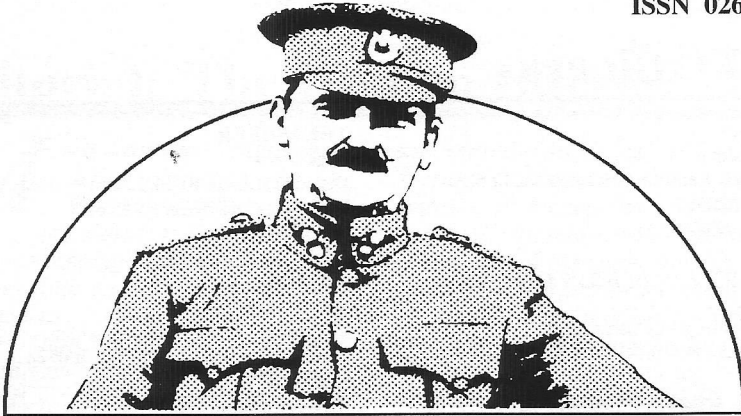


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THE COLONEL

Number 92

Autumn 2008

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY
for enthusiasts of the light and narrow gauge railways of
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An Index to *The Colonel* issues 1-91 is available on our website (see below).

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Editorial: The Human Interest

Most railway enthusiasts, their societies and, by extension, their magazines are interested mainly in the technicalities of railway operation; the locomotives and rolling stock. Some are more interested in timetables or company histories - how the railways were originally built and financed the way traffic was built up, declined and changed in nature. To have a society primarily concerned with one individual and the railways he was associated with is unusual, but then Colonel Stephens was an unusual man, at least in the railway world. However, judging by the studies carried out by our members, we are interested not just in one man, but the lives and efforts of people

associated with the railways that Stephens conjured into existence. William H Austen, his assistant and eventual successor, and Thomas Ward Green one of his supporters of the SMR revival project are prime examples. But we have also published articles on members of the Colonel's family and in this issue we learn about the Rev. Bertie Wilford, a supporter of the Cranbrook and Paddock Wood Railway, Tom Gatford, a driver-fitter on the WC&PR with connections to two other Stephens lines, as well as a snapshot from the life of EC (Dan) Carey when he started as a gate boy on the WC&PR. The human interest thrives in our society. Long may it continue

Ross Shimmon

*Cover picture: The Rev. H H (Bertie) Wilford on Hope Mill Station on opening day.
Peter Harding Collection*

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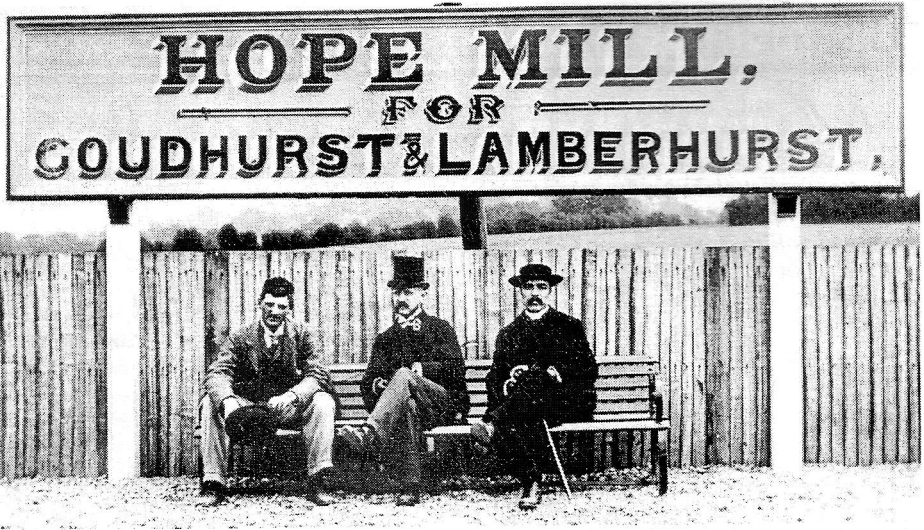
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 Details on page 14

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CAMBER SANDS 100

Lunch & walk on 11 October
 See page 13



OPENING DAY AT HOPE MILL

PETER HARDING looks at one of the special guests at the opening of the first section of the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway to Hope Mill Station in 1892.

What a day it must have been at the grand opening of the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway (C&PWR) when the first train arrived at Hope Mill Station on Monday, September 12th 1892. By way of celebration, the farmhouse and oast houses at Hope Mill, which were owned by Mr. Edward Clemetson, were decorated with bunting, while some of the streets in Horsmonden were also decorated.

The ceremonial first train was drawn by a Cudworth E1 class (formerly the 118 class) 2-4-0 No.112 with five quaint old four wheel carriages and two brake vans. The engine was draped in front with a Union Jack while the sides were covered with hops. It was hops which the line was to become mostly associated with and also the many hop-pickers who came down from London for a working holiday towards the end of each August and lived in hop-pickers' huts on the various farms for a few weeks.

Cut his railway teeth

There is no doubt that the 22-year old Holman F. Stephens cut his railway teeth as resident engineer on the C&PWR, working under the supervision of Edward P. Seaton, the consulting engineer. During this period, Stephens was able to make many contacts which he was able to use to his advantage in the years which followed. Some of these contacts were people like the Mancktelow Bros. of Horsmonden, who built the station buildings on the C&PWR and who went on not only to build the stations but also lay the track on both the Rye & Camber Tramway and the Selsey Tramway, the next two lines of which Stephens was engineer. He was also able to make the acquaintance of William H. Austen who, at the time, was in his early teens and had just been employed at Cranbrook by the main contractor J T Firbank. On completion of the C&PWR, Stephens hired Austen as his assistant, a position Austen held until Stephens died in

1931. Austen then took over the group of light railways which Stephens had built up since their days on the C&PWR.

Rev. H H Wilford

One interesting person at this grand opening who has always fascinated the author was the Rev. H H Wilford, who seems to have featured quite prominently in the photographs. The Rev. Wilford was in fact the 28 year-old Curate at Horsmonden Church which is quite close to Hope Mill and over 1½ miles from Horsmonden village. It seems that the Rector of Horsmonden, the Rev. Hugh Smith-Marriott was not that keen on having the railway but said that he would support it if local people felt that it was really necessary. Because of his own doubts about the new railway, the Rev. Smith-Marriott might well have asked Wilford to attend on his behalf. The Rev. Wilford seems to have made a great impression on the gathering as he also attended the grand celebration dinner which took place on the same evening at the Gun Inn at Horsmonden. The chair was occupied by Mr. George Throssel, the chief representative of the main contractor J T Firbank and, after the meal had finished and

the tables were cleared, Mr. Throssel gave the royal toasts and the national anthem was heartily sung. This was followed by Mr. W Gale singing "Speed on my bark" which was followed by the Rev. Wilford singing "George's visit to London town". Later, Mr. Throssel proposed the health of the Rev. Wilford who he said had 'displayed a very nice feeling by coming amongst them as one of themselves'. In response, the Rev. Wilford thanked the chairman and said that he was sorry that there was no other clergymen present. His object in coming there was, first to wish prosperity to the new line, and secondly to meet the many pleasant friends he saw before him that night. He would be pleased to meet them again and forward anything which was for the success of the good people of Horsmonden. So, who was the Rev. H H Wilford and what happened to him in later years?

Known to his friends as 'Bertie'

The Rev. Herbert Hignett Wilford was known to his family and friends as 'Bertie' and was born in 1864 at Upwell in Cambridgeshire where his grandfather was Rector at the nearby village of Welney. He went to Jesus College at Cambridge University and having taken his holy orders

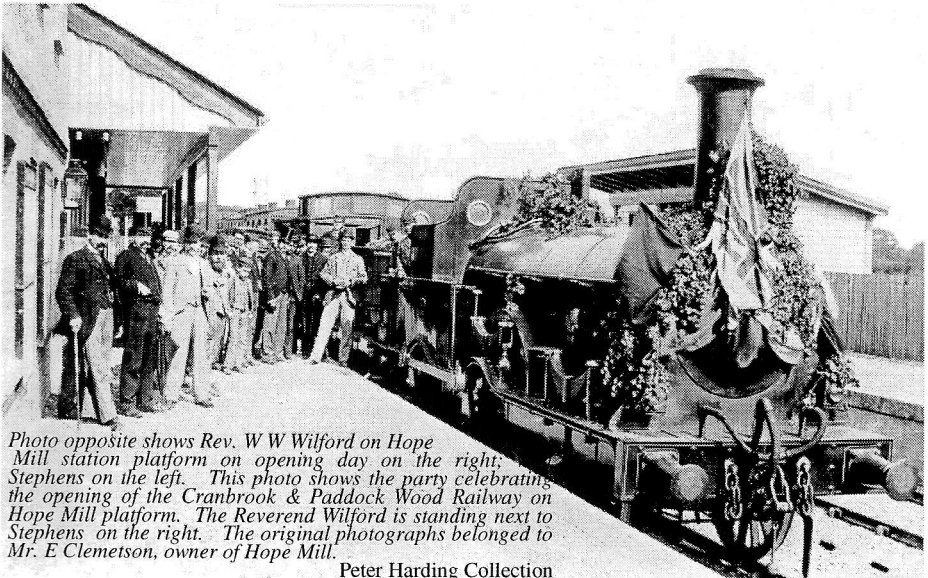


Photo opposite shows Rev. W W Wilford on Hope Mill station platform on opening day on the right; Stephens on the left. This photo shows the party celebrating the opening of the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway on Hope Mill platform. The Reverend Wilford is standing next to Stephens on the right. The original photographs belonged to Mr. E Clemetson, owner of Hope Mill.

Peter Harding Collection

worked as curate at Monk Soham in Suffolk from 1888 to 1889 before moving on to Horsmonden in 1890. A keen sportsman, 'Bertie' Wilford played cricket for Cambridge University and later in the early 1900s for London County, a well known club side who played at the Crystal Palace. While playing for London County he played with, and became friendly with, the famous W G Grace who had joined them from Gloucestershire. In 1899, 'Bertie' Wilford followed his grandfather as Rector of Welney and was then to spend the rest of his life in the village.

A brilliant preacher

From all reports, he was a brilliant preacher and popular figure, and might well have gone further in the church if he had not been so isolated in a remote fenland parish. As it was, he was on the Ouse Drainage Board and, over a period of years, was chaplain to no less than six High Sheriffs of Cambridgeshire.

Having an active interest in sport and playing cricket for London County, he also played for and was captain of Welney Cricket Club from 1905 and later served as President, Chairman and regularly umpired. While staying as a guest of 'Bertie' Wilford at the rectory, W G Grace is also known to have played for Welney Cricket Club on more than one occasion.

'Bertie' Wilford also spent much time and energy in helping both the village football

club and the Men's Institute which had originally started in the rectory grounds' coach house. Like so many people of that time, he also suffered the sadness of losing his only son during the Great War of 1914-18.

The Rev. Herbert Hignett Wilford died suddenly in 1937 and so ended the life of a well respected man who had showed so much interest in his fellow men. One wonders how often his mind went back to Monday, September 12th 1892 and that day at Hope Mill Station and the evening at the Gun Inn at Horsmonden. ●

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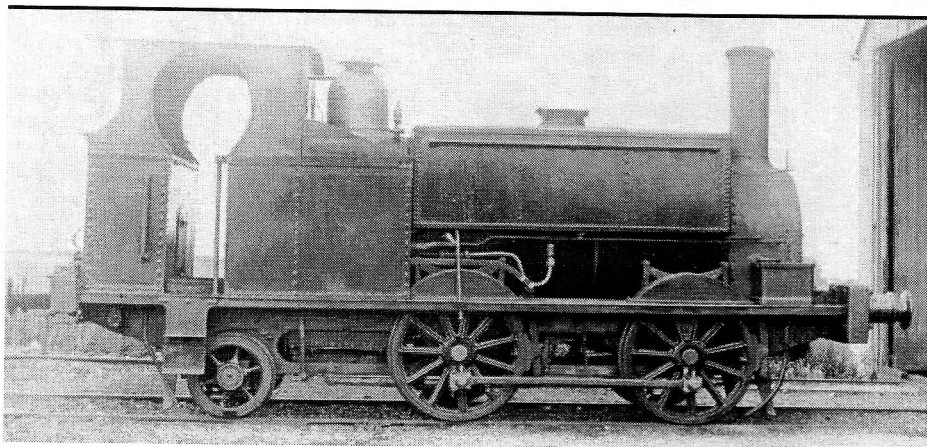
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A JOB WELL DONE

Heavy engineering on the Selsey Tramway in the most primitive conditions described by BRIAN JANES

When the Selsey Tramway opened on 27 August 1897 its purpose-built passenger engine, *Selsey*, was not available, having only arrived that morning after a snail-paced 10-day journey from its makers in Bristol. Its stand-in was of rather more ancient lineage, an 0-6-0ST that originated in 1865 from the works of obscure builders, Messrs Dodds of Rotherham, Yorkshire. After years of toil in industrial service it had been overhauled by Messrs Peckett & Co in Bristol, re-christened *Chichester* and arrived in Sussex on 24 May 1897 to assist in the final construction of the tramway. However, Stephens clearly took a liking to the beast and kept it as the tramway's 'goods engine' to save the cost of buying a second new engine. This was, incidentally, the first manifestation of what was to become something of a trademark of Stephens's practice, even though, if he had the money, he still bought new.

A more permanent solution

Anyway, the tramway's sharp curves and very light rail soon showed up the weaknesses of the rigid 0-6-0 wheelbase, with its tendency to straighten the very light track. To ease matters, within a few days the rear section of the coupling rods had been removed allowing limited sideways movement in the rear axle and producing an improvised 0-4-2. This again was a harbinger of an intermittent practice that cropped up from time to time on some of Stephens's other railways. This proved a purely temporary expedient and, with the decision to keep the engine, a more permanent solution had to be found by fitting, probably during 1898, a controlled 'radial' box and small trailing wheel to replace the rear driver. This solution was in itself fairly radical for, although the radial axle had been widely adopted in the

15 years or so since its final development by F W Webb at Crewe, the adaptation of an existing engine in this way was unusual, perhaps even unique.

Nothing done at undue cost

This, being a Stephens line, nothing was done at undue cost and, rather than sending the loco away to a works for such an extensive change, the work was done at Selsey. In 1953 the late W E Hayward was researching the history of the Avonside Engine Company of Bristol. He interviewed a gent called Allan Liversedge who had been with Avonside from 1892 to 1935, as fitter, marker-off, charge hand and inspector of outside work regarding repairs and their estimates. He recalled that that, after his company had got the job of adapting *Chichester*, measurements had been taken, the radial axle-box assembly was designed and built and sent down to Sussex.

Primitive conditions

Liversedge and a skilled labourer then went down with the necessary gear, meeting Jack Belcher, the engine driver. They uncoupled and removed the trailing wheels and the frames were very carefully marked off and surplus material cut away. Bolt holes for fixing the new radial unit were then drilled and the axle box and wheels were put into place. This work was done out in the open, and would have been done with manual ratchet hand drills, cold chiselling and filing through iron frames of probably 1-1½ inches thick - no flame cutting or power tools of any kind. The engine would have been lifted with primitive bottle jacks and packing. Amazing work, done in the most primitive conditions imaginable, by a couple of men whose skills and initiative fill me with wonder. By such men was Stephens's Empire built. ●

◀ *The photograph opposite clearly shows the radial truck on Chichester.*

The Colonel Stephens Museum, Tenterden

TOM GATFORD AND THE SNAILBEACH RAILWAY

Did Driver Gatford run the Snailbeach District Railways 'virtually single-handed' for nearly 20 years, as has been claimed?

ALBYN AUSTIN, aided by ANDY CUCKSON's research, doesn't think so.

The standard reference book for the Snailbeach District Railway was written by the late Eric Tonks as long ago as 1950. A very similar 2nd edition was published in 1974, which was recently reprinted, and has yet to be superseded. Since then much further information has come to light, as many more records have entered the public domain.

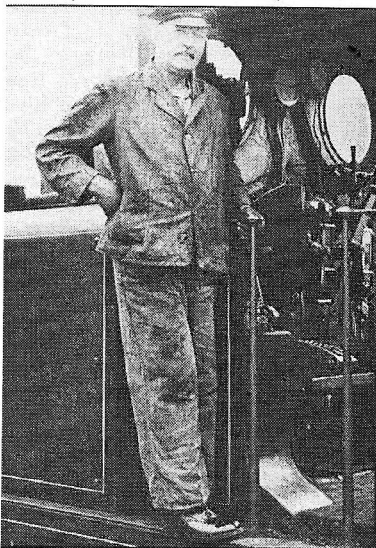
One of the main researchers on the Snailbeach is Andy Cuckson, who has written many articles over the years on the railway, and has found several errors in Eric Tonks's book, as well as much more information. He has a book on this railway in preparation, summarising all the information that has been gathered over the years.

The Colonel Stephens Museum [www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk] has an excellent summary of current information about the railway on their web site, (although Andy says this too has some inaccuracies from his research).

Driver-fitter

In the Tonks book we are led to believe that Tom Gatford, as driver fitter, ran the railway virtually single-handedly from 1923 until the locos wore out in the late 1940's. He then retired to the cottage beside the line near the mines. Tom Gatford is reported as

having previously worked on the Bishop's Castle Railway, though I have never heard his name in connection with that railway from any other source.



Romantic story

This romantic story of the one man railway doesn't hold water, except perhaps for a brief period in the war or just afterwards. Recent research shows the Snailbeach Railway generally had three (very occasionally four) staff in the Stephens era, and that Tom Gatford was at Snailbeach in the late 1920s and moved away in the 1930s. According to Christopher Redwood's book on the Weston Clevedon & Portishead Railway, Tom Gatford was the senior driver on that line

from the mid 1930s until closure on 18th May 1940, when he drove the last train. It seems impossible that he was also driving the loco at Snailbeach on 5th May 1940, as credited in a photo in the Tonks book.

Worked on the S&MR

Tom Gatford is reported to have previously worked on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway in Peter Strange's book on the WC&P. This is confirmed by the late Bill Willans in his article about life at Kinnerley, published in *Colonel 18* [page 8], when he recalls that an unhappy Tom Gatford was transferred there

“temporarily” from Snailbeach in 1928 or 1929 to assist in repairing the Ilfracombe Goods, *Thisbe*. Bill left Kinnerley in 1929 so would not have known if Mr Gatford ever returned to Snailbeach. At this time *Thisbe* was the best loco on the line and was sorely missed. A photo of Mr Gatford in Peter Strange’s book reveals a very different man to the one on the Snailbeach footplate in Tonks. Tom Gatford’s trademark was a pair of beautifully shiny boots, as befitted a man described as a former regimental sergeant major. Did Tom Gatford return to Snailbeach during the war and retire there? Andy Cuckson says the locals he has talked to did not mention him being there at that time.

An uncommon name

I decided to carry out a little research on the matter, using the ancestor tracing services now available on the internet to search for births, marriages and deaths. Andy stated that, in his time at Snailbeach, he signed himself as Thomas James Gatford in correspondence to the Colonel. Gatford is fortunately an uncommon name. My searches found only one suitable Tom Gatford, thankfully Thomas James. He was born on 22nd January 1874. His father was also James, described on his birth certificate as a general labourer, and his mother was Jane, and they were living in Bookhurst, Crawley, Surrey. He doesn’t seem to appear in the 1901 census; but a soldier in his mid 20s could well be fighting in the Boer war at that time.

Married in 1905

At age 31 he married Daisy Ethel Wood, aged 26, on 1st July 1905. The marriage was solemnised at the registry office in Strood, Kent. Perhaps they weren’t religious, attended a non-conformist church that didn’t have a licence to carry out marriages, or being a soldier meant complications in getting bans read. At this time Mr. Gatford was a corporal in the Royal Engineers, based at Lydd in Kent. His father was now described as an engine driver, and his wife to be was a spinster who came from 16 Station Road, in what looks like Frindsbury Intra [“in the District of”?]. Frindsbury is part of Strood.

Daisy was the daughter of a barge captain. This confirms Tom Gatford’s military connection, and also gives a good indication of possible contact with the Colonel, through the Royal Engineers in Kent, leading to his later employment on the Colonel’s lines.

These facts mean that, in 1940 when the WC&P shut, Tom Gatford was 66, past normal retiring age. He died on 15th February 1946, aged 72, of chronic bronchitis, with his wife Daisy present, at his home 17 Foord Street, Rochester, Kent. Daisy registers her late husband’s occupation on the death certificate as formerly an aircraft works policeman.

Retired to Kent

Thus the conclusion is that Tom Gatford wasn’t the driver on the Snailbeach in May 1940, when Graham Vincent took the photo in Eric Tonks’s book. He certainly didn’t retire there after the locos were condemned in the late 1940s as he was already dead. It looks as though after the WC&P shut the Gatfords retired to Kent, where they had spent their early married years. Tom Gatford worked as what we would now term a security man at a war time aircraft factory long past the normal retirement age to aid the war effort. I think this would be an appropriate job for a retired and patriotic soldier keen to assist the war effort. I can’t say definitely that he never returned to Snailbeach during the war, but if he did so it must have been for a very brief period, and seems unlikely.

Three other Gatfords

The string of fitter-drivers who followed Tom Gatford at Snailbeach from the mid-1930s into the 1950s have been identified in the article “Snailbeach: Railway Staff, the repairs to DENNIS (etc.)” by Andy Cuckson in *Industrial Railway Record* No.180. Three other Gatfords are reported as dying in the Weston or Bristol area from 1965 onwards. I wondered if they were children, but they all seem to have been born before 1905, and Daisy was described as a spinster, so it seems unlikely that she had three children before marrying Tom.

Does anyone know any more information about driver Gatford and his family and what became of him after 1940? ●

Publications referred to are listed overleaf ►

► *Continued from the previous page*
Tom Gatford and the Snailbeach Railway

References:

REDWOOD, Christopher. The Weston Clevedon & Portishead Railway the detailed study of an independent light railway. Sequoia Publishing, 1981.

ISBN 0 905466 42 X [page 75 refers to Gatford driving the last train]

STRANGE, Peter. The Weston Clevedon & Portishead Railway a pictorial record. Twelveheads Press, 1989. ISBN 0 906294 19 3 [picture of driver Gatford is on page 28]

TONKS, Eric S. The Snailbeach District Railways. Industrial Railway Society, 1950. Revised edition, 1974. Reprinted 2007 ISBN 978 1 901556 50 6 [Reviewed in *Colonel 90*, page 21, photo of 'Driver Gatford' is on page 32]

The picture of Driver Tom Gatford on page 8 shows him, complete with shiny boots, at Clevedon in September 1937, on the footplate of WCPR Terrier No.4. Reproduced from the book by Peter Strange (see above) by kind permission of the Twelveheads Press.

Deadlines for 2008/9

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

93: Winter 2008: 15th November

94: Spring 2009: 15th February

95: Summer 2009: 15th May

96: Autumn 2009: 15th August

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

50 years since the Last Hop Pickers' Special

Can it really be 50 years since the last Hop Pickers' Special ran from London Bridge on to the Kent & East Sussex via Robertsbridge? Sadly, yes. The very last one ran on 21st September 1958. Both the BBC and ITV regional news bulletins ran the story featuring a re-creation of the train at Bodiam and a tableau organised by the railway re-enacting a well-known photograph (reproduced below) outside the station. ●



S&M: The final chapter

The October (yes, October) issue of the *Railway Magazine* recorded in its 'From the Archives' column that, in October 1988, 'a small section of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway - about ¾ mile - that remained latterly has been closed on 15th July. It ran into the yard of Shrewsbury Abbey station to supply the adjacent Esso depot.

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT:

'The Selsey Tram' by David Bathurst

Laurie Cooksey, continuing his self-imposed task to 'set the record straight' on publications on the Colonel's railways, turns his attention to another book on the *Hundred of Manhood & Selsey Tramway*

Laurie has painstakingly corrected the whole of David Bathurst's book. We have chosen to publish in The Colonel only his notes on the captions to the illustrations. If sufficient members show interest, we will photocopy the whole article and send it on receipt of a small charge. Watch for details in the next issue - Editor.

1. Here and throughout the book, the author refers to locomotives as, in this case, '*The Chichester*'. But I mention it only once here.

4. *Railmen* should read *railwaymen*.

7. *The beautiful view just south of Sidlesham ... a goods train proceeds ...* 'Sidlesham' and a mixed train are shown climbing away from Stockbridge Road crossing, a little over half a mile from Chichester.

8. *Little vegetation featured round the line, this section between Ferry and Selsey was an exception.* The hybrid railmotor, with the Ford leading the Shefflex, is pictured approaching Selsey Bridge from Selsey.

9. *The Tramway in a cathedral setting c1910.* With the newly-arrived Hurst Nelson carriage bringing up the rear and still to lose its glossy finish, this photo would have been taken soon after its arrival in 1900.

12. *Railmen* again. *This area of track remained in position until 1947.* All the track beyond Chichester Tramway station was removed in 1936, but this short section on its 16 chain curve was relaid c1940, it is said, for the use of a rail-mounted gun that could have fired on Selsey should there have been a German invasion during WW2.

13. *A tramway driver's view of the Hunston lift-bridge.* Perhaps I'm being too pernickety here, but this photo was taken at track level.

18. *The tramway's water stop at Hunston seen*

here in 1932. Although credited to Chichester District Museum, this photo comes from the well-known railway historian the late Roger Kidner's collection. It is dated October, 1933.

22. *Sidlesham station before the flood, with misspelt signboard and would-be passengers. It was the only intermediate station with passing loop and "up" and "down" platforms.* The name board is not misspelt. This was the old spelling, reflecting its pronunciation. Although there was a double-ended siding behind the station building from 1897, it was not until 1911 when the station was rebuilt after the floods that a passing loop and up and down platforms were provided.

30. *The trackbed at Stockbridge crossing looking north, 1932.* The view is looking south from the Stockbridge Road level crossing up the 1 in 115 grade towards the canal at Hunston.

31. *The Sidlesham crossing Hunston lift-bridge, photographed in 1900.* On page 39, the author correctly states that 'Sidlesham' arrived on the Tramway in 1907.

34. *A sunlit Selsey station, 1918.* This photo showing the station in its original condition was taken very soon after its opening in November 1897.

37. *The tramway's proudest locomotive acquisition the Selsey, built specially for the tramway and shown as new, c.1897.* With major alterations having been made to 'Selsey' since delivery, this photo can be dated to c.1908.

42. *The Hesperus pictured at Selsey in July, 1928.* Taken by H C Casserley, but credited incorrectly to J Wynne-Tyson, this photo is dated 5th November 1928.

46. *Here a 'mixed train' is led by Sidlesham near Ferry.* The locomotive is in fact 'Morous'.

Continued on the next page ▶

▶ *Continued from previous page*

Setting the Record Straight

49. The original ⁹/₁₀ of this heavily-cropped photo shows the passenger carriage behind the open wagon to be one of the pair of six-wheelers that arrived on the Tramway in 1932, thus dating the picture after that date and not 1926.

49. 'Ringing Rock' arrived on the Tramway in 1922, not 1917.

52-54. *A show of Sheffexes at Selsey, 1932, and Sheffexes with intending passengers.* I have the impression that, to the author, a Sheffex is any railmotor.

56. *A tramway carriage begins a new life.* This is clearly not an ex-Tramway carriage.

57. *The engine shed at Selsey, this picture was taken prior to 1926, since the domed roof was later replaced by a pitched one.* The conventional pitched roof replaced the original curved one as shown in this photo c. 1910.

66. *A mishap just below Chalder station in the late 1920s.* With the three ex-LCDR carriages making up this train having arrived on the Tramway early in 1921, this photo would have been taken in the late summer after then, but before the fatal accident of September 1923.

78 & 79 *The results of the labours—the Selsey tramway is raised on to the new embankment at Sidlesham, 1911.* This shows not the new embankment, but the original being shored up by sleepers.

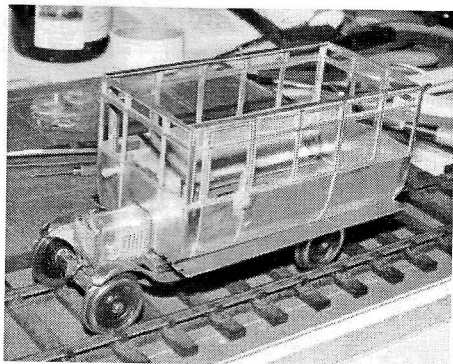
86. This photo [of the closure notice] was taken by HC Casserley and should have been credited to him, not J Wynne-Tyson.

97....*A train headed by 'Ringing Rock' crossing the tramway bank in 1934-5.* The presence of the two ex-LCDR 4-wheel carriages in the formation date this photo to pre-1932. ●

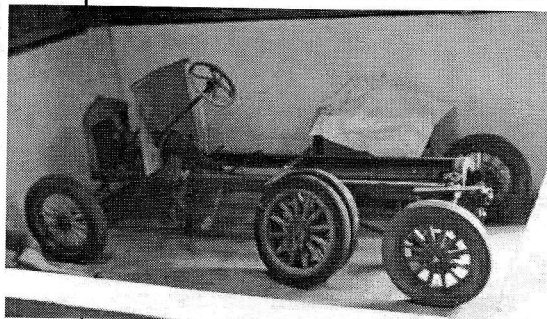
BATHURST, David
The Selsey Tram. Chichester,
Phillimore & Co., 1992.

Work in progress

Kerry Baylis is building this model railmotor. He promises more information and pictures in a future issue.



Meanwhile, Colin Shutt, whose replica Ford railmotor was experienced by many at the Colonel Stephens weekend at Tenterden on the K&ESR, sent this shot of his Ford truck



chassis when it first arrived. As Colin says, "it is hard to believe that it is a runner". Colin has acquired most of a cab and has some new body panels on order from America, a 'Supaphord' gearbox, a pair of front wings, two ignition coils and a 'host of other parts'. He hopes to incorporate a turntable so that it can always run forward. Colin says that as the truck weighs a lot less than the railmotor, he will be able to tow it himself to visit other railways.

Something to look forward to! ●

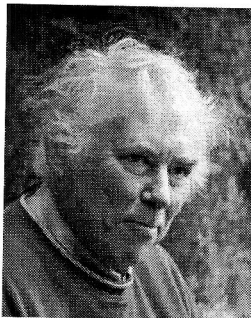
SOCIETY NEWS

Our new website takes shape

Bruce Hunt (pictured below) has taken over as manager of the Society's website, following the sad death of Robert Kinghorn (Obituary on page 15). Bruce has redesigned the site which has a new address:

www.colonelstephenssociety.co.uk

Although it is still very much under construction it is already worth visiting. It includes an index to *The Colonel* issues 1-91. We hope to update it as soon as each new issue is published.



There are pages with photographs for each of the recent Members' Days from 2005 to 2008, together with the events held in 2006 to mark the 75th anniversary of Colonel Stephens's death. Each of the

railways associated with the Colonel is featured usually with a map, potted history and some photographs. There is, of course, a brief biography of the Colonel, together with a membership application form. Bruce has several ideas for developing the site. But he welcomes ideas and contributions, including photographs. He says the space available is enormous and we have used only 1% so far.

You can contact Bruce on:
webmaster@colonelstephenssociety.co.uk

CAMBER SANDS CENTENARY

The lunch at Rye followed by the walk of the route of the Rye & Camber Tramway to mark the centenary of the opening of Camber Sands station will take place on Saturday 11th October. If you haven't booked your place contact the Editor now. ●

Members' Day 2009: "another cracker"

Nigel Bird, Society treasurer, has described Stuart Marshall's plans for next year's Members' Day as 'another cracker'. The event is scheduled for Saturday 16th May, with some activities taking place, as was the case this year, on the Sunday.

It is hoped there will be an opportunity to view the old S&MR station at Shrewsbury Abbey and learn about the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust's plans to turn it into a visitor centre. This will be followed by the Society's AGM, lunch and a vintage bus tour of some of the visible remains of Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway. It is hoped to arrange a trip to see the remains of the Snailbeach Railway the following day. At some point Stuart and members of the Trust would also like to fit in a visit to see the S&MR crane which was rescued and located at Coleham Pumping Station by the Society's former chairman Derek Smith. All in all the 2009 event promises to be at least as good as our recent annual gatherings.

More details will appear in *The Colonel* as soon as we have them. Meanwhile, reserve the 16th and 17th May in your diary. ●



The KESR gift shop at Tenterden is selling a range of limited edition 00 gauge wagons. Pictured here is the Clevedon Gas Co. 7 plank vehicle in authentic red livery at £10.50 (p&p £1.25). Others in the series include a WC&PR coal wagon, and a Tenterden Brewery 8 plank truck. On line store: www.kesr.org

SOCIETY NEWS

WANTED: YOU, YOU & YOU!

▶ Two members who had agreed to help Kerry Baylis **staff the Society's stand at the Festival of Railway Modelling**. Have had to pull out. So Kerry is appealing for replacements. The show will take place on 18/19th October at the East of England Agricultural Society show-ground, near Peterborough. It promises to be a great show and the more people Kerry has to help with the stand, the more time they can spend looking at the rest of the exhibits. If you can help, please contact Kerry on 01482 342506 or kerry@thetrackside.karoo.co.uk

▶ Nigel Bird writes: "Chris Grove at Tamar Belle tells me that **3 evening meals** (indoor BBQ) went unpaid at the members weekend on the Saturday night. (17th May) The cost is £6 each including wine. The Society has paid for these but would appreciate reimbursement from those who had a meal and failed to pay. I am sure this is an oversight. Please make cheques to Colonel Stephens Society and send to Nigel Bird (Treasurer) address on page 2. Thank you."

▶ Colin Shutt of replica Ford railmotor fame needs **12 railway wheel tyres** 32" diameter tread. If you have some cluttering up your shed, or if you know someone who just might have some, please contact Colin on 01757 630193 or shutt872@btinternet.com

***"Travel in safety, across Country,
away from the crowded roads
over home made steel instead of
imported Rubber - support the
local line!"***

This is the slogan on an EKR timetable donated by John Miller to the Colonel Stephens Museum as reported by the *Tenterden Terrier*.

RENEWAL TIME

The arrival of the Autumn issue of *The Colonel* means that it is time to renew your annual membership subscription which remains at just £7 for UK members, £9 for joint membership (two people at the same address, one copy of *The Colonel*) and £12 for overseas members. Not many organisations are freezing their prices this year, but the ever-thrifty Colonel Stephens Society, true to our mentor's tradition, has managed to do so!

Please return the enclosed renewal form with just your name and membership number with your cheque or postal order to the Membership Secretary as soon as possible. New membership cards will be sent out with the Winter issue of *The Colonel*. Only if you have changed any of your details (address, phone number, email address, etc.), please use the form to let David Powell know the changes.

Donations

As always, we are very happy to receive contributions to our important donations programme. This way, individual contributions can be considered to make significant differences to projects related to the colonel and his railway heritage.

FAQs

Meanwhile, for the benefit of new members can we deal with two frequently asked questions? Why don't we offer a direct debit or standing order facility for subscriptions and gift aid for donations? The same answer covers both: although we keep these under review, we don't offer them at present because of the potential costs and complications in terms of administration and additional accountancy charges.

As Treasurer Nigel Bird has said: "I think we have the best value subs in the UK - and we want to keep it that way!" •

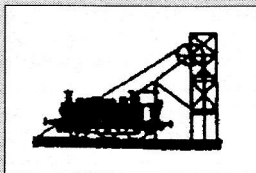
SOCIETY NEWS

Robert Kinghorn 1942-2007



We learned with sadness of the death of Robert Kinghorn, our web manager, late last year. This is an edited version of his obituary prepared by his employer, Imperial College: Robert read chemistry at Edinburgh University. He then undertook research in organic chemistry at what was then the Northern Polytechnic and obtained a PhD. He joined the geology department in 1969 as a research assistant and took charge of the new organic geochemistry laboratory at the Royal School of Mines. Following a degree in geology from the OU, he joined the academic staff and became involved in source rock studies. He lectured in the subject on the MSc petroleum geology course. His work resulted in several publications. He was a fellow of both the Geological Society and the Royal Society of Arts. Robert was a life-long supporter of the Conservative Party and stood as a parliamentary candidate in two general elections. He was strongly committed to local government and served as a councillor in Islington and latterly in Hounslow. He was chairman of the Conservative Transport Group and published a number of railway books, most recently *Lost Railways of Northumberland*. He served as the Society's web manager for several years in an efficient and unobtrusive manner. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife Rosemary.

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www.eastkentrailway.com

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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://:](http://www.brickyard-cottage.co.uk)
www.brickyard-cottage.co.uk

Rye & Camber Tickets

The Colonel Stephens Museum recently acquired two rare tickets from the Rye & Camber. Both are Bell Punch type. One is a third class single to "Sands". This dates from the time when the conductor charged according to how well-dressed (in his opinion) the passenger appeared. ●

DISPATCHES

Letters to the Editor

Those KESR through carriages

Interesting that Helen Brett is querying shunting operations [Dispatches, *Colonel 91*, p21]. Through coaches did operate for a very, very short period, 1929 (as told to me by George Dobell, station agent at Tenterden). This was four years before I started work there. In later years I do remember attaching a through-fitted horse box to the rear of the London train. This was done by crossing over from KESR to the up SR line and reversing back over to the south of Robertsbridge level crossing gates into the long siding (which had another siding off it to the timber yard). We stood there until arrival of the up train. We were then let out onto main line behind the train, now stopped in platform. The horse box was coupled on. The SR train then left. We followed it up to the crossover and returned to KESR platform. This siding can be seen in Stephen Garrett's *The Kent & East Sussex Railway* of 1999. The loop at Robertsbridge was seldom used (except for storage of war-time trains). When we arrived in the platform the coach was uncoupled and we hit it up the siding where the water crane was with the guard on it. The loco stopped short and went onto the KESR running line. The coach returned to platform down the gradient under the control of the guard on hand brake. The loco then went to the water crane and returned to the coach ready for departure. Kindest regards to you all at *The Colonel*.

Monty Baker, by email

Helen Brett replies:

Many thanks for your interesting letter. I stand corrected about through carriages from Tenterden. I had completely forgotten about the saw mill siding. I knew about the short siding between the level crossing and the end of the up platform which ended in the wagon turntables across to the bay platform. This was in the days of the staggered platforms. This is shown on the map under photo 59 in Tonbridge to Hastings [Middleton Press, 1987. It also shows the long siding before the level crossing. We were very interested in your explanation of how the KESR train loco was run round at Robertsbridge.

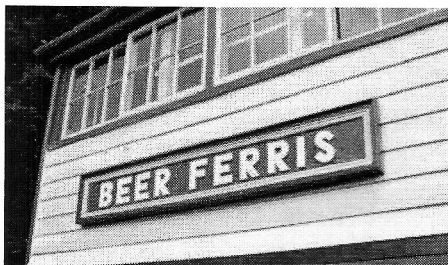
Every one here has been under the impression that the run round loop was used. The main comment was that 'it would not be allowed now due to health & safety'.

As to shunting I have quite an experience of it here as well as driving; only diesels unfortunately. We have only a small pool of volunteers here and the jobs have to be done by those available, providing they are suitably qualified.

Beer or Bere?

Another very interesting and enjoyable edition of *The Colonel*. May I comment on article "What's In A Name" [*Colonel 91*, p9], with information from C R Clinker's Register of Closed Passenger Stations & Goods Depots: 'Beer Alston' and 'Beer Ferris' were actually the spelt versions of these stations in their early days, being renamed from, 18.11.1897. Lydford is listed as spelling altered from 03.06.1897. Were the original versions as used by the railway also the spellings in use for those communities, fascinating though the liquid lunch theory might be? Callington, we are told, had a pre-opening name of Kelly Bray announced but opened as Callington Road, being renamed from 01.11.1909. As for Stoke Climsland, this was originally Monk's Corner Depot until 02.03.1908 and Luckett from 01.11.1909. This is referred to in the article "In the Tracks of The Colonel" [*Colonel 91*, p15]. Seven Stones Halt last appeared in a timetable of Sept.1917. Hope this info may be of some use.

Stan Berry, by email



Letters to the Editor

Congratulations again on an excellent *Colonel*. Regarding Peter Barnfield's puzzle over the Stoke Climsland luggage label, that is explained elsewhere in the issue. Stoke Climsland was the original name for Luckett station, so it was not a case of producing a label for a local village. Peter says "One's mind boggles at the potential size of Waterloo's label rack....." There was indeed an enormous rack, guarded by a man whose sole task seemed to be to protect the labels from the grasping hands of label collectors. In this endeavour he was frequently unsuccessful, as witness some of the labels in my own collection!



The article on the Maidstone & Faversham was really interesting. If it and the K&ESR's Maidstone Extension had been built, and were both run from Salford Terrace, I wonder if there would have been running powers over the main line "gap" so that Robertsbridge-Faversham through trains could be run?

Les Darbyshire, by email

Gunnislake demolition

I was interested to read Les Darbyshire's account of the 2008 members' event and was sorry I was not able to attend this year. I should like to make one small comment - Les suggests that the original station building at Gunnislake was demolished only after the station was relocated to the opposite side of

DISPATCHES

the main road. I visited the line in September 1993, before the station was moved, and the station building had already been demolished and replaced by a small waiting shelter. Incidentally, the original Gunnislake station had an island platform with access by a subway. This was perhaps a unique feature on one of the *Colonel's* railways, although I believe something of the sort was envisaged for the Southern Heights Light Railway.

**Tom Burnham
Staplehurst, by email**

Kinnerley Ground Frame

I wonder if any member can answer the following. Various reference books tell readers that the famous Kinnerley covered ground frame on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire railway had twelve working levers. From photos of Kinnerley station these apparently controlled eight signals including the well known "down" three doll bracket. This leaves four levers for points. However, excluding the siding point facing up trains as they approached Kinnerley, which had an adjacent lever controlled by the staff, there seem to be rather more than four points which might be controlled by the ground frame. I am assuming that there are either no facing point locks or, if there are, these are worked by the relevant point lever. The question is twofold. Firstly, which points were worked by the frame? Secondly what was the number of the appropriate lever controlling each signal and each point.

**Alan Cliff
Lock's Siding, by email**

The leaves are falling, children are back at school, the nights are drawing in. What time of year is it? Yes, it's time to renew your modest subscription to the *Colonel Stephens Society!* Forget the credit crunch. See page 14.

REVIEW

An Illustrated History of the Shropshire and Montgomery Light Railway. Peter Johnson. Hershman: OPC, 2008. 128pp. 22 x 30 cm. £19.99.

ISBN 978 0 86093 619 0

This is Peter Johnson's latest offering for those interested in light railways in general and the S&M in particular. So what do you get for your £19.99? First and foremost it delivers exactly what is says on the cover. Its 128 pages include a balanced record of the almost 100-year history of this rural backwater in its various guises: the original ambitious Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway, the doomed period of the Shropshire Railways, the Stephens resurrection as the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway and its final phase as a War Office Railway.

As one would expect of an historian, the historical content is based extensively on original source documents; an updated and expanded offering of the equivalent chapters in Eric Tonks's seminal work on the railway in its various forms. On the other hand, the pursuit of an accuracy based largely on primary research material, does result in a certain factual dryness in the historical account. This could have been relieved by the inclusion of more anecdotes and arguments such as those which have featured in *The Colonel* over the years. Indeed the Society and its efforts are not recognised at all in the book.

The next key word in the title is 'Illustrated'. For me this aspect was worth every penny of price. Peter has collected some 200 illustrations, most supported by very detailed commentaries. Some illustrations were familiar but, importantly, many were new to me and, an admitted

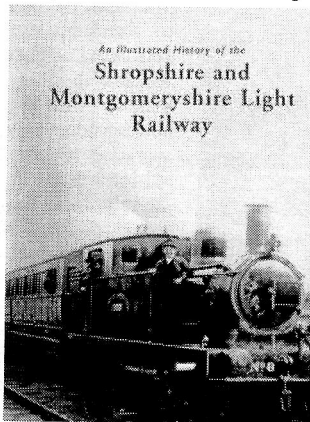
S&M 'groupie', I thought that I had acquired everything available from Nigel Bird's books or Roger Carpenter's photos! Our associated on-line Yahoo group 'chat room' has already highlighted some disagreement over the inclusion of many of the illustrations in their original sepia, some preferring a more uniform approach. Peter has defended this in terms of historical accuracy. Personally I side with Peter; furthermore, I have never associated 'uniformity' with 'Stephens'.

Although Peter has delivered his book's title, this is still not the ultimate book on the S&M. Apart from the photographs, model-

lers in particular are likely to be disappointed. Although the route is described, there is little in the way of detailed descriptions of stock and buildings, certainly no drawings, nothing on liveries, except what can be inferred from the illustrations, and few track layout diagrams other than the results of a 1940 War Office Survey. This is not an S&M version of Laurie Cooksey's Selsey Tramway, which must set the bench mark for a definitive account of a railway, especially his brilliantly comprehensive

Volume 2. Finally, one particular comment did jar. In his introduction Peter Johnson refers to the 'infamous' Holman Fred Stephens. In his sleuthing was Peter hoping to uncover evidence in the records of an early Maxwell, a light railway George Hudson, the Victorian railway king alleged to have committed fraud and embezzlement on a large scale but never prosecuted? However, although there is comment on occasional gaps or unexplained inconsistencies in the official records of the S&M, no direct evidence is posited to support this unnecessary and, I believe, unjustified adjective. This book does what it sets out to do, is good value for money, especially for the illustrations. But it is not a 'Cooksey'. •

David Powell



Our regular round-up of the railway press

Press Digest

The excitement is mounting as the **Welsh Highland Railway** gets ever closer to completing its route from Caernarfon to Porthmadog. The October issue of *Railway Magazine* has a two-page spread on the latest developments, expressing admiration for the completion of trackwork over the Britannia Bridge and across the A487 towards the Harbour station. The writers even compare with project with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Some great photos show the profile of the tramway style rails, which were specially made in Austria, and the famous flat crossing with a close-up of a BR standard on a main line special. Meanwhile, the September issue of *Welsh Highland Heritage* feature the plans of the 'other' **Welsh Highland Railway**, the successor to the 1964 company, to ensure that the legacy of the old Welsh Highland is not forgotten. The company is offering to run a Welsh Highland Heritage train to Pont Croesor. The train would be hauled by *Russell, No. 590* or *Gelert* with original and replica coaches. These would include the Gladstone, the Buffet Car, the Hudson bogie (all originals), plus a replica Ashbury (under construction) and a replica Pickering. This project is the subject of an appeal by the WHR(P), a leaflet on which fell out of this issue. A replica halt at Pont Croesor is being funded and Chris Dearden, chairman of the company, hopes that the heritage train could also run a few times a year to Beddgelert. I can just envisage a Society outing on this train. Speaking of *No. 590*, a 16mm model of the Baldwin features in the August issue of *16mm Today*. This is the Accucraft live steam model which David Pritchard has modified to resemble *590* more closely, including the 'eyebrows' shading the front spectacles and the cab extensions. Looks good to me.

Just A Few Lines, the newsletter of the Tamar Belle Heritage Group has a full report of our members' weekend at **Bere Ferrers**, including shots of some us driving the resident Hunslet diesel in the siding.

Abbey Lines, the newsletter of the Shrewsbury Heritage Railway Trust reports in its Summer 2008 issue that the local council had been unsuccessful in its bid for funding from the government-sponsored Community Assets Fund to restore **Shrewsbury Abbey station** as a visitor centre. This was particularly disappointing because the project had progressed to the final stage in the vetting process. The council was now in the final months of its existence as it is due to become part of a new unitary authority next year. The Council agreed to forward it to the new council for inclusion in its capital programme. So it looks as if little progress will have been made by the time we visit next May.

Phoenix, the newsletter of the **Rother Valley Railway** carries news of works carried out at Robertsbridge, including progress on the platform extension at Robertsbridge, the replacement of the engine in their mini digger, refurbishment of some items of rolling stock including the brake van "essential to our plans to provide a passenger service." There is also a brief article by Mike Pease on the various unrealised schemes to extend the K&ESR.

The SECR Birdcage brake coach 1100 has recently returned to traffic on the **KESR**. Nick Pallant outlines the history of these coaches and the restoration of this example in the *Spring Tenterden Terrier*. The same issue has a lovely shot of **Snailbeach Baldwin No.3** outside the loco shed, while Brian Janes fleshes in the detail of how the construction of the **RVR** and the **KESR** was financed.

We marked the centenary of the opening of **Camber Sands station** in our last issue. The *Tenterden Terrier* also celebrated the occasion with a different article, but also written by Laurie Cooksey, in its Summer 2008 issue, together with some nice photos from the Colonel Stephens Archive. There is also a nice colour shot of the nearly completed birdcage in this issue. ●

LAST VEHICLE

The Day I met Colonel Stephens

E C Carey started work on the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway in 1923 as a gate boy, or crossing keeper. He was always known as Dan or Dano on the railway. This is his account of the first time he met the Colonel, as told to his son Howard K Carey (young Dan), reproduced by kind permission of Howard:

"I started on the light railway in May or June 1923. I had been working as an errand boy for a grocer in Clevedon after I left school in 1922. So I would be about 15 and three months old when I was employed by the WC&PR as a gate boy, operating the three-gate crossing in front of the Great Western station at Clevedon.

I had other jobs as well, one of them being carriage cleaning. It was while I was doing this that I first met the Colonel. He was, as you know, in charge of the line. There I was cleaning the carriage windows when up he came: 'Hello Jimmy. How do you like working for me?', he said.

He had a walking stick in his hand and was busy flicking bits of old oily waste that was scattered about into a heap and setting fire to it. I replied 'I like the job,

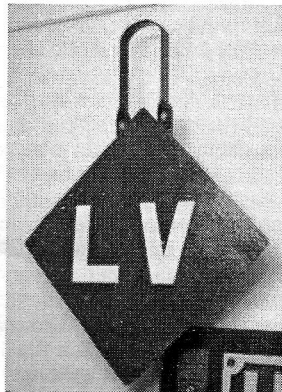
sir'. The Colonel then said: 'I suppose there is a lot goes on down here that I don't know about'. I then replied: 'I suppose there might be'. The Colonel said: 'Well, you might like to drop me a note if you think there is anything I should know'.

I replied to that by saying: 'I'm not going to start creeping, sir, because you never know where that will end'. 'I'm glad you said that Jimmy' replied the Colonel, 'because the first you sent me I would have sacked you', and off he marched.

He always called me Jimmy. I don't know why, because almost everyone else called me Dan or Dano." •

We hope that Chris Jackson will soon be back with his jottings.

► Picture shows the 'last vehicle' board used on the KESR instead of a tail lamp in daylight hours. Brian Jones apologises for not finding a picture of one in use, but as he says 'not many people photograph the end of trains'. The board, pictured in the Colonel Stephens Museum is bright red with white lettering.



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