

THE COLONEL

Number 74

Spring 2004

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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: SO, FARWELL, THEN...

It's difficult to know quite what to write in this my last editorial. I should certainly say thanks to everyone who has taken to trouble to express their appreciation of *The Colonel* over the years. It's always encouraging to know that the punters are happy and enjoying the results: that's the point of it, after all.

And most of all, thanks for all the wonderful contributions, in words and pictures, that you have made to *The Colonel*. Any publication of this kind is only as good as the material provided, and some excellent stuff has passed through my hands and onto these pages. Well done, and keep it coming.

I'm bowing out at what I think is one of the most interesting periods the society has ever enjoyed. Developments at Shrewsbury Abbey, where we have seen a major piece of the Colonel's legacy not only saved, but about to be put to good use, represent a pinnacle of what this society is all about. I'm proud to say that we did our bit for this great goal. And it proves that we are not just about digging up the past, but also have a role to play in shaping the future of the Great Man's legacy.

And it is also a great achievement that we have moved closer to supporting and report-

ing the continuing efforts of the hard-working preservation societies caring for the K&ESR, EKR, S&MR, FR and WHR.

On that note, I'd point out that, as this issue goes to press, things really seem to be moving up a gear at the Robertsbridge end of the K&ESR, where the Rother Valley Railway enthusiasts have made great strides in the clearance and rebuilding of the former junction station and its approaches. We'll hear in detail about all this from our guest speaker Mark Yonge at the AGM.

We should, I think, continue to invite representatives of other organisations to our annual get-togethers to further cement the bonds between we historians and modellers and those who actually get their hands dirty keeping the body and soul of the Colonel Stephens railways together in the 21st century. That's an idea I'll pass on to my successor to do with as they see fit. See you at the AGM. *SH*

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Society News

Rother Valley to be explored at AGM 2004

Members will be exploring the Rother Valley, home of the Kent & East Sussex Railway, in more ways than one at this year's AGM at the Vine Inn, Tenterden, Kent on Saturday April 24. As well as the now traditional free train ride on the preserved railway itself, there will be a presentation to the meeting from Mark Yonge, who has been closely involved with preservation in the area for a number of years.

He has been chairman of the Tenterden Railway Company, which runs the preserved railway, as well as a director of the Rother Valley Railway (East Sussex) Ltd, a company set up to acquire the trackbed of the 'missing link' between Bodiam station and the K&ESR's former junction with the main line

Invitation to give Colonel lecture

John Rayment, branch secretary of the East Anglian Railway Museum, has written to ask if anyone is prepared to give an illustrated talk about the Colonel's railways at a future branch meeting.

"We hold our meetings on the last Wednesday of the month," he writes. "We are able to provide a slide projector, screen and slide. We are able to pay reasonable travelling expenses."

Meetings are held at Langtons Hall, in Billet Lane at Hornchurch, Essex and start at 8.00pm. Access for setting-up can be arranged from 7.30pm.

Dates available for the talk are 30 June, 28 July, 25 August, 27 October, 24 November and 15 December. Volunteers please reply via the editor. ●

at Robertsbridge.

Mark will be giving us a potted history of how the K&ESR was saved - appropriately on the 30th anniversary of its reopening (*see below*) - as well as an insight into the continuing fight to reconnect with the main line.

The meeting will kick off at 12.00 midday, with free coffee and sandwiches available for those that want them. One of the main items on the agenda will be the election of a new editor for *The Colonel*, as present incumbent Stephen Hannington is hanging up the editorial eye-shade for the last time with this issue. We have at least one volunteer for this role: see page 9 for more details.

The society-sponsored trip down the line will depart from nearby Tenterden Town station at 3.30pm, taking us to Bodiam and back. Unfortunately, the K&ESR's excellent period Victorian train is not available this time round. We will be in a reserved section of a Mk 1 coach, but at least there will be a steam loco in charge.

...
★ *Under the heading 'Celebrate the Railway That Refused to Die', the K&ESR will be marking 30 years of preservation with a gala weekend on April 3 and 4. The event will also take place almost exactly 50 years to the day since the line was closed to passenger services and lifted beyond Tenterden.*

There will be bands playing, a special air display (weather permitting), and photographic displays of the enthusiasts' achievements over the years. For more details, contact Tenterden on 01580 765155 during office hours, or you can visit the website at www.kesr.org.uk. ●

News

A Baldwin returns to the Welsh Highland Railway

John Keylock reports on the prospect of a Baldwin once again running on the WHR:

It is eighty years since Colonel Stephens purchased Philadelphia Locomotive Works Baldwin locomotive No. 590 for his new responsibility: The Welsh Highland Railway. A War Department bargain, it cost the Colonel a mere £270, compared with £1475 'free on board New York' quoted in 1917. It was something that the Colonel couldn't resist.

Eighty years on sees a re-enactment of the circumstances, with Baldwin No. 794 being delivered to Porthmadog (Gelert's Farm) on permanent loan to the Welsh Highland Railway Ltd from the Imperial War

Museum. The agreement allows for 794 to be rebuilt and run as 590: after all, the number was only painted on.

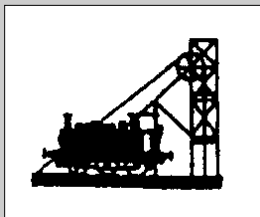
It is planned to have the loco up and running five years hence, and to this end a fund has been established. It is specifically dedicated to the memory of Peter Thomason, the company's vice chairman who was tragically killed in a motor accident in September.

It is reputed that £50,000 has already been spent overhauling the bottom end of this locomotive, but an equivalent figure – and more – will still need to be raised to ensure that the job is completed. A new boiler alone will cost in the region of £40-50,000.

One of 590's original tanks has survived: a tribute to the preservative properties of the paraffin that had been stored in it at a local garage since 1941. It would be nice to think that it could be incorporated into the rebuild.

Work is starting on the full restoration of *Russell* this autumn, and with the heady prospect of rebuilding 590, there is plenty of locomotive work in store for the loco department at Gelert's Farm Works. ●

The East Kent Railway



Ride the Colliery Line from Shepherdswell to Eythorne

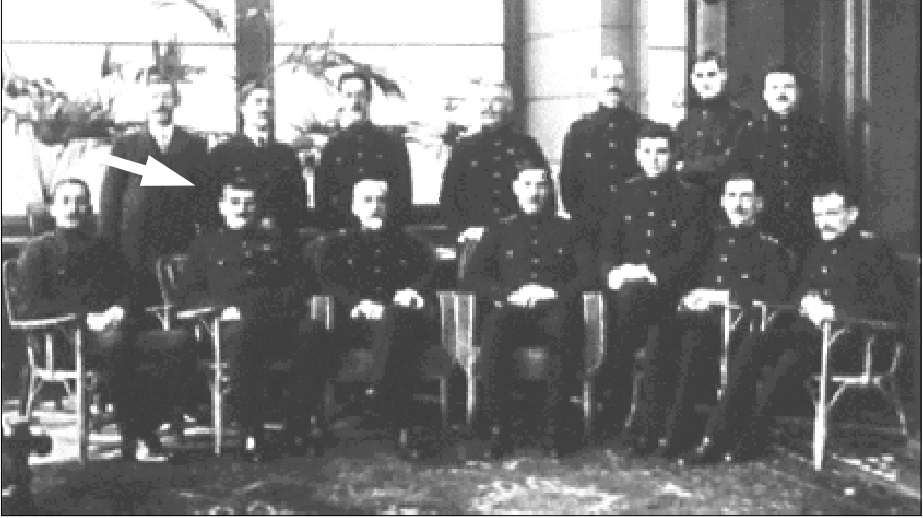
www.eastkentrailway.com

Membership secretary: Brian Hancock, 33 Beauxfield, Dover, Kent CT15 7PD

Back Issues

**Back issues of The Colonel are available for 75p each, including UK postage, or excess postage at cost for overseas, from:
Les Darbyshire, 74 Red Rose, Binfield, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 5LD**

New Colonel pictures found



One of several photos of the Great Man discovered by Tony Michell: Stephens as Lieutenant Colonel of the Royal Engineers Fortress Command (TF), seated second from left. Tony says he has discovered railway affiliations for most of the officers in Stephens' unit by 1915.

Tony Michell, erstwhile biographer of the Great Man, has been in touch to say that he is now back at work on the biography after a work-induced lull in activity.

The text so far runs to 224 pages, he says, and there is a still a "great deal" of archive material yet to be processed. The big news is that he has unearthed a number of what he believes to be unpublished photos of Stephens.

"I have discovered what I expect to be about 20 new photos of the Colonel," Tony reports. "The reason to say 'I expect' is that I have seen three, but the rest are temporarily mislaid in the archives, but will turn up if the archivist makes an effort.

"The source is Captain Salomons, the man who died on the *HMS Hythe* at Gallipoli. I have in the same source found numerous notes and letters from Stephens to

Salomons on military headed notepaper with the Salford Terrace address from 1911-1913."

He adds: "One of these notes contains the PS: 'I am just back from the Dublin Horse Fair'. The only other mention I have found of an Irish connection is that Stephens arranged a collection for widowed Irish policemen after the rising in 1916.

"Have you ever come across anything about Stephens in Ireland? It would be interesting to imagine the Great Man visiting some of the Irish light railways."

As usual, contributions are invited from readers on any of the topics Tony has raised. For now, the best biography to date of the Colonel is on the Colonel Stephens Museum website: www.hfstephens-museum.org.uk ●

Dispatches

Letters to the editor

Ladies' modesty and distant destinations at the Abbey station



Regarding the plans for Shrewsbury Abbey station building [Colonel 72], the attached photo (*above*) illustrates two interesting points:

(1) Opposite the station building there was no platform, the building being at ground level - the raised platform started further away from the buffer stops, beyond the building. There may well have been a low platform alongside the building in "Potts" days, but the track level had been raised by the time of the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway.

(2) At least part of the area marked on the plan as 'ticket office' was in fact a ladies' waiting room. Presumably there

was a partition!

Enlargement of the photo reveals that the posters on the wall are: one for the Great Western advertising Cornwall; and two Southern ones advertising respectively Hastings & St Leonards and Tunbridge Wells. The Hastings one is on a South Eastern and Chatham Railway notice board.

I wonder how many people using Shrewsbury Abbey station were travelling to any of those places!

Les Darbyshire, Bracknell, Berks.

Mr Finch and the Perkins brothers

I agree with your verdict, given on page 4 of the last edition of *The Colonel*, that the recent book on the East Kent Railway is excellent and "well worth waiting for". My only comment would be that I would have liked Stephen Garrett to have used the introduction to have said a little more about what had been Maurice Lawson Finch's contribution, and what had been his own.

I think this comes to a head in Chapter Ten, when we are treated to a 1939 trip over the railway. Are we to assume that this is Lawson Finch's own account? It does seem to match one or two of the pictures used in that part of the book which are attributed to him.

On a second matter, I see that Jon Clarke asks about the identity of G. Perkins in relation to his photographs of the S&MR. In producing my own history of the GWR's

branch to Wombourne in Staffordshire, I came across an account by T.R. Perkins of a journey undertaken on that line in 1925 just after it had opened. It was published in the *Railway Magazine* and, although I don't have my notes currently to hand, I believe Mr. Perkins made it his aim to travel on every mile of passenger railway line in Britain.

My rusty memory suggest to me that T.R. Perkins and G. M. Perkins were brothers, and that one of them was indeed a pharmacist from Henley in Arden. I have dim recollections of T. R. Perkins also writing about a trip on the Bishops Castle Railway.

Ned Williams, Wolverhampton, W. Midlands

Home sought for Lawson Finch's file

My husband [Maurice Lawson Finch] was an avid collector of all things that interested him. As you might know, the K&ESR was of major interest. Sifting through his papers, I have found a file containing articles cut from newspapers and magazines with reference to the line. They date from 1949 to 1977 and obviously they are just random.

I have already offered them to the Tenterden Museum, but they are not of interest. It seems a pity to bin them and I thought if you put an offer in your magazine, some enthusiast might like to have them.

Eileen Finch, Seaford, East Sussex

● RESPONSES VIA THE EDITOR, PLEASE

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Dispatches

Letters to the editor

WC&PR models in 4mm scale

Scratchbuilt WC&PR No. 1 Clevedon, an ex-Furness Railway Sharp Stewart of 1857.



Coach No. 7, an ex-Metropolitan Railway First from a Bill Bedford kit that "went together reasonably well".

Thought you might be interested in a couple of pictures - the first is my scratch built model of *Clevedon*, which is almost complete.

The second is a model of WC&PR coach No 7, an ex-Metropolitan Railway four-compartment 1st, converted to a saloon. It's a Bill Bedford kit and available from him for about £25.

The kit is etched brass throughout and you supply wheels, buffers and whitemetal detailing bits. The kit incorporates fold up tab and slot construction and rather neat

sprung W irons. It's my first kit of his and went together reasonably well.

The five-compartment ex-thirds are going to follow soon. The WC&PR had three pairs of these, along with No 7, which incidentally is at the London Transport Museum Depot at Acton on display, minus a chassis.

Andrew Ulyott, Weston-Super-Mare

AGM 2004: A GENUINE ELECTION?

Stephen Hannington sets the scene for the next AGM on April 24

One of the highlights of the upcoming society AGM was to have been a big 'first' for the society: a **contested** election! Never before have we had more than one person seeking a committee position, with the winner being decided by an actual show of hands.

Unfortunately, it doesn't look as if we're likely to have one after all. Whereas we had several people coming forward to volunteer for the role, most of them promptly withdrew when they heard that there was a serious contender or two. Nonetheless, the committee thanks them - they know who they are

- for coming to the society's aid in its hour of need.

However, there was one other volunteer who seemed enthusiastic about the job, but I've heard nothing from him since, after inviting him to email a 'job application'. I blame myself, for not making a note of this person's phone number. But if you're reading this, and simply forgot to follow through, we're still interested. Please get in touch.

The one candidate we do know about, long-standing member Ross Shimon, has supplied his CV and application, which is published below. It may be a mere formality if no-one else comes forward, but I think you'll find Ross' credentials interesting whatever happens...

AGM 2004 AGENDA

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

Why I'd like to edit *The Colonel*

I have been interested in the light railways of Colonel Stephens since the late Fifties. I have a reasonable collection of pamphlets, books, magazine articles and photos.

I first visited the K&ESR in about 1960 and took photos of the station at Tenterden and the P Class tank at Robertsbridge. I built a rather crude freelance model layout in EM gauge, purporting to be Loose on the proposed Maidstone extension. It had two Terriers and a P Class tank.

I have been a long-term member of the Colonel Stephens Society (membership no. 047). I have, however, been unable to be active because of my job, latterly in The Netherlands.

I have also been a long-term continuous member of the Tenterden Railway Company

and the Kent & East Sussex Railway Preservation Society before that. I am also a member of the Rother Valley Supporters Association and the East Kent Preservation Society.

My experience of editing includes:

- Portsmouth & District Model Railway society newsletter, 1960s;
- Preston Polytechnic library staff newsletter, late 70s;
- Managing editor, IFLA Journal 1999-2004 (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions).

I would like to be the editor because I am very keen to have the opportunity to work in a practical way to assist the Colonel Stephens Society, now that retirement provides with the time to do so.

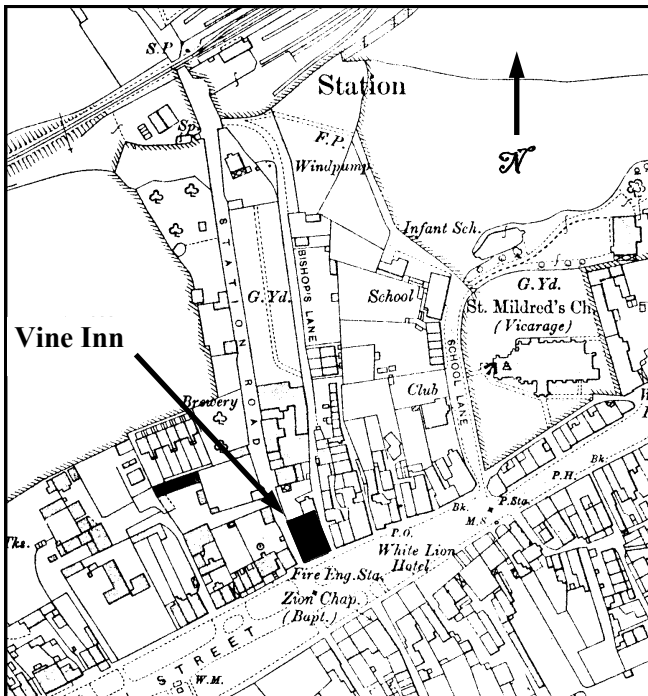
I have, however, little to offer in the way of improvements or changes. I believe that *The Colonel* is a model of its kind, given the

resources available. I would try to encourage a little more modelling information, but that, of course, depends on the availability of contributors. Perhaps we could find some more human interest stories from key figures, and some more preservation news.

Naturally, I am happy, if there are other candidates with better and more relevant experience, to withdraw and find some other way to work for the society. I have no suggestions at present for major changes to the layout of *The Colonel*, although, once I become familiar with the facilities available, I would be keen to continue its development.

Ross Shimon, Faversham, Kent

Location information



**Date: Saturday
24 April 2004**

**Venue: Vine Inn,
Tenterden, Kent**

Time: 12.00am

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 DERELICT POTTERIES RAILWAY

Chris Jackson supplied this fascinating news report from the July 19 1907 issue of The Railway Gazette, referred to in the last Colonel. Picture captions are reproduced as they originally appeared

The accompanying illustrations, which depict characteristic scenes of the picturesque state of disrepair into which the derelict "Potteries" Railway has fallen, are of interest in connection with the movement for re-opening the line. This unfortunate enterprise originated in the year 1862 in a scheme for the construction of a mineral railway from Llanymynech to Westbury, the latter village having a station on the Great Western and London & North Western Joint Line from Shrewsbury to Welshpool.

In the following year, however, the company decided on a more ambitious programme. It obtained powers to drop the Kinnerley – Westbury section, and instead to continue the line from Kinnerley to Red Hill, a station on the Shrewsbury – Welshpool Railway and much

nearer to Shrewsbury, from whence it proposed gaining access into Shrewsbury general station over the Great Western and London & North Western Joint Line.

At the same time it received permission to carry passengers as well as minerals, and in consequence changed its name from the West Shropshire Mineral Railway to the Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway. The application for running powers over the joint line of its powerful neighbours was refused the little company, which, nothing daunted, asked for and obtained parliamentary sanction to build its own line over the remaining distance to Shrewsbury.

This latter section runs for some distance parallel to the joint line, from which it is only separated by a fence, crosses over the



Typical View of the Track of the Deserted Railway, showing one of the Standard Over-bridges

Shrewsbury & Hereford Railway, and then sweeps round into that quarter of the county town known as the Abbey Foregate, where its Shrewsbury terminus is located.

In 1864 the Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway Company was authorised to amalgamate with a kindred concern called the Shrewsbury & Potteries, which had already obtained powers to construct a line from Stoke-upon-Trent to Shrewsbury via Market Drayton. The associated companies re-named themselves the "Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Junction Railway" and launched an ambitious scheme to continue the line from the western terminus at Llanymynech to Llanymynech, and thence across the Welsh hills to Bala and Festiniog, passing through a tunnel two miles in length near Llangynog, till it came to Portmadoc on the Cardigan Bay coast.

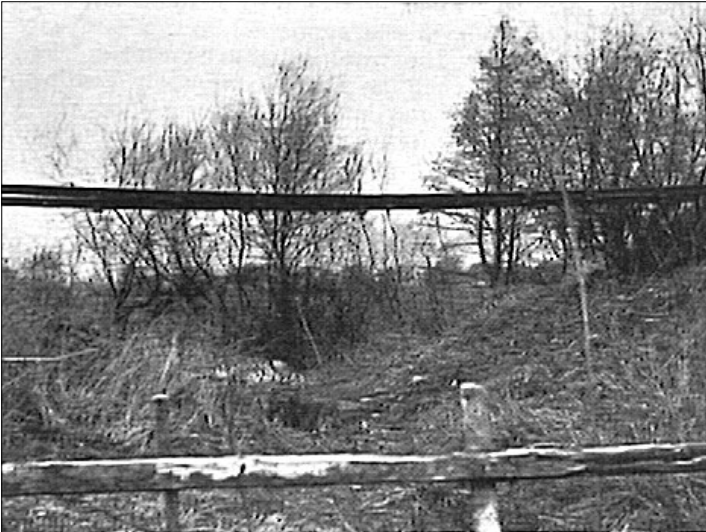
The lines actually constructed are as follows:- Shrewsbury to Llanymynech, main line so-called, 18 miles in length, double track (though the "down" track was removed in 1873); Kinnerley to Criggion, branch, 6 miles in length, single track; Llanymynech to Llanymynech, branch, 2½ miles in length, single track; Shrewsbury (Abbey Foregate) to Potteries Junction, on Shrewsbury & Wellington Joint Railway, spur line, ¼ miles in length, single track.

'But the line has never been worked again from that day to this'

All of these, save the spur line, were operated in due course. The main line was opened for traffic in August, 1866, and opening of the two branches followed two or three years later.

From the beginning the company laid stress on the fact that it conveyed third-class passengers in "covered coaches" by all trains. Second-class coaches were also run until 1875, when they were abolished, and at the same time all third-class fares were reduced to the basis of a penny per mile.

The station at Llanymynech is alongside that of the Cambrian Railways, on the main line from Oswestry to Welshpool. The "Potteries" Railway at one time had an arrangement with the Cambrian, whereby week-end tickets were issued from Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth and back for 8s. first-class and 4s. 6d. third-class, and market tickets between Shrewsbury and Oswestry at the price of 2s. 8d.



Track suspended in Mid-air. The Embankment has completely slipped away.



*Kinnerley,
Junction for the
Criggion Branch,
showing Ruined
Signal Cabin,
Signals and Water
Tank.*

During the summer excursions were frequently run to Criggion, which besides being an important mining centre, is most picturesquely situated in the midst of the lovely district around the Breidden hills. The company's misfortunes reached their climax on Monday, June 21 1880, as reported in the Wellington Journal of the following Saturday as follows:-

"We have to lament the loss for a while, if not altogether, of a short line of rail which afforded very great convenience, especially for parties attending Shrewsbury market either for buying or selling, who resided anywhere between that town and Llanynech and district.

"The Shrewsbury & Potteries line, as it is called, has been considered in anything but a good state. Still, the convenience was so great that a considerable amount of traffic, passenger and mineral, was carried on it.

"But from some, at present unexplained cause, a Government Commissioner made an examination of it last week, and on Monday last an order came down that all traffic on it was to be stopped forthwith; and greatly to the astonishment of some residents near the line they found their communication with the outside world stopped suddenly and without notice.

"It is to be hoped that some arrangement will shortly be made to re-open the line, so that parties living near it may not for long be excluded, or virtually excluded, from their county town."

But the line has never been worked

again from that day to this, although there have been several fruitless attempts from time to time to bring about its re-opening. In 1888 the property was transferred to a new company styling itself the "Shropshire Railways" which sold the rolling stock owned by its predecessors. Of the "Shropshire Railways" the latest Board of Trade returns state "there are neither directors nor officers appointed to this company, which is not in working."

Only the trunk of the "Potteries" railway still exists. The Criggion branch has almost completely disappeared, since it ran entirely on the ground level. Some years ago the Cambrian Railways took over the Llanyblodwell branch, and the extension from thence as far as Llangynog has been carried into effect more recently by the Tanat Valley Light Railway. Then the North Staffordshire Railway has built a line from Stoke to Market Drayton.

Below is a complete timetable of the company's service in the western direction, during the year 1878:- (see page 15) ■



*Station Office on
Llanymynech
Platform.*

Comments on the Potts pictures

Jon Clarke writes:

The Kinnerley bridge pic shows the trackbed in a better state than ones I have of it taken in 1902 [see *Colonel 73*], when a haystack was under the bridge.

The picture of the signal box is equally interesting. Two Potts signals are clearly standing, but they do not appear in the 1902 ones I have.

I would guess, therefore, that your photos were taken much earlier, and were dug out of the archives for the 1907 article.

The signal photo is especially interesting as it shows rails curving into what appears to be a white gate, or at least posts, presumably heading for the Criggin branch. ●

Chris Jackson replies:

Very intriguing that you think they were using old photos, as I suspect *Railway Gazette* did not have an archive at that stage.

Although today's *Railway Gazette International* traces its ancestry back to *Herapath* and earlier (1835), that's through one of various other titles that were merged into the journal between 1914 and the mid-1930s. *Railway Gazette* as such was only launched in mid-1905 as an offshoot of an American

title, so I'm not sure how they would have laid their hands on pre-1902 pictures.

They may have come from *Railway Magazine*, which was launched in 1897 and shared a common editorial team and later common management right up to the 1980s. However, I'm not even sure that *RG* and *RM* had come together at that stage.

My guess, without checking, is that this association might date from around 1910 when *RG* was acquired by John Aiton Kay, who remained proprietor and editor until his death in 1949. Do you have any indications that *RM* might have done a story on the Potts at that period?

Or, of course, the photos may have come from someone else's collection altogether. It is frustrating that there is no indication as to where the 1907 article originated. Someone must have initiated or contributed something, as I can't see an international, US and British Empire-focused magazine suddenly deciding to run a feature on the Potts off its own bat!

I guess we'll just have to keep hunting... ●

POTTERIES, SHREWSBURY & NORTH WALES JUNCTION RAILWAY							
Secretary – John Wade			General Manager – A Judd, Shrewsbury				
Fares		Down – All First and Third Class					
First class.	Third class.		mrn.	mrn.	aft.	aft.	
s. d.	s. d.	Shrewsbury (Abbey Station) dep	6.0 *	9.30	2.0	6.15	
0 6	0 3	Redhill	6.11 *	9.38	2.8	6.23	
0 8	0 4	Hanwood Road	6.14 *	9.41	2.11	6.26	
1 2	0 7	Cross Gates or Ford	6.25 *	9.50	2.20	6.35	
1 6	0 9	Shrawardine	6.32	9.55	2.25	6.40	
1 6	0 11	Nesscliff	6.37	10.0	2.30	6.45	
2 0	1 1½	Kinnerley (see side)	6.43	10.7	2.37	6.51	
2 6	1 4	Maesbrook	6.49	10.15	2.45	6.58	
3 0	1 6	Llanymynech { arr	7.0	10.20	2.50	7.3	
		{ dep	...	10.24	...	7.13	
3 4	1 8	Llanyblodwell arr	...	10.30	...	7.20	
* Wednesdays Only							
CRIGGION BRANCH							
		Kinnerley dep	a 7.20	a 10.12	a 3.46	b 5.15	b 7.5
		Melverly	7.27	10.19	3.53	5.22	7.12
		Crewe Green	7.32	10.24	3.58	5.27	7.17
		Llandrinis Road	7.37	10.29	4.3	5.32	7.22
		Criggion	7.40	10.32	4.5	5.35	7.25
		a. Saturdays only.	b. Wednesdays only.				

Timetable of the company's service in the western direction, during the year 1878

THE ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY

∞
Robertsbridge station, East Sussex TN32 5DG

REBUILDING THE K&ESR FROM ROBERTSBRIDGE TO BODIAM

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THE CUNNINGHAM FILES, PART TWO:

“LOCK UP THE COLONEL AND BILL AUSTEN AND THROW AWAY THE KEY”

Roy Cunningham, who travelled on and photographed several of the Colonel's railways in their twilight years, recalls the extraordinary opinions of one of the Great Man's former employees on the S&MR

I was back at Tenterden on 11 June 1961, again travelling by bus from Maidstone, this time in the company of a lady who was soon to become my wife, to await the arrival of the very last BR revenue-earning train to operate on the K&ESR. This was the Locomotive Club of Great Britain's South Eastern Limited. And we waited, well, for some time after the scheduled arrival time.

And then we heard it on the bank. Not puffing very well. And the puffs were distinctly getting slower. And slower. We were at the Headcorn end of the station and eventually the leading locomotive came into sight. At that point the puffs stopped altogether. Both Terriers – 32622 leading and 32670 banking – had run short of steam.

I must admit that I panicked slightly, thinking they might not attempt the last couple of hundred yards into the station. But they took a few minutes for a 'blow-up', then rolled into the station in fine style. Huge crowds, both travelling and linesiding, marked the occasion.

Like the East Kent, by the time that closure came, most, if not all, the K&ESR running line had been relaid in 95lb bullhead rail, much of it replacing the double-head that had been laid between 1910 and the 1930s.

I travelled on the Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Railway on 9 September 1956. This was on the second day of a tour organised by the Railway and Canal Historical Society. The previous day had been spent on board a horse-drawn narrow boat on the Llangollen Arm of the Ellesmere Canal.

The train was provided by the War Department, who were then operating the line. It comprised Bagnall inside-cylinder 0-6-0T WD No. 143, an ex-LMS compartment coach, a brake saloon originally forming part of the former LT&SR through Ealing-to-Southend train, and a WD (Southern Railway-built) fitted goods guard's van.

If my memory serves me right, at that time the link to the BR network was at the site of what would become the Hookagate permanent way yard, not at the original transfer sidings at Meole Brace. The exchange sidings were located between the running lines of the two railways.

The WD had taken over the whole of the S&MR main line from Shrewsbury to Llanymynech, but had not included the Criggon branch in its requisition. They had relaid their portion of the line with new flat-bottom rail and resignalled it with steel signal posts and upper quadrant semaphores. I assume that it had also modernised the block instruments and installed full interlocking. However, on the day of our visit all the signalling was switched out and our special was run on a one-engine-in-steam basis, with signals happily passed at danger.

There was still civilian traffic over the line at this time, but this was moved by the WD on behalf of the S&MR company up to nationalisation, and on behalf of BR thereafter. In 1956 two sections of the line were kept open exclusively for this civilian traffic. These were from the exchange sidings to Shrewsbury Abbey, where there was an oil terminal;



Shrewsbury Abbey station in 1956. The platform road has been relaid with light flat-bottom rail by the WD, but that in the loop road appears to be original PS&NWR

and the Criggion branch, where the line continued beyond the disused Criggion station, through a pair of five-barred gates into the British Quarrying Company's premises.

The Criggion branch was a strange anomaly by then, in that it was an isolated part of the BR network, on which they employed two lengthmen for maintenance. But the track, which was probably original PS&NWR double-head, was of a vastly different standard to any other BR running lines. Equally anomalous was the fact that although the traffic passing over it was BR's, the haulage was provided by the WD.

The situation at Shrewsbury Abbey was different in that it was included in the WD requisition. The photograph that I took at Shrewsbury Abbey shows that the WD had relaid the platform road with fairly light (60lb?) flat-bottom, whilst what looks like

'Potts' vintage double-head remains in the engine release road.

The photograph also shows just how close the station was to the Abbey itself: a very short stone's throw from the buffer stops. Shrewsbury Abbey station lasted for a few years after the S&MR closed, with access via a spur connection to a truncated remnant of the Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth line.

About half a mile south of Kinnerley junction alongside the Criggion branch was the grounded body of the Wolseley-Siddeley railcar [*Colonel 10*] that had been used as the passenger vehicle on the branch, hauled by *Gazelle*. On our tour of the railway in 1956 we were conveyed along the branch by a brace of Drewry petrol railcars normally used by the WD maintenance gangs.

We had an ex-S&MR employee on



The body of the Wolseley Siddeley railcar alongside the Criggion branch, near Kinnerley in 1956. Colonel 10 told the story of its rescue 30 years later by Mike Wright. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

board the special. He was an elderly man, well past retirement age, but he had a theme that he repeated over and over again: that Colonel Stephens should have been thrown into Shrewsbury jail and the key thrown away. No particular offence was specified, but according to this man, the way he, his colleagues or the railway had been treated by the Colonel would have justified such action.

After about 20 minutes of continuous haranguing I had heard more than enough. In the hope of changing his mood, I asked him what he thought of Bill Austen. "Should have been thrown in the same cell alongside o' him," came the vehement reply.

It was a great shame, really, as this gentleman had been invited along in the hope that he could have related some of his memories of the line under the Stephens/Austen regime. But he was so obsessed with his opinion of his former bosses that we discovered nothing of interest from him.

I cannot remember reaching Llany-mynech on this trip. The working agreement at this station has always intrigued me: the S&MR passenger trains always appeared to use the Up S&MR platform, arriving from Shrewsbury direction wrong-road. There did not appear to be any protection at the junction end of the platform to stop an over-running

S&MR train from fouling both tracks of the Cambrian main line. Perhaps somebody has the answer. Could it be that S&MR trains were driven very carefully and had very reliable brakes?

I spent a week on the Ffestiniog in 1958, when I was fortunate enough to be given a lift by a friend with a car. We took advantage of our flexible transport to visit the Stiperstones on the return journey. My companion photographed the abandoned and locked engine shed, and one of the hopper wagons that was then still in use.

I have prints of both photographs, but unfortunately have lost contact with the photographer. That would have been during the period when Shropshire County Council was operating the Snailbeach District Railway, using an agricultural tractor for haulage. ■

MORE ON EKR'S LCDR COACHES

Just when he thought he was home and dry, Robin Fielding discovered that the Selsey Tramway had a prior claim to make

I really thought I had got things pretty well sorted in respect of the ex-LCDR four-wheel coaches that went to the East Kent Railway. Just how wrong can you be?

No sooner had issue No. 72 of *The Colonel* appeared than I had letters from fellow members Laurie Cooksey and Ron Mann. They were able to provide me with information showing that, whatever SECR records might indicate, the ex-LCDR four-wheel First No. 14 (SECR No. 2410) was to be found on the Selsey Tramway.

Both kindly supplied me with information from the last page of the first edition, published 1948, of the book by E. Griffith on the Selsey Tramway. Referring to a coach body, he writes: "The legend 'Lot 262' can be faintly traced on the outside, and inside is still clearly painted in gilt 'No. 2410 2nd Class'." SECR records show that First Class coach No. 2410 was downgraded to Second during 1904.

Laurie Cooksey's research shows the purchase of the second-hand First Class carriage from the SECR for the Selsey Tramway. The references he has found relate to the purchase of the carriage during 1919, while the SECR records do not show No. 2410 as sold until 1921.

What is clear is that both the East Kent and Selsey Tramway had very similar, if not identical, ex-LCDR four-wheel First Class carriages. I consider it unlikely that the Colonel would have swapped two seemingly identical carriages between the two lines, although it is, of course, a possibility. What is certain is that one body

remained at Selsey after closure and photographs show the East Kent vehicle still in existence and standing on its wheels at Shepherdswell during 1947.

The question is: where did the Colonel acquire the second ex-LCDR four-wheel First? The SECR sold various different types of LCDR carriages to a number of concerns and individuals. It may be that the second carriage came by one of these routes. Further research is required.

Following on from this, I have been examining further photographs of East Kent Railway carriage No. 8. I now think my original identification of the date of construction being post-1885 is too late: it is more likely to be post-1880. This means that carriage No. 8 could be ex-SECR No. 2737 or 2771. I remain fairly certain that it is unlikely to be the 1879-built No. 2888.

One further point I must correct is my statement that no lining was applied to ex-LCDR carriages during the life of the SECR. This had been the information published by the SECR Society. However, I know this is now considered to be incorrect. In recent times some former LCDR carriages have been recovered to the K&ESR after being used as parts of a bungalow. These vehicles still bore SECR livery and the lining was clearly visible. ■

→ *Continued from page 20*

directors to pay a dividend at the rate of 2½ per cent per annum on the Ordinary Stock.

The Bere Alston & Calstock Light Railway (Extension & Amendment) Order, 1909, authorising an increase of the capital of the separate undertaking and the extension of the line to Congdon's Shop, has been confirmed by the Board of Trade. At the meeting on

Tuesday, the directors were authorised to create £9,000 new Debenture Stock and to issue £10,000 in Ordinary shares. ■



Jackson's Jottings

WEST COUNTRY WAYS

Chris Jackson digs out more gems from The Railway Gazette archives

January 29 1909: Weston, Clevedon & Portishead Docks Railway

The directors report that the extension of the line from Clevedon to Portishead was opened in August 1907, and that a substantial increase in traffic receipts has resulted therefrom. The junction at Portishead with the Great Western Railway was completed in November last.

April 30 1909: The Light Railway Report

The twelfth annual report dealing with the proceedings of the Board of Trade and of the Light Railway Commissioners under the Light Railways Act 1896, up to December 31 1908, shows that a total of 579 applications for Orders to authorise light railways (including 87 applications for amending Orders) have been made to the Commissioners since the Act came into operation.

In respect of 366 applications (15 in 1908 and 351 in previous years) Orders have been submitted to the Board of Trade for confirmation. Five other applications, in respect of which Orders are under settlement, have been approved by the Commissioners; and 197 applications have been rejected or withdrawn.

The decisions with respect to 14 applications have been deferred, and seven new applications made in November last remain to be considered. Of the Orders sent to the Board of Trade, 137 referred to light railways of the 'A' class, where the rails are laid on private land, the mileage being 1,314½, and the estimated cost £8,274,486.

144 orders referred to class 'B' lines, where the rails are laid on public roads, with a mileage of 639 and estimated cost of £6,077,325. There were also eight Orders to 'Neutral Class' lines with a mileage of 54, and an estimated cost of £543,506; and 77 were amending Orders, in respect of which the estimated cost was £167,148.

The number of Orders so submitted was, therefore, 366, dealing with 2,007½ miles of line and works estimated to cost £15,062,465. During 1908 the Board of Trade confirmed eight of the 15 orders submitted to it in that year, in addition to ten Orders which had been submitted in 1907. During the year, the Board had confirmed five orders, leaving two still under consideration.

More developments in the Tamar Valley:

January 29 1909: Light Railway Orders

The Board of Trade have recently confirmed the undermentioned Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners: (2) Callington Light Railway (Amendment) Order, 1909, further amending the Callington Light Railway (Extension of Time) Order, 1903, and the Callington Light Railway (Amendment and Transfer) Order, 1907, and authorising the construction of a light railway in the extension of the light railway authorised by the Callington Light Railway Order, 1900.

(Pick the bones out of that one! Ed.)

April 23 1909: Plymouth, Devonport & South Western Junction Railway

The report of this company for the past half-year shows receipts of £30,764, including £573 profit from the working of the Bere Alston & Calstock Light Railway, as compared with £31,707 for the corresponding period of 1907. Expenses, including £11,640 paid under working agreement with the South-Western Railway, were £12,433 against £11,974, leaving a net revenue of £18,331 against £19,733.

The balance available for dividend is £3,562 less at £12,361, partly because of the £2,175 interest now required on the 3 per cent Calstock Guaranteed Stock. This enables the

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