proceeds will be given to the Society's donations fund. It is reviewed on page 16. Nigel can supply John Scott-Morgan's new book on the Kent & East Sussex Railway, also reviewed on page 16, at £19.99, plus £3 p&p. Nigel is kindly offering 10% of the cover price to our donations programme.

AGM 2008

The AGM next year will be held during Members' Day at the Tamar Belle, Bere Ferrers station on Saturday 17th May 2008. More details on page 15.

The Tamar Belle can be contacted at: www.TamarBelle.co.uk or telephone: 01822 84004

A Memorable Day At Tenterden

Society Chairman, LES DARBYSHIRE, reports on this year's Members' Day held at Tenterden to coincide with the KESR's Colonel Stephens Weekend

On Saturday 5th May a considerable number of CSS members descended on the charming town of Tenterden for our 2007 Members' Day and AGM. This particular day had been selected because it coincided with the Kent & East Sussex Railway's Colonel Stephens Gala Weekend, billed (see picture) as "a special weekend highlighting the work of the line's founder - railway entrepreneur Colonel Holman F Stephens". A most appropriate event indeed for the Colonel Stephens Society to attend.

Intensive service

The KESR had organised an impressive service between Tenterden and Bodiam, with three passenger train sets in operation, plus some freights and a mixed train. A train of 1950s stock was hauled by Hunslet Austerity No.23 *Holman F Stephens*, a 1930s Maunsell set was double-headed by Terrier No.3 *Bodiam*, resplendent in its blue KESR livery, and P class No.753 in SECR green and elaborate lining, while the vintage set of four and six-wheeled coaches was in the charge of a visiting 0-6-0 tender loco, No.65462 of LNER class J15, built by the Great Eastern in 1912 and normally resident on the North Norfolk Railway at Sheringham. Another


visiting engine was Terrier No.W8 *Freshwater*, usually to be found working on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. Because W8 has only Westinghouse brakes, it could not be used to haul passenger trains, but it was used for freight workings and also for banking some of the trains up the incline into Tenterden. The train I travelled on, with *Bodiam* and 753 on the front and *Freshwater* pushing at the rear, got up the bank in what must have been record time.

Star of the Show

A very special visitor, and one which we were all very eager to see, was Colin Shutt's replica Ford railmotor (pictured opposite) which was carrying passengers to and from a siding at Tenterden. This, for most of us, was the star of the show. The trip was all too short, but it was a wonderful experience, giving us some feeling for what travel must have been like on the

real thing. From contemporary accounts, I think the replica is probably rather quieter than the original, but the smell was surely authentic, especially when running in reverse.

Our own contribution to the weekend was to be found in one of the huts at Tenterden where the model railway layout 'Rye Town' was in operation. Built in 4mm scale (EM gauge) by former *Colonel* editor, Stephen Hannington and now owned by



Opening Cavalcade 10.00 am every day

Two guest locos - North Norfolk's J15 and L.O.W.' *Freshwater*

See 'Colonel Stephens at work'

Replica Ford Railmotor

All day unlimited travel between Tenterden & Bodiam

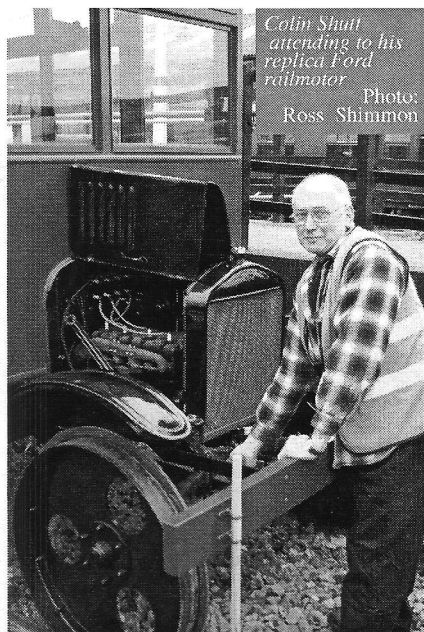
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5th - 7th MAY

Bank Holiday Gala celebrating the achievements of K&ESR's famous engineer

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Colin Shutt
attending to his
replica Ford
railmotor
Photo:
Ross Shimmon

by the time the AGM finished, the sun had come out and the well-polished engines and stock looked magnificent. All in all it was a memorable day. I certainly thoroughly enjoyed it and I'm sure everyone else did too! ●

Albyn Austin adds: I had a great day. 'Rye Town' really captures the quiet countryside atmosphere - one of the best model railways I've ever seen. Riding the railmotor was a fascinating experience: the smell of the hot oil and exhaust fumes, plus high frequency vibration and hard seats. I think a trip to Rolvenden would have been quite enough. Robertsbridge would have been purgatory, especially if you add in the wheel squeal. I paid an all too brief visit to that super museum, complete with some amazing survivals, the new animated Colonel (*pictured below*) and that most remarkable of all his locomotives, *Gazelle*. I had a run in the vintage train behind the J15, got off at Wittersham Road, with its suitably overgrown old tamper in the sidings and sat quietly on a seat eating my sandwiches for 20 minutes, disturbed only by a Tiger Moth. Very atmospheric. ●

Chris Jackson, it is a delightful interpretation of 'what might have been' had the planned and authorised East Sussex Railway from Northiam to Rye been actually built. Also in the hut was one of our new display stands, built by Kerry Bayliss, and looking most professional.

Life-like, and he moves too!

In the Colonel Stephens Museum, a remarkably life-like, full-size effigy of the Colonel was to be found in the painstakingly accurate reconstruction of his office. As visitors approach the scene, the Colonel lifts and turns his head as if to greet them. Eerie or what? The Society has made a contribution towards the cost of making the mannequin.

The AGM itself is reported elsewhere, but I must say that the venue was excellent - apart from the bells of St. Mildred's church next door which, although very pleasant to hear, did make communication in the meeting somewhat difficult. I hope members did not miss too much of the proceedings.

Although the weather started dull and rather cold, it improved during the day and



The Colonel in his office

Photo: Ross Shimmon

OPEN AT LAST - 100 YEARS AGO

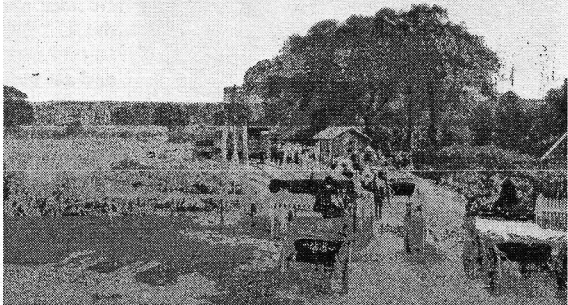
HOWARD K CAREY harks back to opening of the Clevedon to Portishead extension of the WC&PR in August 1907. Photos: the author's collection

Think back to the balmy summer days of Edwardian England, when there were very few motor cars about, especially in the country areas. You either walked or travelled by horse and trap or cart and roads were not tarred. So, there was great excitement in Clevedon town on the morning of 7th August 1907 - at long last the Clevedon to Portishead extension of the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway was officially opened for passenger traffic. Freight would come later. The first up train to Portishead left Clevedon at 8.10 am. It consisted of two American-type coaches, hauled by the Manning Wardle 0-6-0 saddle tank *Portishead*. A large crowd of townfolk had assembled at the Triangle level crossing to cheer it on its way. A railway employee walked across the road in front of the train, because the large level crossing gates had not yet been installed. The second up train of the day, the 9.30 am, also consisted of two 'American' coaches, but was hauled by the Manning Wardle saddle tank *Weston*. Locomotives and coaches were painted dark red. Both trains were photographed; the first as it crossed the Triangle in Weston and the second passing Cadbury Road halt, Weston-in-Gordano. I have both shots in my collection.

Portishead station was very basic; a low platform, waiting room, and a ticket and parcel office, with just a run-round loop and a water tank for the locomotives. The sidings and the connection to the GWR exchange sidings were installed in the following year and opened in the November. The rails for the GWR connection were, in fact, already laid across the level crossing, east of the WC&PR station when the line opened.

Now the people of Portishead could travel to Clevedon Town in just 35 minutes, or on down to Weston-super-Mare in a little over one hour. The line gave good service to the people of the Gordano Valley for the next 33 years. Eight trains a day were provided in 1907, but this varied over the years, declining at one point to only four. When the line closed abruptly in 1940 there were five a day up to Portishead. I know, because I travelled on most of them at one time or another. And

Portishead Station on opening day



there were extra trains going down to Weston from Clevedon. When the war started passengers numbers increased quite a lot so it was a big shock when it was no more. It was sorely missed as the Bristol Tramways Co. cut the bus service from Clevedon to Portishead to three down and two up per day as soon as the line closed.

My grandfather, A.J. Hurdle of Walton-in-Gordano was not fond of the line, most likely because some of his cows were killed in the 1930s. They had got on the line because of poorly maintained fencing. But there might have been a deeper reason. His father owned and ran his own carriage business. He used Hansom cabs to convey people between the two towns before the line opened. He must have been hit hard by the new competitor. I have a feeling that he went out of business

Portishead leading the first train on the Triangle Crossing, Clevedon, 7th August 1907.



soon after. Although passenger figures were quite high, the cost of building the extension was the cause of the company failing, falling into receivership and then into the hands of Colonel Stephens. ●

A HUNDRED YEARS LATER...

Although there are now few physical remains of the WC&P, large stretches of the route are relatively unscathed, running through quiet farmland. But there is nothing to signpost or commemorate the railway and it can be difficult to find, unless you know where to look. In November 2006, the WC&P

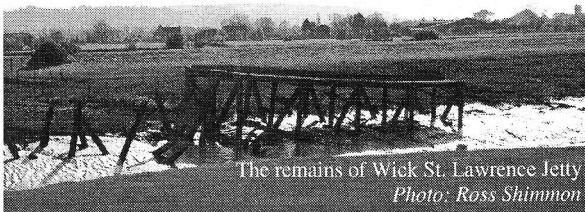
Railway Group was formed, dedicated to the preservation of the remains of the line as far as practicable. Members believe that this fascinating railway shouldn't be allowed to disappear completely. They hope to work with local councils and landowners to this end. They also plan to promote an awareness of the heritage of the railway to the general public and to be a focal point for people interested in it.

The group is about to embark on its first major activity, a thorough and detailed survey of the route. They would like to have the route suitably marked along its length,

with markers, plaques and maps. The local authority plans to convert some of the track bed to cycleways and footpaths which may be the best way to protect the route from further development.

More ambitious long-term ideas include the installation of some replica features, for example a halt building and a length of track. The group also intends to record the memories of the sadly dwindling number of people who remember the railway in operation. Members believe that this is the make-or-break time for those who wish to raise the profile of the railway. Soon there could be nothing left and, as this year is the centenary of the completion of the line to Portishead, the group intends to capitalise on that event.

The group hopes to apply for charitable status in due course, but needs to grow in numbers to achieve this. New members are very welcome, whether active or not and from near or far. Further details about the railway and the group with information on how to join are on the excellent website www.wcandpr.org.uk Or you can telephone Paul Gregory on 01275 847139. ●



The remains of Wick St. Lawrence Jetty
Photo: Ross Shimmon

Deadlines for 2007/8

Copy for *The Colonel* should be submitted to the Editor by the following dates:

- 88: Autumn 2007: 15th August**
- 89: Winter 2007: 15th November**
- 90: Spring 2008: 15th February**
- 91: Summer 2008: 15th May**

These are final dates, but we much prefer earlier receipt if at all possible. ●

THE COLONEL ON THE ROCKS

The third instalment of edited extracts from a report, prepared in 1921, in PAUL JACKSON'S collection, on mineral deposits in the areas served by several of the Colonel's railways. Previous instalments appeared in Colonels 85 and 86. The next instalment will cover the Selsey Tramway

WESTON, CLEVEDON AND PORTISHEAD RAILWAY

This line traverses a large area of alluvium and blown sand; but between Portishead and Clevedon there are good exposures of rocks ranging from Old red Sandstone to Trias; while in the neighbourhood of Weston-super-Mare the western extremity of the Carboniferous rocks of the Mendip range comes in.

Summary and Conclusion

So far as the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway is concerned, the present mineral production is confined to a few quarries for limestone and gravel. Attention should be directed to the following :-

Sand.

There is no obvious reason why the large deposits of blown sand, existing all along the line, should not find some use. No attention seems yet to have been given to the possible use of these sands for various purposes, such as glass making, refractories, etc.

Sandstone.

Immense quantities of sandstone are available in the neighbourhood of Portishead.

Limestone.

Beds of good dolomite occur about Clevedon and Weston. Calcined dolomite is used extensively in the metallurgical works of South Wales. There is plenty of pure limestone for lime burning in the same localities. (See also under ROADSTONE.)

Building Stone.

Both sandstone and limestone suitable for building occur in the above mentioned areas.

Strontium Sulphate.

Attention has been directed to the possibility of the occurrence of Celestine, sulphate of strontium, in the neighbourhood of Weston.

Coal.

The Nailsea coalfield has not yet been fully exploited in the lower parts, and there is an unknown extension towards Clevedon, and also about Portishead.

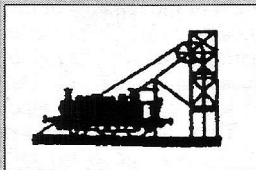
Clay.

Some of the beds in the Keuper Marl are used for brickmaking. They should be looked for around Worle, and between Clevedon and Court, as well as about Walton-in-Gordano.

Roadstone.

The Carboniferous Limestone is the best local roadstone. There are several quarries along the southern side of the ridge between Weston and Worle, many of which are now disused. Another ridge, the Woodspring ridge, (Middle Hope), exposes the limestone for about 2 miles at a distance of about 2 miles north of Weston. In the Clevedon area, the limestone ridge stretches continuously from Clevedon to Portishead along the west side of the road. There are several quarries, and in the large one at Big Weston there is a bed of compact dolomite. ●

The East Kent Railway



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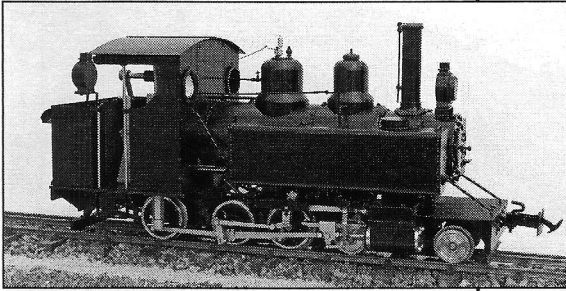
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NEWS

Live Steam 16mm Baldwin

Graham Langer reports that Accucraft are producing a 16 mm scale live steam WW1 Baldwin. It will be gas-fired, two cylinder, with full working valve gear and very well detailed. Available in 32mm or 45mm gauge, in any colour you like as long as you like black, this impressive looking machine is priced at £1100. Graham says he thinks that this is the first time the firm has produced anything related to the Colonel's railways. He has held his breath and ordered one! We feel a review coming on. ●



Selsey wagon in 4mm

The *Railway Modeller* reports in the June issue that Richard Essen has commissioned Dapol to produce a run of 100 private owner open wagons in 00 gauge in the livery of Arnell coal merchants of Selsey. Arnell wagons were recorded on the Selsey Tramway. Laurie Cooksey's book includes an outline drawing of one by Ron Mann. However, we note a slight discrepancy. Ron records the bottom line as reading 'Selsey Chichester' whereas the model in the photo in the *RM* reads 'Selsey Tramway'. As with all these commissions, you need to ignore the fact that, while the livery may be authentic, the wagon itself is unlikely to be. Price is £6.50, plus £1.50 p&p from Richard Essen, 9 Cavendish Road, Bognor Regis PO21 2JW or Wicor Models, 20 West Street, Portchester, PO16 9UZ. ●

Snailbeach revival

Wayne Johns reports that work starts on rebuilding the Snailbeach Railway in August this year. August marks the 130th anniversary of the opening of the line, which closed in 1947 and was dismantled in 1962. Preservationists have revived the original company which has laid dormant. According to the website www.sdrailway.com the plan is to rebuild the railway from Pontesbury to Snailbeach as a "first class tourist heritage tourist railway". The revived company owns, or has recent rights or leases for about half the trackbed. They have about 12 feet of company records dating back to 1873 through to 1923 and again from 1932 until 1985 when the company went dormant. It is planned to bring them back to Shropshire in a Snailbeach museum in 2008. ●

Exhibition Alerts

The Erith Model Railway Society will have an exhibition on 22 and 23 September at the Freemantle Hall, Bexley, Kent. The Wilmington Model Railway show will be held at St Michael's Church Hall, Wilmington, near Dartford, Kent on 13 and 14th October. Both will have a strong Colonel Stephens showing, reports **Alan Bone**. ●

Notes for contributors

Contributions to *The Colonel* are very welcome. Please send them to the Editor (address on page 2). They may be in the form of a Word document, an email attachment, a floppy disc, a CD or a typescript. Steam age authors may, of course, send them as a manuscript - but please write legibly. Please ensure that photos, either in electronic form or traditional print, are reproducible. Authors are responsible for ensuring that their material is not subject to copyright restrictions. ●

NIGEL VISITS THE HEAD OF STEEL

Our Treasurer, Nigel Bird, reports on the reconstruction of the Welsh Highland Railway as it gets ever nearer its destination - Porthmadog

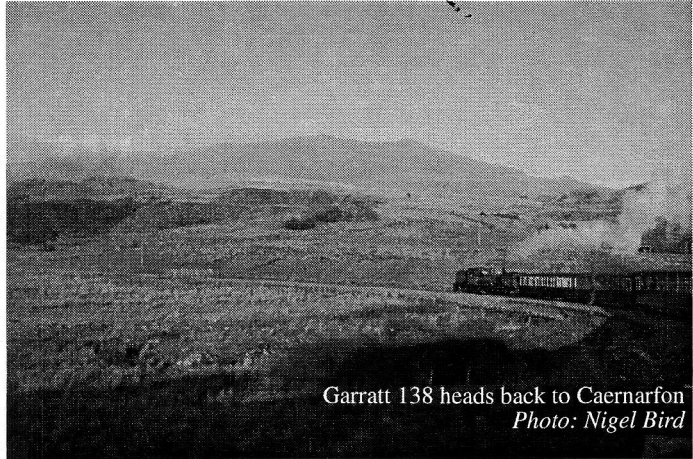
Unless you have been locked away in a darkened room for the last 15 years or so, you must be aware that yet another part of the Colonel's empire, in deepest, glorious, North Wales is arising from the ashes at a pace.

The Welsh Highland Railway from Caernarfon to Porthmadog is edging ever southward (and northward). Re-opened from Caernarfon to Dinas in 1997, followed by Dinas to Waunfawr in 2000 (we had a past AGM at The Snowdonia Parc, Waunfawr for those with a memory left) and finally (so far) Waunfawr to Rhyd Ddu, reopened in 2003. This last section is without doubt the most stunning section yet with glorious views of Snowdon and Cwellyn Lake, tight S bends, bridges - it has the lot.

Phase 4 will see the line opened in full, from Rhyd Ddu to Porthmadog, with street running through the town and a flat crossing over the standard gauge Cambrian line to The Ffestiniog Railway at Harbour Station. It's hard to believe, but from Easter 2009 you will be able to travel, by narrow gauge steam-hauled train, the 40 miles from Caernarfon in North Wales to Blaenau Ffestiniog - amazing! I still can't believe it. And you should see the locomotives they have-Garratts. BIG or what?

Work on Phase 4 is well advanced, with the head of steel now just south of

Beddgelert, more than four miles from Rhyd Ddu. Although not opened to public trains yet, (until the line is completed through to Porthmadog, due to officially open Easter 2009), two sponsors' trains for those making regular donations to the rebuilding fund were run on 24th March. I decided sometime ago



Garratt 138 heads back to Caernarfon
Photo: Nigel Bird

that I would support this fund as, in my opinion it's the last and possibly greatest, remaining narrow gauge line to be rebuilt (except maybe the Lynton & Barnstaple?) and it has a Colonel connection! So I was on board the train as it steadily and rather gingerly left Rhyd Ddu, hauled by Hibberd Planet Diesels *Upnor Castle* and *Conway Castle*, banked by Garratt 138 *Millennium*. After about 2 miles the Garratt dropped off as the track ahead was not ballasted/tamped sufficiently to take its bulk (over 60 tons, quite a lot for the 1ft. 11½ inch gauge). The two diesels easily took the train forward. The scenery on this section is again stunning, with distant views over Snowdonia, tight S bends and very little

close line-side vegetation to obstruct the views. We slowly passed through Beddgelert Forest Halt, which has been erected mainly for the users of the very large Forestry Commission camp site located here. It was here that most passengers thought we would terminate. But no - on we went about another mile or so, to literally 100 yards from the head of steel, just north of Beddgelert the big grins on board reached from one side of the carriage to the other - what a privilege to do this ahead of regular traffic. Due to safety restrictions we were not allowed to leave the train - but hey who cared. We had fantastic views. A prompt departure saw the two diesels propelling us some two miles to rejoin the Garratt that was awaiting us, to take us back to Rhyd Ddu and on to Caernarfon. It was a superb day, but more was to follow.

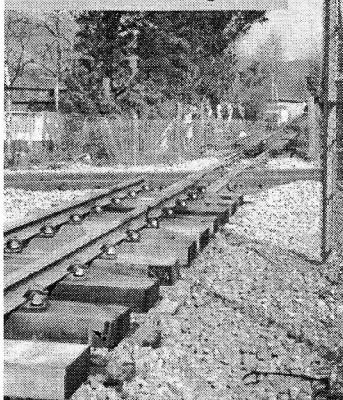
As if that were not enough, the same weekend saw the opening of another section of the line, this time the Welsh Highland Railway (Porthmadog) opened an extension northwards from their base at Gelerts Farm, Porthmadog. The Porthmadog-based group was formed in 1961 and has been slowly beavering away, having established a large workshop, loco and carriage storage facilities, museum, etc., as well as opening two stations; Pen-y-Mount, in particular, being very much in the Stephens tradition. However until Friday 23rd March, all their running lines were within the confines of their own land, with no running on the old WHR trackbed. This has now all changed; an extension of almost a mile to Traeth Mawr (Big Beach) sees public trains running northwards of the old trackbed, heading towards Beddgelert from the southern direction. A loop has been put in at Traeth Mawr, but no station, so it is literally an out and back trip, but well worth it, as you see the glorious mountains of Snowdonia tantalisingly ahead and the flat land that was once sea all around you. The next major plan by the group based at Porthmadog is the restoration to full working order of *Russell*, the only surviving original WHR Locomotive. It is hoped that the loco will be ready for the grand re-opening at Easter 2009 (helped a little by our Society making a donation of £500 last year).

There is so much to see in and around Porthmadog, so why not go for a long weekend? After all, where else can you see and enjoy three narrow gauge steam

railways, two still being extended, Fairlie and Garratt Locomotives, open coaches, super scenery and some of the finest fish and chips in the world (Allports at Porthmadog)? I am sure they will welcome you with open arms, and your financial support for either WHR line and or *Russell's* restoration will give you that nice warm feeling that you have helped what is surely the greatest narrow gauge line come to life. Who knows, maybe a future Members' weekend will see us return to the area soon? ●

The Flat Crossing - WHR meets the Cambrian main line

Photo: Nigel Bird



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TEST LES

Questions for Les Darbyshire

Q On the KESR both the Terriers seem to have a pipe of about 2 1/2" dia going vertically up from the left hand side tank. This pipe is often emitting steam when the locos are in motion and at rest. I have seen this pipe on no other Terriers. Do you have any idea what it is for?

A This one has me puzzled. I was aware of these pipes, and put them on my 4mm models, but I do not know their purpose. I have closely studied a large number of photographs of Terriers, in LB&SCR, Southern Railway and BR days, and can find no other instance of a Terrier with this pipe. It seems to be a fitting unique to the K&ESR. As Robin says, the pipe emitted steam when the loco was in motion or at rest.

Both No.3 *Bodiam* and No. 5 *Rolvenden* had the pipe in 1910 or earlier. The pipe on *Bodiam* survived both the 1935 rebuild at Rolvenden and the 1943 conversion to A1X at St Leonards, but it disappeared at the 1947 overhaul at Brighton.

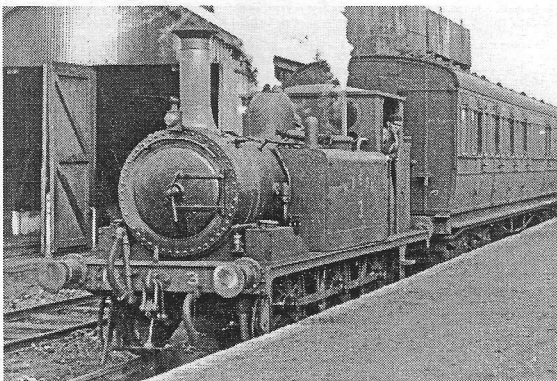
I posed the question to Brian Janes at Tenterden but he also was stumped. He thought it might have had some connection to Stroudley's feedwater heating system but if so, why is it not on the other Terriers that had this system?

I would welcome hearing from anyone who has a definite answer to this one!

Q WCPR no. 4 (ex-Ashted) has rather a lot of pipes around the buffer beams on both ends - at least 5, maybe 6. I know one is steam heating, one vacuum and another Westinghouse air, but what about the others? I have always assumed that it was for the Angus train control system, but then I realised that it was No. 2 Portishead and not No. 4 that was involved with these trials. Do you have any ideas?

Both teasers are from Robin Gay, Bristol

A This one is a bit easier! When WC&PR No.4 was purchased in 1937 from the Southern Railway it was fitted with air-operated motor train (pull-and-push) apparatus. This apparatus required three pipes between the locomotive and driving trailer coach, carrying respectively the regulator control and connections to the main air tank and back-pressure tank. It is rather surprising that this apparatus survived so long as the engine had not been used for motor train work for some years and had been overhauled in 1935, when I would have expected that the equipment would have been removed - but it clearly was not! •



KESR No. 3 Bodiam at Rolvenden in April 1947, before overhaul at Brighton later that year, showing copious quantities of steam emerging from the pipe in the first question

Photo: Darbyshire Collection

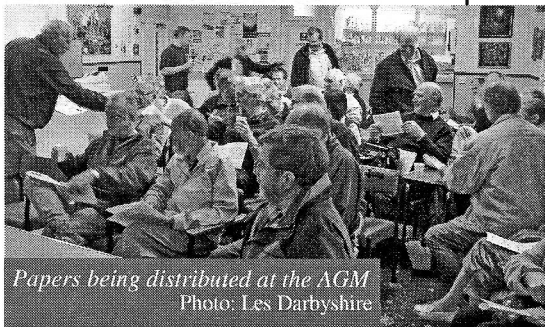
What was that?

Remember the picture quiz on page 15 of *Colonel 86*? John Keylock sent the first correct (and the most comprehensive) answer on a postcard of the loco in question. The photo was taken by H B Tours in 1934/5 from the first carriage of a northbound train between Nymsfor and Croesor Junction behind Baldwin 590.

SOCIETY NEWS

Big Turnout at AGM

The Society's AGM at Tenterden in May attracted the biggest attendance for several years. A popular south east venue, together with the unique Colonel Stephens Gala, put on by the KESR were the reasons given by



Papers being distributed at the AGM
Photo: Les Darbyshire

several members for the healthy turnout of getting on for 50.

Officers all re-elected

All the officers indicated that they were willing to serve for a further year. Since there were no other nominations they were re-elected en bloc. The full list is on page 2.

Chairman reports successful year

Chairman Les Darbyshire reported on 'another successful year' for the Society. The 75th anniversary of the Colonel's death had been marked in a fitting manner, membership continued to increase, while exposure of the society's work had developed with mentions in the railway and model railway press. Kerry Bayliss had produced two new display panels for use at exhibitions, one for use in the north and one for the south, while the old panel had been put to good use in Northern Ireland. The Society had donated towards several good causes, including the oral history project to record reminiscences of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway, the restoration of the Welsh Highland locomotive *Russell* and the purchase of a map of the Burry Port & Gwendraeth Railway by the Colonel Stephens Museum. ●

Subs hike coming

First increase for 15 years

Treasurer Nigel Bird, unavoidably absent, in his written report said that the Society's finances continued to be in a healthy state.

However, he proposed an increase in the subscription rates with effect from the renewal date in September 2007. He believed that it would be prudent to do so to ensure that subscription income covered the cost of printing and distributing *The Colonel*, bearing in mind increases, recent and forthcoming, in postage and printing costs. None present could remember when the previous increase took place, but it was believed to be at least 15 years ago. He proposed that the new annual rate for membership should be £7 (currently £5), joint membership for two people same address, one journal £9 (£8) and overseas members £12 (£10). The rates were approved.

Membership up

Membership Secretary David Powell, also unable to be present, reported that, although the 'churn rate' (the percentage of total number of members not renewing each year) was between 5-6%, the actual total continued to rise as the number of new members exceeded those not renewing. But the rate of increase was declining. ●

Archives Arrivals

Les Darbyshire reported on two fascinating contributions to the Society's archives. Contemporary slides of the construction of the Bere Alston and Calstock Railway have been passed to us in digital form. Some of them will appear with commentary by Les in *The Colonel*. A member in Canada has given us film of the last special train to travel on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway in 1960. It will be transferred to DVD format and made available to members only. Any proceeds will go to the Society's worthy causes fund. ●

SOCIETY NEWS

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2006/2007

	2006/7	(2005/6)
	£	(£)
Balance brought forward	1143.14	
INCOME		
Subscriptions	1660.00	(1610.00)
Donations Received	845.00	(821.00)
Back Issue Sales	34.50	(113.00)
Badge Sales	21.00	(36.00)
Advertising	54.00	(30.00)
Binder Sales	101.50	(115.50)
Guide Sales	53.00	(23.00)
RIP 75th anniversary	280.00	(nil)
<u>AGM 2005:</u>		
Train Fares paid by members	66.00	(nil)
Donations on bus	57.30	(nil)
Sub total:	3172.30 +	
TOTAL INCOME:	4315.44	
EXPENDITURE		
Printing <i>The Colonel</i> (4 issues)	703.00	(719.20)
Postage and stationery for <i>The Colonel</i>	349.27	(276.31)
Printing back issues	nil	(32.16)
Printing publicity/membership forms	89.00	(159.00)
Donations made:	1150.00	(250.00)
£250 to CS museum: BP&GV map		
£500 to WHR Russell fund		
£200 to Shrewsbury Heritage Trust		
£200 to CS museum: Colonel mannequin		
RIP 75th anniversary (Room hire/food)	510.00	(nil)
Domain name renewal	28.44	(nil)
Membership WHR Heritage Group	11.00	(20.00)
Exhibition stands (new)	402.33	(nil)
Committee expenses (D Powell)	88.96	(119.50)
Committee expenses (R Shimmon)	32.54	(22.55)
Sub total:	3364.54	
Balance:	950.90	
Add 6 unresented cheques	907.28	
Less credit not shown on statement	60.00	
Balance as per Bank Statement, 29th March 2007	1798.18	
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT		
Balance at 21st March 2007	3134.21	
Plus interest earned	94.03	
Balance at 12th April 2007	3228.24	
TOTAL CASH ASSETS	4179.14	(4277.35)

**Nigel Bird,
Treasurer**

SOCIETY NEWS

Appeal for ideas

Several ideas for honouring Colonel Stephens and his work came from the floor at the AGM, reports secretary Guy Hardy. The matter was prompted by a letter from Colin Saunders in *Colonel 86*, expressing disappointment at the lack of prominence of the Colonel's name on the gravestone at Brompton Cemetery. One member suggested a course module, possibly at York (in conjunction with the NRM) or Birmingham University, on light railway operation, current railway study and a modern approach to recycling. It was suggested that the owner of Parry People Movers might consider helping with this - it was believed that he was a fan of the Colonel.

Lively discussion followed on the possibility of placing a blue plaque on the building in Tonbridge which had housed the Colonel's offices. Local members provided useful information on people and organisations to contact. A development of the idea was for the Society to provide plaques to install at heritage railways with a Colonel Stephens connection. It was agreed to publish an appeal for ideas in the next *Colonel* and to leave the Committee to take appropriate action. So please contact the Secretary (address on page 2) with your suggestions •

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was pipped at the post, and the
'Ford' Railbus

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Members' Day 2008

Members' Day next year will be held on Saturday 17th May at Bere Ferrers station, using the facilities of the Tamar Belle, so mark your calendar now. It will be organised by our Treasurer Nigel Bird and Chris Grove of the Tamar Belle. Bere Ferrers is, of course, on the truncated Callington branch which we know better as the Plymouth, Devonport and South Western Junction Railway. Chris told the AGM at Tenterden that the Tamar Belle has Gresley carriages fitted out to a very high standard, which could be hired for accommodation and meals. There is a museum, a small diesel engine available for cab rides, a simulator of Pinhoe in the 1960s and, for more athletic members, a pump trolley in working order! Members' Day will take place in the centenary year of the famous Calstock Viaduct and of the conversion of the original 3'6" mineral to standard gauge. It would also be possible to organize a tour of the part of the line which has been closed. More in future issues. •

Donations Fund

Chairman Les Darbyshire reported that there had been a surprising low level of response to invitations via the railway press for grants from our donations fund. However, support was given to the oral history programme of the Shrewsbury Railway and Heritage Trust and to the restoration of the WHR loco *Russell*. Stuart Thomas of the BP&GVR said that he was delighted that the Society had contributed towards the purchase of a historic map of that railway by the Colonel Stephens Museum. He hoped that it would be possible to sell reproductions of it to mark the centenary of the introduction of a passenger service. It is hoped to publish a progress report on all the projects supported by the Society in a future *Colonel*. Meanwhile the meeting empowered the committee to spend up to £1,000 on grants during the year. •

REVIEWS

A bumper crop of recent books

Colonel Stephens - a celebration: a brief outline of the life and works of Holman Fred Stephens and his light railways. Compiled by Brian Janes. Tenterden: Kent & East Sussex Railway, 2007. 32pp. Stapled softback, A5. £3.50. No ISBN.

This charming little booklet (*illustrated on our cover*) provides a short account of the Colonel and his empire. It includes up to date information, collected by the researchers associated with the Colonel Stephens Museum in recent years on the Colonel and his railways. This is an inexpensive summary of the latest views of the Colonel and his railways in the larger world. Useful for those who don't spend much money on books and a good summary for those who do! It is profusely illustrated throughout, albeit pictures are a little small to keep the size within bounds. It begins with a summary of the Colonel's life and career, then a shorter summary for Bill Austen and the later days of the Colonel's empire. The next section covers the railmotors, including their development and impact on the Colonel's lines and the wider world. Next there are single page summaries of each of the lines he was associated with, complete with maps, mostly coloured, originally produced by the Railway Clearing House. Unfulfilled projects are listed, and finally short sections cover UK light railways in general and the definition of a light railway.

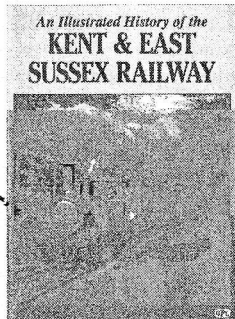
The book is best summarised by Brian Janes's introduction; "This modest work draws together for the first time many of the threads of recent research to try and paint an accurate miniature portrait of a fascinating personality and his lines". I found it a very enjoyable read and whole-heartedly recommend it at its very modest price.

Albyn Austin

Nigel Bird (address on page 2) can supply copies of *Colonel Stephens - a celebration* at £4.50, including postage and a card-backed envelope.

An Illustrated history of the Kent & East Sussex Railway. John Scott-Morgan. Hersham: Oxford Publishing, 2007. Hardback, 293 x 222mm, 112pp, £19.99. ISBN (10) 0 86093 608 2

Despite its title, this book is not for you if you really want an illustrated history of the KESR. But if you want a well produced large format photographic album of the line, covering mostly the years from the 1930s to its closure, then it is for you. But, as Christopher Mitchell explains elsewhere in this

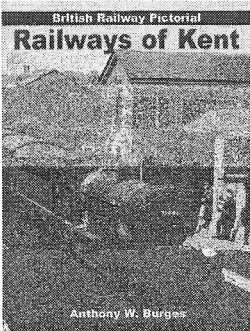


issue, treat the captions with a pinch of salt. For example, there are several references to 'Hudson's (instead of Hodson's) Mill' at Robertsbridge. The half title page has a nice picture of a mixed train in c1947 with several cattle trucks, but it can't be associated with Biddenden Fair, because we established in *Colonel 84* that the fair ceased in 1934. The flippant reference to the signals at Fritenden Road on page 56 jars the most. In addition to the black and white photographs, a number of drawings of the railway's buildings are included, together with track layouts. But they have not reproduced very clearly; disappointing given the reputation of the publisher. The author explains how he managed to bring together such a fine collection of images in *Tenterden Terrier No. 102* in an article entitled 'Hunting Down the Past'. In the same issue, Brian Janes records that John Scott-Morgan's original title for the book was *Rails in the Rother Valley* which would indeed have been more accurate. A nice feature is the reproduction of a set of postcards of local attractions published by the railway in 1905. To summarise, this is a handsome book, worth the price for the photographs of a charismatic line. Just beware the captions.

RS

Railways of Kent. Anthony W Burgess (British Railways Pictorial series). Hersham: Ian Allan Publishing, 2007. Softback, 280 x213 mm, 80 pp, £12.99. ISBN (10) 0 7110 3165 7

Several of the Colonel's lines were in Kent, so this well-produced photographic album is of potential interest to members. In addition to the pictures there is a thoughtful introduction, including maps and charts giving dates of line and locomotive shed closures. The KESR is treated in six pages, the East



Kent in three and the Hawkhurst branch in another three. In addition, there are three photographs of the Sheppey Light Railway three years after closure. The vast majority of the photographs

were taken by the author and do not seem to have been published before, others are by Graham Siviour. The captions are frequently detailed and appear to be accurate. Whilst the photographs depict familiar scenes in most cases, they are often from a slightly different perspective compared with those published elsewhere.

If you are seeking a comprehensive collection of one of more of these lines, then you will want to acquire this book. If you are also interested in the 'other' lines in Kent, then you will be even more keen. RS



DISPATCHES

Letters to the Editor

Are we weird?

Am I the only person who cringes each time I read the words 'The Great Man' or worse 'Our Hero'. Am I the only one to hate these terms? Colonel Stephens was not 'great', nor a 'hero'. He was just an ordinary bloke with a vision and a talent trying to make a few bob. I feel that this hero worship puts off prospective members and makes our Society look - well - weird!

**Christopher Mitchell
Tenterden**

What do you think? Is Christopher right, or was he 'our hero'? Let us know your views - Ed.

Why did the Selsey Line fail?

Laurie Cooksey provides a very clear history of the Selsey Tramway in his fine two-volume work [reviewed in Colonel 86, p.22 - Ed]. He uses newspaper reports, chairman's addresses, minute books and contemporary accounts by journalists and enthusiasts. But some facts raise more questions than they answer. Why did the Colonel organise a buy-out from the local business men who had successfully managed the company until 1920? Why was the line then allowed to fall into further decrepitude, especially as it could have been grouped with the Southern in 1923?

Volume 2 reviews the route in detail with many rare photos of trains and stations. The inclusion of updated drawings by Ron Mann would make feasible a model of this fascinating line, helped by the brass kits being produced by Robert Kosmider and the Manning Wardle Class K kit now available from Kemilway. Laurie's book is essential reading on what was a standard gauge light railway in its purest form.

**Albyn Austin
Whitehaven**

Those round huts in Nicosia!

I was going through some old *Aeroplane Monthly* magazines when I came across this photograph (reproduced left) showing a 'line hut' out there in the Mediterranean. With all that heat, definitely not for sitting in!

**Ian Dack
Sheringham**

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Following in Laurie Cooksey's footsteps, Christopher Mitchell corrects the captions in John Scott-Morgan's book on the KESR, reviewed on page 16

As both fireman and guard are looking towards the rear of the train in the shot on **page 18 (upper)**, I think that it is being propelled back into the platform after the locomotive has run round the carriage. If this is Rolvenden on **page 32** then, compared with the picture on **page 33**, the home signal has not only jumped from one side of the line to the other, but also moved away from the turnout which appears beside it. As the train is on a curve which Rolvenden is not, I suggest that this is a train from Robertsbridge entering Bodiam. Locomotive No.4 (**top of page 39**) is showing two headlamps rather than one tail lamp, suggesting that the train is coming down the hill from Tenterden at Orpins Crossing heading into Rolvenden, in spite of the direction of the smoke. From experience I know that a strong cross wind can blow across the line here. If the train is arriving in the picture on **page 42 (bottom)** why is the crew sitting on the platform bench? On reflection, I suppose it could be the crew of an (unseen) ex-Headcorn train in the opposite platform. This is a starting, not a home, signal on the middle of **page 45**. The famous three-arm signal at Tenterden shown on **page 45 (bottom)** had two home arms to control entry into each platform and one starter arm to control exit from the station into the Tenterden-Rolvenden section. The reference to a similarity between the bunkers of *Hesperus* (pictured on the top of **page 48**) and that of Terrier No. 3 is incorrect. The platform signals at High Halden Road shown on the top of **page 49**, and similar ones at Wittersham Road and Frittenenden Road, were used to indicate if a train was required to stop at the station. They were not running signals. Similar comment applies to **page 56 (middle)**. The fact that both arms are "off" does not imply that Will Hay was the station agent, merely that trains were not required to stop there at the time

the photo was taken. This is a starter signal controlling the exit from Headcorn and entry into the next section on **page 60 (top)**. There is no such thing as a 'home starter' signal. Although the caption on **page 62 (top)**: states that this is No.1 *Tenterden*, the nameplate is clearly that of *Northiam*.

I am surprised that there are so many errors relating to the railmotors, given that JS-M co-authored, with Stephen Garrett, the excellent Irwell Press book, *Colonel Stephens' Railmotors*. The **title page** shows the second, not the first, Ford railmotor set. This photo is reproduced again on **page 74 (top)**. The railmotor is again mis-identified, as it is in the lower photo on the same page and at the top of **page 75**. However, the lower photo on that page does show the first set, although the caption states it is the 'rarely photographed' second set. **Page 77 (lower)** shows the remains of the Shefflex and the first (not second) Ford set. The caption on **page 82 (top)** describes an LSWR 'all-third', whereas it is clearly a brake third. On **page 90 (middle)**, the print shop is the larger shed behind the one nearest the camera. The author states that the shot of the O1 was taken in the section between High Halden Road and Biddenden, but it looks more like Orpins curve out of Rolvenden going up to Tenterden. I am intrigued to read on **page 96 (upper)** that O1 31065 was going to Tonbridge (22 miles) for its washout, instead of its allocated shed of Ashford, only ten miles away. I wonder if the author has evidence for this? In spite of the direction of the exhaust, with the fireman standing on the Terrier's steps and the guard in the six-foot, I think that the train on **page 100** is being propelled out of the platform in order to run round. Finally, on **page 105 (upper)** this signal is a starter. • *This is as good a place as any to admit our own incomprehensible error. The caption to the cover photo in Colonel 86 said it was the HMST Ford set, but its radiator clearly says 'Shefflex'! Apologies - Ed.*

Our regular round-up of the railway press **Press Digest**

The June issue of *Back Track* has a superb feature on the **Callington Branch (PD&SWJR)**; nine well-illustrated pages, some in colour with more on Bere Alston promised for a future article. If that's not enough, elsewhere in the same issue is a superb photo of a **WHR Beyer-Garratt** and a shot of *Taliesin* at Blaenau in 1932. Not only that, a flyer fell out of my copy promoting the fund to restore *Russell* with the slogan: 'Don't let him miss the party in 2009'. The party in question will be, of course, at the reopening of the full length of the WHR. The Society has already contributed to the *Russell* fund. We have also contributed to the restoration of the 4-6-0T **Baldwin 778** of the Greensand Railway Museum, based at the Leighton Buzzard Railway. Many magazines, including *Heritage Railway 98* reported the steaming of 778 in Alan Keef's yard at Ross-on-Wye. Baldwins are closely associated with the **Ashover Light Railway**. Ambitious plans for its reconstruction from Woolley to Ashover Butts and the possible preservation of the famous 'Where the Rainbow Ends' café, now at Clay Cross, was featured in a 2-page report in the May *Steam Railway*. The same issue also features two major milestones in the restoration of the **WHR** with photos of *Prince* on a train at the WHR terminus at Traeth Mawr and the WHR sponsors' train four miles beyond the resent terminus at Rhyd Ddu. There is also a special supplement in this issue celebrating the magazine's Photographer of the Year awards. Among the winners is a lovely shot of a GWR

pannier and short freight on the Gwili Railway. It's not 'one of ours' of course, but those who attended our 2005 Members' Day will have fond memories of the line. Another winner is a colour shot of one of the **FR's** double Fairlies. *The Tenterden Terrier*, official journal of the **KESR**, is always full of interest. No. 102, Spring 2007, reports on the Society's commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Colonel's death including a reproduction of the original bill from Brompton Cemetery for £5.16s.0d. There is also a full report of the railway's heritage policy, a detailed article on the boiler water treatment system currently in use and one on bus connections, including a timetable of 1929, printed at the the printing shop on Rolvenden station. *East Kent Railway News* No.77, Winter 2006/7 also carries a report of the 75th anniversary event. Just arrived is the June *Railway Magazine* with a glorious centre spread of the J15 on a mixed train during the **KESR** Colonel Stephens weekend. As Albyn Austin remarked, it is the closest we can get to an Ilfracombe Goods. But wouldn't it be wonderful if the owner of the O1 on the Bluebell allowed it to run on the **KESR**, especially when the Birdgag coach is finished? The same issue of *RM* reports that the weekend was success, generating £18,000 in ticket revenue. There are also two shots of three 08 diesels which were cut-down for use on the **BP&GVR**, in immaculate EWS livery, ready for use on the renewal of track on the Manchester Metrolink system. •

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Jackson's Jottings

AMERICAN COMPARISONS

CHIS JACKSON continues his trawl through the RAILWAY GAZETTE with its comparison between the situation in the US and the UK

March 24

The Light Railways Act Failure, continued

On the Illinois Division of the Atcheson Railroad in the year 1910, total transportation expenses per 10,000 gross ton-miles were \$6.53 on the main lines, on the branch lines \$14.30, all other expenses \$8.45 and \$15.93 respectively. On the Missouri division the figures were, main line, transportation expenses £7.09, the branches \$32.54; for all other expenses the figures were \$9.62 and \$23.54 respectively. In other words, on that division the cost of carrying a ton a mile was just about 3½ times as much on the branch as it was on the main line. When we add to this fact that the margin over operating expenses is what a company has to look to for interest on capital, and that whereas the main line had nearly 6,000,000 ton-miles over it per mile of road, the branches had only a

little over 500,000; in other words, that the main line had 12 tons to bear the burden of capital for every ton that the branch lines had, the hopeless untenability of the Board of Trade position becomes sufficiently apparent.

Perhaps some day the Board of Trade will put to the farmers in some locality a very simple question :- "Which would you prefer, to have a light railway constructed and opened, carrying farm produce at 3d. per ton-mile, or to continue to cart your own produce at a cost of 8d. per ton-mile along the route of a light railway sanctioned but not constructed, with a maximum authorised charge of 1d. per ton-mile?" If the question were thus posed, and it is really a fair way of putting it, the answer we imagine would be prompt and categorical. •

In the next instalment, the Railway Gazette considers the Light Railways Commissioners' attitude to competition.



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Modelling The Colonel's Railways ?

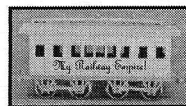
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