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# THE COLONEL

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**Number 91**

**Summer 2008**

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**Where did Stephens  
live? - 4**

**Camber Sands 100 - 6**

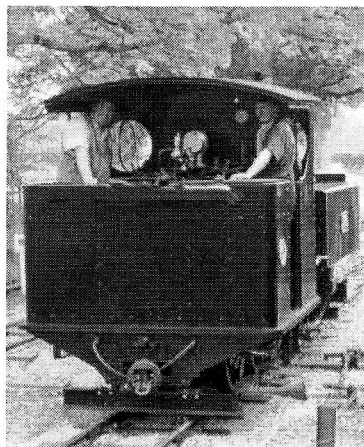
**Rother Valley in 2008 - 8**

**Beyond Maidstone - 10**

**Weekend at**

**Bere Ferrers - 15**

*Full contents on page 3*



**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 1-83 is available on our website (see below).

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**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.

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

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## Editorial: The Eye of the Beholder?

**B**eauty is said to be in the eye of the beholder. For railway historians and, especially perhaps, railway modellers, colour is of more consequence. But colour is similarly a subjective matter. It's difficult enough to recall and then to reproduce a livery in contemporary use. Apart from personal perceptions, the weather, time of day, length of time since the vehicle was painted and/or cleaned all affect 'the colours' concerned. These days the difficulty is com-

pounded of course by the sheer complexity of the designs used by current train operating companies. But we are mostly talking about liveries last seen well over 60 years ago and photographed in black and white! So we must be thankful that there are a few people like Jim Jarvis around whose memory and colour photos can help us, supplemented by samples of the real thing at the Colonel Stephens Museum. Otherwise we have to depend on intelligent guesswork. **Ross Shimmon**

### CONTENTS

- We know where he lived - 4**  
**Camber Sands centenary - 6**  
**RVR: the missing link - 8**  
**What's in a name? - 9**  
**An extension to the Maidstone extension - 11**  
**Bere Ferrers weekend - 15**  
**Archives grant - 18**  
**AGM reports - 19**  
**Financial statement - 20**  
**Dispatches - 21**  
**Books & DVDs - 22**  
**Press Digest - 23**  
**Tailpiece - 24**

Cover photo: Immaculate Baldwin 778 backing onto its train at Pages Park, May 2008. **David Powell**

## Web Manager

### Wanted

Members at the AGM learned with sadness that our web manager for many years, Robert Kinghorn, died last October. Unfortunately we did not hear of his death until much later. Our current difficulty is that none of the current officers has any documentation about the arrangements Robert made for hosting and updating the site. So it is currently dormant, although accessible.

The meeting agreed to seek a new web manager. Volunteers for this important post should contact either our chairman, or our secretary, both of whose addresses are on the opposite page.

## WE KNOW WHERE HE LIVED

**PHILIP SHAW**, of the *Colonel Stephens Museum, Tenterden*, records the various addresses used by the Colonel.

**H**olman Stephens was born at 10, Hammersmith Terrace, London, on 31st October 1868. His parents, Frederick George Stephens and Rebecca Clara (nee Dalton) had married on 8th January 1866 and Fred acquired the house as the matrimonial home. The 1871 census shows the family at this address with F.G. Stephens (aged 42) Rebekah (aged 36), Fred's mother, Dorothy Mary Stephens (aged 79), Holman (aged 3) and Rebekah's illegitimate daughter, Clara Adelaide Charles (aged 15). Rebecca had used a revised spelling of her name after her marriage, but she was generally known as Clara and her daughter was known as Lottie.

By 1881, the time of the next census, Dorothy had died (1871) but the family had two servants in residence, Ellen Thorndean and Elizabeth Hart. Ten years later, in the 1891 census, Fred's sister, Mary Ann Warren (aged 68), a widow, was living with them and there was one servant, Sarah. H. Smith. Holman Stephens is shown as a civil engineer.

### **Retained rooms at Ashby House**

The 1901 census is interesting; whilst Fred and Rebekah continued to live at Hammersmith Terrace, Holman had moved to Ashby House, Priory Road, Tonbridge, where he is described as a "boarder". The head of the household was Charles Standen, a timber merchant's traveller and his wife Mercie (aged 55). His three children, Ellen, Henry and Alice also lived there. Stephens retained his rooms there until the end of his life and although the census data for 1911 and 1921 are not yet open to the public, it is believed that the house remained in the occupation of the Standen family. Stephens continued to sleep at Ashby House regularly and some meals were taken over to him, prepared by Catley's café. Stephens never slept at his London clubs. He used hotels extensively during the course of his business travels.

Right from the start, Stephens seems to have seen the value in having modern communications. The first Tonbridge telephone directory (1898/9) shows that there were a mere 30 subscribers to the telephone service, including Stephens at Ashby House (Tonbridge 223). The Standens are not mentioned at all. From December 1895 to April 1900 Stephens was using Ashby House as both an office and a residence. His first recorded letter heading is printed as merely "Tonbridge, Kent" It is dated 18th February 1898, gives the telephone number as Tonbridge 223 and the telegraphic address as "Stephens, Tonbridge Station" This would, of course, have referred to Ashby House but Stephens said to his father when he moved there that "Tonbridge is such a small place, the name of the town is sufficient". The Tonbridge telegraph office was maintained at the station, which was, of course, very convenient when sending telegrams, of which there were many to the outposts of the growing empire from the frequently irate Stephens!

### **Salford Terrace**

In April 1900 the letter heading was still "Tonbridge" but the telephone number was Tonbridge 23. This signified the move to Salford Terrace (about 200 yards away) but probably also to a general upgrading of the telephone system that was taking place at this time in Tonbridge. Number 23, Salford Terrace, did not appear as such on the letter headings until later, certainly after 1905. The telephone number was changed again, to Tonbridge 143, sometime before 1917. Ashby House does not appear to have been used for any correspondence after Salford Terrace opened, nor was a telephone line maintained there.

Stephens died at the Lord Warden Hotel Dover on 23rd October 1931, which he had used on a semi-residential basis throughout

the 1920's. He had also taken a lodging room at "Hillside", Station Road, Robertsbridge during the general strike of 1926 and retained it afterwards, but hardly ever used it. He seems to have been a man of few personal possessions, who stayed where his work took him, right to the end. •

*Number 10, Hammersmith Terrace, London, W.6. remains as a single private residence. Ashby House, Priory Road, Tonbridge has been demolished for some years. "Hillside" in Station Road, Robertsbridge survives and is (or was last year) still named as such. Number 23, Salford Terrace is currently occupied as an osteopath's office. The Lord Warden Hotel, Dover, closed at the outbreak of the last war and has since been used as offices. Alfred Catley's confectionary and café premises were at 5, Salford Terrace, Tonbridge and are long gone.*

**Wressle Brickyard Cottage**

Luxury self-catering holiday  
Accommodation for two people  
in the Vale of York.  
Convenient for the National Railway  
Museum, the railways of the  
'Light Railway King of the north'.  
The Derwent Valley Railway  
(still running) where the Colonel  
was pipped at the post, and the  
'Ford' Railbus  
Tel: 01757-630193  
Website http://:  
www.brickyard-cottage.co.uk

*Below: The entire Tonbridge telephone directory in 1898-9*

**TONBRIDGE.**

218	<b>A1 BOOT Co.</b> .....	48, High street.
210	<b>ARNOLD, Wm. &amp; Son, Merchants, Engineers,</b> Autocar Manufacturers .....	East Peckham.
210a	Ditto .....	Wharf.
201	<b>BALTIC Saw Mills Co.</b> .....	Medway wharf.
207	<b>BARTRAM, W. &amp; G., Ed.</b> ...Brewers and Maltsters.....	Bridge brewery.
207a	<b>BARTRAM, W. &amp; G., Id.</b> ...Brewers and Maltsters.....	Bridge brewery.
217	<b>BOYD, T. L.</b> .....	North Frith.
219	<b>BRADBURY, Agnew &amp; Co., Lt., Printers, Book-</b> binders, Lithographers .....	The Whitefriars Press.
215	<b>CATCHPOOL, C. R.</b> .....	The Avenue.
213	<b>CECIL, Lords Arthur and Lionel</b> .....	Hornslodge farm.
213a	<b>CECIL, Lords Arthur and Lionel</b> .....	The Cottage, Hornslodge farm.
213b	<b>CECIL, Lords Arthur and Lionel</b> .....	Orchardmans.
213c	<b>CECIL, Lords Arthur and Lionel</b> .....	The Stables.
204	<b>GREGORY, P.</b> .....	147, High street.
218	<b>HALL, H. K. &amp; Co.</b> .....	Engineers, Cycle Agents...82, High street.
214	<b>MANWARING, T. &amp; W., Agricultural Merchants</b> .....	High street.
214a	<b>MANWARING, George</b> .....	Hadlow stair.
202	<b>MEDWAY (Upper) Navigation Co., Sailing Barge</b> Owners .....	.....
220	<b>PALMER, Wardley &amp; Barton</b> .....	Solicitors...East street.
208	<b>POLICE Station</b> .....	Pembury road.
203	<b>POST Office (for Postal facilities ONLY)</b> .....	.....
207b	<b>ROGERSON, Mr.</b> .....	Hidden lodge.
211	<b>SEALE &amp; Auston</b> ...Ironmongers, Founders, Engineers.....	76, 78, High street.
211a	<b>SEALE &amp; Auston</b> ...Ironmongers, Founders, Engineers.....	Butany foundry.
206	<b>STAGG, R.</b> .....	Woolstapler... ..
208a	<b>STAGG, R.</b> .....	Yardley court.
223	<b>STEPHENS, H. F.</b> .....	Civil Engineer...Ashby house.
221	<b>THE Quarry Hill Brick &amp; Tile Co.</b> .....	Tonbridge.
222	<b>WOOD, Rev. J., D.D.</b> .....	Schoolhouse.
209	<b>WOOLLEY, C. A.</b> .....	Cycle Agent...76, High street.

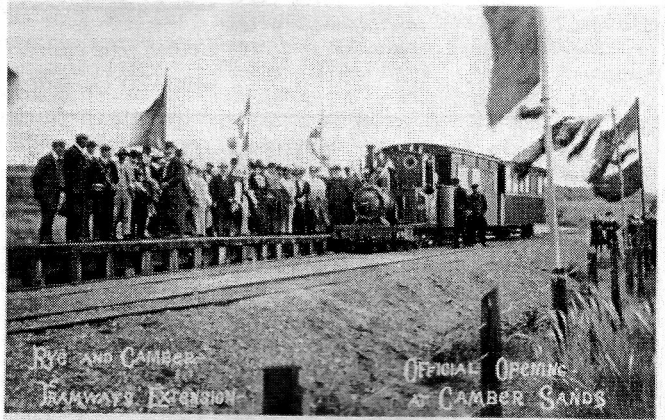
# CAMBER SANDS CENTENARY

**LAURIE A COOKSEY** commemorates the opening of the extension of the *Rye & Camber Tramway to Camber Sands one hundred years ago*

**T**he 3ft gauge, 1½ mile long Rye & Camber had opened to traffic on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1895 to serve Rye Golf Club, to make it easier for the people of Rye to get to the seaside and to provide access to the village of Rye Harbour on the western bank of the River Rother by means of a ferry. At the Rye & District Trade Association's meeting in the autumn of 1895, it was hoped that "Camber-on-Sea", with its sands "the finest in England", might develop as the "marine suburb of Rye" with "pleasure trips to sea and musical entertainments of a more refined character than the usual beach performances at seaside places". But, owing mainly to opposition from Rye Golf Club, only the Royal William Hotel opposite the chub was built. Although Councillor I Longley soon opened a large refreshment room, known as The Retreat, close to Camber station on the shore.

The first serious proposal to extend the tramway was made at the Tramway company's AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1902 when the chairman, Cuthbert Hayles, suggested that if they did not extend the line some 880 yards, "their sand trade would come to a standstill". Sand was being obtained from the sand hills served by a 4½ chain extension to the line at Camber and was being sold profitably to the builders of Rye. Hayles added that the tram did not take trippers "anything like far enough to the usual bathing place. They had to walk some distance over the sand and they might think they might as well walk the whole way". At each succeeding AGM the subject of extending the line was brought up.

Armed with new 21-year leases from Rye Town Council (for the first half-mile out of Rye) and from the Curteis Estate Trustees (for the remainder of the line), work eventually commenced on the 41 chain extension in march 1908. Apart from the first few yards, the formation was built on an unfenced 3ft high embankment of mud and beach with faggoting added as an extra precaution against the sea. An area on the landward side of the embankment of some twenty-one acres was reclaimed from the sea and the Tramway Company's new lease stated that it was re-



sponsible "to take all necessary steps to prevent said piece or parcel of land ... or any part thereof from becoming or remaining flooded with water". No easy task! The new terminus was situated a quarter of a mile short of the coastguard cottages and, with only around 20 houses in Camber at that time, little consideration was given to any custom originating from that end of the line; not even a footpath connected it with the road.

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 1908, the evening timetable was abandoned and the special tram with *Camber* (Bagnall 2-4-0T, works no.1461 of 1895) in charge of both carriages,

left Rye a 5pm to take the 50 or so directors, shareholders and members of Rye Town Council to the new terminus. Bedecked with flags for the occasion, it was the locomotive that performed the opening ceremony by breaking a red silken cord stretched between two posts at the beginning of the extension. At the new Cambers Sands station, also decorated with flags, the specially invited guests were able to stretch their legs briefly before the tram took them back to the original terminus, now more accurately named Golf Links, where they partook of "an excellent tea" provided by Cllr Longley in The Retreat close by.

### Far from the madding crowd

The following morning, the extension opened to the public. Of the 12 scheduled week day trams, 7 ran through to the new terminus, with 5 out of 9 similarly on Sundays, throughout the summer. The tramway's publicity had suggested that its original terminus was "far from the madding crowd" and the description was transferred to the new station. It was never the intention to operate the extension during the winter and from 1<sup>st</sup> November and every winter thereafter, all passenger services terminated once more at Golf Links.

The original termini each had a solid concrete-faced platform and a corrugated iron building containing a booking office and waiting room. But Camber Sands consisted of only a wooden platform made up of second-hand standard gauge sleepers, backed by a primitive two-rail wooden fence. It wasn't until some time before the First World War that any protection from the elements was provided for passengers, when a windowless shelter with a corrugated iron roof was added to the rear of the platform. Bench seats lined the three walls and, over the years, the interior became covered with the names of day-trippers scratched into the woodwork. Beyond the run-round loop, the line was extended some 100 yards into the sand hills for the continued excavation of sand for selling to local builders. In October 1911, rough weather and what was described as the highest tide for 30 years, damaged the tramway embankment. Five months later sleepers were

hanging from the rails in mid-air in several places.

Councillor Longley's refreshment building at Golf Links became surplus to requirements in 1912 when Messrs Thompson's opened a large wooden shack immediately behind Camber Sands station. People could buy tea and sticky buns along with buckets and spades. No water was laid on, so the tram brought fresh supplies from Rye daily. Ever keen to increase income, the had leased the reclaimed land behind their embankment to the golf club in September 1910 at £16 per annum. Carelessly failing to notice its expiry in 1924, the club continued to occupy the land free of charge, subletting it to a local farmer. By 1931 the sand business had ceased and the track beyond Camber Sands was lifted to leave just a short locomotive spur.

Despite competition from the all-conquering bus, many (mainly local) people still travelled to the sands on the tram each summer and Camber Sands station would have lasted the life of the tramway were it not for what must surely be a unique occurrence in railway history - the moving of a station to improve a golf course! In October 1938, a new 3ft high embankment commencing 21 chains short of the 1908 station was built to head eastwards and terminate 275 yards closer to the coastguard cottages in a similar run-round loop, again with a sleeper-built platform, but no shelter. Traffic began in time for Easter, on Maundy Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1939, but with the onset of the Second World War on 4<sup>th</sup> September that year, the tramway closed, never to run for the public again.

Today, the site of the 1908 Camber Sands Station is lost under the redeveloped golf course, but the 1938 embankment can easily be followed as it marches eastwards across the links to end beside a low mound that once formed part of the short-lived platform. ●

◀ **Opposite page:** Flag-bedecked *Camber*, with both carriages waits to take the 50 or so invited guests from the new Camber Sands station back to The Retreat, close to Golf Links station, for a celebratory tea on the opening day of the extension on the Tramway's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1908

*Colonel Stephens Museum & Archive*

# THE MISSING LINK

**HELEN BRETT** reports on progress to restore the missing link between original terminus of the Rother Valley Railway at Robertsbridge and the current southern end of the KESR at Bodiam

**T**he Rother Valley Railway was incorporated in 1896 and was brought under the provisions of the 1896 Light Railway Act during the same year. The railway was promoted to link Tenterden (now Rolvenden) with Robertsbridge, and Holman Stephens was appointed Engineer and later Managing Director of the line.

The route opened for freight traffic on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1900 and to passenger traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> April the same year. In 1903 the line was extended to Tenterden and in 1905 to Headcorn and its name was changed to Kent & East Sussex Railway.

## **Slow Progress**

Nothing more was heard of the Rother Valley Railway until on 22 May 1991 the Rother Valley Railway (East Sussex) Ltd was incorporated with the aim of restoring the old line from Robertsbridge to Bodiam where it would meet up with KESR. Progress on the work has been very slow due to lack of funds and - more important - volunteers to carry out the work and also in re-acquiring of the old track bed, a considerable length of which has been returned to flat farm land. However, due to one member, (Roy Seabourne) the track bed between the main line station at Robertsbridge and the old A21 road through the village has been acquired. Also a large area, which was orchard and gardens, was acquired and this area has been developed as the new RVR Robertsbridge station.

## **Five bridges**

Along the first half-mile of the old track bed there are five bridges, four of which require rebuilding. Work on these has not been possible due to the fact that these had remained the property of British Rail Property Board. This problem has recently been overcome and repairs can now go ahead once the required funds are obtained.

Progress on re-instating the track has been ongoing since 1991 on a stop/start basis as funds and labour become available. The building of the new station and access lines has been a challenge as it was basically building a railway from scratch on a 'brown field' site. The site had to be levelled, track laid, workshop and storage facilities arranged and a platform constructed. A visitor centre was developed in a building from Victoria Station, the old VSOE building, donated to the RVR which is now the buffet and shop operated by the Rother Valley Railway Supporters' Association, who also supply all of the volunteer labour on the railway.

## **Track relaid**

Slow, but significant, progress has been made to the railway over the past six years. The track layout has evolved to suit the present day needs and does not look anything like it did in the old RVR days. This is mainly because we are not able to run into the old bay platform of the SER station (which is still there, but only occasionally used by engineers equipment), and of course the removal of all of the old goods yard (although the goods shed is still there and is leased to the RVR). Most of the new track laid by the volunteers was done with a minimum of materials and it resulted in wooden sleepers being laid without a suitable ballast underlay. All of the track has had to be re-laid in the last two years mainly utilising concrete sleepers although wooden ones are used in the station area for cosmetic reasons. This reworking of the track has now almost reached the first bridge.

In rebuilding or preservation of a railway there are many things that are required beyond track and rolling stock. Many mundane things need doing, Vegetation clearance, ditch digging, trenching for drainage, tree clearance, etc., many of which need doing every year.



During the four weeks of April 2008 the volunteers of the Supporters, Association have been working seven days a week in recovering track work from the old Ore goods yard and carriage shed. A great deal of which will enable the Railway to progress a little further.

When will the RVR once again reach Bodiam? Probably a long way in the future. As with the all preservation of all old railways, the two main requirements are funds and volunteer labour, both of which are hard to come by. *But we will reach there, have no doubt.* •

## Deadlines for 2008/9

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

**92: Autumn 2008: 15th August**

**93: Winter 2008: 15th November**

**94: Spring 2009: 15th February**

**95: Summer 2009: 15th May**

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

## 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 type-script. 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 •

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**PETER BARNFIELD** *examines his collection of luggage labels*

**B**ruce Hunt's fascinating story of the Bere Alston Junction sign in *The Colonel* No 90 sent me to excavate my small heap of West Country luggage labels from the depths of one of my boxes of bits. One wonders if the Colonel himself ever had anything to do with matters as mundane as these flimsy pieces of railway history. I very much doubt it and fear that he would not have been amused at some of the less than perfect spellings to be found.

Reproduced overleaf is a selection from the Bere Alston area, reduced in size to fit the page. One can't help feeling that the misspelling of BEER Alston happened after a lengthy liquid lunch. Matters went even further downhill with BEER FERRIS, which we will assume is the slightly inebriated version of Bere Ferrers! The LSWR was not alone in the strange spellings game however, even the GWR produced some howlers, although it is somewhat surprising that the relatively local South Devon Railway couldn't quite manage to get Lydford correct (bottom right).

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for these errors and why they were not corrected: how were instructions passed on to printers, and were they local enough to know the actual places? After all, the world was a much larger place in those days and literacy was probably not so very common, particularly at local railway level. *continued on next page ▶*

## THE ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY

Robertsbridge station, East Sussex TN32 5DG

### REBUILDING THE K&ESR FROM ROBERTSBRIDGE TO BODIAM

Visitor centre open Sundays and Bank Holidays 9.30 to 17.00 (or dusk if earlier)

For membership, telephone: 01580 881833, go to [www.rvr.org.uk](http://www.rvr.org.uk)

or write to: RVRSA, 375 New Hythe Lane, Larkfield, Kent ME20 6RY

## Luggage Labels

► *From previous page*

Back to the Bere Alston area, or to be precise, Callington Road. No spelling mistakes here and an apt name for the terminus at Kelly Bray, one mile up the road from Callington itself, but does anyone know if the station ever carried this name? Stoke Climsland had me puzzled since it didn't appear on my LSWR system map. Noting that the typeface (font) matched that of the Callington Road label, I glanced at the OS map and of course, there was Stoke Climsland some two miles up the road to the north of Kelly Bray, so the terminus was the logical station to receive luggage. How many other villages were lucky enough to have their own labels and were there ever any for Kelly Bray itself? In fact why wasn't the terminus named Kelly Bray?

Returning to the illustrations we see that the seemingly difficult Gunnislake is perfectly spelt and that the Southern Railway's 1925 reprint appears more antique than the modern looking LSWR sans serif version. Note also that the LSWR stock number for all labels was the same (787) and that this remained the same during the Southern regime.

Finally we come to Calstock and another pleasing font, but just how many items did Waterloo dispatch to this tiny station, or any others in the relative railway backwaters of the Callington Branch? I've sometimes pondered over the LSWR's apparent obsessive need to print "WATERLOO TO" on so many of its luggage labels when "FROM....." with space for a rubber stamp, as in the top examples, would surely have been more generally useful?

One's mind boggles at the potential size of Waterloo's label rack and I don't suppose many of the staff had the faintest idea where Stoke Climsland "station" was! •

London and South Western Ry. 787

From

TO

**Beer Ferris**

London and South Western Ry. 787

WATERLOO TO

**CALLINGTON ROAD**

London and South Western Ry. 787

WATERLOO TO

**GUNNISLAKE**

London and South Western Ry. 787

WATERLOO TO

**CALSTOCK**

London and South Western Ry. 787

WATERLOO TO

**STOKE CLIMSLAND**

SOUTHERN RAILWAY. 787

(S/20)

TO

Stock 787

**GUNNISLAKE**

S.D.R.

Passenger Luggage.

Lidford to

**Exeter**

London and South Western Ry. 787

From

TO

**Beer Alston**

# AN EXTENSION TO THE MAIDSTONE EXTENSION

**SIR ROGER MOATE**, former MP for Faversham, and **ARTHUR PERCIVAL**, of the Faversham Society, describe the line proposed to link Faversham with Maidstone via a Colonel Stephens light railway. These notes were originally prepared for a display in Newnham, one of the villages that would have been affected by the proposals

In the 19th century, there were two Acts of Parliament (one technically an Order) passed specifically to allow the building of a railway line through the valley from Maidstone to Faversham. The first was to have started from Lenham and the second from a point near Hollingbourne. Even today, it is easy for us to see that the main lines from London to the Kent coast do not provide easy communication from Faversham to the county town of Maidstone, some 16 miles away.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have been if either of these lines had been built. What would have been the effect on the villages of Wychling, Doddington and Newnham? How might it have affected Ospringe and the road and rail corridor into Faversham - and subsequent developments? Might either line have survived the railway closures of the 1960s? How many local residents today realise that a railway line might have existed only yards away from their home? Would it have been seen as an environmental boon or a noise nuisance?

The plan that appears on pages 10 and 11 shows the two routes. It was drawn up in 2002. Copies of the detailed plans, drawings, elevations and cross sections are in the records of the Faversham Society. The original plans of the 1881 Act are in the Record Office of the House of Lords, together with details of the petitions.

## **The 1881 Act**

The 1881 Act proposed a double track, 10-mile long, conventional line linking the then authorised, but not yet built Maidstone and Ashford line at Lenham, to the London Chatham and Dover Railway at Faversham,

coming into the east of Water Lane at Ospringe. There was to be a 1440 yard tunnel near Lenham. The cost was estimated to be £240,000. There were to be no stations, so it can be seen essentially as a link between the two main lines and a useful cross-country connection. For that reason, it might perhaps have survived to the present time. However, the project did not proceed as the promoters had other priorities for their money.

## **The 1901 Light Railway Order**

The light railway was to be 12 miles long, from a station between Harrietsham and Hollingbourne to another at Ospringe to the east of the Stone Chapel [just off what is now the A2]. It would carry "if not the engines, the passenger and goods trucks" of the main line railway company [LCDR]. There were no big bridges or tunnels or major earthworks. The route was generally closer to the road than the 1881 proposals. It was designed by Colonel Stephens and the

“ It would be even more successful than the Sheppey Light Railway ”

contractor was to be William Rigby. The cost was forecast to be £86,470, a figure that was criticised by the Board of Trade inspector as too high. The Light Railway Commissioners held a public enquiry at the Institute in Faversham on 3rd November 1899. Opposition came, but was not heard, from Sittingbourne and Sheppey local authorities.

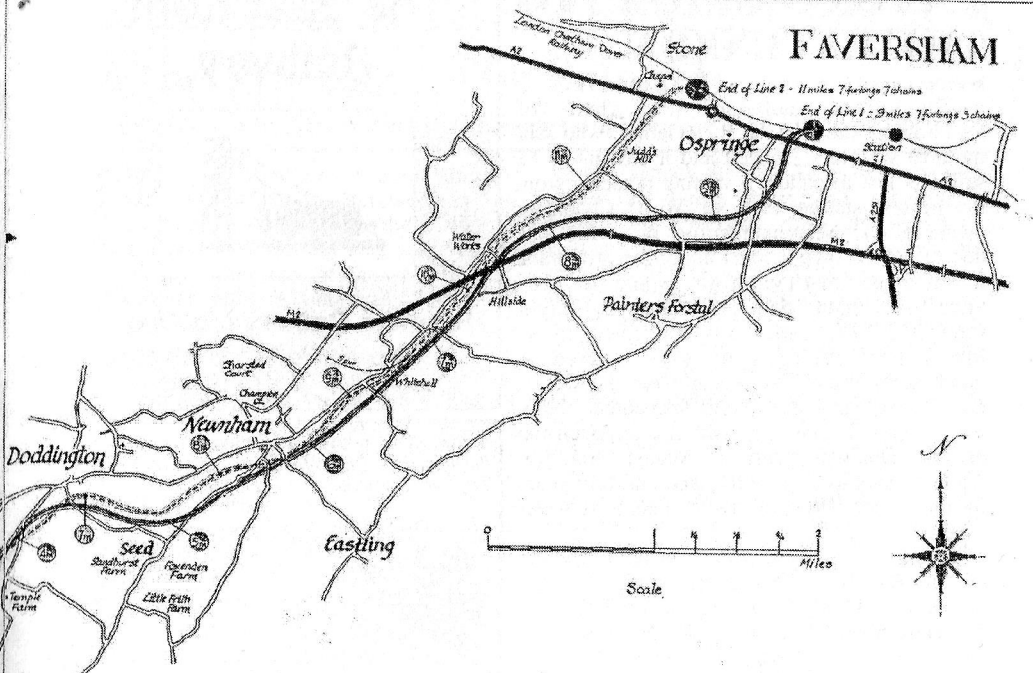
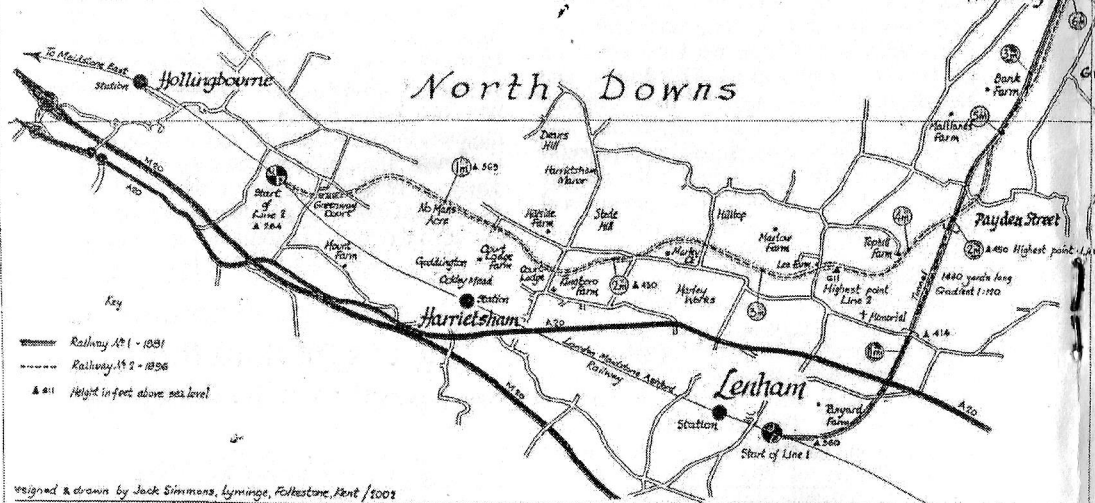
*continued on page 14 ►*

# LONDON CHATHAM & DOVER RAILWAY

## MAIDSTONE & FAVERSHAM JUNCTION

SESSION, 1881.

← MAIDSTONE



LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

# MAIDSTONE & FAVERSHAM JUNCTION

## LIGHT RAILWAY.

H. J. Stephens, Engineer.

We are grateful to Sir Roger Moate, who commissioned it, Jack Simmons, who drew it, the House of Lords Library, which holds the original deposited plans on which Jack based his version, and Arthur Percival of the Faversham Society, for permission to reproduce this plan.

## AN EXTENSION TO THE EXTENSION

► From page 11

Supporters included the vicar of Doddington, the Rev. Hughes-Games, who said the area was very isolated and it cost up to 12 shillings just to collect a visiting preacher from the nearest station, and Mr W M Chapman, owner of the Newnham gravel pits, who was due to get his own sidings under the proposals. It was argued that the railway would be "even more successful than the Sheppey Light Railway". The Order was confirmed on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1901. Three years were allowed to purchase land and five to complete the works. But nothing happened until November 1903, when an application was made for an extension of time. This was granted in August 1904, giving two years to acquire the land and four years for the works. However, the powers were never used. ●

*A more considered article on the proposals by Tom Burnham was published under the title 'Beyond the Maidstone Extension' in the Tenterden Terrier, no.37, summer 1985, pp17-20.*

### Nigel Bird Books

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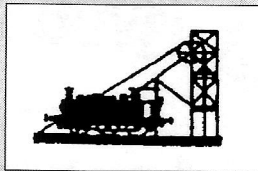
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## The East Kent Railway



**Ride the Colliery Line from  
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*Below: "We paused at Callington to admire the mural of PDSWJR 0-6-2T Earl of Mount Edgcombe, painted by Ian Pethers.*

*Photo: Les Darbyshire*



## SOCIETY NEWS

### In the Tracks of The Colonel

*Society Chairman, LES DARBYSHIRE reports on this year's members' event*

It has been the custom in recent years for our AGM to be followed by an exploration of some of the Colonel's haunts in the locality. This year was no exception. After the AGM was finished, followed by an excellent buffet lunch, we assembled on Bere Ferrers station to catch the train to Gunnislake. Bere Ferrers was once on the Southern main line to Plymouth, and would have echoed to the sound of Bulleid Pacifics on the legendary Atlantic Coast Express – and before that, the equally legendary T9s. Now it is reduced to a single track branch. The second platform still exists, trackless and deep in the undergrowth, but on the down platform the very smart LSWR buildings stand, now private dwellings.

#### **First stop Bere Alston**

Our train, a Class 153 diesel unit operated by First Great Western, arrived on time from Plymouth and we climbed aboard. The fare, at a "special offer" party rate, was only £5 for four people for the return trip to Gunnislake, an incredibly low price for a wonderful journey. First stop was Bere Alston where the original main line to Waterloo now ends. Here we had to reverse to join the branch that once went to Callington. As at Bere Ferrers, the train used the down platform, though in this case the up platform was still clear of vegetation and its waiting room and signal box were intact, if in need of some TLC. The waiting room was the one that originally sported the blue "Bere Alston Junction" sign as portrayed in glorious colour in the last *Colonel*.

#### **Calstock Viaduct**

Having reversed, we joined the branch proper, and soon found ourselves climbing up steep gradients and round tight curves to gain height. This was the "new build" part of the line, joining the main line to the old East Cornwall Mineral Railway route beyond the

top of Calstock Incline. Soon we were way above the Tamar valley and, rounding a curve, we emerged onto the Calstock viaduct. The view from the viaduct of the river 120 feet below and Calstock village on the slopes behind it was spectacular. It was rather like being in a low-flying aircraft. However you could not see much of the viaduct itself from the train. Calstock station has lost its original Stephens building, which looked like it should have been in Kent rather than Cornwall, but at least it had a reasonable, if small, shelter. Leaving Calstock the line twisted and turned in remarkable fashion, going round a curve of 180 degrees or more, to keep the gradients to a reasonable level.

#### **Original ECMR route**

After joining the original ECMR route the line was a little straighter. At a couple of road crossings the train had to stop completely before hooting and proceeding – health and safety rears its ugly head! I don't think they would have stopped in the old days, just whistled noisily and carried on!

Arriving at Gunnislake we stopped at a neat and tidy station (but with only a bus shelter for comfort) that is now the end of the line. Gunnislake station used to be on the opposite side of the main road, but the line was cut back to allow a low bridge to be removed. In truth, this has not inconvenienced the passengers much, as the old station was not far away, but the Stephens building was demolished at the same time which was a pity. Almost next door to the station we visited the garden railway of Ian Pethers, a local artist.

We boarded a coach for the next part of our journey to explore the closed part of the line beyond Gunnislake. Our guide was Chris Grove, our host at the Tamar Belle. The coach travelled through very pleasant scenery to Callington, where we paused ►

► to admire a mural of the original PD&SWJR 0-6-2T "Earl of Mount Edgecombe" - one of the locos purchased by the Colonel - painted by Ian Pethers (*see below*). We then went to the site of Callington station, which was at Kelly Bray, a long way out of Callington proper and one reason for the demise of the line.

There was nothing to be seen there as the site was now a small industrial estate, so we proceeded along the road parallel to the line to the foot of Kit Hill where there was once a



siding with an incline leading up the hill to some granite quarries. We walked a little way up the incline to absorb the atmosphere of the place - it would have taken more time and energy than we had to get to the top!

### **Luckett**

Next stop was Luckett, originally Stoke Climsland, and the site of one of the original ECMR depots whose building remained. In typical fashion, the station was a long way from both places! Next was Seven Stones Halt where the remains of a platform still existed, plus some 2-foot gauge track laid recently by a local narrow gauge group. We were told that beside the Halt was the site of a pleasure ground with funfair that existed before the First World War and attracted large crowds - a trainload of 600 people was mentioned - but it was hard to imagine that, looking at the place as it is now.

### **Latchley re-creation**

Back on the coach and we went on to Latchley, another ECMR depot that they called Cox Park. Here again, the ECMR building was extant and lived in by a charming lady who came out to greet us. The PD&SWJ platform was still intact, and we decided to take a photograph re-creating an old picture (*below*) of the Station Mistress and her family. There should have been five adults and two children in the picture, but lacking any children in our party we had to

make do with the five adults plus two more adults crouching down to simulate the youngsters! (*opposite page*) Surprisingly, a Southern Railway concrete milestone 6 ½ (from Bere Alston) was found behind the platform. Next we travelled to Chilsworthy Halt, a small station with, in old photographs, good

views across the valley but now so thickly overgrown that the platform itself could only just be seen. Under the adjacent overbridge was another Southern concrete artefact, a gradient post, but since this was lying face down and was too heavy to lift we did not see what the gradient was.

### **Arsenic plant**

Near the station we looked at the remains of the Clitters mine with its engine house that once housed a beam engine, and then walked a short way to the site of an arsenic plant - we took care not to kiss the ground there! It was such picturesque and leafy countryside around that it was difficult to imagine the area ever being a hive of industry - but it was!

Back on the coach we travelled almost back to Gunnislake, finally stopping at the village of Albaston. Here, some continued

on the coach back to Calstock but most of us decided on the option of walking back via the ECMR incline, having first partaken of welcome refreshment at the Queen's Head! Our guide for the walk was to be Bruce Hunt Suitably refreshed, we started on our trek which was, perhaps fortunately, largely downhill. The first part of the journey took us along an old drovers' track, pre-dating the Colonel by several centuries. The track was sunken through long years of use, and in places was worn down to the bedrock which was very slippery! Eventually we came to the top of the Calstock incline, known as The Butts, where a water tower and the engine house still stand. The site is now in private hands and the first part of the incline itself was not accessible to the public, so



we had to make a detour along a path that intersected the incline about a third of the way down. Once on the line of the incline we were able to see the considerable amount of engineering work involved in building it. There was a substantial bridge over the line, and one under it crossed by triple girders, one for each running rail as it was a three-rail incline except for the half-way passing place. The incline was quite steep and, with the onset of fine rain, rather treacherous to walk down!

### *Amazingly good shape*

For the last part of the incline, the modern path deviated from its line and we arrived at the river some way east of the incline foot. Following the road along to the west, we came to a stone bridge that carried the incline over the road. Near here was a very old carriage body that some thought was of Great Western origin, so nothing to do with the local line. Back along the road we

got an excellent view of the viaduct reflected in the waters of the Tamar, and as we drew closer we could see the viaduct's construction of concrete blocks. Since the viaduct piers are tapered there must have been a lot of different sized blocks to be cast. What was remarkable to see was the way that the structure had stood up to 100 years of Cornish weather. When you consider what a typical concrete structure of say the 1960s or 1970s looks like now, Calstock Viaduct looked in amazingly good shape. Indeed, it seemed almost new! From a

cottage beside the viaduct an old lady emerged (we seemed to attract ladies – can't think why!) who told us that her cottage was built 50 years before the viaduct and pointed out the date 1858 on it. She said that one of the cottages had to be demolished to make way for

the viaduct, and this was clear once you had been told about it.

To get back to the station required a climb, either up about 100 steps or else a rather longer but less steep, trek along the road. Up at the station, we learnt that our train back to Bere Ferrers, expected from Gunnislake at any moment, was running very late and had only just left Bere on its outward journey! As the rain was getting more intense and there was not much room in the station shelter, we decided to catch the train in the wrong direction and have a final run on it up to Gunnislake and back, before returning "home".

So, we arrived back at Bere Ferrers having made an extra trip on one of the Colonel's lines, and just in time for our evening barbecue – which, because of the rain, had to be held inside the Tamar Belle's preserved Gresley coaches. A great end to a wonderful day. ●



## SOCIETY NEWS

### £500 Grant to FR/WHR Archives

**Members at the AGM decided to give a grant of £500 towards the conservation of the archives of the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways.**

**PATRICIA LAYZELL WARD describes the work involved**

When volunteers gained access to Harbour Station in Portmadoc in the 1950's they found that Robert Evans, the former General Manager, had kept a careful eye on the premises. A vast number of documents were found and their importance was recognised, thanks to Michael Seymour and Allan Garraway. Michael carefully listed many documents until his untimely death. Fortunately his enthusiasm was shared by Gareth Haulfryn Williams, County Archivist in the mid-1990's, and the collection was transferred to Gwynedd Archives. A grant enabled the drawings to be cleaned, repaired and encapsulated.

#### **Transfer to Caernarfon**

The transfer to Caernarfon resulted in the archives being housed in appropriate environmental conditions, with the added advantage of a Conservation Laboratory on site. In addition the records of other railways in the county are held there. Members will be aware that papers relating to the Welsh Highland Railway were transferred from the Official Receiver. Other collections shed light on the Welsh Highland Railway, for example, the papers of local solicitors.

#### **38,000 documents**

The Festiniog/Welsh Highland records consist of some 38,000 documents, one of which is dated March 8 1832. This is a letter which Mrs Eliza Madocks wrote to James

Spooner informing him about the progress of the Festiniog Railway Bill. The collection contains ledgers, notebooks, accounts, correspondence, publicity materials and the drawings. Cataloguing has been in progress for some four years and, as yet, there is not a date when the collection can be opened for public consultation. Many people who are interested in the collection will not be able to travel to Caernarfon easily and so the cataloguing is being carried out in some detail – which will also help those who need to identify documents and files before arrival. The catalogue will be made available on the Gwynedd Archives website and on DVD. And an important point is that it will, hopefully, be added to The National Archives ASA2 catalogue.

#### **Fascinating correspondence**

For Colonel Stephens enthusiasts there will be more of his fascinating correspondence to read. Some letters are very pithy – others well illustrate his kindness and generosity to employees who fell ill. The daily life on the Welsh Highland is portrayed in memos from D.O. Jones. Fortunately the WHR records are generally in files which cover topics and incidents. However it is the earlier records of the Festiniog that are in good condition. Charles Spooner's notes and 'scribbles' are on acid free paper whereas the documents from about 1910 are on poor quality paper and those of the war years often on the back of old timetables. There is a lot of work to be done to repair documents and so the grant from the Colonel Stephens Society is most welcome. As soon as the cataloguing is complete a longer news item will appear in *The Colonel*.

Best thanks are due to members of the Colonel Stephens Society for the generous donation towards the conservation of this important historical collection. ●

## SOCIETY NEWS

### Income up, members down, AGM hears

Society Treasurer, Nigel Bird, reported a healthy financial situation, with income up from £1660 to £2210, largely as a result of the subscription increase decided upon at Last year's AGM. He recommended no increase this year - it remains at £7.

Meanwhile, membership secretary, David Powell, reported that "the demographics are against us". Whilst we recruited 27 new members in 2007/8, overall membership stood at 312, a net loss of 12. He urged all to work at enrolling new members in order to maintain our viability as a society.

### Blue Plaque: little Progress

Les Darbyshire, reporting to the AGM at Bere Ferrers, said that he had heard no more from the authorities in Tonbridge about the possibility of placing a Blue Plaque on the Colonel's former offices in Salford Terrace. He would follow it up, but reminded members that local councils proceed slowly in such matters. He would also follow up the suggestion that the building should be 'listed', but he was more pessimistic about that idea. However, there was enthusiasm from the floor about the proposal to have made some plaques to be placed at stations on the Callington line (and elsewhere) commemorating the Colonel's involvement. It was suggested that a generic design in aluminium would be most appropriate.

### Donations Programme

The meeting decided to set aside £1500 for donations during the coming to projects with a Colonel Stephens connection. The committee was authorised to decide which projects to support in addition to the FR/ WHR Archives reported on the previous page. If you know of some suitable candidates, contact our secretary; address on p.2.

### Centenary Lunch in Rye?

Members enjoyed the weekend so much that discussions in the 'Olde Plough' at Bere Ferrers and in the Gresley carriages kept returning to an idea for a second gathering this year. 'What a pity we get together only once a year' was the theme. The suggestion that found most favour was a lunch at Rye, possibly in 'The Mermaid', to mark the centenary of the opening of the Cambers Sands extension of the Rye & Camber. It could be followed by an exploration of the remains of the Tramway. All being well, you should find a loose slip in this issue.

If you are interested, return the slip to the Editor and if there's sufficient interest, we'll see what we can do. Should be fun! If you want to read more about the R&C, try Laurie Cooksey's *The Rye & Camber Tramway: a centenary history*. Brighton: Plateway Press, 1995. ISBN 1 871980-26-7. £17.95, plus £3 p&p from Nigel Bird Books, address on p.14.

### 2009 AGM Fixed

It was agreed to plan to hold the next AGM and Members' Day (or should it be weekend?) on Saturday 16th May in the Shrewsbury area. There should be plenty to explore, including the remains of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire. We can observe progress on the visitor centre being built by the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust at Shrewsbury Foregate station and the work towards restoring the Snailbeach District Railways. Society archivist, Stuart Marshall, has agreed to organise it at the committee end. The SHRT has indicated willingness to help.

### EXHIBITIONS

Alan Bone has sent us notification of model railway exhibitions in the south east featuring Colonel Stephens railways, including the Erith Model Railway Society at Freemantle Hall, High Street, Bexley DA5 1AA on 20/21 September [www.erithmrs.ukmodelshops.co.uk](http://www.erithmrs.ukmodelshops.co.uk) and Wilmington Model Railway exhibition at St. Michael's Church Hall, Church Hill, Wilmington, Dartford 01322 220561

# SOCIETY NEWS

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT YEAR ENDING 9.5.08

(2007 FIGURES IN BRACKETS)

### INCOME

Subscriptions	£2210.00	(£1660.00)
Donations Received	£836.19	(£845.00)
Back Issue sales	£ 59.20	(£34.50)
Badge Sales	£15.00	(£21.00)
Binder Sales	£22.60	(£101.50)
Guide Sales	£22.00	(£53.00)
DVD Sales	£117.00	(nil)
Biography Book Sales	£130.50	(nil)
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>£3412.49</b>	

### EXPENDITURE

Printing The Colonel (4 issues)	£845.00	(£703.00)
Postage and Stationery for The Colonel	£375.08	(£349.27)
Printing Publicity/Membership Forms	£138.00	(£89.00)
Printing Fascinating Facts leaflet	£89.00	(nil)
Donations Given		
Made up thus	£1000.00	(£1150)
£500-WHR Russell Fund		
£500 Gwendraeth Valley Rly. Soc.		
Committee Expenses (D Powell)	£89.31	(£88.96)
Ditto (R Shimmon)	£62.53	(£32.54)
(£20 re 2007 AGM, 72p re AGM 2009,		
£4.95 re membership forms postage,		
£36.86 "The Colonel" related expenses.		
Colonel Biography Book (ex KESR)	£84.00	(nil)
Production Costs DVD	£28.00	(nil)

**SUB TOTAL £2710.92**

Balance as per Bank Statement 9.5.08 £1597.25

### Deposit Account

Balance at 12/4/07	£3228.24
Plus interest earned	£71.03
Balance at 9/5/08	<b>£3299.27</b>

**TOTAL CASH ASSETS.....£4896.52**

*Letters to the Editor***DISPATCHES****Through carriages on the KESR**

The question and answer on the through coaches of the KESR in the 'Test Les' page in *Colonel 90* concentrates on timetable problems. However the operational difficulties at Robertsbridge seem more crucial.

A study of the track layout of both main and KESR lines shows that there was no 'run-round' loop on the main line - only a cross over at the 'up' side of the station. It would therefore have been necessary for the coaches to be attached to an up train to be ready in the down platform with shunting (pilot) loco at the 'down' end of the coach. The up train would have then had to pull forward past the cross over, stop, then allow for the point change and the through coach to have been propelled over and coupled.

The coach from the KESR train would have had to be detached and positioned in the main line 'down' platform. If using the KESR train loco, the train would have had to be propelled back down the line to the KESR run round loop, the loco run round the train, pick up the through coach, then pull it into the main line down platform. If a pilot loco was employed it would still have had to pull the coach down into the KESR run round loop and the loco run round the coach before pulling it into the down platform.

On the 'Down' trains the problem would not be quite as bad. In fact it would be quite straightforward. I would, therefore, suggest that the question should be 'did through carriages ever run from Robertsbridge'?

The track plans suggest that there would not have been any problems at the Headcorn end. The 1908 map shows that the train loco could run round, pick up coach, go back to junction of the line to the main line, push the coach up to the main line station and connect to the rear of the main line up train. As for down trains, once the main line train had left, it is a straight run over the up line and onto the KESR.

**Helen Brett**  
Trustee, RVRSA Robertsbridge.

**Blue or Green?**

In reading the 'Press Digest' in *Colonel 89*, I was concerned and disappointed to note that the October *Back Track* reproduction of our colour photo of EKR No.2 indicates a blue livery. The original 120 size Dufay colour truly showed the Austen green (a slightly blueish, rich green) and this copied closely onto 35mm Kodachrome, which has reproduced well in one or more other publications. That livery was consistent with that on rebuilt No.7, which we photographed in black & white at Easter 1937 and S&MR No.2 in August 1939\*.

Regarding EKR 0-6-0 No.6, we were sad to see the lining out on most of the engine had already been covered up by another coat of paint, because Austen had seen the engine a day or two before and took exception to the brighter green already applied and lined out!

Volume one of the book *The East Kent Railway* [M Lawson Finch and S R Garrett, Oakwood Press, 2003, ISBN 0 85361 608 6] has the colour picture of No.2 on the cover which I recall was fairly accurate.

**Jim Jarvis**  
**Harpenden**

*[I have had another look at the October Back Track and, indeed, the cover of The East Kent Railway. Of course you are quite correct, Mr. Jarvis, both reproductions clearly show EKR No.2 looking in fine fettle in lined out green livery -Ed.]*

**APPEALS FOR HELP**

**Kerry Baylis** needs help to staff the Society's stand at the Festival of Railway Modelling at Peterborough 18/19th October at the East of England Agricultural Society showground. Contact Kerry at [kerry@thetrackside.karoo.co.uk](mailto:kerry@thetrackside.karoo.co.uk) or: 01482 342506

**Ned Williams** also needs help to staff the Society's stand at the Warley National Model Railway exhibition at the NEC, Birmingham on 22/23 November. Contact Ned at [nedwilliams@toucansurf.com](mailto:nedwilliams@toucansurf.com) or: 01902 773376

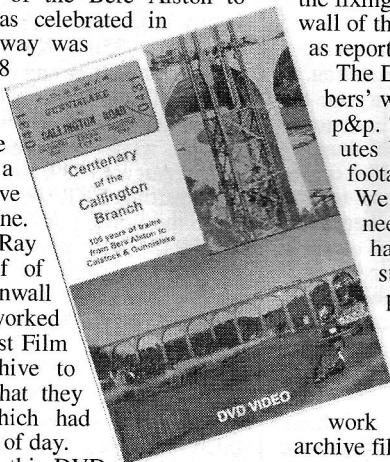
## BOOKS & DVD<sub>s</sub>

***Centenary of the Callington Branch*** DVD available from Ray Bentley £11 (inc p&p) 14 Chapel Street, Bere Alston, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7DE. Please make cheques out to Ray Bentley.

The centenary of the Bere Alston to Callington line was celebrated in many ways. One way was holding the 2008 members' weekend in the area, another was the production of a DVD with archive footage of the line. CSS member Ray Bentley, on behalf of the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, worked with the South West Film & Television Archive to uncover material that they held, much of which had never seen the light of day.

The footage on this DVD was shown at the members' weekend in Bere Ferrers and its unique value was much appreciated. It includes the only known moving images showing the wagon lift on Calstock Viaduct. Double-headed steam freight is seen on the viaduct. There is plenty of amateur footage of steam freight on the line shot from the lineside, from the footplate and guards van. The best discovery in the depths of the archive was a very good quality colour film of the line shot at Gunnislake just before truncation. It was for a TV documentary that never got finished but which may now be resurrected.

There is an insert in the DVD box with an explanation of each clip on the DVD, a potted history of the line and a list of 10 DVDs and videos with clips of the line, that are known to Ray Bentley and available in commercial publications. The Colonel's Guide of Videos/DVDs for this line needs radical updating; the insert fulfils that need. The box has a photo of a PD&SWJR 1908 ticket from Gunnislake to



Callington Road. The original 1908 station sign 'Bere Alston Junction' erected by Colonel Stephens on the branch platform (white on blue) has recently come into the possession of the Victoria Bookshop in Bere Alston. The Tamar Belle group found the fixing holes of the correct centres in the wall of the shelter on the branch platform – as reported in *The Colonel*.

The DVD was sold for £10 at the members' weekend but we need to add £1 for p&p. The DVD runs for about 50 minutes. We paid SWFTA upfront for the footage but they retain the copyright.

We have taken the sales risk and need to sell 190 to break-even. We have sold 150 so far. Our sales strategy is to sell as cheaply as possible to get this important material to as many people as possible. We hope the guaranteed income to SWFTA will help them carry on their good work in preserving valuable railway archive film.

If you want a taster email Ray at [erbentley@supanet.com](mailto:erbentley@supanet.com) and he will email you the cover and insert to you. ●

***Calstock Viaduct 100 years and more: a photographic record of its construction and the story behind it.*** Vic Harman. Calstock: Calstock Parish Archive Trust, 2007. 68p, illus, A4, paper covers. £10.

***Branch Line Memories (Devon & Cornwall).*** Eric R Shepherd. Newton Abbott: Ark Publications (Railways), 2005. ISBN 1 873029 11 X. 128p, illus, 13x21cm, paper covers. £7.95. Includes chapters on the ND&CJR and the Callington Branch.

Both these books were on sale during the members' weekend at Bere Ferrers. We hope to review them in the next issue of *The Colonel*. ●

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

**LORRY CRASH KILLS RAIL MEN**

was the startling headline in the *Shropshire Star* reporting the tragic deaths of Dieter Bühler, the recently appointed general manager of the **Snailbeach Railway** and the civil engineer, Kurt Brugger, in a road accident in Switzerland. They were on their way to England to start work on the revival of the Snailbeach. Checking the railway's website [www.sdrailway.com](http://www.sdrailway.com) as we went to press, the tragedy does not seem to have affected the ambition to, eventually, restore the railway from Pontesbury to Snailbeach. Last year was the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening. A gala is planned for August this year to celebrate the event - a year late, because of 'legal reasons'.

The **Snailbeach** had two ex-WD **Baldwin 4-6-0Ts**, several other Baldwins have been in the news lately. Elsewhere, David Powell reports on the smooth riding example at the Leighton Buzzard Railway. Meanwhile, *16mm Today*, the magazine for modellers of narrow gauge trains on 32mm gauge, carried an extensive, and very favourable review of the Accucraft live steam model of an WD Baldwin in the February 2008 issue. And very fine it looks, too. We hope to publish our own review soon.

If you see any railway magazines, you can't have failed to see the stunning shots of the reconstruction of the **Welsh Highland Railway** as it nears Portmadoc. *Steam Railway 347* in particular published an impressive array of aerial views. The *Railway Modeller* runs an annual competition for the RM Cup voted for by readers. The 2007 runner up was CSS member Andrew Ulyyott for his evocative model of the **WC&PR** terminus at Weston Super Mare. If you missed the article it appeared in the February 2007 *Modeller*. Congratulations Andrew! Robert Kosmider is well known to us for his kits of Colonel Stephens (and other) prototypes marketed under the 'Steam & Things' (see overleaf). In the May 2008 issue of *The Gauge O Gazette*, he demonstrates that he is a practical modeller with a useful article on making stretcher bars for hand-built point work.

*Abbey Lines* is the newsletter of the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust. Its Spring 2008 issue carries an instalment of a series entitled *Tracking the Old Potts*. This instalment covers the **S&MR** from Kinnerley to Shrawadine, with photos of the remains of Pentre Halt 'hiding in the undergrowth'. The same issue contains information on the application for a Lottery grant to help build the visitor centre at the old **S&MR** station at Shrewsbury.

The **East Kent Railway** was given a boost last November when the long-awaited Transport and Works Order was granted. *East Kent Railway News 80* contains information about plans to purchase a significant piece of land close to its Shepherdswell base, known as The Knees. Bob Baines, the EKR chairman, explains the attraction of the area to the EKR as it is the location of the original EKR engine shed and workshops. These plans were successful. £42,000 was raised within eight weeks. At the same time the trackbed between Shepherdwell and Wigmore Lane via Eythorne was purchased securing its future. In the same issue, Tony Adams has a fascinating article outlining a day tour by bus of the area served by the **EKR**, using regular services in the Dover-Canterbury-Sandwich triangle.

Having spent the weekend at exploring remains of the Callington Branch, John Simmonds kindly sent in a copy of an article from the *Railway Magazine* of January 1917 entitled '**The Bere Alston and Callington Line**'. The article includes a photo of S G Hartnell, manager of the Bere Alston and Callington Section. After a summary of his early railway career it continues: *upon the opening of the PDSWJR, he was appointed clerk at Calstock and in January 1909, was promoted Clerk-in-Charge to Mr H F Stephens of Tonbridge, the then Manager, whom he succeeded in 1911.* By contrast, the current issue of the same magazine contains details of proposals to reopen the line from Bere Alston to Okehampton! ●

## TAIL PIECE

### *Baldwins: Rough riders or rough track?*

One locomotive type synonymous with Stephens's narrow gauge operations is the ex-WD USA 4-6-0T design, originally built by Baldwin for the War Office in 1916 and 1917. Although never owned by Stephens, No 788 is a working example of this type. In 2001, the Society made a donation towards its restoration. 788 re-entered public service at the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway in August 2007, restored to its original 'short' open cab condition as supplied to meet the WD specification for a 3½ ton axle limit, and as fitted to the Ashover's *Joan* and *Peggy*. The other ex-WD Baldwins acquired for the Ashover and Snailbeach lines still had open cabs but extended over the bunker, while the Colonel's WHR and Snailbeach examples ended up with more substantial enclosed affairs.

The 4<sup>th</sup> May 2008 saw me heading to Leighton Buzzard for this year's Indian Weekend, and an opportunity to see 'our investment' at work. 788 was in steam, having been one of 50 Baldwins sent to India after WW1 and was sharing duties with ex Matheran Light Railway 740, an Orenstein & Koppel 0-6-0T. The Indian theme extended to station name boards, garlanded locomotives, real Indian tea (made with condensed milk) and the presence of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

Society. I travelled up behind 740 to photograph 778 arriving at Stonehenge, the top terminus, before returning behind the Baldwin, riding in the first coach which gave good views of 778.

Driving the Baldwin was Patrick Keef (one of the directors of the locomotive builders Alan Keef Ltd), who had been the main project manager for 778's restoration. Conversation with Patrick back at Pages Park soon turned to the riding qualities of the Baldwins in general and 778 in particular. Patrick confirmed my observation from the coach that it was indeed a smooth runner, even when running bunker first. This raised questions about the apparent reputation of the Baldwins as rough riders, especially when running bunker first, without the benefit of a pony truck to ease them into curves. Could it be that the locomotives' reputation was mainly the consequence of poor (or non-existent) track maintenance?

Before I left I bought *Over Here! Baldwin Military Locomotives in the UK* by Lawson Little, published by the Narrow Gauge Society, 38 pages plus a stiff card cover, containing 43 good quality photos, drawings (for 7mm scale), colour paintings of WHR and Ashover Baldwins and informative text. I recommend this book to anyone interested in or contemplating modelling these locos. This book is available at LBNGR or from Nigel Bird at £6.95 including postage. Cheques to be made out to Nigel Bird Books, please.

**David Powell**

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