

THE COLONEL

Number 71

Summer 2003

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

Editorial: the long and the short of it

It will not escape your notice that a massive six pages of this issue has been devoted to the report of the recent AGM. This qualifies it as the longest such account ever, even though the meeting itself must have been one of the shortest on record.

I must take the credit - or blame - for the brevity of the proceedings, as I was in the chair, although the dearth of fellow committee members - for perfectly understandable reasons - must also have contributed.

Make of this what you will, but I think an important conclusion that can be drawn from the length of the report is that we are now more active as a society than we have ever been. This must surely be good news.

The healthy growth in membership numbers proves that this activity is paying off. Innovations such as the website and the new publicity brochures, plus such perks as the visit to Fawley Hill and the availability of *The Colonel's Guide*, for which we have Jon Clarke to thank, have all played their part in attracting new converts to the society.

This has led to certain distribution prob-

lems, such as copies of this journal arriving unstamped for a small proportion of members (myself included), but I believe these teething problems should now be behind us, thanks in particular to Alan and Mary Garner returning to the mailshot fold.

It is ironic, however, that now that our publicity machine is starting to move into top gear - we have leaflets, posters and ads ready to roll - we have no-one willing to take on the task of putting them to good use.

I have noticed that other societies have had a similar problem. Perhaps publicity-seeking seems too esoteric and vain an activity for such practically-minded and modest folk as we railway enthusiasts. But all the job requires is a little imagination, some initiative and a bit of graft every now and then. And it can be fun, too. Is there no-one out there prepared to give it a go?

SH

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PUBLICITY OFFICER

Position vacant

Society News

Membership count up but cash down, AGM told

Membership is up, but cash reserves are down. Those were the main highlights of this year's AGM, which attracted the relatively low turnout of 12 members, despite the temptations of the Bucks. Railway Centre venue. We were also missing most of the committee, due to a combination of bad luck, bad transport and ill health.

But this didn't stop them all being elected, although the vacancy for a publicity officer remains unfilled. And the society is again to donate £500 from funds to deserving Stephens-related causes.

The best news is that membership is continuing to climb, thanks to an improved public awareness due to such measures as the website and the new publicity brochures. We have 22 more members than at this time last year, giving a total of 262: an increase of roughly 10% on last year, and just under 42% over the last three years.

Membership secretary David Powell reported that we actually gained 41 new members during the period, but also lost 19

due to a variety of reasons. The net result is yet another record membership count.

Our cash assets have fallen by roughly £400 compared to last year, due mainly to the one-off costs of producing the Colonel's Guide as a freebie for members, and of printing 5000 publicity leaflets that have found numerous outlets.

Even so, our total bank balance stands at an impressive £3200, including £419 in *ad hoc* donations from members, for which the society is grateful.

"The accounts are generally quite healthy," reported treasurer Nigel Bird, "especially considering what we have achieved in the last year."

As a result, membership subscription levels continue to defy inflation and have been frozen for yet another year. A full account of the AGM proceedings starts on page 9. ●

S&MR photo supply delays resolved

Delays in the availability of copies of historic photographs of the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire Railway held by the Kidderminster Railway Museum are now over, according to photograph archivist Audie Baker. Copy negatives of 30 photos, paid for by the society in a £120 grant last year, have been made and the museum's full range of S&MR photos can now be bought without paying an extra surcharge.

"I am sorry this has been protracted," said Baker. "We have all had to suffer: one gentleman has been waiting since last July for one picture that was tied up."

The problem lay in obtaining access to a bequest of photos that had been placed in the archive's catalogue somewhat prematurely. Though this happened before Baker's full involvement in the project, he admits that the move was "mistaken", but all has been resolved now.

"May I take this opportunity of thanking you officially on behalf of the Board of Directors and Trustees of the Kidderminster Railway Museum for this most generous sponsorship," he said. "I am sure it will be beneficial to your members." ●

News

Colonel Stephens video:

Our dreams of a Colonel Stephens video may at last be about to come true as it emerges that Hillside Films of Rugby is preparing a two-part set based on vintage cine film.

Australian member Robert Kosmider came across a mention of this in a catalogue from The Signal Box shop in Anstey, Leics., which described it as follows:

“Colonel Stephens Railways - Then and Now. Features archive footage of the WC&P, K&ES, S&M, WH and other lines of the Colonel’s railway empire in the 1930s, plus

an exploration of some of the surviving lines as they are today. 51 minutes, cost about £16.”

But don’t get your cheque books out just yet. Further investigation by Robert has revealed that the video is not yet available. Hillside proprietor Robert Hendry stressed that it is “in preparation”, and is turning out to be a longer job than originally envisaged.

“The Stephens project is progressing quite well, and has evolved from our original idea of a single video to a much more comprehensive two part program,” he said.

“The Stephens story is much more comprehensive than I had originally believed possible, but a paradox is that the more material you find, the more you want to fill in the remaining missing pieces in the jigsaw.”

As a result, Robert has appealed to society members to contact him with details of any footage they might have, or know of, that could help to fill in the gaps.

“We have a good deal of vintage cine film on several of the lines,” he said, “but the Paddock Wood & Hawkhurst and Sheppey Light seem to have totally escaped cine photographers. If anyone has any material we would be very interested to hear from them.”

Hillside’s address is 2 Moultrie Road, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV21 3BD. Its website is www.hillsidefilms.fsnet.co.uk

It has been a long-standing aim of the society to facilitate or encourage the production of just such a video, so do please help.

Hillside’s latest project is a video about the Stratford-upon-Avon & Midland Junction Railway, which should be available about now. Coincidentally, this line provided the junction with the Colonel’s Edge Hill Light Railway at Burton Dassett. ●

News in Brief

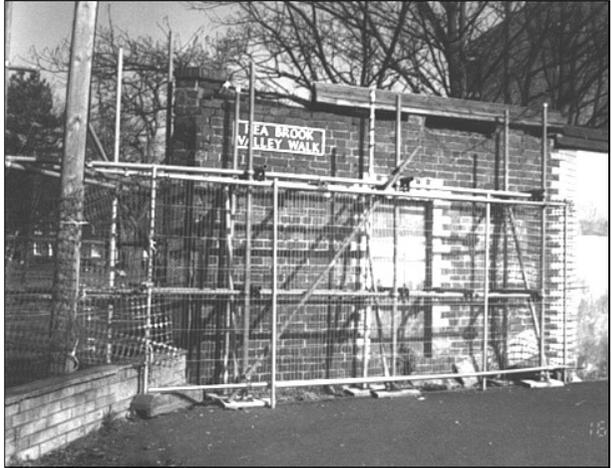
○ Peter Harding’s **booklet on the Sheppey Light Railway** has been revised and updated, containing extra information and photos. It is in his usual A5 format and runs to 32 pages with 47 photos, plus track diagrams and reproductions of timetables and tickets. Cost is £3.50, and copies can be ordered direct from Peter for an extra 40p postage from: Peter A. Harding, Mossiel, Bagshot Road, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2SG.

○ An album of **period photos of the Festiniog Railway**, all taken in 1887, is due to be published in July by Narrow Gauge & Industrial of Cambrian Forge, Garndolbenmaen, Gwynedd LL51 9RX. With around 50 photos, it is a new version of the ‘Spooner Album’ and orders are being taken now at prices starting at £33.50 plus £3.50 p&p.

○ Moseley Railway Trust has failed in its bid to open a museum at the former terminus of the **Ashover Light Railway**. Planning permission was refused by the local council.

S&MR Abbey station wins six-month reprieve

Taken by chairman Derek Smith in March this year, this photo shows the north end section of the Abbey station building clad in scaffolding. The former window is occupied by part of a mural that continues on the right, where originally there was a wooden boarded section. To the right of the window, a doorway has been bricked up.



At a meeting on June 16, Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council deferred a decision on whether or not to demolish the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway station building at Abbey Foregate in Shrewsbury until December.

As reported in the last *Colonel*, the poor condition of the building, which has been shored up with scaffolding, has prompted the council to consider its fate.

Several interested groups, including the Colonel Stephens Society, have lobbied for its preservation. This action has won it a reprieve, but its future is by no means secure yet.

The council's property services manager Geoff Trantham described the latest ruling as "largely a no-decision". He added: "My recommendation was to demolish it, largely on the grounds of public safety."

The council will now be seeking detailed proposals from interested parties on

what could be done with the building. Suggested options include a tourist information centre, tea rooms and a museum.

Membership secretary David Powell has taken up the cause on behalf of our society. In a recent interview with Radio Shropshire, he described its importance and put the case for its preservation.

David also emailed the council cabinet prior to its meeting, saying, amongst other things: "There is a very large audience watching how your council will be meeting its heritage custodian responsibilities, not just in Shrewsbury, but nationally and through societies such as ours, internationally."

The society's committee is now considering further moves in its lobbying campaign to save the building. ●

Dispatches

Letters to the editor

Southern Heights: extra info

I was interested to read the recent correspondence about the Southern Heights Light Railway [*Colonel 70*]. A very comprehensive nine-page article about the line by John Edwards was published in the journal of the Bromley Local History Society (Volume 6, 1982).

The article recaps various local newspaper and local government archive mate-

rial, including details of the public enquiry and the role of Southern Railway general manager Sir Herbert Walker. It also includes some more general notes about light railways and a potted biography of Colonel Stephens.

Mr Edwards also contributed an equally comprehensive article to *Bromley Local History* Volume 5, published in 1980, about the predecessor proposal for the Orpington, Cudham & Tatsfield Railway, which was granted a Light Railway Order in October 1901, but progressed no further.

Copies of both publications were at one time obtainable from the Local Studies section of Bromley Central Library, but I believe that they are now out of print.

Chris Jackson, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey

Correction: wrong date

Stephen Garrett's letter about the two *Wembleys* [*Colonel 70*] is most interesting, but surely the date quoted in his final paragraph, left hand column [of a report by the Colonel to the Light Railways Investigating Committee] should be 1922 and not 1902?

Laurie Cooksey, Ramsgate, Kent

● *Editor's reply: Quite right! This was my error and not Stephen's. Sorry.*

Baggage truck

With regard to Laurie Cooksey's letter about the light baggage trucks [*Colonel 70*], I saw the three-plank one on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire in 1933, so it could not have been at Selsey [see article, page 17].

Its buffers exactly fitted those on the engine *Gazelle* and also those on the horse tramcar No. 16. It seems probable, therefore, that it was used with them on the Criggin branch.

R.W. Kidner, Bow Street, Ceredigion

Casserley's dog's identity unveiled?

Re recent correspondence in the last issue about the characters in the photo on page 13 of *Colonel 69*: according to *Great Railway Photographers - H.C. Casserley* (ISBN 900193-55-8), the Casserley's dog was called *Timker*. Another piece of useless information!

Richard Jones, Heswall, Merseyside

● *Editor's note: I queried whether the dog's name was, in fact, TINKER, but Richard replied that the book gave the name as he has quoted it. Was this an error? Any help with this daft but intriguing line of enquiry would be welcome.*

*Letters to the editor***Dispatches**

***Ringing Rock's* former life -**

Firstly, in response to Ron Mann's letter about whether *Ringing Rock* was possibly named *Wembley*: I cannot answer this directly, but I do have a photo of it taken, I believe, soon after delivery to Selsey. This was reproduced in *Colonel* 33.

There is no sign of a name, but there is a very clear square on the tank side which is presumably the remains of a previous owner's logo or plate. Is this any help in identifying who the previous owner may have been?

The picture (*below*) is stamped "Morey, St Pancras Studios, Selsey" and may be outside Selsey shed. I suspect the date is soon after arriving at Selsey, which seems generally to be taken as being 1917. The cab was obviously altered at Selsey and the spark arrester (?) removed.

Secondly, I have 60 spare copies of the

Tenterden Terrier, comprising numbers 18 to 63 inclusive, plus numbers 1, 4, 10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 for disposal. These contain a lot of very interesting historical Colonel Stephens material.

Instead of letting them disappear into the morass of second hand magazines, I will be quite happy to give them to any society member willing to pay the cost of delivery or collect them personally.

*David Churchill,
84 Castle Lane, Solihull,
West Midlands B92 8DF*



Dispatches

Letters to the editor

Final words on the K&ESR railcar

Following an article by Stephen Hannington describing his 4mm scale model of the K&ESR's ill-fated Pickering steam railcar in Colonel 67, and a follow up article by Albyn Austin in Colonel 69, in both of which speculation about the seating arrangements of the vehicle was rife, noted historian Stephen Garrett waded into the fray with the following contribution:

The figure of 36 seats [*quoted by Stephen but queried by Albyn*] was given in the K&ESR Rolling Stock Register and repeated in my *Colonel Stephens Railmotors* book, but I have always presumed this included the notional seating space in the guard's compartment.

I have found an article I wrote for the *Tenterden Terrier* that contains the following information, which probably came from the May 1905 *Locomotive Magazine*, as it is mentioned in the article:

Guard's compartment: six seated passengers, four standing and up to 14 churns (whether it could carry both passengers and churns or whether these were alternatives isn't clear, but I suspect the latter), non-smoking compartment 20 seats, smoking compartment 11 seats.

This would support 3+2 seating in the non-smoking compartment and 3+2 with a bulkhead seat for six in the smoking compartment. How the six seats in the guard's compartment would be arranged I cannot say, but perhaps two longitudinal three-seater benches on either side of the compartment would fit the bill.

And R.W.Kidner had this to add to Albyn's speculations about why the railcar was so little used:

I was interested in the piece about the Pickering steamcar. I was told that one of the reasons for it not being much used was the difficulty of getting milk churns in and out. This was an important traffic at one time.

In 1935 the car was moved from its berth alongside the Pickering coaches to

the paint shop siding and some work was done on it, but by 1937 it was amongst the no-hoppers. The back and windows were altered then or earlier.

On another matter, Mr Garrett made this reply to a suggestion from the editor that the vehicle at the end of the siding pictured on page 13 of Colonel 69 (the notorious

Coach underframe, not match-truck...

***Casserley-family-and-dog shot*) is a coach underframe:**

I had always assumed that the vehicle at the end of the siding was the match truck or runner for the Pickering crane, but on closer inspection I believe that you are right and that it is the disembodied frame from one of the Pickering/Hurst Nelson conversions.

Presumably it had been brought round to the goods yard from the rolling stock dump because of easier road access for taking the body away. The photo is dated September 1935, which suggests that the carriage involved is No.4, whose body was sold to Mr Brazil in that year for £10. However, it could be No.1 whose body was sold in 1934. At least we know it's not No.6 : body sold 1932 and underframe sold 1933.

AGM 2003 REPORT

This year's Annual General Meeting took place in the grand surroundings of the restored former Rewley Road station from Oxford at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre alongside Quainton Road station. There were 12 members in attendance, plus one dog.

Unfortunately, the only committee members available were editor and secretary Stephen Hannington and archivist Stuart Marshall. Both chairman Derek Smith and treasurer Nigel Bird were unable to make it due to transport difficulties, while membership secretary David Powell was in hospital (he is now fit and well). Stephen Hannington therefore chaired the meeting.

1) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCES

Apologies were received from Albyn & Sheila Austin, Nigel Bird, Michael Bussell, John Cant, Laurie Cooksey, Roger Crumblehome, Ian Dack, Les Darbyshire, Robin Penfold, David Powell, Derek Smith, Les Spratt and Dave Sutton.

2) ACTIONS FROM LAST AGM

Website space was renewed with the existing supplier for two years at a cost of roughly £44 per year. Hopefully we'll get something cheaper in 2004, but someone else will have to negotiate it.

An advert was drafted for the EKR magazine and has also appeared in the newsletter of the Rother Valley Railway Supporters Association. A publicity brochure (see editor's report) was produced, whose text could also be used for ad copy. Unfortunately, our publicity officer resigned as this became available so, once again, little progress on publicity front.

Donations are covered in the editor's report.

There was nothing to report on the long-standing proposals to encourage the production of a Colonel Stephens video, but see news story on page 4.

3) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairman

Once again I am pleased to report another successful year for our society. Our member-

ship is right up, much better than many other societies. This AGM is something special: the first time we have held our meeting on a Sunday, not on one of the Colonel's lines, but at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, plus a ride on the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway.

This has all been organised by our membership secretary David Powell. We say a big 'thank you' to him for all his efforts. A special thank you to our treasurer Nigel Bird for looking after our funds so well in the past year and the super time we all enjoyed at the 2002 AGM and on our visit to Porthmadog.

Stephen Hannington continues to do a first class job with the journal. Long may that carry on. Thanks to Stuart Marshall for looking after the archives and the printing of *The Colonel*.

I would also like to thank Jon Clarke for the super *Colonel's Guide* to books, magazines, models, videos and films. He obviously put a very large amount of work into this project. This must be the best guide to the Colonel's standard gauge light railways of all time. We thank him for his efforts.

Publicity leaflets are currently held by David Powell.

This year we celebrate 18 years of our society and as one of the founding members, I am pleased we have managed to make the work of The Colonel known to ordinary folk.

During the year our society has been well represented at model railway shows. Thanks must go to all our members who helped out on the stands and brought their models.

The wooden jib ex-S&MR yard crane is to be moved from the Broomfield Railway to the Coleham Pumping Station in Shrewsbury, where it will be much easier to see.

I know 2003 will be a good year for our society with good times in the years to come. May I thank you all for the help I have received since becoming your chairman.

Derek Smith

Treasurer

Once again I am delighted to report substantial progress within the society. Both sub-

scription income and donations rose substantially in the past year. This has enabled us to make very worthwhile donations in support of various projects and produce the excellent Colonel's Guide, which was given to members a few months ago.

Our cash assets have fallen some £400 over the year and can be accounted for by the one-off production costs of promotional leaflets (£239) and the aforesaid guide (£264) as well as our donations of £570 made this year.

The accounts are generally quite healthy, especially considering what we have achieved in the past year. I see no reason to increase subscriptions for 2004.

I am happy to stand for re-election.

Nigel Bird

The treasurer's report was accepted in a motion proposed by Chris Jackson and seconded by Stephen Garrett.

Membership Secretary

Apology One: Please accept my apologies for not being on parade but your membership secretary is currently six miles up the railway line attempting to respond to the certain comments from our treasurer about my untidy walking.

Apology Two: As some of you may be aware, I covered the stuffing and dispatch of the most recent *Colonel*. After they had been sent, a recheck highlighted that a batch of six envelopes (out of 261) may have gone out unstamped. Four have been identified and their excess postage refunded, and not from your society's funds as it was my mistake, albeit not helped by the somewhat cramped conditions in which I was working.

Alan and Mary Garner have agreed to take over the mailing of The Colonel in future: a task which they carried out with great success before the current printing arrangement was in place. The society thanks them for resuming the job.

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Once again I am happy to report that our membership has increased for the fourth year in a row. Our Membership now stands at 262, a net increase of 22 (2002 - 240; 2001 - 220; 2000 - 185) and includes:

- One Honorary Life Member, Leslie

Darbyshire

- 16 Joint Members (down four; two joint members resigned, the remaining partners reverting to Ordinary Membership)
- Four Overseas Members (three in Australia, one in Holland), up one.
- 241 Full Members, up from 216 last year.

Since the last AGM, we have lost a total of 19 members. Three have passed away: Mr J. Randall of Forest Gate London, Mr John Pinkney of Liphook, and Mr Greenslade of Kingswindsford. We record our condolences to their friends and families.

Six have resigned, including two joint, primarily due to change of interests. Ten did not respond to their renewal request and 'hasten' (2002 - 9; 2001 - 6; 2000 - 3)

On the credit side, since the last AGM we have gained 41 new members. Significant sources of new membership include our web site and our stand at the Warley Model railway Exhibition at the NEC, which resulted in six new members.

Also, a brochure mailshot went out with the Festiniog Railway Heritage Group magazine and generated 12 new members: thank you to Adrian Gray. And we gained three new members to date from brochures handed out at the Railway Associations In London stand at the recent Alexandra Palace exhibition: thank you Chris Jackson.

We have a net gain in membership numbers of 22. The increase in membership does give some headaches in trying to forecast print numbers for *The Colonel*, but this is a problem we are more than happy to entertain!

RENEWALS

Could I make a plea for members to renew promptly, chasing those having 'senior moments' is a significant task. Last Christmas 46 members (20%) had to be 'hastened' of whom 36 responded in some way.

WARLEY SHOW

We had some challenges in manning our stand at the Warley National Model Railway Exhibition at the NEC last December that were eventually solved by Les Spratt, despite his not being in the best of health. We are very privileged in being on the Warley list of accredited societies which means we get a free 6ft stand and two free tickets each day which are transferable, so that we can

FINANCIAL STATEMENT**YEAR ENDING 20.4.03**

Balance brought forward £277.50

INCOME £

Subscriptions Received	1331.00
Donations Received	419.00
Back Issue Sales	93.64
Badge Sales	42.00
Binder Sales	179.00
Fawley Hill Tickets	36.00
Transfer ex Deposit a/c	180.00
Current a/c Interest	2.38

SUB TOTAL	<u>£2283.02+</u>
	£2560.52

EXPENDITURE £

Printing <i>The Colonel</i> and Guide	886.04
Postage	260.39
Donations Made	570.00
Corporate Membership	18.00
Stationery	132.92
Printing Promotional Leaflets	239.00
Website Costs	102.20
Fawley Hill Trip	36.00
Back Issues Printing	30.22
<u>AGM 2002</u>	
Room Hire/Food	86.50
Train Tickets (WHR)	136.00
<u>AGM 2003</u>	
Room Hire	30.00

SUB TOTAL	<u>£2527.27-</u>
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Balance	£33.25
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Plus four unrepresented cheques	£395.54
Balance as per bank statement 20/04/03	£428.79

Deposit Account

Balance at 20/4/02	£3292.51
Less transfer to current account	180.00-
	<u>£3112.51</u>
Plus interest earned to 20/4/03	53.19+
Balance at 20/4/03	<u>£3165.70</u>

TOTAL CASH ASSETS:	<u>£3198.95</u>
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split the attendance between days. I would hate to lose this high-visibility opportunity of promoting the Society.

Could I make a plea for any members willing to be involved with this year's show on December 6 and 7 to contact the membership secretary. David Powell will liaise with the indefatigable Les Spratt in arranging the stand manning, because first call goes to the hard-working West Midlands crew who have supported this stand over the last 10 years.

Sadly, for various reasons, this team does now need augmentation. If we have more than two members on duty each day we will fund the additional stand steward entrance fee. We also cover the steward's car parking charges.

Meanwhile, the membership secretary continues to store the three club stand display panels, folders with examples of recent *Colonels* as well as several hundred brochures and a brochure holder.

FAWLEY HILL

Finally, last year several members were privileged to be able to visit Bill McAlpine's fabulous private railway and museum near Henley. I record my grateful thanks to one of our members, Roy Slaymaker, who obtained the tickets for us.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

I thank my fellow committee members for the help and understanding over the last 12 months. I am willing to stand for re-election.

David Powell

Editor

THE COLONEL

The newsletter is ticking over well. There is lots of material in hand, but all contributions are gratefully accepted. I am particularly pleased that the Dispatches section has been especially healthy of late – keep it coming. I would like to see it develop as a sort of 'Notes & Queries' section.

Permission has been granted to use material from the Colonel Stephens Museum website, so a biography of the Great Man and his second-in-command Bill Austen from this source will appear in future issues.

A selection of S&MR photos has been obtained from Kidderminster Railway Museum (KRM) for use in *The Colonel*, paid for from society funds (see pages 17 and 18). The KRM has had difficulties in accessing

some of its collection, resulting in delays in provision of some of the photos whose copy negatives have been funded by the society (These have now been resolved: see page 3).

I also plan to publish adverts in *The Colonel* for related groups such as the East Kent Railway and the RVRSA in the same way that we advertise Nigel Bird's Books. This could be done on 'contra-deal' basis, whereby we advertise them and, in exchange, they advertise us.

Feature material from *The Colonel* – Stephen Garrett's history of the EKR – is appearing in *EKR News*, the magazine of the East Kent Railway Trust, and they have run a small display advert for our society. This is available for use in other organisations' newsletters. Contact the editor if you have a possible outlet for this.

I drafted a letter that was sent to Shrewsbury council, signed by Derek Smith, advocating restoration of Shrewsbury station booking office, referring to nationwide context of Stephens' work. The following reply from Geoff Trantham, property services manager of Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council, was read to the meeting:

"Former Railway Building, Abbey Foregate

Thank you for your letter regarding the condition and future use of the above building. I am at present investigating the level of repairs necessary to the building and to possible future uses.

I will be reporting to the next cabinet meeting in May and if there is any information you feel would be of use to them in their deliberations, then please let me have the information by the end of April."

[For the latest situation, see News Special, page 5]

DONATIONS

The last AGM voted £500 in donations to suitable projects. These were disbursed as follows: £400 to the further restoration of Welsh Highland Railway original locomotive *Russell*. Its owners, WHR Porthmadog, were clearly delighted. They donated complimentary tickets to visit their Gellert's Farm HQ, which were raffled at the meeting.

A further £120 was given to Kidderminster Railway Museum to create copy negatives of S&MR photos they hold. This saves members £4 per photo where this is required. Thanks to member Ian Hammond for a gen-

erous donation of £20 towards this.

Further candidates for future donations, should they be agreed, are: the ex-Ashover Light Railway Planet diesel, currently residing at Boston Lodge on the Ffestiniog Railway; more Kidderminster photos; and the Colonel Stephens Museum at Tenterden, Kent.

PUBLICITY LEAFLETS

5000 new publicity leaflets were printed and, in the absence of a publicity officer, were being held by David Powell. They have been distributed via the Festiniog Heritage Society's magazine, as well as via R.A.I.L. at a recent exhibition at Alexandra Palace, as described by David Powell. They have helped to generate 15 new members to date.

At last we have a job for a publicity officer to do. Along with the small display ad and posters, we have some material to back the position, which still has an unspent budget of £150.

BINDERS

These are now sold out, but more could be ordered if there is sufficient demand. Minimum order is 50 at a cost of roughly £200.

The opinion of the AGM was that it would be a good idea to re-stock, given the popularity of the first batch.

COLONEL'S GUIDE

This has been well received – thanks to Jon Clarke. It is hoped to publish updates and amendments in *The Colonel* on ad hoc basis.

Stephen Hannington

Archivist

Stuart Marshall reported that there had been little activity on the archiving front. He reiterated the plan that, rather than hold materials himself, he should simply keep records of material owned by members, who were understandably reluctant to part with it.

The aim is to publish a questionnaire in a future issue of *The Colonel* to establish what material members possess. The committee is to discuss whether this should be accompanied by an SAE or similar to encourage responses.

Stuart also agreed to hold stocks of the society's publicity leaflet and to supply member's requests for same.

4) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The committee was unanimously re-elected under a proposal by Stephen Garrett, seconded by Steve Parr. The publicity officer's position remains vacant.

5) SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2003/04

The treasurer's recommendation that subscriptions should stay the same was accepted in a motion proposed by Stuart Marshall and seconded by Stephen Hannington.

6) DONATIONS TO RELATED ORGANISATIONS

The meeting agreed to make £500 available in donations to beneficiaries to be decided by the committee. Proposed by Stephen Hannington, seconded by Alan Garner.

7) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

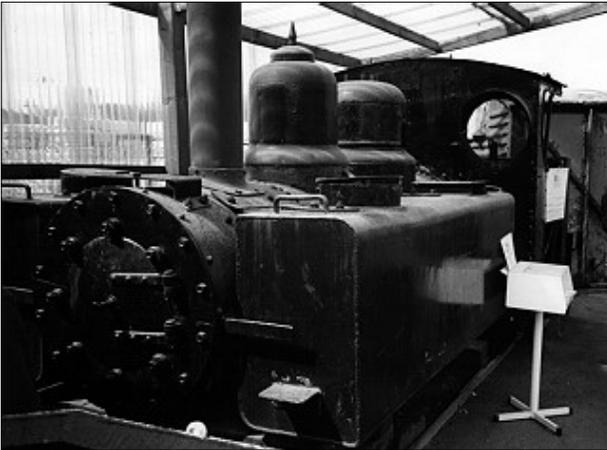
Ned Williams reported his discovery of an Internet group called the Corrugated Iron Club, dedicated to the recording and conservation of buildings constructed of this material. Given the Colonel's preferred usage of the stuff, Ned sent information to the group, including about the Colonel Stephens Society. If this is your bag, take a look at www.corrugated-iron-club.info.

Les Spratt's 7mm scale layout depicting the East Kent Railway is now appearing at exhibitions, the meeting was told.

Stephen Garrett reported that the first volume of his new history of the EKR is now due to be published by Oakwood Press in "autumn" of this year. The latest news is that Volume 1 will be out in September, followed by Volume 2 in November.

The meeting then concluded. ■

THE REST OF THE DAY



The body of the Baldwin 4-6-0T locomotive, for the restoration of which the society donated £100 in 2001, resides at the Stonehenge works site of the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway. Members had a chance to inspect it there during the pre-AGM 2003 festivities. The chassis is being worked on at the other end of the line at Page's Park workshops.

As has become traditional, the AGM was about more than attending the meeting itself. Members first visited the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway, enjoying a ride along the 2¾ mile former sand-pits line; then were given a tour of the BRC's site after the meeting had ended.

Our host at the LBNGR was society archivist William Shelford, who showed us the upper works of the Baldwin 4-6-0T that had benefited from a £100 donation from us. He told us that the group is awaiting a decision on its application for £49,000 Lottery funding to help restore the loco which, among other things, needs a new boiler. There are also a pair of wagons bogies from the Ashover Light Railway at Stonehenge works.

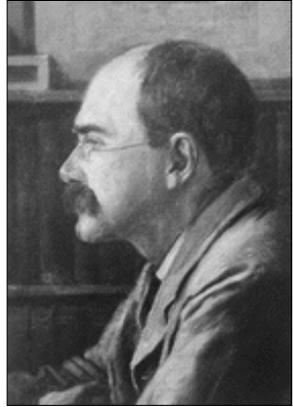
At Quainton Road, we were given a guided tour of the site's many marvels by Peter Hoskings - who, incidentally, also told us that our new publicity brochures had proved very popular, so he was given a further plentiful supply.

Included in the site is the bay platform that once served the very Stephens-esque Brill Tramway. Member Stephen Garrett told us that the Great Man was at one time involved in plans to extend this line to Oxford and has since provided further details of this project for *The Colonel*.

The society's thanks go out to Messrs Shelford and Hoskings for their hospitality, as well as to the catering staff at Rewley Road for the ample refreshments. ■

THE KIPLING LETTERS

Copies of these letters from Rudyard Kipling (right) to Colonel Stephens were kindly provided by Michael Davies from his collection. The first was hand-written and some words could not be deciphered. The format of the originals has been followed as closely as possible. Signatures are typeset and should not be taken



BURWASH
ETCHINGHAM

BATEMAN'S
BURWASH
SUSSEX

July 10th 1918

Dear Stephens,

Many thanks for your note. I only wish you could see my table just now. It rather resembles a railway collision in a Post Office. I don't see any way to fix any dates ahead for anything. I've got to go to places up and down the line, as I can and I don't see how I can fit in present jobs as it is.

Do please tell "the Ellentines" how ????? I am - I know something of the work the club is doing (I wish, by the way, they'd pronounce against aliens being allowed to hold any kind of real estate in England. That will be the next thing to take in hand) Come on with your ?????? You can't "inflict" too often or too ?????? in that line.

Ever sincerely,
Rudyard Kipling

BURWASH
ETCHINGHAM

BATEMAN'S
BURWASH
SUSSEX

6th January 1925

Private

Dear Colonel Stephens,

The Comprehensive Pass for the coming year has arrived. I send you my best thanks for it, though after the last month or six weeks I have got an idea it would have been more to the point if you had given me a free seat in a motor boat, punt or barge from Robertsbridge to Paddock Wood. I don't know whether your lines in the west survived, but coming down from the north a few days ago it seemed to me that your big brothers in the Thames Valley were being tried rather high.

With every good wish for the coming year,

Very sincerely yours,
Rudyard Kipling

Lt. Col. H.F. Stephens, M.I.C.E.,
Salford Terrace,
Tonbridge.

BATEMAN'S
BURWASH

SUSSEX

Jan. 1/29

Dear Stephens,

The faithful Pass has duly arrived, and though I am not likely to use it, I am always grateful that you remember me.

I have been working the Great North Road lately and have seen how the Railways are being killed by the Car. Of course a good deal of it was suicide on the part of the Railways and their people, but that don't make it any less sad. With all good wishes for the coming year,

Ever sincerely yours

Rudyard Kipling

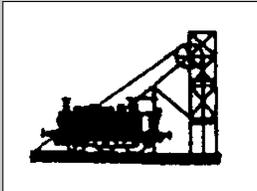
EDITOR'S NOTE:

In view of the fact that Kipling and his family destroyed many of his personal letters, the survival of these three is remarkable. Kipling would have been 53 when the first was written - after he lost his only son John, aged 18, at the Battle of Loos in 1917. Most biographers say this was a tragedy from which Kipling never really recovered. He died in 1936.

The reference in the first letter to "the Ellentines" is intriguing. This apparently refers to a club of which both Kipling and Stephens were members. In his articles attempting to trace the relationship between the two men in Colonels 62 and 63, Tony Michell speculates that they may have shared membership of one or more London clubs. Does anybody know who the Ellentines were?

It would seem that Stephens had been sending Kipling free passes for the K&ESR since 1903, when he was given an introductory note to Kipling, although there is no evidence that any meeting between the two ever took place. Any further comments on these matters are invited. SH

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THE HAPHAZARD CHARM OF KINNERLEY

Legendary railway historian Roger Kidner gives an exclusive account of a visit he made to the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway in 1933

One of the charms of the Colonel's railways was that nothing was ever thrown away, and this was especially true of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire. My introduction to the line, apart from a visit to Abbey Foregate in 1930, came in 1933 when I was doing a tenting trip in the Borders, and decided to see the once-a-week train on the Criggion branch, which was then open for non-quarry traffic only as far as Melverley.

Well, the train came in on time: two Midland carriages with an ex-LNWR 0-6-0 at the rear. The only occupant was a trussed-up goat, which was left on the platform for collection. The train was away in a minute, the engine already being at the right end.

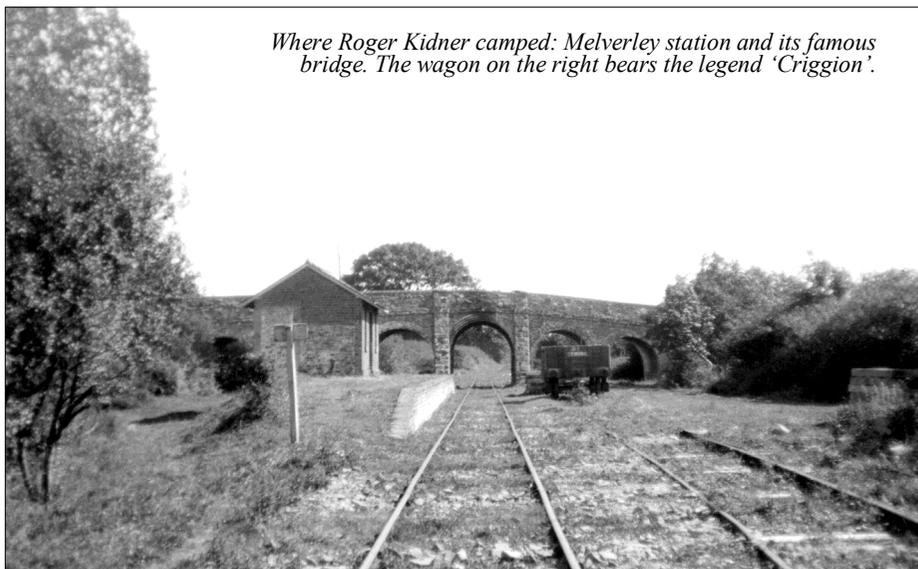
As it was raining, I decided to camp under the ample road bridge. I first selected the large centre arch, but then changed to a

side arch: just as well, because early next morning a pump trolley came clicking down the line and through the centre arch.

Going round to Kinnerley, I was amazed at the number of engines and carriages left all over the area, haphazardly placed. The seventy-years-old *Severn* was almost complete, and *Hesperus* had a plate over the chimney to keep out the rain. The other Ilfracombe Goods *Pyramus* had lost its boiler and the tender was elsewhere.

Of the Terriers, *Daphne* was in good order and even sported a headlamp, but the other two, *Dido* and *Hecate*, had their boilers up on piles above the wheels. The three ex-LNWR 0-6-0s were in the engine shed.

The most obvious carriages were the ex-LSWR royal saloon, No. 1A, and the former K&ESR ex-GER 3rd brake being used as the

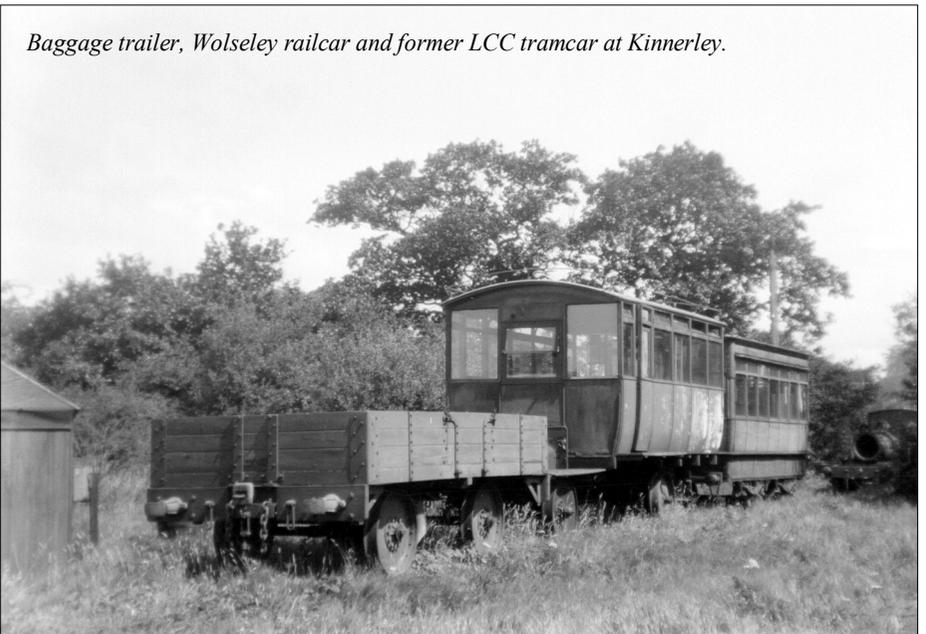


Where Roger Kidner camped: Melverley station and its famous bridge. The wagon on the right bears the legend 'Criggion'.

The boilers of Dido and Daphne at Kinnerley, as described by Roger Kidner. One of the cabs sits beyond the wheels, while in the left foreground is what appears to be one of the locos' buffers. Anyone know what the coach in the background is?



Baggage trailer, Wolseley railcar and former LCC tramcar at Kinnerley.



Criggon stone train brake van, as both were painted blue. Most of the others were present, but only two ex-MR bogies and the four-wheel parcels van No. 1 seemed to be in use.

On the long siding behind the engine shed were some real gems. The Colonel's old inspection saloon *Gazelle* was at the end, with its boiler lagging stripped. Further down were the horse tram once used on the Criggon service, and the single Wolseley railcar with its light goods trailer.

This was mostly around the shed area: in the station itself, things were more orderly. A loaded stone train was waiting for Monday, and the Ford twin-set and some not-too-bad carriages were in the bay. In the undergrowth was the skeleton of an open wagon said to have been left behind in 1880 by the Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Rail-

way.

On further visits up to 1939, nothing much changed except that one ex-LNWR engine got painted. Then, of course, the Army arrived and all was changed. ■

Editor's note: the ex-PS&NWR wagon is intriguing. Anybody know anything more about it?

All the photos illustrating this article are from the collection of the Kidderminster Railway Museum and were taken by V.R. Webster on 8 August 1932.

Jackson's Jottings *continued from page 20*

A couple of months later the K&ESR was back for more money:

20 September 20 1907: Light Railway Order *"The Board of Trade has recently confirmed the undermentioned Order made by the Light Rail Commissioners :- Kent & East Sussex Light Railway (Further Borrowing Powers) Order, 1907, extending the borrowing powers of the Kent & East Sussex Light Railway Company."*

Meanwhile, the Central Essex was slowly getting nowhere. The second half of 1908 saw a flurry of announcements tucked away in the back pages of the *Gazette*, including this one:

28 August 28 1908: Light Railway

Order *"The Board of Trade has recently confirmed the following Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners: Central Essex Light Railway (Amendment and Extension of Time) Order, 1908, amending the Central Essex Light Railway Orders, 1901 to 1907."*

■

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THE COLONEL'S ORBIT

Chris Jackson peruses further light railway stories from The Railway Gazette

In the last instalment we looked in at progress with the Bere Alston & Calstock project. At the same time a great many other schemes were being proposed, and more than a few of them came into the Colonel's orbit at some time or other. Our first mention of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, for example, comes with the approval of the abortive Maidstone extension:

25 May 1906: Light Railway Order *"The Board of Trade have recently confirmed the following Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners: - Headcorn & Maidstone Junction Light Railway Order, 1906, authorising the construction of a light railway in the county of Kent, from Headcorn to Maidstone."*

We touched briefly last time on the glut of applications in November 1906, in relation to the Callington Light Railway, but it is perhaps instructive to look at the report in full, as it gives a good overview of the bustle of activity at the commission:

7 December 1906: Light Railway Applications *"Fifteen applications to the Light Rail Commissioners were made during last month, as compared with 17 at the same time last year. The new proposals involve the construction of 20¼ miles of line and new works estimated to cost £163,802.*

"Of the proposed new mileage nine is on electric tramways of 3ft 6in gauge, including Clacton-on-Sea & St Osyth (Extension), Maidstone Corporation (Extension No 2), Llandudno & Colwyn Bay (Extensions and Amendment); while the Portsmouth & Horn-dean Electric Light Railway (on the 4ft 7¾inch gauge similar to the Portsmouth Tramways) proposes an extension of ¾mile.

"New steam-railway mileage aggregates 10⅞ miles, including E&W Yorkshire Union 3¼ miles, Mid-Suffolk (Deviations) 4¼ miles,

North Lindsey (Extension) ⅝mile, Cromarty & Dingwall 2¼ miles. The East & West Yorkshire Union Order will also ask for power to acquire certain existing mineral railways; and the North Lindsey Order will take power to construct a jetty and improve Winteringham Haven. The Mid-Suffolk Deviations propose to join the Southwold Railway instead of the Great Eastern at Halesworth. The application for the Cromarty Order will revive powers and authorise deviations from that line sanctioned in 1902.

"Applications for extension of time or amendment include:- Brackenhill, Callington, Central Essex, Dartford District, East Sussex, Leicester & District, Southwold. By the Callington Order it is proposed to transfer powers obtained in 1900 and in 1903 to the Great Western Railway. The line authorised in 1900 was to make a junction with the Great Western at Saltash, and to run through St. Mellion to Callington, a distance of 11 miles."

Little more is recorded of many of these schemes, but the promoters remained undefeated, the Edwardian fervour continued, and further orders were approved in July 1907:

12 July 1907: Light Railway Orders *"The Board of Trade has recently confirmed the undermentioned Orders made by the Light Rail Commissioners :- Wolverhampton & Cannock Chase Railway (Light Railway) Order, 1907, authorising the Wolverhampton & Cannock Chase Railway to construct and work its authorised railways as a Light Railway under the Light Railways Act, 1896, and for other purposes, and East Sussex Light Railway (Extension of Time and Amendment) Order, 1907, amending the East Sussex Light Railway Orders 1901 and 1905."*

continued on page 19 ➤