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# THE COLONEL

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**Number 62**

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THE JOURNAL OF THE COLONEL STEPHENS SOCIETY  
FOR THE ENTHUSIAST OF THE LIGHT AND NARROW GAUGE  
RAILWAYS OF COLONEL HOLMAN F. STEPHENS

## Editorial: progress is made

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Firstly, a big thank you to everyone who wrote in praising the new-look *Colonel*. Your comments are much appreciated, and it seems that the move to digital printing - and staples! - has met with universal approval.

It's good to know that as a society we are capable of making significant improvements and progress in what we do. A glance at the AGM preview on page 9 will reveal ideas for further progress to be made.

Prior to that, we have a bumper harvest of letters prompted by various articles in the last *Colonel*, which I interpret as a very healthy sign, especially as we regard ourselves as essentially a correspondence society. This issue's showing provides ample evidence of that. Please keep 'em coming.

The latest crop of correspondences included a number of responses prompted by the story of the East Sussex Light Railway in the last issue. As yet unpublished is an account received of another might-have-been line. A request for details of a third stillborn proposal has uncovered a further detailed description, so the fascinating subject of rail-

ways-that-never-were looks set to become a regular feature over the next few issues.

Page 11, meanwhile, contains the first fruits of a very important project undertaken by Dr Tony Michell, who is working on a full biography of The Great Man. Such an account is long overdue, and Tony is to be congratulated for taking the job on. The society is doing its bit to help him out, and if anybody has got anything they can contribute to the exercise, please step forward.

Finally, I know there has been some anxiety about the impact of the Foot & Mouth outbreak on our AGM. Your committee has looked into the issue at some length and concluded that our meeting should be able to go ahead as planned. It seems highly unlikely that any of the day's events will be affected, so please do make the effort to attend if you possibly can.

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## Staff Officers

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

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### CHAIRMAN

**Derek Smith**

30 Upper Road, Meole Brace,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9SQ  
Tel: 01743 249088

### EDITOR

**Stephen Hannington**

131 Borstal Street, Rochester,  
Kent ME1 3JU  
Tel: 01634 830370  
Email: [steveh@tivoli.demon.co.uk](mailto:steveh@tivoli.demon.co.uk)

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

**David Powell**

Gateways, Bledlow Road, Saunderton,  
Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 9NG  
Tel: 01844 343377  
Email: [DJPowellLtd@compuserve.com](mailto:DJPowellLtd@compuserve.com)

### TREASURER

**Nigel Bird**

Bryn Hir, Llanio Road, Llwyn-y-Groes,  
Tregaron, Dyfed SY25 6PY  
Tel: 01974 821281  
Email: [nigelbird.books@virgin.net](mailto:nigelbird.books@virgin.net)

### ARCHIVIST

**Stuart Marshall**

53 Peasland Road, Saffron Walden,  
Essex CB11 3ED. Tel: 01799 500528  
Email: [chrisstu66@compuserve.com](mailto:chrisstu66@compuserve.com)

### PUBLICITY OFFICER

**Julia Hastings**

4 Coronation Cottages, Robertsbridge,  
East Sussex TN32 5PE  
Tel: 01580 881711  
Email: [juliajekyll@madasafish.com](mailto:juliajekyll@madasafish.com)

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## Society News

# AGM at Tenterden: ready for the off

Everything is now in place for the AGM at Tenterden, heart of the K&ESR, on Sunday 29 April. Proceedings will kick off at 12 noon sharp in the function room of the Vine Inn at the top of Station Road, a short walk from the railway station (*see page 10 for map*).

Confirmations of attendance have been received from 16 people so far. If you intend to be there, but haven't so far confirmed, please let the editor know via post or email at the addresses at the foot of the opposite page.

This will help us organise the catering arrangements, as well as reserve seats on the train after the AGM. Coffee and sandwiches will be served free at the meeting. The Vine also serves excellent meals for those who want a more substantial bite to eat.

The K&ESR has confirmed we will have the SE&CR saloon added specially for us to the tail of the 3.30pm train from Tenterden, returning at 5.15pm. This will seat 20 on a first come, first served basis. Any more than that can travel elsewhere on the train. All fares will be paid by the society.

## Members missing

*Membership secretary David Powell reports that he has 'lost' three members following the Autumn's renewal season. These include one of our founder members, Jon Clarke (006) of Chester, plus M. Gicquel (460) of Tiverton and Michael Darby (273), previously of Platt Bridge, Wigan, but now 'not known at this address'.*

*"If any members know, or happen to meet, any of these three," said David, "I would be grateful if you would let them know that, while you have your latest copy of The Colonel, they won't! However, this can be rectified by the prompt payment of their subscription renewal."*

Member Chris Mitchell has kindly procured a footplate pass for the train, which will be raffled at the AGM. We hope to be able to share the privilege among several different people by, say, splitting it between the outward and return journeys.

Prior to the train ride, there will be a guided tour of the carriage workshops at Tenterden station. Thanks are due to the Tenterden Railway Company, proprietor of the K&ESR, who really have pulled out all the stops to make us welcome. Don't miss it! ●

## STOP PRESS

## Foot and Mouth

While other heritage railways have suspended services because of the Foot and Mouth epidemic, the K&ESR says that it is running trains as normal. The only restriction is that visitors are asked not to leave the stations.

Bookings administrator Jayne Lewis said: "Everyone has told us to carry on running trains. There's no reason at all not to do so. In fact, they're encouraging us to run them to keep the tourist industry going."

MAFF guidelines also say it is perfectly OK to travel by road in the countryside. It asks only that people do not enter on foot into fields where livestock is held.

Although an outbreak of the disease in the vicinity of the railway might change the situation in the coming month, there is currently nothing to prevent the AGM going ahead as planned. ●

## News

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# East Kent changes its status

The East Kent Light Railway Society (EKLRs), which runs trains over the former East Kent Railway between Shepherdswell and Eythorne, has voted to change its status to a charitable trust limited by guarantee.

It is hoped that the move will make it easier for the organisation to buy land and arrange loans, and put it in a better standing with government and other official bodies. It would also bring the EKLRs in line with other railway preservation groups.

Currently, the organisation's members face - in theory - unlimited financial liabilities in the event of a commercial catastrophe. Under the new rules, individual liability is limited to a mere £1 each.

High on the EKLRs's list of priorities is

to purchase the freehold of land on which it is currently operating as a leaseholder. The change of status proposal was presented to members at an extraordinary general meeting on 27 January and accepted by an overwhelming vote in favour.

Meanwhile, the line recently enjoyed one of its most successful Santa seasons ever, aided by 0-4-0ST *Spitfire*, the repairs to which our society helped to fund.

The railway's current work schedule includes lengthening the platform at Eythorne and installing a run-round loop there. And the signal box from Barham station on the Elham Valley line is to be erected at Shepherdswell as a museum and information centre. ●

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## Lost line found

The mystery about the Maidstone & Faversham Junction Light Railway, aired in the last *Colonel*, has been solved. Member Tom Burnham wrote a feature story about the line in the Summer 1985 issue of *The Tenterden Terrier*, the house journal of the K&ESR's proprietor.

A copy has been passed to Newnham Parish Council, which made the original enquiry, their parish being on the route of the stillborn proposal. Tom's account is pencilled in for a future issue of *The Colonel*. Thanks to Tom and everyone else who helped to solve the riddle. ●

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## 4415 paintings:

Adrian Gray has pointed out that copies of a painting of historic Kerr Stuart diesel number 4415 in service on the Festiniog Railway are available from Phil Hawkins at 21A Belsize Road, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 6JL, or telephone 020 8421 1204. ●

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## Website now open

Our Web site has finally gone live, thanks to the splendid work of member Dr Robert Kinghorn. You can visit it at:

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

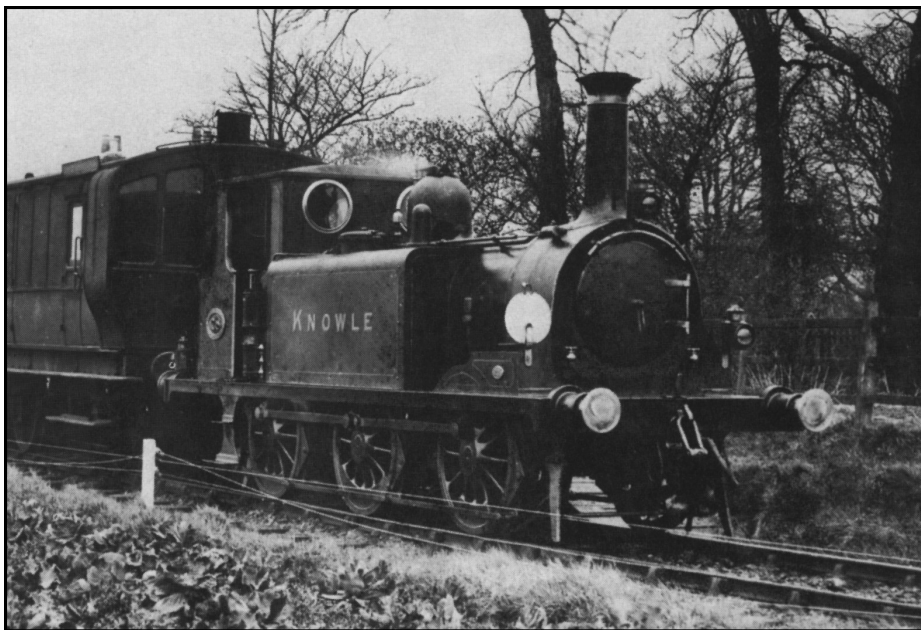
To entice new members, it includes an introduction to the society and the Colonel, plus a summary list of his railways, and an application form. For existing members, there is a current index to *The Colonel*, including this issue, which will be regularly updated.

On a related subject, David Powell has discovered something calling itself The Colonel Stephens Railways Webring, which apparently aims to link all Internet sites relating to the Great Man and his works. It's at:

[www.kesrail.co.uk](http://www.kesrail.co.uk)

What bothers us is that they've nicked our logo of the Colonel and are using it as a 'badge' to indicate membership of the Webring. Does anybody know who's behind this organisation? An email question to the 'ringmaster' produced no response. And can the original draughtsman of the logo come forward, please? ●

## Knowle saved for the K&ESR



The Terrier Trust, which owns and is restoring former K&ESR No. 3 *Bodiam*, has bought another Terrier, LB&SCR No. 78 *Knowle*, following a successful appeal for the funds. Secretary of the trust Gerald Siviour reports that over 350 people sent contributions within three weeks of the launch of the appeal. Half the £80,000 purchase price has been paid and the loco became the trust's property on 27 November. The final instalment is due on 1 June this year.

*Knowle* has been based at the K&ESR for some time, and helped haul the last passenger train on the line back in January 1954. She is currently in full running order in unlined black Southern Railway livery, carrying the number 2678.

Gerald reports that the trust aims to repaint *Knowle* in lined BR black later this year, as a contrast to the Rother Valley Rail-

*A youthful Knowle at Langston station on the Hayling Island branch in 1900, taken from Locomotives Illustrated number 48: The LB&SCR Terriers.*

way livery that will be applied to *Bodiam* when she finally returns to service. We donated £50 towards her repairs last year.

Refurbishment of the loco's frames is taking longer than expected. Gerald said: "We're waiting to have a bit of extra strengthening on the frames. Our objective is to have *Bodiam* back at Rolvenden this year and back in service for next year."

At the trust's instigation, Hornby is to introduce a version of its OO scale Terrier model as *Bodiam* in RVR livery within a couple of months' time. ●

## Dispatches

*Letters to the editor*

### Signalling on the Callington Branch

In the article by Chris Osmont in the last *Colonel*, page 13, paragraph 7 refers to signals being of the 'customary two-wire pattern' about which nothing seems to be known. In case it is of any help or interest, may I comment, based upon Festiniog experience.

On the FR the disc distant signals presented the full face of the disc to oncoming trains when at danger, and a clear aspect was given by rotating the disc through 90°, to a position parallel to the track. Red and white lamp aspects respectively were also displayed.

Both disc and lamp were mounted on a spindle in a hollow cast post. At the base of the post, on the bottom of the spindle, was a horizontal pulley around which ran a length of chain. Attached to either end of the chain were wires which ran in parallel, through guide wheels, from the signal to a miniature capstan at the station.

The base of the capstan resembled the base of the signal and on top was a miniature, telltale disc. A horizontal lever, running between two guides, could be moved through 90° in the capstan, thereby moving the chains and wires, to alter the aspect of the signal.

Locking the signal was achieved with pins through the lever guides.

Now, I am not suggesting that the Callington Branch had disc signals: indeed, we are told they were three-position, slotted post semaphores. Festiniog slotted post home signals also used three positions, but these were set from a lever at the base of the signal, pinned in one of three positions.

I do wonder, therefore, whether the three positions of the Callington Branch homes were set by a similar two-wire system, applied to semaphore signals and actuated by a three position lever.

The benefit of the system is that control is positive and does not rely on a counterbalance. On the other hand there is no provision for 'fail safe to danger'. Perhaps there is a photograph showing the signal controls that might shed some light on this suggestion.

*Adrian Gray, Brackley, Northants*

### No wangling

Referring to the caption of the picture on page 5 of the last *Colonel*, I object to the word 'wangle'. I am a K&ESR driver and a customer of both Mr Bird and Mr Penfold (the 'chum'), so when I heard that they were coming down for the *Bringing Home The Goods Weekend* I arranged a footplate pass for each of them.

We train crews are forbidden from giving footplate rides unless the person is in possession of a valid footplate pass. Your caption implies that people can turn up and beg a ride. This is untrue, and I would be grateful if you could publish the truth in the next *Colonel*.

*Christopher Mitchell, Tenterden, Kent*

## Nigel Bird Books

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## Colonel Stephens green and buses

I can't cast any light on the true shade of the green, but I can muddy the waters a bit further. The eye is very sensitive to green shades: try matching shades of green. Photographic emulsions, especially early ones, do not give true renditions of colour especially for greens. Thus I'm afraid you cannot

**About the 'Maidstone Bus Company': I have the fleet histories of both Maidstone Corporation and the Maidstone & District bus companies, neither of which mention a Maidstone Bus Company.**

**As the Maidstone Corporation liveries were first ochre and off-white, during WW2 were brown with minimal white relief, and before going into liquidation were blue and off-white, they can be eliminated.**

**Until the advent of the National Bus Company, the Maidstone & District colours have always been dark gloss green with cream relief bands around the windows, so I think the editor's childhood memories are correct.**

*Trevor White, Helmsley, Yorkshire*

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rely on the shade in the old colour photo-

With reference to Adrian Gray's request for help with the colour of Festiniog coaches, I think that the Maidstone Bus Company he refers to and the Maidstone & District Bus Company are one and the same, or an evolution as their territory expanded.

I was in our newsgroups and glanced through *Preserved Bus* magazine and in it was an advertisement by Exclusive First Editions, PO Box 24510, London E17 4TG. It showed a range of M&D buses painted in dark green and cream. This firm must have carried out thorough research and should be able to help Adrian.

*Ron Mann, Christchurch, Dorset*

graph. Human memory of colours is also quite poor, especially after all these years, and so can also only be an approximate colour guide.

Even actual paint samples can also be subject to change after many years. Exposure to air and UV light will drastically alter colours after a few years. Long term storage in the dark can also be unreliable due to darkening of varnishes and even chemical reactions of the pigments.

Paints of this period are usually fairly simply based on traditional pigments. Stable greens were a particular problem. Brunswick green, for instance, was a mixture of lamp black and yellow ochre in an organic resin, I believe. This sort of mixture is bound to be a very variable colour because of the variations in the ingredients' colours and their particle size distributions.

This also assumes the paint shop carefully measured the proportions rather than approximately adding them. Other greens would use yellow ochre and blues such as ultramarine or prussian blue with white lead or lamp black.

In the absence of further information on the bus green, I'd stick with the colour you've got or pick a nice dark green of your choice. Colonel Stephen's loco green is usually described as similar to Southern Railway olive green. Southern railway malachite green is a very different colour compared to the Southern dark olive green or Brunswick green.

### **Anniversary of the Colonel's Death**

October of this year marks the 70th anniversary of the Colonel's death. Does the Society intend to mark this event in any way?

*Albyn Austin, Whitehaven, Cumbria*

# Dispatches

*Letters to the editor*

## The East Sussex Light Railway

On the subject of the East Sussex Light Railway, I had also assumed that the projected line had followed the course of the Rother. My Rye terminus, which unlike your Rye Town has never progressed beyond paper, was envisaged to be on the field (often flooded!) belonging to the Mountfield Estate adjacent to the SR line.

Although, as the article states, the approach along the Rother is cramped, it would have been possible to get a line in alongside Military Road, virtually on the river bank, swinging on a fairly tight right-hand curve to bring it parallel to the main line and entering my suggested station site via an extra arch under the road at the bottom of Rye Hill.

Whilst all this dreaming is interesting, I remember Les Darbyshire showing me a drawing of the route described in the article. An examination of the Ordnance Survey map suggests a far more plausible explanation for the more difficult route: the almost flat route along the Rother valley would not have generated any passenger traffic and minimal goods. It would have been purely a linking line.

On the subject of traffic, I am currently researching the nature of the traffic that the hop

fields may have generated for the K&ESR, and will distil this into an article for *The Colonel*. Readers of *Model Rail* will have noticed a very nice article by Guy Van Meroye in the January edition about his Wisley Green layout, including how to model a hop field.

There is another interesting 'might have been' mentioned in Middleton Press' *Branch-lines Around Midhurst* (ISBN 0-906520-49-5): the Surrey & Sussex Light Railway. This was apparently proposed by the Colonel in 1902, running from Selham, on the Pulborough to Midhurst line, to Cranleigh and on to Ewhurst and Ockley. Does anyone have any more information on this scheme?

*Richard Jones, Wirral, Cheshire*

● **Editor's note:** see *The Colonel* issue 10 for a brief description of the S&SLR by Hugh Smith. Another article by Graham Kean on this railway is scheduled for the next *Colonel*.

You mentioned in your article on the East Sussex Light Railway the name of the proposed engineer to the Robertsbridge and Pevensey Light Railway as one Arthur J. Barry and you ask who he is.

Well, if nobody has mentioned anything to you yet, I can tell you that he was joint engineer to the Crowhurst, Sidley & Bexhill Railway (CS&BR) – later the Bexhill West branch – with P.C. Tempest of the SER. I am currently preparing a booklet on the line and hope to publish in April/May.

This was a double-tracked line of which the major undertaking was a seventeen-arch viaduct. The Robertsbridge & Pevensey line would have been much easier for him and would have taken place at the same time, as it was 'just up the line', so to speak, from Crowhurst, where the Bexhill line would start

from.

By the way, listed as someone with a 'special invite' at the grand opening of the Bexhill line was Mr H.F. Stephens. He was probably invited because of his association with the Rother Valley line. The chairman of the CS&BR was the Hon. A.E. Gathorne-Hardy, who was also chairman of the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway.

Referring to the news item mentioning the Maidstone & Sittingbourne Railway, I can't really help as far as the route is concerned as I never looked at any plans. My booklet on the Colonel Stephens Railways in Kent only really dealt with the lines which were actually built.

*Peter Harding, Woking, Surrey*



# GET YOURSELF READY FOR A BUSY AGM 2001

*Editor Stephen Hannington sets the scene for the forthcoming AGM*

Although many of you planning to attend this year's AGM are no doubt particularly looking forward to your ride on the K&ESR and all the fun that that entails, it's worth bearing in mind that there will also be some serious business to discuss: this year more than any other.

The society has made great strides since this time last year. Membership levels are once again healthy; we have seen the start of what could be a new policy of donating money to related organisations; *The Colonel* is now digitally printed; and we have a Web site up and running. And for the first time ever, we actually had a committee meeting.

This year we have to decide how we want to develop these themes. For a start, in order to recruit more members, or at least to let fellow Stephens aficionados know how and where to get hold of us, the committee is proposing to launch some kind of advertising campaign in the railway press.

There have been calls for us to advertise more at every AGM I've ever been to, but, to date, nothing much has come of it. In order to rectify this, the aim is to set an advertising budget in the hope that the availability of an agreed sum of money will get the ball rolling. Publicity officer Julia Hastings has researched some sample costs to guide our decision-making. Or do you think we've got better things to spend our money on?

Like donations to other organisations, perhaps. We have so far given £200 to help restore locos on the Great Man's former railways and provide better facilities for preservationists. This has made good use of our growing cash mountain, and forged a lot of good will with organisations working hard to preserve and maintain what remains of the Colonel's heritage.

Should we continue this policy? Should we be donating more? If so, how much? Or maybe you think we shouldn't be doing it at

all. You decide.

On the subject of money, but this time income rather than outgoings, treasurer Nigel Bird is suggesting that subscriptions should be raised this year: for the first time since 1992. His motivation is to fund the improved, and somewhat more expensive, printing of *The Colonel*, but maybe there could be more to it than that.

We've had only two rises in the membership fee since the society was formed back in 1985, defying inflation and being

## AGM 2001

- 1) Apologies for Absence
- 2) Actions from the last AGM
- 3) Committee reports:
  - Chairman
  - Treasurer
  - Membership secretary
  - Editor
  - Publicity
- 4) Election of Officers
- 5) Subscriptions for 2001/02
- 6) Donations to Related Organisations
- 7) Publicity Budget
- 8) Any Other Business

much cheaper than most other railway-related societies. Is it time for another price hike? How much should it be, and how will it fit with our new spending commitments? Come along and have your say.

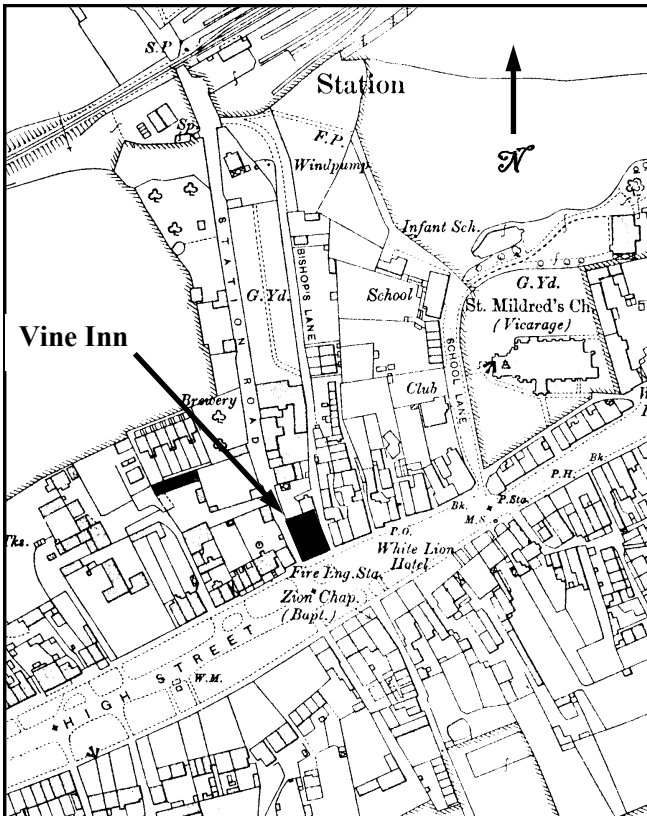
And let's not forget the election of officers. All our existing committee members are willing to stand for their posts again. But maybe you fancy having a go, or would like to propose someone for the job.

This is your chance, but remember that you will need someone to second your proposal (as well as the agreement of the nominee, of course). If you have any nominations, please submit them to the editor in advance, if you can. Likewise, any suggestions for Any Other Business should ideally be noti-

fied in advance, although such suggestions will, of course, also be taken on the day.

Hopefully, these notes will have provided you with some food for thought, and we can all look forward to some good, robust discussion on April 29, as well the pleasure of mixing with folks who all share a passion for the brave little railways that made up the empire of the late, great Colonel. I look forward to seeing many of you there. ■

## Location information:



*This is a 1908 map of Tenterden, but little has changed. There are car parks immediately behind the Vine on Station Road, down the lane opposite the pub, and at the K&ESR station. The High Street is part of the A28 Hastings-Ashford road.*

# THE COLONEL AND MISTER KIPLING

**PART  
ONE**

*Tony Michell is compiling a biography of The Great Man that he hopes to complete next year. In the meantime, he presents the following foretaste of his work in which he tries to track down the alleged friendship between the young Holman Fred Stephens and the great writer Rudyard Kipling.*

John Scott-Morgan writes in *Railways of Arcadia* that Holman Stephens "was also a friend of Rudyard Kipling, who lived at Bate-mans, near Etchingham, and to whom he sent an annual free pass to travel on the Kent & East Sussex Railway." How can we further document or substantiate this relationship?

Kipling was a profuse writer of letters and has been well studied. His main collection is in Sussex University, and nearly all known letters to or from him up until 1919 are in print, collected by Thomas Pinney in four volumes. No correspondence between either Holman or his father F.G. Stephens, and Kipling is known to exist.

This does not necessarily mean that no correspondence ever passed between them as we shall see. Kipling's wife Carrie and his daughter between them destroyed many letters after Kipling's death. As the archivist in charge of the Sussex papers writes: "no-one knows the principles on which Kipling's wife and daughter destroyed his papers."

Kipling's own autobiography misses out many important relationships. In 1911 when his father died, he and his brother spent three days rooting out correspondence and papers to be burnt at the bottom of the garden, some of them possibly from F.G. Stephens.

Nor do the F.G. Stephens papers in the Bodleian Museum, which were purchased from the Colonel's former employee J.A. Iggulden in 1957, contain any letters between Kipling or his father and F.G. Stephens, but the chance survival of these documents is even more haphazard.

The absence of surviving correspondence does not prove the absence of a relationship, but certainly makes it difficult to document and interpret it! My argument is that Stephens

and Kipling knew one another from early childhood, but between the ages of 10 and 35, in 1903, Stephens had no direct contact.

He certainly felt by 1903 that Kipling would not remember him, although I would argue that Stephens had been following Kipling's career with great interest: as had half of all England! We can demonstrate that the two fathers and two sons moved in the same circles, and circumstantial evidence suggests that Kipling, three years older than Stephens, was a formative influence in the latter's early choice of careers.

From 1903 onwards, while not especially close during most of their lives, the two men had common interests that would have led them to meet from time to time and have discussions about engineering, motoring, flying, the army, the Boer war and life in general. Most importantly, Stephens became the model for the central character in one of Kipling's later stories.

Stephens is first presumed to have met Kipling about Christmas 1873, when the latter came to spend his Christmas holidays at "his beloved aunt Georgie's" at the Grange, North End, Fulham. Georgie was the sister of Kipling's mother, Alice MacDonald. North End adjoins Hammersmith, and to walk from the Grange to 10 Hammersmith Terrace took about fifteen to twenty minutes. On the way between the two houses, one would have passed Kelmescott House, to which William Morris, Burne Jones's business partner, would move in 1878.

F.G. Stephens, Burne-Jones, Morris and the Macdonald sisters had all known one another in the late 1850s and early 1860s. The Macdonald sisters were a remarkable tribe. Georgie married Edward Burne-Jones,

while Alice married Lockwood Kipling, although Alice had flirted with other pre-Raphaelites in the early 1850s, at the time that F.G. Stephens was most closely involved with them.

Another sister married Sir Edward Poynter, a famous artist and later president of the Royal Academy, while a fourth married the father of the future prime minister Stanley Baldwin.

F.G. Stephens kept in touch with all the Pre-Raphaelites and their friends, and in particular was a lifelong friend of Burne-Jones. The correspondence of 'Ned' Burne-Jones and Steev, as he later called Stephens senior, shows a continual coming and going between the two households. Sometimes Steev went to the Grange, and sometimes Ned dropped by 10 Hammersmith Terrace. F.G. may have asked Holman Hunt to be the godfather of young Holman Fred Stephens, but he was close to all the pre-Raphaelites for most of his life.

F.G. Stephens' protests about the Victorian restoration of Burford Church led to the foundation with William Morris and Burne-Jones of the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings. He was one of the founder members, although he only attended six committee meetings.

The three men were therefore close both physically and in their artistic lives, and while Stephens senior rose to be a major figure in art criticism, rather than in practical work, the three neighbours were bound up in the same circle. In 1887, May Morris, William Morris's daughter, came to live at number 8 Hammersmith Terrace on getting married, and with them came the newlyweds' lodger, one George Bernard Shaw.

Rudyard Kipling was about three years older than Holman Stephens, having been born at the end of December 1865. Stephens was therefore seven years younger than Philip Burne-Jones, and two years younger than Margaret Burne-Jones, who was the closest in age of the Burne-Joneses to him. Stephens was thus the youngest of the set by two years.

The age difference is important, for it seems to have defined the early relationship between Kipling and Stephens, in which it can be argued that the latter had early in his life developed an immense admiration for Kipling. Kipling became a formative influence on his ideas in his teens, although Kip-

ling can hardly have been aware of him at that time.

Kipling came to spend a month at the Grange every Christmas from 1873 to 1882. He loved the bell push there so much that he later bought it and put it in Batemans many years later, where it still remains. He described the nursery romps at the Grange as "an incessant come and go of young people and grown-ups all willing to play with us - except an elderly person called 'Browning', who took no proper interest in the skirmishes which happened to be raging on his entry."

### CHILD-CONSCIOUS

Stephens was one of the young people coming and going and his father one of the grown-ups. In other passages, Kipling describes the interactions with Edward and Georgina Burne-Jones and William Morris in the house. They paint a picture of a very child-conscious household, quite different from the sombre picture of middle class Victorian life in which children are to be 'seen and not heard'.

Burne-Jones, in one of his playful letters to Stephens' father, asks: "how was my little Steev?", apparently asking after the son. Amongst Stephens' other childhood friends were the two children, Anna and Lawrence, of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, who painted the portrait of Stephens' mother now on display in the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden.

Kipling went to India in 1882, about a year before Stephens left University College School to spend a year with a private tutor. Stephens wrote to his mother from Vitre, France in 1885 that he could not make up his mind whether to become a soldier or a railway engineer. Where did he get these ideas from?

From his letters home it is obvious that one source was his conversations with the Government Inspector of Railways at Vitre "who has taken a fancy to me, and very often I go to his cosy little office and talk with him". Another was the Commandant of the 70th Regiment of Infantry, who introduced Holman to military music, which became a life-long interest.

But another possible influence could be Kipling's writings in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, which he found himself writing, often unaided, due to the illness of the editor between November 1882 and 1884. For this

to be true, Kipling's mother would have had to have brought them back to the Grange at Fulham on her trip in July 1883 to show her sister what Rudyard was writing.

A little later, there would have been a good case to think that Stephens got his ideas from reading *The Weekly*, a weekly edition of *The Pioneer* "for Home consumption", edited almost unsupervised by Kipling. *The Weekly* published much of his early fiction, later put together as *Plain Tales from the Hills*. His weekly work spun together stories of soldiers and engineers of great charm.

Kipling was certainly not the only influence. Stephens' father showed a strong feeling for the poetry of modern engineering in several of his writings. In his original article for *The Crayon* in 1856, describing the original Italian Pre-Raphaelites, he wrote:

"...there is something else we miss; there is the poetry of the things about us; our railways, factories, mines, roaring cities, steam vessels, and the endless novelties and wonders produced every day; which if they were found in the Thousand and One Nights, or in any poem, classical or romantic, would be gloried over without end."

F.G. Stephens continued further. A poet points out "to others (as if they had no eyes) the sentiment of a flowing river with the moonlight on it, as an emblem of the after-piece, but you see not this in the long white cloud of steam which the locomotive pours forth under the same moon, rushing on." For Stephens' father, therefore, there was poetry in railway locomotives.

Stephens claims that he could talk authoritatively with the government inspector on English railways at the age of 16, and seems to have had his first cab ride in Vitre.

His letters to his parents from France in 1883 also show a fascination with soldiers, as well as his developing sense of humour in which he describes the "very big red trousers (in which I believe they must carry their tents)". He had enquired about joining several regiments in 1887, including the Hertfordshire Yeomanry and the North Devon Husars while he was at University.

When Kipling returned to London in 1889 he already had "receding hair and stiff bearing", but was still only 23. He was already something of a celebrity and moved into what he described as somewhat rakish quarters in Villiers Street, off the Strand, but which still cost a princely £55 per annum. Stephens by

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***Stephens claims that he  
could talk authoritatively  
with the government  
inspector on English  
railways at the age of 16***

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this time was working for the Metropolitan Railway based at Neasden, and presumably still living in 10 Hammersmith Terrace.

The two men did not meet during this period, although Kipling stayed in London three years and Stephens would have heard of all this from his father. In early 1892 Kipling married and was gone on his travels to America. Stephens had moved to darkest Kent more than twelve months before.

There is one more possible influence. It was in 1891 that Stephens became a member of Masonic lodge no. 1854. Indeed, the Colonel Stephens Museum at Terenure has his regalia. It is possible that Kipling's writings were a key influence in him joining the Masons.

Kipling had joined in India and was enthusiastic about the atmosphere of the Lodge in which "another world opened to me which I needed. There were men who would talk to me as though they had known me all their lives on subjects which both I and they will be able to discourse with freedom and camaraderie."

Although Kipling is not known to have been an active member of the Masons after 1891, his stories continued to be set in Lodges down to his death. Stephens seems to have abruptly stopped membership in 1896, but kept his regalia.

When Kipling returned to England in September 1896, Stephens was firmly entrenched in Tonbridge. It was a moment when he was playing many parts. Operating out of Ashby House, he was consulting engineer to the Medway Navigation. He was retained by the Rye and Camber Tramway, and by the Selsey Tramway, both of which he had built. He was now also an investor and principle engineer for the Light Railway Syndicate Ltd, and was working on the Rother Valley (Light) Railway, which won

its Act of Parliament in July 1896.

But this was not all. Stephens, in doubt about employment prospects during 1894-5, had a post as investigator of accidents at the Board of Trade, which gave him ample chance to tell the board about his achievements.

He began what can only be called his 'second life' at the same time, taking a commission as a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, Sussex Volunteers, based at Seaford and Eastbourne, which he could reach in about two hours from Tonbridge.

It is tempting to think that in making this decision, Stephens was influenced by the writings of his elder playmate Kipling, and his extolling of the Indian Army and the soldier's life. The introduction to the Sussex Volunteers is likely to have come from fellow inspectors of the Board of Trade who were normally ex-Royal Engineer officers.

Kipling was now becoming a major establishment figure and was elected in 1897 to the Athenaeum Club by Ned Burne-Jones and Henry James, shortly to establish himself at Rye. Sydney Colvin, F.G. Stephens' collaborator on what is regarded as his most scholarly work, the *Catalogue of the Satirical Prints in the British Museum*, and who was still keeper of the prints and drawings at the British Museum, suggested that Kipling be elected under Rule 2, which admitted distinguished people without the usual balloting.

Was this also Holman Stephens scene? Scott-Morgan writes that Holman was the member of a number of London clubs, and professional institutions. This includes the Reform Club, which indicates at least his father's liberal instincts, if not those of Holman's compared with Kipling's much more conservative attitude.

Which other clubs remain to be investigated? Young upper middle class men of the period joined clubs, just as they joined the Masons. In higher society, Stephens worried about meeting superiors for table, and had written nervously to his father on how to address Lord Harris, whom he did not know.

We do not know how Stephens spent his evenings or much about his leisure pursuits at this time. If it is correct that Kipling was using him as a model for his late story, *The Woman in His Life*, published in 1931 in *Limits and Renewals*, then "theatres made him think impotently of new gadgets for handling the scenery, or extracting opera-

glasses from their clips; cards and golf ended in his counting the pips in his hand, or the paces between shot and shot; whereas drinks softened the outlines of things, if not at once, then after a little repetition-work."

Does this sound like our image of Stephens in his twenties and thirties? He, like John Marden in the story, was excited by engineering in general. We do not know whether Stephens drank heavily at this period, but Philip Shaw's interview of Ernie Rogers, the hall porter at the Lord Warden hotel where Holman spent his final years, revealed that in the 1920s the Colonel "mingled little with the other guests and usually dined alone, returning to the hotel lounge afterwards for whisky, which he drank in large quantities without any noticeable effect, and a cigar." ■

**\* MORE IN THE NEXT ISSUE \***

# SIGNALLING ON THE CALLINGTON BRANCH PART TWO

*Chris Osment continues his account, which first appeared in South Western Circular, the journal of the South Western Circle, in April 1994.*

After the reconstruction the signalling was upgraded to a level in keeping with Light Railway status. Signal-boxes were provided at a number of locations, although these were in effect just ground-frames housed in simple wooden huts, usually with the block working apparatus in the station office.

The direction of working was changed, the line now being 'down' from the junction to the terminus at Callington. The 1908 IR records that all the points were fitted with economical facing point locks (FPLs), a common method of economy on minor railways whereby the FPL and point were worked by the same lever. At the various loops the FPLs were provided with 34' locking bars and the signals were detected at the points.

In later years most of the points were refitted with ordinary FPLs, worked from separate levers. All the intermediate sidings had simple one-lever ground-frames (GFs), although during the 1920s many of these were renewed as two-lever frames when the economic FPLs were replaced by the normal pattern worked by a separate lever.

Home and starting signals were provided where required, but no distant signals originally, although one was installed at Gunnislake in 1938 as a result of a change in signal sighting. Another was erected at Bere Alston post-1961, probably for the same reason.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to discover which contractor supplied the original signalling equipment and early photographs are scarce, although the signals appear to have been lower-quadrant (LQ) arms on wooden posts similar to contemporary L&SWR practice. In later years many signals were replaced by the Southern Railway as upper-quadrant arms on rail-built posts, although the Down Inner Home at Calstock became one of the rare examples of a LQ arm on a rail-built post. At Gunnislake in BR days there was a lattice-post signal and another which had a concrete post.

A proper form of Absolute Block working was introduced and the 1908 IR gives the block sections as follows:

- **Bere Alston - Calstock:** Train Staff & Ticket (TST)
- **Calstock - Gunnislake:** Electric Train Tablet (ETT)
- **Gunnislake - Callington:** Train Staff & Ticket

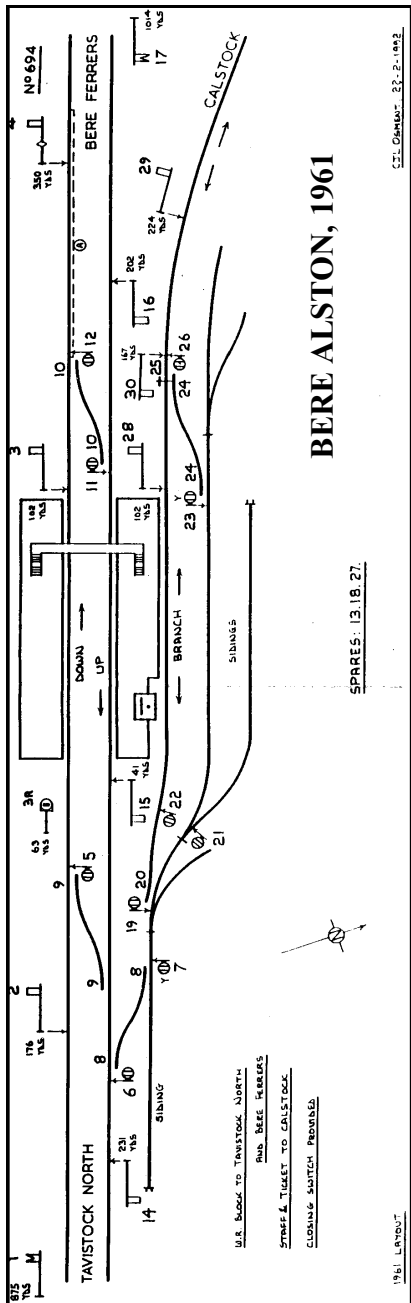
It has not been possible to establish what form of block instrument, if any, was used originally in conjunction with the TST working, but certainly in BR days the Bere Alston - Calstock section was controlled over the telephone without any block instruments. It is unclear also why there was a single ETT section, especially as it was not the one with the most intermediate sidings, but perhaps it was provided to increase operational flexibility.

By 1911 the ETT equipment is recorded as being Tyers No 7 instruments. A further Inspection of new works in 1916 (IR dated 27 May 1916) records that the Gunnislake-Callington section had been changed to ETT, with an intermediate instrument at Luckett, and in 1923 this section is recorded as Tyers No 7 also ('B' configuration). In 1931 the Bere Alston - Calstock section is recorded as having a round staff with green tickets, but apparently in BR days the tickets were blue.

The Calstock - Gunnislake section was converted to Electric Key Token (EKT) ('B' configuration) in BR days, believed to be circa-September 1951. The Gunnislake - Callington section was still ETT in 1962, but is believed to have been changed in that year: certainly it was EKT later.

Bere Alston - Calstock is believed to have remained TST until 5 May 1968, when Calstock and Gunnislake signal-boxes were closed and Bere Alston - Gunnislake became a single section with One Train Working (OTW) and a wooden train staff.

Since the closure of Bere Alston signal-



box on 7 September 1970 the branch has been part of a single OTW section all the way from the junction at St Budeaux and the train staff is kept locked in an instrument at St Budeaux (Victoria Road) station, from which it is released electrically by the signalman at Plymouth panel.

By 1993 the staff was square, blue (although most of the paint had worn off!) and fitted with an 'A' configuration Annetts key for unlocking the GF at Bere Alston.

Because of the numerous sharp curves and steep gradients the line speed was not very high: there was an overall maximum limit of 25mph, with numerous more severe restrictions. There were several ungated level-crossings and the Light Railway Order required that speed be reduced to 10mph at 300 yards from each crossing. In some places the railway company itself imposed a more severe restriction because of the local situation.

During the late 1920s the Southern Railway tried, but failed, to get approval to shorten the restricted distance to 200 yards. During their investigations they found that, in any case, many of the warning boards were not out the full distance from the crossings, but it is not clear what action, if any, was taken.

At Bere Alston a new platform was built for the branch trains at the back of the Up platform, which became an island. The branch approaches the station from the south-west and at the north end of the platform connected with the Up sidings and thence the Up Main. This connection was not signalled for passenger traffic and the branch had a separate passenger service with no normal through running.

The L&SWR signal-box (SB) stood on the Up platform near the Tavistock end, but the branch had its own SB on the same platform near the footbridge at the Plymouth end. The 1908 IR states that the branch SB had a 4-lever frame, which worked the Home and Starting signals, the crossover points to the loop at the Calstock end, and a set of protecting trap points at the Tavistock end of the platform road.

The branch SB also contained the train staff apparatus for the section to Calstock. The points connecting the branch to the L&SWR sidings were worked by an adjacent single ground lever, locked by a key held by the L&SWR signalman. The branch box was closed on 13 February 1927 and its work was



transferred to the ex-L&SWR box, where the frame was increased to 30 levers and the SB itself extended in length accordingly.

**Calstock** station was situated immediately adjacent to the Cornish end of the viaduct and was on a sharp curve (right-hand for Down trains). Apart from the single platform and main running line, there was a loop siding, which gave access to further sidings. One siding led to a wagon lift built on the Down side of the viaduct, by which single wagons could be lowered to further sidings on the quay 112ft below. With the decline of the mine traffic the lift fell into disuse and eventually was dismantled in 1934.

The SB stood at the Callington end of the station and originally contained a 4-lever frame, working the loop points at each end and Home signals in each direction. The Down Home had an additional repeater signal on the far (Devon) side of the viaduct, worked from the same wire.

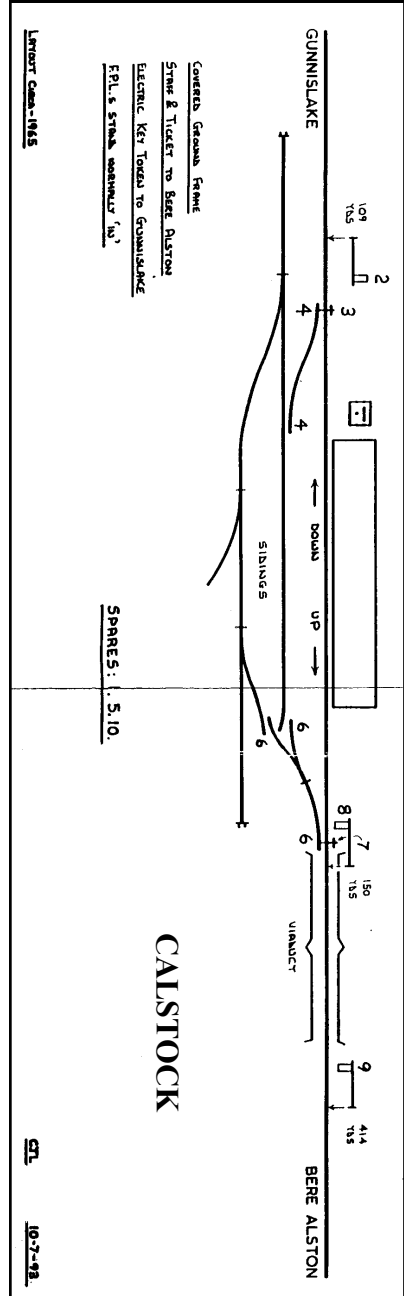
The TST and ETT equipments were kept in the station office. After complaints about the stiffness of the levers, the frame was replaced sometime between 30 April and 16 July 1937 by a larger one with 10 levers, with the 'repeater' signal becoming an independent Down Outer Home.

The new frame was fitted at the back of the SB and presumably was installed and tested while the original frame was still in use, so it must have been rather cramped in the tiny box for a while!

**Gunnislake** was the main passing place on the line and unusually had an island platform between the loops, with a subway access for passengers at the Calstock end. Home and Starting signals were provided in each direction and there were sidings off both loops, as well as an additional Down siding connection from the single line at the Callington end of the station. The SB was situated outside the Up loop at the Callington end, with a frame of 10 levers, all in use at the time of the 1908 IR. The ETT and TST equipments were kept in the office.

The Up Starting signal was originally in rear of the connection to the Up Siding, but during the mid-1930s an increase in the length of ballast trains from Hingston Down meant that there was insufficient length in the Up Loop when passing trains, so on 8 October 1936 (Signal Instruction 35 of 1936) the signal was renewed 53 yards further from the SB.

It was suggested that a Mechanical De-



pression Bar be provided on the Up loop at the fouling point with the siding (a similar arrangement already existing on the Down Loop), but this idea was rejected in favour of the following addition to the Special Instructions: "When a passenger train is standing in the up loop line no movement must be made to or from the up siding except any necessary shunting operation carried out by the engine of such passenger train."

In 1938 attention turned to the matter of the Down Home signal, at that time 28ft high and situated 206 yards from the loop facing points on the 'wrong' side of the line.

It was considered that this signal should be moved to the correct side of the line and also brought much closer to the facing points, but in the new position it could not be seen for a distance of 440 yards by an approaching train, so therefore a distant signal would be needed to comply with Ministry of Transport Requirements.

After some discussion about relative costs, and the seemingly useless argument from the S&T Department that "as the Light Railway has never been equipped with distant... there does not appear to be any reason why we should do so now", the idea was accepted.

On 20 July 1938 (Signal Instruction 32 of 1938), the Down Home was renewed 145 yards nearer the SB and a new Down Distant was provided 800 yards in rear of the relocated Home, both signals being 13ft 6in high. The arm of the distant signal was fixed permanently in the 'on' position.

The stations at **Chilsworthy** and **Latchley** were both simply a platform on the single line, although each also had a siding controlled by a 1-lever GF. The 1908 IR records that at Latchley there was a 220ft platform "which it is intended to be used when required for passengers... there is a home signal in each direction worked from the platform whenever it is required to stop a train."

A similar arrangement probably existed at Chilsworthy, as old photographs of that station show a signal-post on the platform with two stop arms for opposing directions.

**Seven Stones Halt** was just a simple platform, which was opened in 1910 in order to serve the nearby Phoenix Pleasure Grounds. Sometimes it is referred to as Phoenix Mines Halt after the nearby mines, whose owners contributed to its cost. The halt was closed when the Pleasure Grounds

shut during World War I, the date being given variously as 1914 or 1917.

At **Luckett** (Stoke Climsland) the 1908 IR records a 225ft platform on the Down side "with Home signals at each end". There was a loop siding on the Up side and a further siding on the Down side at the Gunnslake end of the platform, with a connection facing to Up trains.

The SB stood on the Up side at the Callington end of the loop and contained a frame with four levers and a key, which unlocked a further single-lever GF working the east end loop points. The 1908 IR required removal of the interlocking between the key and levers 2 and 3 (probably the point levers). The SB is recorded as reduced to GF status on 8 July 1923, but it is not known when, if at all, it was a block post. Certainly an IR dated 27 May 1916 records that an intermediate ETT instrument had been installed at Luckett.

It is possible that the 1923 date refers simply to the removal of the signals, as it is not known when these were taken out of use. The loop siding and both grounds frames were taken out of use on 23 September 1962, the other siding having been removed at an earlier date. ■

\* MORE IN THE NEXT ISSUE \*

## Book Review

# COLONEL'S ROLE ON THE HAWKHURST BRANCH REVISED

The most striking aspect of Brian Hart's new account of the Cranbrook and Paddock Wood Railway, as far as Stephsophiles are concerned, is his belittling of the Colonel's role in this undertaking.

Tradition has always attributed the branch railway to Hawkhurst as Stephens' first undertaking as an independent engineer, and as a typical example of his work. The corrugated iron buildings, for example, are often cited as proof of this.

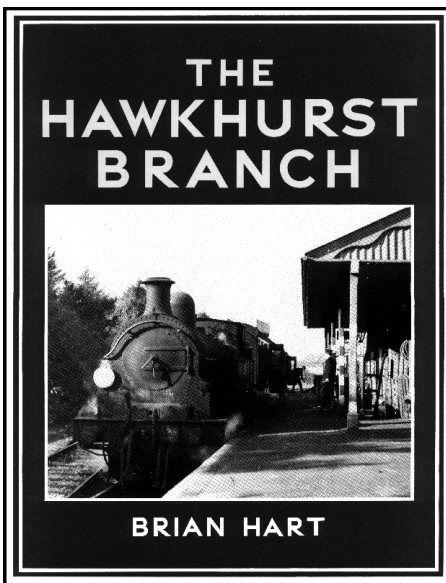
But Mr Hart has found otherwise. To quote from the book itself: "Unquestionably, 'Colonel Stephens', as he later became in his military career, was a truly remarkable man and although his achievements in the ensuing years were considerable, it cannot be claimed that he was responsible for the Cranbrook & Paddock Wood Railway."

Hart relates that while Stephens, as resident engineer, would have "dirtied his clothes on site" by overseeing construction works, he was essentially only carrying out the instructions of the SER's chief engineer Edward Seaton, who should be regarded as the true architect of the branch.

The book devotes just over a page to this enlightening and convincing discussion of Stephens' role: the rest of its 252 pages contains as in-depth an account as anyone could ever want of this outpost of the South Eastern Railway's empire.

This includes full O.S. 25" maps, track plans and signalling diagrams, plus scale drawings by Ken Garrett of all the buildings and structures at Hawkhurst station. Full details of the line's planning, construction and operation are given, including Hart's trademark coverage of related human interest stories. Here, it's the life and times of the hop pickers whose regular forays down the line were so much an integral part of its character.

Personally, I could have done without some of the rather overblown descriptions of, for example, the Kentish Weald in prehistoric



times. But that's a minor quibble. This is without doubt a splendid book and a must-have for all fans of Kentish branch lines. If it's not in this book, it's not worth a mention. **SH**

*Postscript: Peter Harding writes: "Brian Hart has sent me a copy of his new Hawkhurst book which I feel is absolutely brilliant. I don't think I can praise it enough."*

**The Hawkhurst Branch by Brian Hart, published by Wild Swan Publications, 1-3 Hagbourne Road, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8DP. ISBN 1 874103 54 2. 252 pages, hardback. Price £26.95. ■**

## 0-6-2Ts FOR THE ND&CJR



*E1R Class number 2094 pictured "in Cornwall" from Locomotives Illustrated number 127. Larger 0-6-0Ts of the Southern Railway. The platform face looks suspiciously like the style used by the ND&CJR. Could it be Petrockstow?*

### ***Tony Michell speculates on the Colonel's involvement with the rebuilding of Stroudley's E1 class into the E1R 0-6-2Ts that ran on the ND&CJR***

The North Devon and Cornwall Junction Railway had no suitable locomotives to run the railway, and in July 1925 the Southern dispatched no less than seven of the old Adams 460 Class 4-4-0s to operate the line [*British Light Railways p.139*].

Was Maunsell prompted in this by the fact that in November 1924, the Colonel had approached the Southern Railway to buy two of their slightly larger sisters, the 445 Class, for the Shropshire and Montgomery? Or was Stephens prompted to look at the 445 class by the discussion about suitable locomotive classes for the North Devon?

Although the 445 Class locos were being scrapped at the time, Maunsell refused the Colonel's bid of £1,450 apiece against the offered price of £1,700 [*Colonel 60*]. In 1925 the Colonel attempted to buy two of the 460s, perhaps to release the Terriers he had bought for other work on other lines.

Like Stephens, Maunsell also agreed that an 0-6-2T was ideal for freight workings on a light railway with heavy traffic, and proceeded

to rebuild surplus E1s to the handsome E1R class, which comfortably handled all traffic on the ND&CJR until the late 1950s.

In fact it seems likely that Maunsell and Stephens discussed the whole subject of motive power, and that one of the options proposed was to purchase further 0-6-2Ts such as those on the PD&SWJR.

Was it Stephens or Maunsell who got to discussing Stroudley's larger 0-6-0Ts, surplus since 1923, and was it Maunsell or was it Stephens who suggested rebuilding them as 0-6-2Ts? We may never know, but it seems clear that Stephens was closely associated with the ten E1Rs that came to live on the line he had just built. The Maunsell Private Papers still exist and may give the answer. I expect to get to them later this year. Sir Richard Maunsell was one of those who attended the Colonel's funeral. ■