

Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway - Wick Saint Lawrence Wharf

13

THE COLONEL 118

A couple of members have asked for more information about the wharf and the railway. I visited Howard Carey in the autumn when he talked about the area. Based on my notes and Howard's further comments we've written the following. An article is appropriate as the wharf celebrates the centenary of its building this year. Howard has also provided a very nice sketch map of the area, see opposite.

The station was just a shelter that looked like a large garden shed. It was partitioned into two to provide space for a small booking office but this was used as a store. It was painted buff with white barge boards and window surrounds and a red oxide corrugated iron roof. Across the road from the shelter was a milk platform which Howard thought used an old six wheel coach or wagon chassis like the one at Ham Lane (which still had the wheels on). The station was about halfway between Weston and Clevedon, 3.8 miles from Weston and 4 miles from Clevedon.

There was a loop just beyond the station which had "Y" points and a short headshunt for each side at opposite ends. The loop was 183 yards long to hold a loco and three bogie coaches. It was disused after the Portishead extension was opened and the side nearest the sea was used as a siding. The track was supported on conventional sleepers with two or three pairs of concrete pot "sleepers" in between the wooden ones. The headshunt could hold 5 or 6 wagons. Old wagons such as the machinery wagon and the steam crane once used on the wharf (disused since 1931) were kept there. The wind could really blow in from the sea here and on one occasion a wagon left in the loop with the brakes on was blown on to the River Yeo bridge.

The turnout to the wharf was about 800 yards from the Wick St Lawrence shelter on the Clevedon side. Beyond this turnout was the bridge across the River Yeo on 7 sets of cast iron piles and girders. It was 240ft long and the piles had subsided at the Clevedon end. Even before the line opened a photo shows a slight dip in the girder work here. The track had to be levelled by plac-

ing timbers on top of the metal piles. It was 30ft from the bottom of the bridge girders to the river bed and at spring tides the water level would nearly touch the girders. In 1938 or 9 a steam crane was hired from contractors in Portishead to do repair work on the bridge and made its way there under its own power.

The branch to the wharf crossed a small "rhine" (a drainage channel pronounced "reen") by a short timber bridge. This was the one that collapsed in 1934 under No. 4 "Hesperus". The timber baulks had just been replaced by contractors and a large knot in the wood was hidden under the rail. It was this that caused the failure. Beyond this bridge was a loop which could hold 8 wagons. Beside the line to the jetty were two water tanks that had been used for the steam crane and two huts, one with a curved roof (removed by the mid 1930s) and one with a pitched roof. In one of these was a pile driver and there were some unused concrete piles stored beside the line here too. The loop could hold 8 wagons and 4 at a time were allowed on the wharf. Locos were banned from the 80ft long wharf and the 140ft long approach jetty; but the lightweight Fordson tractor was permitted on the wharf to push 4 wagons on and then pull them loaded off. The Fordson then repeated the operation with the remaining 4 empties. A loco was occasionally used instead of the tractor. Empty wagons were moved on to the wharf by pinch bars and gravity; and full wagons hauled off with a hawser. The track descended onto the wharf due to subsidence, and the track was raised on concrete at the far end. The wharf was only 12ft wide, so there was just a narrow walkway with no handrail on one side of the track, but nobody seems to have ever fallen off.

Loaded wagons were pushed by the tractor from the wharf line loop into the main line loop siding. They were usually collected by the next train and propelled to Clevedon, even if it was a mixed train with coaches and tail traffic. The guard rode on the leading wagon. Sometimes a light engine from Clevedon was sent out to collect the wagons. At Clevedon the wagons were

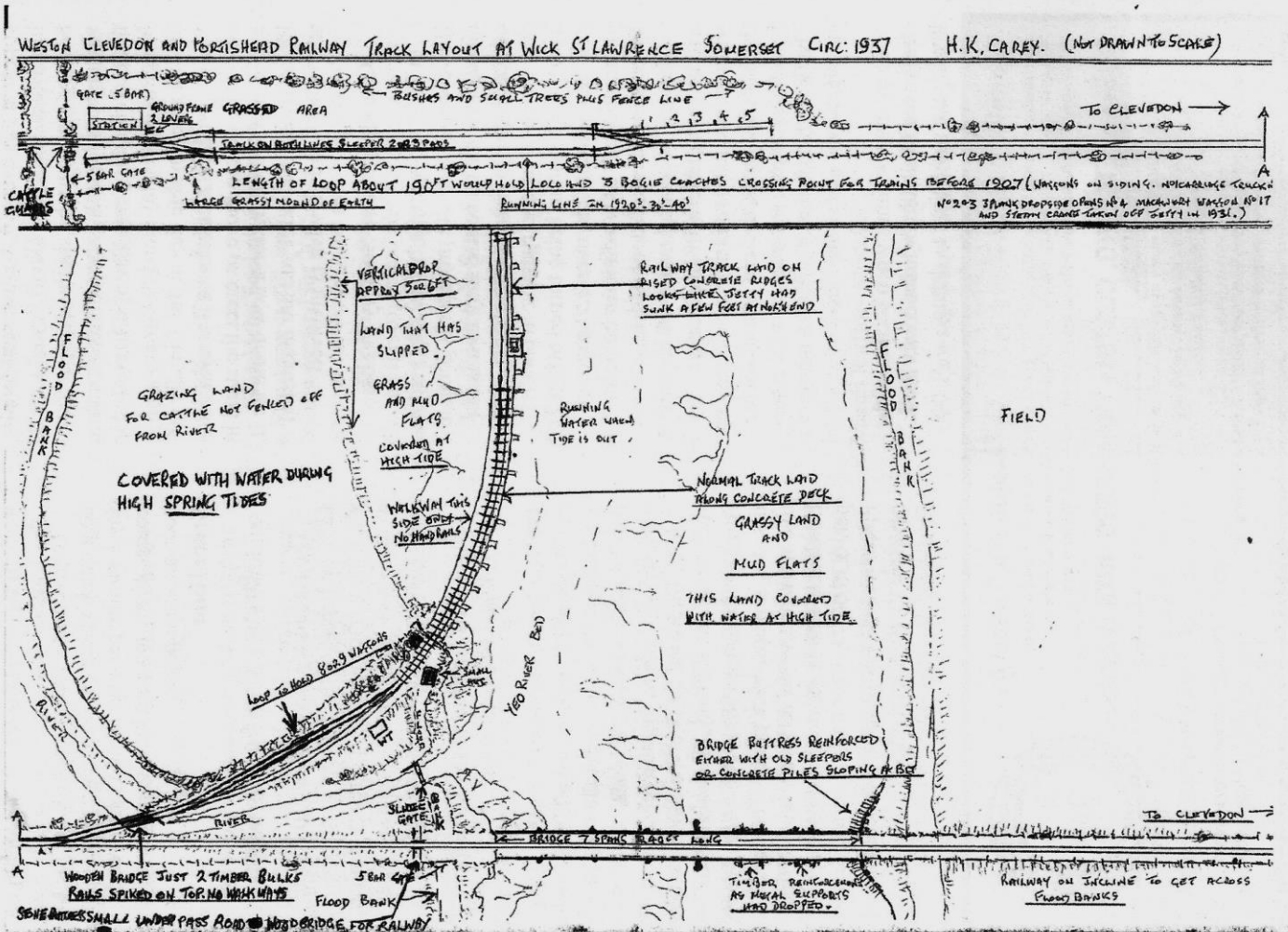
put straight into a siding. Next the wagons were hauled to Portishead to be weighed on the railway's weighbridge before returning to Clevedon. Most of the traffic was Welsh steam coal from Tirpentwys Colliery for the railway. Some boats were still calling at the wharf in 1939 but Howard didn't know when the last one called.

Further information can be found in the three books published on the line. There is also a very good WC&PR Society website,

several detailed articles about the line on the Colonel Stephens' Museum website, and a short section on the Society website.

Rebuilding of the river flood defences looks likely to cover the remains of the wharf approach lines this summer, though the concrete wharf remains should be untouched. The WC&P Railway Group hope to survey the area this spring, before the work begins. Join their group if you want to be involved!

More on Wick St. Lawrence Wharf

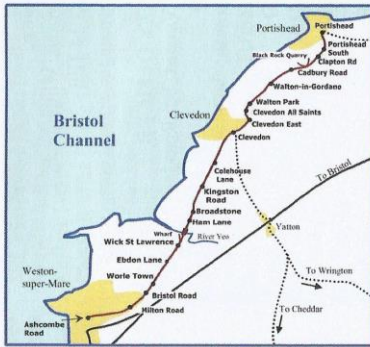
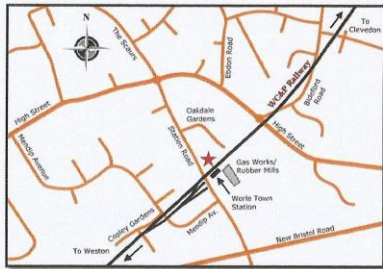




Two 2015 views of Wick St Lawrence Wharf on the WC&PR prior to raising the flood defences. The raised track bed due to subsidence is clearly visible. (Bob Edwardes)

Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway

Site of Worle Station You are here ★



Worle Town Station in 1930 looking towards High Street.



One of the Locomotives - No 1 Clevedon.



Worle Town Station looking towards Weston.

You are standing alongside the route of the Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Railway. This was an unusual independent standard gauge light railway. It was quaint and colourful and operated on a sidetrack. The railway opened from Weston-super-Mare to Clevedon on 1 December 1897 and was extended to Portishead on 7 August 1907.

The map on the left shows the modern road layout, with the WC&P Railway superimposed. The modern footpath linking High Street and Station Road follows the old track bed closely. Worle was one of the more important stations, having a booking office and waiting room. There was originally a 10 inch high platform but this was later removed. Worle was once larger than Weston, but by the time the railway was built it had been overtaken in size. Worle remained a distinct community and an important supplier of food and services for the growing resort.

The station was originally simply called Worle, but in 1913 it was renamed Worle (Moor Lane), and from 1917 onwards Worle Town. The station was on the south side of the line, just east (the Clevedon side) of Station Road

where there was an ungated crossing, the site of several fatal accidents. Traffic lights were installed in 1937/8. There were level crossing gates where the line crossed the High Street. A siding served the Worle gas works until they closed in 1920. The gas works were replaced by Fussell's rubber factory, and then a retirement development.

The railway was always short of money, and most of the locos and rolling stock were bought second-hand from various sources, making a very motley but interesting collection. Increasing road transport in the 1930s worsened the railway's finances, and World War II was the last straw for the struggling railway which closed on 18 May 1940.

Little of the railway now survives, but there are still things to see and short stretches of the route can be walked. Col. H F Stephens managed the railway from 1911 until his death in 1931. He was known as the Light Railway King as he managed a number of other railways.

The WC&P Railway Group has erected other boards like this including at Weston-super-Mare Ashcombe Road, Clevedon centre and Portishead near the White Lion.

Find out much more about this fascinating railway at www.wcprg.org.uk

Maps, books and other publications giving information about this railway may be obtained from the WC&P Railway Group at www.wcprg.org.uk



Train arriving at Worle from Clevedon in 1932.

Worle History Society

This display has been designed by the WC&P Railway Group and jointly funded with Worle History Society. www.wcprg.org.uk www.worlehistorysociety.net Erected in 2015.

Photos are courtesy of the Colonel Stephens Museum - www.kfstephensmuseum.org.uk and the WC&P Railway Group collection. Further information on Colonel Stephens' railways may be obtained from Colonel Stephens Society - www.colonelstephensociety.co.uk

THE COLONEL 119



Group photo of the members attending the AGM posed on the surviving platform at Watergate Halt, ND&CJR. (Bruce Hunt)

THE COLONEL 119

Left: 4mm model of "Hesperus" and KESR train donated to the Col. Stephens Museum by former Colonel Editor Steve Hannington, see page 7. (S Hannington). Left Below: DB Schenker loco 60092 backs onto caustic liquor tanks in front of a domestic waste container train and the new waste incinerator at Weston Point Light Railway Folly Lane Sidings, on 28th April. (A Austin)



Above: The Editor's wife Sheila assures the Guard she has a 1st Class Ticket in restored Brake Composite 17 at L&B Woody Bay Station. (Editor)



Left: Society Chairman, Les Darbyshire, presents a cheque to help restore L&B Chelfham Station. (Bruce Hunt)

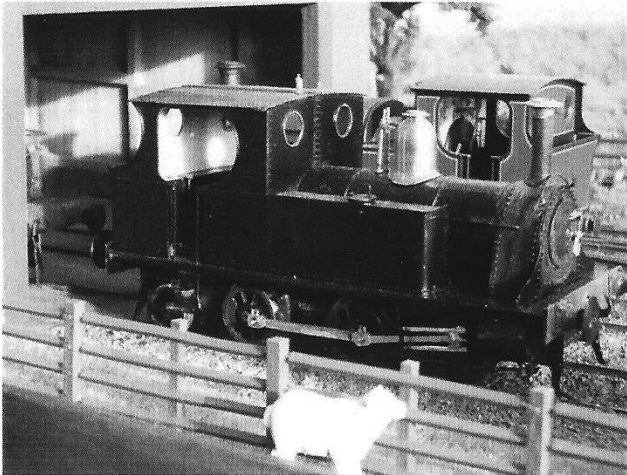


Left above: Meeth Halt, ND&CJR, with Nigel Bird in thoughtful mood. Right above: Chelfham station, L&BR, with the ugly 1960s extension. Left: The restored Chelfham viaduct with some of its seven arches. (All photos Editor)

MODELLING NOTES

Building a 7mm Selsey Peckett Kit

Allen Morgan writes:- In Colonel 119 you mention my article on building a Selsey 2-4-2T kit described in the May Gauge 0



Guild Gazette. The kit is from Agenoria. (See the Society web-site list of kits and models for address etc.) Agenoria will advise on, or supply on request, suitable wheels, gears and motor.

It is built in the long tank original form. Current finished in plain black; (Halfords Satin spray can). I am unsure as to the final colour or name. My Wilden & Enville Lt. Railway (W.E.Lt.R.) is set in 1925, which stops it being on loan from the HMST, so Peckett must have built a second of its type. (By the way the error in spelling "Stephens" was not by me but by the Editor of the Gazette.)"

The latest issue of the Gauge 0 Guild Gazette (August 2015) has a letter from Peter Featherstone, following up on Allen's article on building the HMST 2-4-2T, including two nice photos and tips on improving the running. (Ross Shimmon).

Agenoria to Cease Trading? - Allen also adds that it is reported that Agenoria is to cease trading. They currently have sever-

al ex Colonel's locos in their list of 7mm (0 gauge) loco kits. The proprietor has stated that all 7mm scale kits will cease to be available after December 2015 or when stocks run out, whichever is first.

Perhaps now is the time to look at the list on the Society website, and if interested order, before it is too late?

Steam and Things - Robert Kosimider is still in business but will only continue to be if people order his kits and transfers. See his website for details:-

www.steamandthings.com or email:- sales@steamandthings.com or write to Steam and Things, PO Box 277, Findon, SA5023, Australia.

Branchlines - The two versions of the Ilfracombe goods kits and the EKR O and O1 kits are still available in 4mm. The Ford Railcar kit in 7mm is available at £105, see Colonel 109 for article on building it. Address: Branchlines, PO Box 4293, Westbury BA13 9AA, tel. 01373 822231 (9.30-1 and 2-6) or email sales@branchlines.com

Selsey Town Layout at Telford - The lovely O gauge model of Selsey Town by Keith Smith will be at the Gauge 0 Guild Telford International Centre, Sat/Sun 5th/6th September. The layout was featured in "Railway Modeller". For more info see <http://www.gauge0guild.com> (Ross Shimmon)

Pendon-Madder Valley - The Madder Valley layout is operating at Pendon, Long Wittenham [near Didcot, OX14 4QD], on 19th September and 7th November. It is of course viewable as a static layout (and wow is it inspirational) whenever Pendon is open. This is currently from 11 on Saturdays and Sundays [and also Wednesdays in August.].

Last admission is 16.15, until late October when it is 15.15. They also have their own superb model railways and a nice café too. See their website for full details or phone 01865 407365 for opening times [24/7]. The office phone is 01865 408143 between 9.30 and 11.30 Mon-Fri.

For those who don't know, the late John Ahern's 4mm Madder Valley was the pioneer light railway model. It has full scenery and lovely buildings all hand-built in the late 30s to early 50s. It is fictitious and uses an eclectic mixture of stock- some American and some narrow gauge, scaled up to run on 16.5 mm track. He wrote numerous articles about it and published several books on loco construction, buildings and scenery. It changed the whole emphasis of railway modelling away from mainline ovals with little scenery. It showed the immense potential of the old, the small, the quaint and the single-track rural railway as subjects for modelling. All the many light railway layouts, and a good many of the branch lines, are descendants of the Madder Valley.

Rye Town:- Our Chairman Les Darbyshire emailed to say that during our AGM to Devon, our archivist Chris Jackson was exhibiting his layout "Rye Town" (originally built by Steve Hannington) at EXPO-EM in Bracknell. Chris was short of stock so borrowed some of Les's from "Maidstone Road" for the weekend. Chris took some photos of Les's K&ESR Terrier Bodiam and Ford railcars operating on Rye Town.

The Railway Modeller has published, in its September issue, my letter about the AC Cars railbus which ran briefly on the KESR, operating a short-lived shuttle between Bodiam and the temporary Dexter Halt before the link between Northiam and Bodiam had reopened. (see cover photo- Ed.) In response, the Editor, Steve Flint, has thrown out an irresistible challenge!

I said that the railbus was certainly the kind



Two views of Les Darbyshire's stock operating Rye Town. (Chris Jackson)

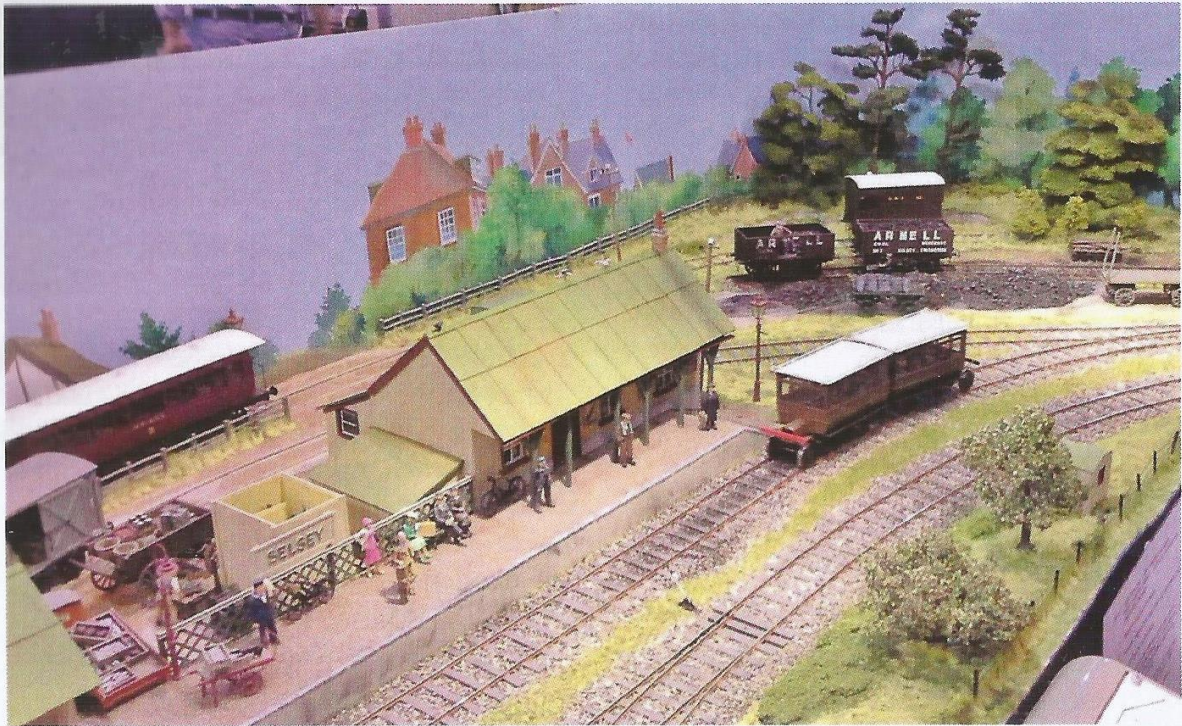
of vehicle the Colonel might have acquired had he still been with us in the 1990s - provided it was available at a good price.

Steve says that 'suggestions as to what items of rolling stock would be in a contemporary Colonel's stock list are welcome'. So, over to you chaps. Buy the *Railway Modeller* for details of how to send in your suggestions! (Ross Shimmon)

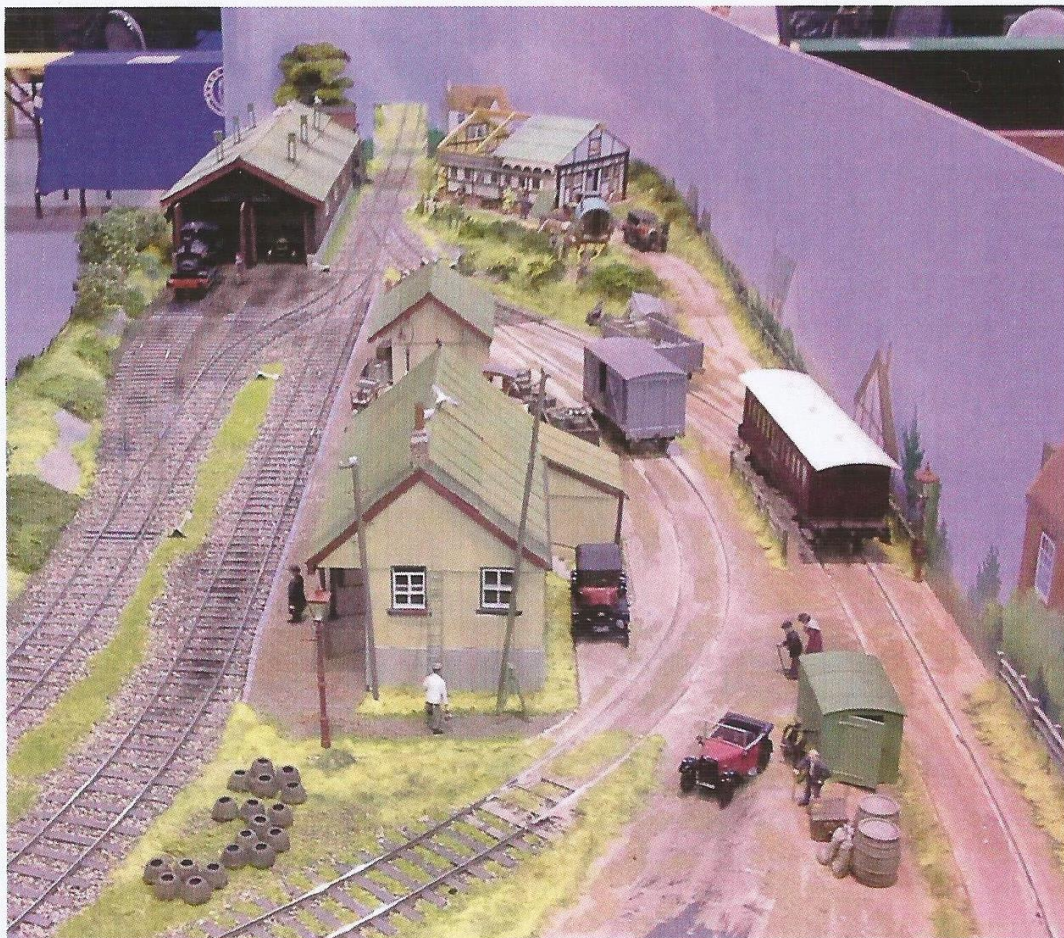
News from The Tamar Belle

Our Webmaster's group at Bere Ferrers Station in Devon, "The Tamar Belle", have been busy rebuilding a cattle wagon and installing inside it an exhibition on the Colonel and his railways. Other stock has been repainted and their Diesel has undergone some maintenance work. See their website for more details of opening times, etc.

THE COLONEL 121



Two views of Selsey Town 7mm layout at Telford. (Photos: Roger Harmer)



THE COLONEL 121



The Lady Mayor of Bishop's Castle and Vic Smith, Chairman of the BCR Society, after unveiling the plaque erected on the old retort house of the former gasworks at Bishop's Castle to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Railway opening on 24th October 1865. The Board of Trade soon closed it down again as no inspection had been carried out. It reopened again in February 1866. (Photos: Sandra and Vic Smith)



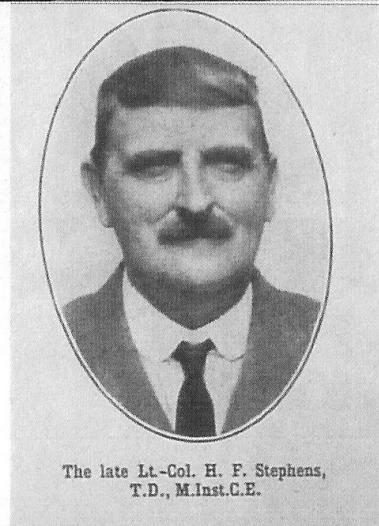
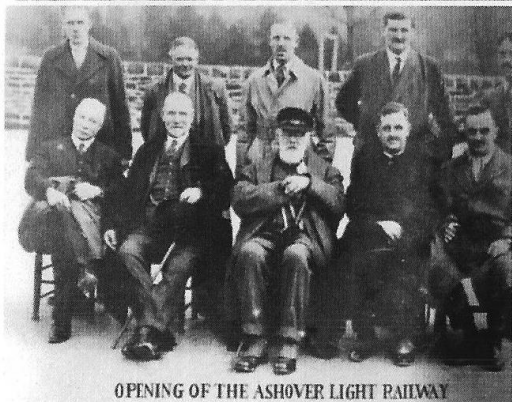
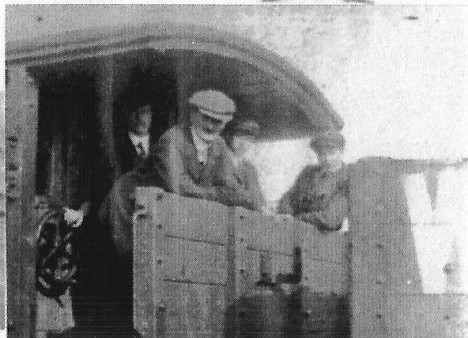
The new Dapol ready-to-run Terrier in 7mm scale. (Photo: John Boshier)

[Note: The original opening celebrations of the Bishop's Castle Railway were in the full Victorian tradition with a ceremonial train of borrowed engine and coaches, evergreen arches, banners, parades, fireworks and bands. There was a meal of roast beef, beer and plum pudding for the navvies and a banquet for 300 of the directors, shareholders and friends at the Castle Hotel, (where a more modest celebratory lunch was held in 2015 prior to unveiling the plaque). People came from miles around to see the event. As the local newspaper said it was the next best thing to a public hanging!]

Some of the Relatively Few Photos of Colonel Stephens in the CS Museum Collection

THE COLONEL 121

Right: Stephens on the WC&P left at Clapton Road Halt (see Howard Carey's letter). Far Right: Detail of Stephens.
 In the early days of the S&MR. Below Left: In Gazelle's passenger compt. Below Right: On goods brake van.



Stephens at the opening of the Ashover Light Railway in 1925. Above and Below: Group photos with detail views showing Stephens. Right: Obituary photo.



Colonel Stephens in IrelandIan Sinclair

The following paragraphs are taken from "The Belfast and County Down Railway" by Desmond Coakham, published by Colourpoint Books in 2010 and reproduced by kind permission of the author and publisher. Notes in brackets are additions by the author:-

The name of Holman Frederick (*actually baptised Fred, Ed*) Stephens has been embedded firmly in railway history for his deeply-held belief that light railway construction was the way to fill the gaps in the British transport infrastructure and bring prosperity to thinly-populated rural areas. His missionary zeal came as a surprise to the present writer, when perusal of BCDR Board minutes revealed that a letter from Mr H Stephens of Tonbridge, Kent had asked for a conference regarding a "Light Railway scheme in which he is interested". This was on 19 November 1913. The General Manager, Moore (*Charles A Moore, General Manager of the BCDR 1904-26*), was instructed to interview Stephens, duly reporting to the Board (*17 December 1913*) that the scheme involved a light railway between Ballynahinch and Kingscourt, a small town in County Cavan, the northern terminus of a branch of the Midland Great Western Railway. Moore was to have a second interview "and make another suggestion" to Stephens. Culverwell (*George P Culverwell, BCDR Civil Engineer 1888-1918*) was called in to report on the distances involved:-

Suggested line Ballynahinch to Newry and Kingscourt; a straight line from Ballynahinch (to Newry) is 24 miles. An actual railway would be at least 26 miles. From Newry to Kingscourt in a straight line is 28 miles, and by a railway... Not less than 31 miles. Distance by rail Kingscourt-Broadstone (*Broadstone was the Dublin terminus of the MGWR*) is 50½ miles.... The distance Belfast to Dublin would therefore be probably not less than 129 miles

against the GNRI (*Great Northern Railway of Ireland*) 112½ miles. The proportion of single line would be a factor against speed.

Suddenly, Stephens' light railway had become a rival to the GNRI main line! In early 1914 there had been two more meetings with Stephens. By that April, Moore had been over the ground of the proposed new line with Keogh, General Manager of the MGWR. In July, Moore had met Stephens in London, with further points to be discussed. The outbreak of World War One was only days away and the BCDR Board had more serious matters on its mind. Stephens (*he had been a Territorial Army officer most of his adult life*) was now apparently full-time with the Royal Engineers and acting Lieutenant Colonel. Even so, when Moore was in London in January 1915 – the Railway Inspectorate were adjudicating on an argument between the BCDR and GNRI involving the new Ballymacarrett Junction signal cabin – he had also seen Stephens, and his interview was minuted as "satisfactory". Fortunately, nothing ever materialized of this proposal, the most irrational of any scheme involving the Colonel. The MGWR had a long-cherished desire for pushing north from Kingscourt to reach the then-prosperous towns of Dungannon and Cookstown in County Tyrone. This was GNRI territory, but after a fierce battle, the Great Northern had put paid to Midland ambition by building a branch from Armagh to Castleblaney on its Dundalk-Enniskillen line, blocking any advance beyond Kingscourt by the MGWR. What possessed the County Down Board to involve itself in any competitive adventure by another company remains a mystery, compounded by the lack of detail in BCDR Board minutes.

In March 1926, with resources depleting rapidly, an encouraging letter from Stephens "of the East Kent Light Railway" reached the (BCDR)

Board, recommending purchase of "small economical Tank Engines" that the Southern Railway had for disposal. Crosthwait (*John L Crosthwait, BCDR Locomotive Engineer 1919-45*) was to go to England to inspect them immediately. This he did; it is not said whereabouts on the Southern, but they were certainly the Brighton "Terriers" (*small 0-6-0Ts*) that Stephens had found so useful on his little lines.

Crosthwait reported back in the following week. He could not recommend the SR engines, mainly on account of their age, which was between 40 and 50 years. (*Note: the Irish standard gauge is 5'3" compared to the British standard gauge of 4'8½", so had Terriers been purchased for the BCDR, as recommended by Stephens, they would have required re-gauging.*)

NEWS & EVENTS

Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Rlys

The August and October "Inside Motions" features "Big Train Meets Little Train" a new free guide to the little trains of Wales featuring bus and train connections. It is available as a download from the web, see <http://bigtrainlittletrain.com/>, or in paper form from tourist information or railway information displays.

The new chairman of "North Wales Tourism" is the F&WHR commercial manager Clare Britton. At Boston Lodge the steel work for the new carriage shed has been erected. FR Santa trains will run to Beddgelert this year while track work is underway on the Cob, at Boston Lodge, Tanygrisiau level crossing, Penrhyn and at Tan y Bwlch. WHR Christmas trains will run from Dinas as work is starting on the new Caernarfon station which will be shut until the start of the 2017 season. Winter works will run from 10th October to 24th March. The railway now has a 1999 vintage ex-London single deck bus for use at special events for such jobs as bar or temporary ticket office.

The new FR "Super Saloon" coach number 118 made it to Southport Flower Show after a big effort by the carriage shop team to complete it in time. The Hunslet diesel "Bill" from Shotton steelworks has been re-gauged to two foot and refurbished to enable it to become the Dinas shunter. Double Fairlie "Merddin Emrys" is being painted to be ready for the Victorian Weekend while "Welsh Pony" is being fitted with an inner firebox. Next year's "Quirks and Curiosities II" event has already attracted a 1885 Decauville, a 1920s Muir Hill internal combustion loco and a 7.5" gauge version of "Taliesin". More locos will be announced later.

"Young Volunteers" training week (the participants do not like the term "kids") will run as usual at the end of July to early August. There is also plenty of volunteer work at Boston Lodge over winter. For instance a volunteer is needed to strip old paint from signs and prepare them to be repainted by the sign-writers.

On 8th September the Hon Sir William McAlpine unveiled a blue plaque on St. Michael's House, Tyndalls Park Road, Clifton, Bristol. This is where the inaugural meeting of 13 people was held in 1951 that resulted in the preservation of the FR. Two of the 13 were present—Vic Mitchell, a former FR director and publisher, and John Bate, still working on the Talyllyn Railway. Also attending was the widow of the late Leonard Heath Humphries, the 17 year old who called the meeting.

The Landmark Trust have raised £400,000 to restore Coed y Bleiddiau cottage which is beside the railway for use as a holiday cottage to sleep four. Three local artists were showing their work at Minffordd station in September. Ffestiniog Travel are running a railtour to South Africa for 16 days commencing March 30th at £4,000 per person. Finally an old copy of "The Children's Newspaper" turned up from 1964 with an article on the FR. There was also an explanation of how Parliament works and advice on dealing with snakes (two separate articles).

Events are:- 10, 11, 17, 18, 22, 23 Dec WHR Santa trains and 10, 11, 17, 18, 22 Dec FR Santa Trains.

The Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Railway Group

As the Colonel Stephens Society isn't producing a Christmas card this year members might be interested in the "Clevedon All Saints in Winter" card (See photo on page 17) being produced by the WC&PR group. The card is blank inside so can be used for other purposes. Cards are £1.50 each plus £1.50 postage for up to ten. They can be ordered via the web or from the W C & P Group C/O 107 Jubilee Crescent, Mangotsfield, Bristol, BS16 9BD.

East Kent Railway

The autumn EKR News reports that the 205 DEMU has been fitted with a refreshments bar. A new brake first coach and a driving trailer are expected to arrive soon. Dana Wiffen has written a short article on the Colonel Stephens Soci-

ety. Another article tells the story of the restoration of the former Southern GUV bogie van now used as the café at Eythorne. Improvements at Shepherdswell are also featured.

Restoration of the trolleybus continues to progress. The lower panels of the bodywork have had their framework renewed, and items like the chassis and the trolley poles have been derusted and painted.

Kent & East Sussex Railway

September passenger numbers have held up well with a total of 10,205 visitors representing 2% down on budget but 17% up on September 2015. Cumulatively for 2016 this represents 14% down against budget but only 1% up on 2015. Sales of Santa special tickets have been going well however.

Both "Terriers" have been in regular use. 32670 had its boiler ticket extended for twelve months. The "Terrier Trust" is converting itself from a registered charity into a charitable incorporated organisation.

Santa Specials will be running 3/4th, 10/11th, 17/18th, 22/23/24th December 2016. In previous years, customers have been able to purchase individual seats within side corridor compartment carriages, but as part of the enhanced offer this year they are selling whole compartments only in both standard class and first class. In selling the entire compartment they have been able to increase the yield whilst reducing costs, as the customers pay for the whole compartment even if there are fewer passengers in their party than the compartments can accommodate! **K&ESR Volunteer Newsletter** courtesy of **Ross Shimmon**

Rother Valley Railway

The planning application for the extension to join the KESR has been delayed by the Environment Agency requiring extra modelling of flood situations. It is now hoped that if they are happy with the results, a decision on the application could be made before the next issue of the Colonel appears.

See the centre pages for colour photos of progress at Robertsbridge. The disused water

The Railway Museum of the Year with a nice light railway attached

*Next time you travel on the K&ESR, leave time to visit
the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum*

- Get up close and personal with the smallest standard gauge loco
 - Study the many artefacts of the Colonel's lines
- Examine the latest exhibits on the light railway in war time, workshop activities, the Colonel's collection of railway passes
 - Improved exhibits include the Ashover display
- **Admission Free**
- *Open from 12.30 to 4.30 on days when the K&ESR is running until
2nd November, visit www.kesr.org*

Awarded 'Museum of the Year' by Heritage Railway magazine

Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6HE
www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk

crane recovered from the K&ESR's Wittersham Road station is being refurbished for use at the RVR station and has now been installed. This originally came from the Shrewsbury Abbey station of the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway. A water tank will be erected also.

The road/rail vehicle has been used to spray the track with weedkiller, the weeds having begun to take hold. This has been so successful that the RVR have used it to spray all the Bluebell railway, bringing in some useful extra income.

Network Rail contractors relocated the power cable under the old worn out track in the main station's bay platform. This relocation enabled the track to be renewed. After grading work, the ballast bed was laid on the usual membrane layer, followed by track panels and ballasting. A new modern pattern buffer stop has been included too. A tamper became the first rail vehicle to use the connection to the RVR since 1970. When complete the connection can be used by Network Rail to move vehicles onto the RVR for training purposes.

It's not expected that the bay platform at Robertsbridge will be used by passengers any time soon. For one thing, it's quite narrow and mainline trains whizz through the other platform face at speeds of up to 90mph. For another, there is quite a gap between the platform edge and the new track. The headshunt to the north which provides access is currently too short to allow much of a train to enter the platform. The siding last saw regular passenger trains in 1954, when services to Tenterden ceased.

Other work has involved adding a back wall to part of the RVR platform, improving wheelchair access to the platforms, laying a sewer pipe from the station building site, building an embankment for the new engine shed headshunt, refurbishment of various items of rolling stock and repainting of the loading bay and contractor's store by volunteers. The garden beds are coming along well and all the work has much improved the station ambience. The planning application for the re-sited engine

shed has now been granted. The new site will provide more space and not require an expensive piled foundation.

There are reports on the upgrade of the A21, Thameslink remodelling of London Bridge station, a visit to Pendon Model railway near Didcot, progress on restoring the ex GWR 2-8-0T No. 4253 and an article on "Terrier" 32670.

Colonel Stephens Museum News



Laurie Cooksey is holding what we think is the last remaining remnant of any of the Colonel's railmotors. It's from the SMR's Wolseley-Siddeley. It was rescued by Jon Clarke from an abortive preservation project. He donated it to the CS Museum. It's going to be featured in a new display of railmotors which will be ready when the Museum re-opens

when the running season starts in 2017.

There are now five times more visitors to the museum thanks to free admission and better publicity. Total museum income has increased from increased donations and book sales. Magazine sales have almost died.

As well as the acquisitions reported in the "Colonel" the museum has acquired a scale working model of a signal box lever frame and a model of Stephenson valve gear once at Ashford Works. It has also been given an "Accucraft" 16mm scale Baldwin 4-6-0 (as used on the Snailbeach, Welsh Highland and Ashover railways) by the manufacturer. A platform ticket machine has also been installed which delivers tickets for 50p. Some exhibits now have a smart phone tag that will give the user extra information using their phone. Work has commenced to build a shelter for Colin Shutt's railcar when it arrives. Volunteers to help with the museum are declining in number basically due to age so more would be useful. **Ross Shimmon and Brian Janes**