

THE COLONEL

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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: reasons to be cheerful

Well, what do you think? Assuming all has gone to plan, you should be looking at a new, digitally printed *Colonel*, which means that everyone gets an originally printed version instead of a photocopy. Above all, this means clearer, sharper photos. As an added bonus, we get staples too.

We have archivist Stuart Marshall to thank for this, as well as treasurer Nigel Bird for volunteering to take over the stuffing of envelopes and posting. Many thanks, also, to Alan Garner for his tireless efforts since the society's birth in photocopying and distributing *The Colonel*.

And there's more to celebrate. For not only have membership levels picked up again, they are close to breaking the all-time record. If membership secretary David Powell's hopes are fulfilled, we shall have gone from the doldrums to a record number of members in less than two years.

Furthermore, we can look forward to a superb AGM in March, when we will be able to sample the delights of a trip on the K&ESR paid for by the society.

I must emphasise here, though, that we have to know in advance how many of you will be turning up. And please don't say you will, then fail to show. We don't want a repeat of the last time we had a trip on the line, when the society ended up paying fares for people who weren't there.

We are also starting to see some results from our donations to worthy causes, chiefly with the return to working order of *Spitfire* on the East Kent. True, our contribution was fairly minor, but I think we are justified in feeling some satisfaction in having helped to get this loco back on the rails.

Saving the worst till last, we still don't have a Website up and running yet, although all the elements are ready to roll, if only our Website host would answer our emails and tell us how to get the materials onto the site. We shall persist, though, and hopefully will have a result for the New Year. *SH*

Staff Officers

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

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

David Powell

Gateways, Bledlow Road, Saunderton,
Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 9NG
Tel: 01844 343377
Email: 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

ARCHIVIST

Stuart Marshall

53 Peasland Road, Saffron Walden,
Essex CB11 3ED
Email: christsu66@compuserve.com

PUBLICITY OFFICER

Julia Hastings

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

Society News

AGM at Tenterden: will you be there?

There's a treat in store for members attending the next AGM: a free train ride on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. But in order to secure a seat, and to enable us to make appropriate booking arrangements, please confirm your attendance by contacting the editor at the address or email opposite right away.

This information is also vital to the catering arrangements: if you turn up without prior notice, you might not get a sandwich, let alone a seat on the train!

The AGM itself will be held in the func-

tion room of the Vine Inn at the top of Station Road in Tenterden, a short walk from the K&ESR station, on Sunday April 29.

For the train trip, we hope to book a balcony-ended, ex-LNWR saloon on the tail of a regular service train. But this only holds 20 passengers, so book early to avoid disappointment. We can book further seats elsewhere on the train, but only if we know the correct numbers. Over to you... ●

Website beset by

Due to technical problems, the society Website has yet to go live, despite the sterling efforts of member Dr Robert Kinghorn. He has created the site, but has been unable to upload it to the server. Efforts are continuing.

Initially, the site will serve as a 'shop front' for the society, with the aim of attracting new members via the Internet. It will comprise an introduction to the society and the Colonel, plus a summary list of his railways, and an application form that can be printed out for mailing in the usual way.

Of more interest to existing members, an updated index to *The Colonel*, including this issue, will also be available. This should also serve as a 'taster' for potential members by giving them an indication of the range of information available from the society.

Once it's up and running (fingers crossed) the site will be further developed: a brief biography of the Great Man is a must, the *Colonel* Index will be updated after every new issue, plus links to other related sites. ●

Decline in membership does a U-

Excellent news on the membership front: membership secretary David Powell reports that we currently have 212 members, an increase of 25 on last year and a reverse of the decline of recent years. This brings us close to our 1997 peak of 213: and we may better even that.

Said David: "The new members include nine signed up at the NEC at the Warley National MRC Exhibition. In addition, there are eight actioned requests for information out there, of which I would hope at least four should firm up.

"Also, quite a few info packs and application forms were given out at the NEC, of which at least one has subsequently converted as a new member."

Special thanks, then, are due to Warley stalwarts Les Spratt, Dave Greensall, Ned Williams and Mr Powell himself. ●

News

CSS joins other societies

On the initiative of membership secretary David Powell, the society has embarked on a programme of 'corporate membership' of other, related organisations.

The aim is semi-formalise links with kindred societies, gain access to information about their activities through their newsletters, and also provide a small boost to their incomes through the membership fee.

To date, the Colonel Stephens Society is now a member of the East Kent Light Railway Society and the Welsh Highland Heritage Group (WHHG), which is dedicated to researching and recording the history of the Welsh Highland Railway.

The WHHG produces an eight-page A4, glossy newsletter packed with interesting historical information. The December issue, for example, includes an illustrated feature on WHR coaches, plus news on recently unearthed original railway documents.

Anyone interested in joining the WHHG should contact John Keylock at Weathervane Cottage, Childswickham, Broadway, Worcs. WR12 7HL. Tel: 01386 853428.

The membership secretary of the EKLRS is Brian Hancock, 33 Beauxfield, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3JW. Tel: 01304 821007.

Terrier Trust aims to buy

The Terrier Trust, which owns and is restoring former K&ESR No. 3 *Bodiam*, has launched an appeal to buy another Terrier, LB&SCR No. 2678 *Knowle*, for £80,000.

Knowle currently lives and works on the K&ESR, and the purchase from her present owner is intended to keep her on the railway. She helped haul the last passenger train on the line in January 1954.

Meanwhile, the frames of *Bodiam* are still undergoing restoration by Ian Riley Engineering at Bury, Lancashire, while the fabrication of new side tanks is ready to start. Our society donated £50 to help put *Bodiam* back on the rails earlier this year. ●

New Hawkhurst book out

Brian Hart's latest book on the Hawkhurst branch in Kent, Colonel Stephens' first independent commission, has just been published by Wild Swan Publications. With 256 casebound pages, it costs £26.95 plus £2 p&p from the publisher. It will be reviewed in the next issue of The Colonel. ●

Popular demand brings winter

Popular demand has led the Welsh Highland Railway (Caernarfon) to introduce a special winter timetable between Caernarfon and its recently re-opened temporary terminus at Waunfawr. Two daily return trips, hauled by 2-6-2T *Mountaineer*, will run every weekend until the end of the year, plus daily workings between Boxing Day and New Year's Day inclusive.

Santa trains will not feature on the WHR, although the Ffestiniog Railway will be running them on the weekends of 9/10 and 16/17 December between Portmadog and Tan-y-Bwlch. Special events scheduled for the WHR next year include a St David's weekend on 3 and 4 March.

Rebuilding work on the next six miles of the WHR to be reinstated has already begun. Work on three bridges near Betws Garmon has started, while a £200,000 contract for cutting repairs at the Aberglaslyn Pass has been let. Track laying towards Ryd Ddu is expected to start next year. ●

News



On 21/22 October, the Kent & East Sussex Railway ran this special goods train, hauled by everybody's favourite latterday K&ESR loco, Norwegian mogul Number 376. Treasurer Nigel Bird and chum wangled a footplate ride. Lucky so-and-sos.

Floods hit K&ESR Bodiam extension

Sections of the Kent & East Sussex Railway's recently opened extension to Bodiam were washed away by the October floods, dealing the railway a bitter blow.

According to Peter Barber, Bodiam extension project manager, wash-outs created two holes in the trackbed, each 15 metres long and 1.5m deep. At their height, flood waters were said to have covered the track to a depth of five feet.

One staff member reported that the floods were so severe that the tearooms at Bodiam castle, not far from the K&ESR station, were under water and that "there were eels swimming through".

Train services were curtailed to Northiam for several weeks, but running through to Bodiam had been restored by the end of November. Repair costs were estimated at around £25,000. This will come as a double-whammy to the cash-strapped line, which had

to launch an emergency appeal to members that raised £85,000 only a few months ago.

The 3½-mile extension to Bodiam opened to regular trains on 2 April this year, and immediately doubled the number of passengers travelling on the line during May.

◆ Financial Update

Profits of just over £230,000 have been reported by the Tenterden Railway Company, owner of the K&ESR, in the nine months to the end of September. This contrasts with a loss of nearly £300,000 for all of 1999, described by company accountant Philip Shaw as a "financial fiasco".

Although the company is still dogged by heavy debts, passenger numbers are up 64% on last year, and revenues from all aspects of its operations so far this year already exceed those for the whole of 1999. ●

News

Track work starts at RVR

Work has started on the upgrading and realignment of track at Robertsbridge, the site of the former junction between the Rother Valley Railway and the main line.

The move follows a licensing agreement between RVR (East Sussex) Ltd, the owners of the site, and the Rother Valley Railway Supporters Association (RVRSA), which has been informally occupying and developing the site for some years.

The track project will be overseen by newly recruited permanent way expert Dave Rimmer, formerly of the Spa Valley and North Downs Steam railways, who will be working full time, aided by other volunteers.

It is hoped that brake van rides will be running over the quarter mile of track between the station and the first bridge along the former RVR/K&ESR route to Bodiam in time for the group's model railway exhibition

on 24 and 25 March. This will include your editor's *Rye Town* K&ESR layout.

The new buffet at Robertsbridge, towards which our society contributed £50, is nearing completion and looking good. It is housed in a prefabricated glass-fibre building that was once the booking office of the Venice Simplon Orient Express at Victoria station.

Meanwhile, members may have been puzzled by a reference in the October issue of *Heritage Railway* magazine to Robertsbridge 20/20 Ltd, "a new company to help protect" the Robertsbridge-Bodiam missing link.

Enquiries reveal it to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Tenterden Railway Company, proprietor of the preserved K&ESR, set up in September 1999. Company secretary Cathy Roberts said its aim is "to do a study into the feasibility, or not, of us ever being able to get back to Robertsbridge".

She added: "It's pretty much not doing anything. It's about as quiet as it can get." So now you know. ●

Kent colliery PO wagon models

Models of Kent coalfield private-owner wagons are available from Hythe (Kent) Models. Based on the 4mm scale Dapol RCH wagons, versions are available in the liveries of Tilmanstone, Snowdown and Betteshanger collieries. They cost £7 each, including post.

Tilmanstone colliery was served by the Colonel's East Kent Railway, and the others by the main line company. The model wears the colliery name in unshaded letters in a straight line, not the shaded, curved style shown in some photos. Does anybody have any definitive information on lettering styles?

The fourth member of the family, from Chislett colliery, is due out in the New Year. Proprietor Steve Skelton says he is also considering commissioning models of other local private owner wagons from the area, and invites suggestions.

Hythe (Kent) Models, 153A High Street, Hythe, Kent CT21 5JL. Tel: 01303 267236. ●

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Spitfire returns to East Kent Railway



Barclay 0-4-0ST Spitfire undergoing final re-assembly at Shepherdswell, the terminus of the East Kent Light Railway Society, following repairs to her firebox aided by a £50 donation from our society. Hopefully, the 1929-built loco will be hauling the railway's Santa Specials, impersonating Thomas the Tank Engine's pal Percy. Repairs were made at the Chatham works of Staniforth Engineering, run by EKLRS member Martin Staniforth (inside smokebox).

Info on Colonel's lost line requested

Membership secretary David Powell writes: I have received a letter from the chairman of Newham Parish Council, Sittingbourne asking for information about what I deduce is the Maidstone & Faversham Junction Light Railway.

The council is researching the history of its area, and is asking about a proposed light railway from Faversham to Hollingbourne, between Maidstone and Ashford, that was authorised in 1899.

In particular they are seeking details of the route, planned location of stations and halts and why the project was abandoned.

At this stage I am assuming that the line is the one authorised in 1899 for the Maidstone and Faversham Junction Light Railway, engineer H.F. Stephens, as referred to in *Railways of Arcadia* by John Scott-Morgan.

Stephens was also involved in the rejected 1904 Maidstone & Sittingbourne Railway, according to *Colonel Stephens Railways in Kent* by Peter Harding. Would this have run through Newham Valley? Answers to the editor, please. ●

Dispatches

Letters to the editor

Millennium Survey: careful now

I fully support the principles of this survey, and will be very pleased to assist members wishing to contribute on behalf of the Festiniog and Welsh Highland Railways. However, the notes about access need amplifying in respect of both the FR and WHR. On the former it is very dangerous to walk along the track as clearances are limited (non-existent).

The sections of the WHR awaiting rebuilding may appear to present no such problems. However, some parts are already designated as construction sites and may not be entered without authority and appropriate protective clothing.

The Waenfawr to Rhydd ddu and Gelert's Farm to Nantmor sections cross land which has been occupied for many years by farmers, some of whom are still very unhappy about

the rebuilding of the railway. Delicate negotiations are still in hand to resolve these situations and 'trespassing' on their land will do nothing to help.

Fortunately a lot of the information we are hoping to record on both the FR and WHR is already known: the Welsh Highland Heritage Group made a detailed survey and audit of that route some years ago.

If you feel you would like to take photographs or make drawings, please make contact with me first. I can then direct you to the appropriate person on the railway.

*Adrian Gray,
Hon Archivist FR Co.*

Biddenden bungalow 'safe'

The last Colonel reported that the station agent's bungalow at the former K&ESR Biddenden station site had been uncovered and speculated that it might be in danger of demolition. John Miller revealed the following:

Philip Shaw and I had a talk with the owner of the Biddenden site about a year ago. We assumed the buildings were about to be demolished, having witnessed the clearance. The owner reassured us and said he intended to renovate the station building as holiday accommodation for renting, and he had similar plans for the station agent's bungalow.

However, Ashford Borough Council, as the planning authority, approved his plans for the station building, but would prefer demolition of the bungalow. The owner said he would resist this as he wanted to keep all the obvious features of the station site, including the remains of the platforms.

The owner said his intention is to landscape the site to provide each building with a garden area, car parking and access, while retaining the railway features. He also owns

about half a mile of trackbed in the Frittenden Road direction.

He gave us permission to photograph the buildings and said that we could go back and measure up the bungalow when all the undergrowth had been cleared. I'm not sure if this has been completed, but I would like to produce a scale drawing (plan and elevations) for the archives.

This summer has been obviously rather busy, but if I get round to going to Biddenden in the next few weeks, I will send you a copy of anything I can produce.

*E.J.R. Miller
Hon. Curator & Archivist
The Colonel Stephens Railway Museum*

Editor's note: An offer of help has been extended to Mr Miller on behalf of the Society under the Millennium Survey concept.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE EAST SUSSEX LIGHT RAILWAY

The Colonel's railways were awash with might-have-been lines that were planned but never built. The East Sussex Light Railway, a would-be offshoot of the Kent & East Sussex, was one of them. But what would have been its exact route? Stephen Hannington raided the archives to find out.

Flushed with the success of linking Ten-terden and Robertsbridge by rail, the Rother Valley Railway, soon to become the Kent & East Sussex Railway, lost no time in planning extensions to its empire. Offshoots to Pevensey, Rye, Appledore and Cranbrook were all plotted and authorised within a year of the original opening. Needless to say, none of these came to pass, except a short section of the Cranbrook line that became the section between the original RVR terminus at Rolvenden and Tenterden Town in 1904.

My own interest lies in the Rye project, which proposed a railway from near Northiam, on the original RVR route, running south-eastwards to make a junction with the South Eastern & Chatham's line at Rye. It provided the basis for my Rye Town layout, which depicts a might-have-been terminus just short of Rye, echoing Les Darbyshire's adaptation of the equally stillborn Maidstone extension for his Maidstone Road layout.

Various maps have been published purporting to show the route of the Northiam-Rye line, which was promoted as the East Sussex Light Railway with Colonel Stephens in charge. The K&ESR itself published maps showing the Rye, Cranbrook and Maidstone extensions in its annual reports until as late as 1934. And the various histories of the line, including Maurice Lawson Finch's original history of 1948 and Stephen Garrett's Oakwood Press book (1980 revision) have all included maps of the route, such as the pre-group Railway Magazine map published in *Branchlines to Tenterden* (Middleton Press).

The problem is that none of them is particularly detailed, and the routes shown are inconsistent. The Railway Magazine map is the most complete and shows the line running parallel to the River Rother to approach Rye from the north-east. Lawson Finch shows a

different alignment, looping through the villages of Beckley and Peasmarsh en-route, but again approaching Rye from the north-east.

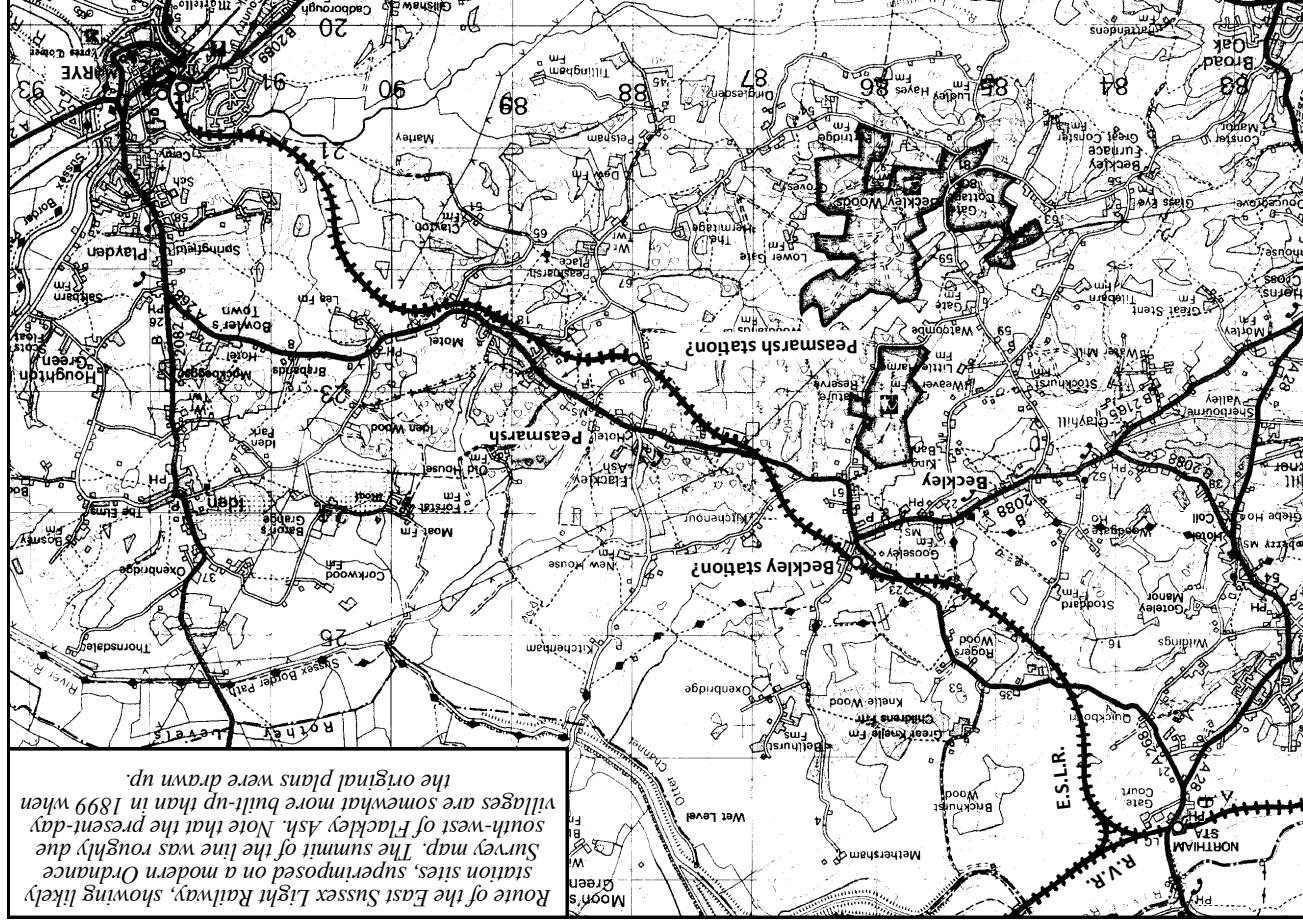
The problem with the north-eastern approach is that the railway would have had to have passed through a narrow 'shelf' of low-lying land sandwiched between the steep slopes of Rye Hill and the Rother, already crowded with a road and housing. To have forced a route through here would have been difficult and expensive. I wondered if this might have been one of the main reasons that the line never got built: it would have supported my own, modelled version in which the line stopped short of this bottleneck.

I also wondered which, if any, of the published maps was correct. The only way to find out seemed to be to track down the original plans. Acting on a tip-off from Les Darbyshire, I paid a visit to the East Sussex County Records Office in Lewes where, since the ESLR had been authorised by the powers-that-be, plans would have had to have been deposited for public inspection.

And there they were: the original plans and sections deposited on 30 November 1899 (at 3.10pm, to be precise!) before my very eyes. These showed the complete route, projected onto a 1": mile Ordnance Survey map (an edition predating the RVR, as it happens), plus larger scale plans and sections showing detail down to individual plots of land, gradients, cuttings and embankments.

From tracings of these, I have produced my own drawings shown here. There are a number of surprises. The most important is that all published depictions of the route are wrong, even the 'official' K&ESR one. The railway would have approached Rye from the south-west, along the valley of the river Tillingham. The *Railway Magazine* map, on which I based my layout, is completely inac-

Route of the East Sussex Light Railway, showing likely station sites, superimposed on a modern Ordnance Survey map. The summit of the line was roughly due south-west of Flackley Ash. Note that the present-day villages are somewhat more built-up than in 1899 when the original plans were drawn up.



curate, although it depicts the easiest route in engineering terms: via the dead level Rother valley flood plain.

In fact, the Great Man chose to project a route that climbed into the higher ground to the south-west, passing close to the villages of Beckley and Peasmarsh and avoiding the bottleneck to the north of Rye. This involved several sections of stiff 1-in-50 gradient up to the summit at 3½ miles just east of Beckley, having climbed 144ft in the process.

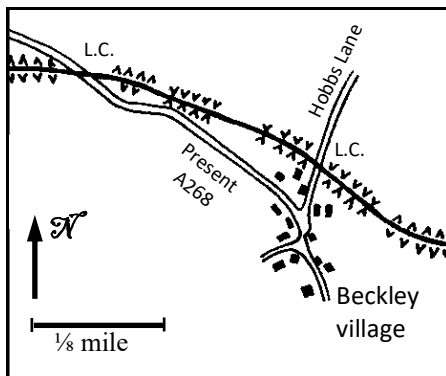
Earthworks would have included a 23' high cutting and a 17' high embankment. The character of the line would have been close to that of the present Rolvenden-Tenterden section: the most difficult part of the K&ESR as built, in terms of both civil engineering and train driving.

No station sites are shown on the plans, but the ESLR would have passed remarkably close to Beckley and Peasmarsh by the Colonel's standards. I have shown where I think stations would have been sited (*left*), but I wonder if other documentation exists that would have specified their location, perhaps at the Public Records Office in Kew.

Lawson Finch – fittingly, I think – turns out to have been closest with his map, although he gives the length of the extension as 9 miles, where as it is in fact 6½ miles. Other points of interest include the triangular junction with the RVR at Northiam: all published maps show only a Northiam-facing connection. As planned, the junction would have allowed through running from Headcorn to Rye, avoiding reversals at Northiam.

At its southern end, the railway would have passed the wonderfully-named Secret Wood, at the foot of a 1 in 50 gradient down out of the hills below Peasmarsh, before crossing the river Tillingham twice, on bridges of 50ft span. These might have resembled the mighty – by K&ESR standards – bridge across the Rother between Northiam and Wittersham Road that, at 60ft, is the longest on the line.

The junction at Rye (*see page 12*) makes for some interesting speculation. It would appear that the ESLR would have had its own terminus at Rye, bypassed by a connecting link of 6 chains radius: much sharper than the 10chain curve out of Robertsbridge, the most severe on the K&ESR as built. This presumably would have been for freight transfers only. Any through passenger trains on this route would have bypassed both the SE&CR and ESLR stations: unless they reversed into



The alignment at Beckley: the station would probably have been on Hobbs Lane, which would have been lowered by 4' 6" to cross the railway on the level at this point.

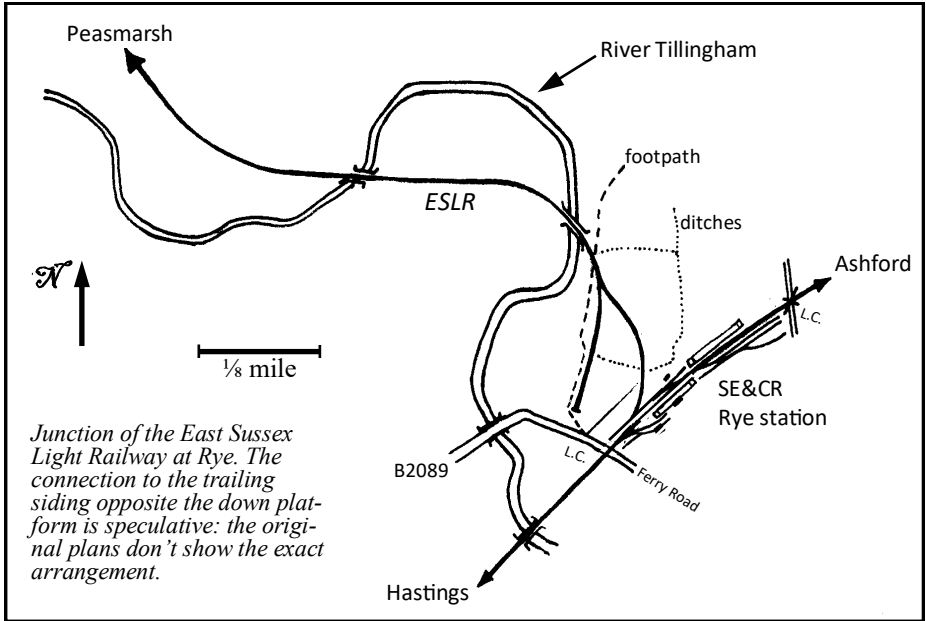
or out of the ESLR station.

And the connection looks likely to have entered the SE&CR trailing siding, rather than connect directly with the main running lines. This would give it something in common with the original, pre-1924 junction arrangements at Headcorn Junction, where connection to the main line was via reversing sidings that made a physical transfer point beyond the K&ESR passenger facilities.

The site chosen by the Colonel for the ESLR's Rye station is now that of a demolished school. It is not difficult to visualise the flattened area as a former station, in a rather attractive outlying area of the town close to the level crossing on Ferry Road.

So now we know. The Colonel's line would have clambered up into hills overlooking the Rother valley and threaded a course close to the present A268, avoiding the deserted flood plains of the valley altogether. With several stretches of 1 in 50-60, it would have been a tough route, while at Rye the connection, even via the geographically easy Tillingham valley approach, would have been awkward and inconvenient for passengers. Perhaps these factors give us some indication as to why the railway was never proceeded with.

The ESLR's promoter's were still keen enough to seek an extension of the original authorisation in 1904, but thereafter it lived on only in map form in the K&ESR's annual reports. However, Lawson Finch remarks in



his book: "There seems to have been much talk of the Rye Branch in 1915, believed to have been discussed for military reasons, and a bank curving away to the right of the line near Northiam is reputed to be the spot from which it was to have commenced."

I don't know where he picked up on this "talk": from local newspapers, perhaps? Or was it merely anecdotal? Neither have I seen evidence of the "bank", although others have referred to land having been acquired. Can anybody confirm this?

Although I have now discovered that I built my layout on a false premise, I feel great satisfaction in having discovered the truth about the East Sussex Light. Who said that there's nothing left to find out about the Great Man's railways? ■

References

- *The documents in the East Sussex archives are QDP/626 – plans and sections, and QDP/676 – extension of time, listing use, ownership and occupancy of plots of land affected by the railway.*
- *The Rother Valley Railway, Later The Kent & East Sussex Railway, by Maurice Lawson Finch, self-published, 1948.*

- *The Kent & East Sussex Railway, by Stephen Garrett, Oakwood Press, 1980. Since revised 1987 and 1999.*

- *Branchline to Tenterden, by Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith, Middleton Press, 1985.*

NB: *The archives also contain plans and sections of the Robertsbridge and Pevensy Light Railway, deposited 30 May 1899. Interestingly, the engineer quoted is not the Colonel at all, but one Arthur J. Barry. Who he?*

SIGNALLING ON THE CALLINGTON BRANCH

PART ONE

The following article by Chris Osment first appeared in South Western Circular, the journal of the South Western Circle, in April 1994. It is reproduced here, as the first of three instalments, with the author's generous permission.

The town of Callington is situated in an area of east Cornwall that once supported many mines and quarries. In the 1860s the idea was promoted of a railway to connect Callington and the mines to the quay at Calstock, where the minerals could be loaded into barges on the River Tamar.

The railway was constructed as a mineral railway of 3' 6" gauge and was opened officially on 7 May 1872, although some sections had been in use for as long as five years previously. The line was almost eight miles long and ran from Kelly Bray, about 1¼ miles north of Callington, to Calstock, where there was a rope-hauled incline about 800ft long that dropped some 350ft to the quay.

Originally, the Tamar, Kit Hill and Callington Railway, and then the Callington and Calstock Railway, by this time the line had been renamed again as the East Cornwall Mineral Railway (ECMR), and probably it is that name by which it is known best.

The ECMR had public depots at Kelly Bray, Monks Corner, Cox's Park, Drakewalls and on Calstock Quay, as well as private sidings at various intermediate locations. It owned two locomotives, which worked the section from Kelly Bray to Incline Station at the head of the incline to the quay: the quay lines were shunted by horses.

Although the ECMR was only a mineral line, it is apparent from note made by J. Thornton Burge, former stationmaster at Templecombe on the LSWR, that a rudimentary form of signalling was provided. The single line from Kelly Bray to Incline Station was worked on the time-interval system, combined with the single-needle telegraph,

the line being 'down' to Calstock.

There was a passing loop at Cox's Park and it was possible also for trains to pass at West of England siding near Drakewalls, but as there was no agent at the siding, written orders were issued to each driver not to leave the siding until the arrival of the train from the opposite direction.

Semaphore signals were provided at Cox's Park, Monk's Corner and Kelly Bray, although Burge states that these appear to have been used only when the ECMR's engines were in steam on the line at the same time. Only distant and home signals were provided, and these were of the three-position, slotted-post variety, although, curiously, Burge says also that they were of the "customary two-wire pattern", about which nothing seems to be known.

There were seven public level crossings, four manned by gatekeepers, but no signals were provided and no lights were allowed to shine in the direction of the railway from the gatekeepers houses between sunset and sunrise.

In 1890 the Plymouth, Devonport & South Western Junction Railway opened its line from Devonport to Lydford, where it joined the LSWR line from Okehampton. The PD&SWJR line was leased to the LSWR, who worked it as part of its main line from Exeter to Plymouth.

In 1891 the PD&SWJR purchased the ECMR and in 1900 obtained an Act of Parliament to extend the ECMR eastwards to join with the main line at Bere Alston. Originally, the extension was planned as 3' 6" gauge also, but in 1905 a further Act authorised use of the standard gauge, with the ECMR being converted to work as a light

railway.

The engineers for the new extension were Galbraith & Church, whilst the task of converting the ECMR was entrusted to H. F. Stephens. After the line was opened to passenger traffic, Stephens was appointed general manager, but it seems that he was sacked after a year because he was absent from the line far more frequently than his contract permitted.

The eastward extension involved the crossing of the River Tamar, which forms the boundary between Devon and Cornwall in this area, and the result was the Calstock Viaduct, an elegant structure of twelve arches 850ft long that carries the railway almost 120ft above the river.

Despite the abundance of granite in the area, the viaduct was built from concrete, the contractors being Langs of Liskeard. Apart from some sections cast in situ, the bulk of the structure was constructed from a total of 11,418 blocks, each weighing at least a ton and cast from concrete at the site.

The work was not without its problems. There was particular difficulty with the foundations of one pier in the river. Fortunately, the viaduct remains in use today as a monument to an engineering practice that was rapidly superseded by ferro-concrete.

The extension was officially known as the Bere Alston & Calstock Light Railway, but often it was referred to simply as the Calstock Railway, and this term seems to have been used for the whole line: it appears as such in the LSWR 1911 WTT Appendix.

The old ECMR depots were replaced by new passenger stations at Callington Road (formerly Kelly Bray), Stoke Climsland (Monks Corner), Latchley (Cox's Park), Gunnislake (Drakewalls) and Calstock, plus an interchange station at Bere Alston.

The entire branch was inspected for the Board of Trade by major J. W. Pringle on 5 February 1908, and the line was opened throughout officially on 2 March 1908.

An additional station was opened at Chilsworthy on 1 June 1909, and a halt at Seven Stones on 15 June 1910, although the latter was closed again during World War 1. On November 1 1909, the station at Stoke Climsland was renamed Luckett, whilst at the same time Callington Road became 'Callington for Stoke Climsland', although the suffix was dropped eventually c1948.

At the time of the 1908 inspection, in

addition to the sidings at the main stations, there were intermediate sidings at the following locations:

Refuge sidings	4m 5c
Perry Spear's siding	4m 39c
Cockings siding	4m 66c
Green Hill siding	5m 24c
Clitters siding	5m 30c
Hingston Down siding	6m 24c
Latchley siding	6m 43c
Kit Hill siding	8m 43c

Additional sidings existed subsequently at Hill Westlake and Whiterock. The reference to 'refuge sidings' in the inspection report is the only one known: there appear to be no other details about the function of this siding. It is possible that it may have been laid on part of the abandoned route of the ECMR leading to Incline Station and perhaps existed only for a short period.

In contrast with their 'main line', the PD&SWJR retained control of the branch as an independent railway until it became part of the Southern Railway at the Grouping, although some sources suggest that it was absorbed by the LSWR in 1922. After Nationalisation it was controlled variously by the Southern and Western Regions, as different boundary changes took effect.

During the early 1960s the freight traffic declined and steam gave way to DMUs for the passenger service. There was talk of total closure, but the poor road access in the area meant that the Calstock Viaduct remained an important link across the Tamar.

Eventually, on 5 November 1966, the line was closed completely beyond Gunnislake, but happily the rest of the branch remains open, although only for passenger traffic as a 'basic railway'.

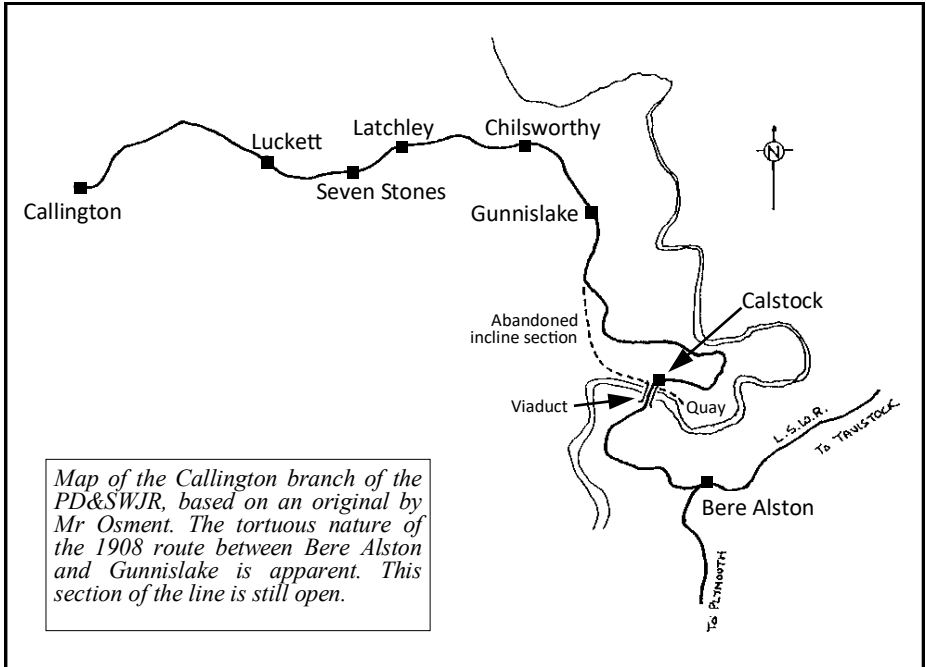
The branch was affected also by more dramatic events on the main line, where the section from Bere Alston to Meldon Quarry was closed completely on 6 May 1968, leaving Bere Alston as the terminus of a branch from Plymouth.

The passenger service was revised so that trains ran through from Plymouth to Gunnislake with a reversal at Bere Alston, and that is the situation at the present time.

The line followed a fairly tortuous route in many places, especially over the part that formed the 1908 BA&CLR extension. From Bere Alston the line leaves in a south-

One of Peter Barnfield's pictures of Callington station in summer 1961, showing a Sunday working waiting in the train shed





westerly direction, but swings round north-west on a 10 chains curve and heads north-east towards Calstock, turning almost due north on a 9 chain curve to run over Calstock viaduct into Calstock station.

The station itself is on a 7 chain curve and down trains leave going east on a gradient that steepens from 1 in 264 to 1 in 37, while swinging back through 180 degrees to run due west.

There follows a series of curves of average 10 chains radius as the line rises over 400ft in the next 2½ miles to the next station at Gunnislake. The BA&CLR joined the ECMR about ½ mile south of Gunnislake. The bypassed section of the ECMR back towards Calstock was abandoned, including the old incline down to the quay.

From Gunnislake the line ran roughly westwards towards Callington station over a section that was slightly easier, although still with many sections at gradients steeper than 1 in 100. The total length of the branch was 9 miles 60 chains. ●

*** TO BE CONTINUED ***

The membership secretary of the South Western Circle is Mike Hayward at 127 Seal Road, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire.

4415 RENAISSANCE

Hugh Smith provides an update on progress towards restoring this pioneering diesel loco to service, towards which we have made a donation

In 1928, Kerr Stuart & Co of Stoke-on-Trent built a 60HP, six-wheel diesel locomotive: their prototype, number 4415. It was demonstrated on the Welsh Highland and Festiniog railways in 1928-29. Neither railway could afford to buy it. Colonel Stephens commented: "I thought you had given her to us!" when Kerr Stuart took the loco back to Stoke.

4415 was regauged to 3' 0" and tried out on the Castledearg & Victoria Bridge Tramway in Ireland, where it was found to be underpowered. Following Kerr Stuart's liquidation, 4415 was acquired by the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds, which regauged it back to 2' 0" and sold it to Mauritius, where it worked on a sugar plantation.

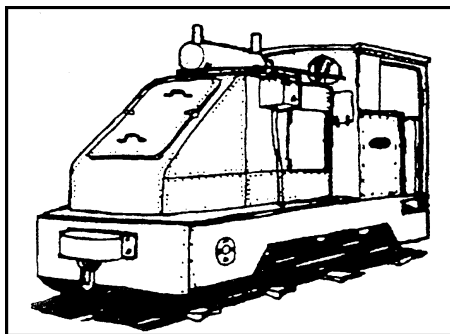
By the early 1970s, the loco had been withdrawn and preserved on a plinth outside the sugar factory. In 1997 it was donated to the Ffestiniog Railway and the Greenwich & District Narrow Gauge Society (G&DNGS), shipped to the UK and stored under cover in Minffordd yard on the FR to await restoration to full working order.

In October 1999, Patrick Keef, of Alan Keef Ltd, inspected the locomotive to see whether full restoration was possible and, if so, at what cost. Assuming that all work was done "by a commercial organisation such as ourselves", he reckoned that it could be done for a little over £50,000.

Patrick found that the gearbox was "in remarkably good condition, with no signs of water ingress or condensation and very clean oil in the sump". Remember that the locomotive had been plinthed for about 25 years!

He added: "Internally, the gearbox is in very good condition. Chains and sprockets are serviceable with only very slight 'hooking' on the sprockets."

This was excellent news because, if the gearbox had been full of stripped gears, restoration would have been prohibitively expensive. As it is, the loco has sound frames, wheels and gearbox, and the G&DNGS has a replacement power unit, so most of the ex-



pensive bits, the final drive chains excepted, are accounted for.

Discussion between G&DNGS chairman Dave Brewer and Andy Savage of the FR led to the decision to fund the restoration in the way that the single Fairlie *Taliesin* was funded and the Lynton & Barnstaple replica *Lyd* is being funded: monthly contributions by Deed of Covenant.

A suitable appeal leaflet, based on that for *Taliesin*, will be published in the near future. Work will not start until a proportion of the total funding has been pledged, so there is little visible progress at Minffordd.

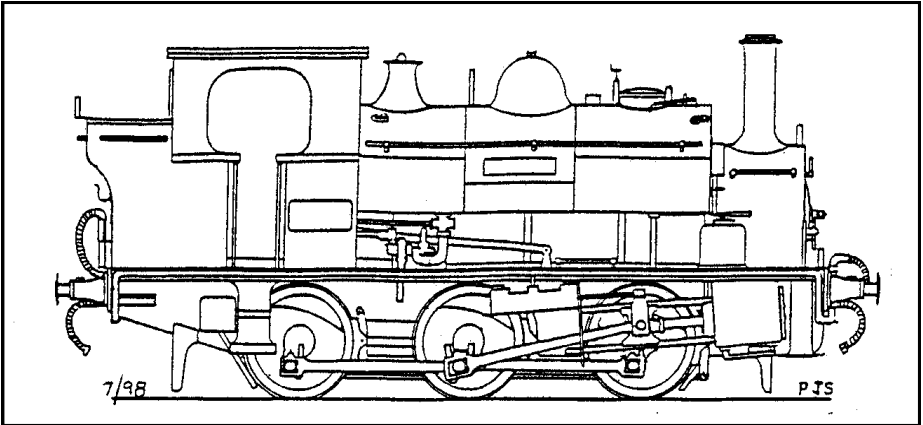
However, there has been quite a bit of activity behind the scenes. Apart from commissioning Patrick Keef's inspection, the G&DNGS has obtained a McLaren 90HP diesel engine to replace the existing unit, which is a 1945 replacement of the original 60HP engine.

I have commissioned a painting of 4415 in FR service: copies are available from the London Area Group of the Ffestiniog Railway Society, which will be donating the profits to the 4415 fund.

If, unexpectedly, the appeal should not receive an enthusiastic response, as much of the work as possible will be done by volunteers, although some tasks will have to be performed by professionals such as Alan



BP&GVR FROM AGENORIA



This drawing of the Burry Port & Gwyndraeth Valley Railway's Avonside 0-6-0ST by Pete Stamper of Agenoria Models was irresistible. It's from his catalogue of little loco kits, so you can have a model of one of these in 4 or 7mm scale for £58 or £88 respectively.

The Colonel upgraded the 40-year-old, 13-mile BP&GVR for passenger traffic in 1909. Two of the above locos, named *Kidwelly* and *Cwm Mawr*, arrived in 1903.

Pete also produces kits for the Kerr Stuart Victory class 0-6-0T, of which one ran on the EKR as Number 4. And, as reported briefly in

the last *Colonel*, he is also working on a new kit for the Selsey Tramway's Peckett 2-4-2T *Selsey*. His excellent, 50pence catalogue lists 21 different industrial and narrow gauge loco subjects, each one an absolute charmer.

Our own Les Spratt describes Pete's kits, which have etched brass bodies, nickel silver chassis and whitmetal or brass castings, as "very nice to put together".

Agenoria Models is at 18 St Peter's Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 0TY, or telephone 01562 886125, or email the proprietor at: petestamper@yahoo.co.uk ■

➔ Keef Ltd or FR permanent staff at Boston Lodge.

If we are overwhelmed by money, the bulk of the work will be undertaken professionally, so that the loco can re-enter service as soon as possible. Its 75th birthday and the 80th anniversary of the opening of the old Welsh Highland Railway in 2003 would be nice, but this project has no deadlines. It will be done when it's done!

The Colonel Stephens Society has already donated £50, for which the 4415 Group is duly grateful. If any member reading this would like to make his or her own donation, they should write to me at the address below.

4415 will, when restored, become part of the FR's Heritage Fleet alongside the 1917 Simplex and Baldwin tractors, and will not be used in everyday service. Any excess funds raised will be set aside for future maintenance so that it does not become a drain on the railway's funds for restoration. ■

Hugh Smith, Hon. Sec., 4415 Group, 31 Carnarvon Road, Stratford, London E15 4JW

HOW GREEN WAS MY COLONEL?

Adrian Gray posed a question in the last Colonel about the exact shade of green used on the Festiniog Railway's coaches during the Great Man's regime. He got an answer, but the quest is not yet over...

Colonel Stephens green? Well, of course he wasn't. Neither am I interested in whether he suffered from *mal de mer*. The question I have been trying to answer is what was the colour referred to as 'Colonel Stephens Green' when matters of rolling stock livery are being discussed.

Allow me to explain, though it may be difficult to discuss hues and shades with clarity. Aside from my natural desire to paint my models the correct colour, I am concerned to canvass broad opinion on this subject for the benefit of the Festiniog Railway, of which I am the hon. archivist.

As some members may know, the FR is in the throes of a Heritage Lottery Fund-supported project to restore its two oldest bogie carriages, Numbers 15 and 16. To enhance the value of this project, the carriages will be finished to their conditions at two different periods: Number 15 as built in the 1870s, and Number 16 at the next most interesting phase, the inter-War period of association with the Welsh Highland Railway, when the Colonel was in charge.

We know that the latter carriage was finished in 'Colonel Stephens Green' and wish to recreate this colour. However, we now have some debate over the correct shade. Members who have visited the FR may have seen the ex-WHR carriage Number 23 – the one with cast-iron letters down the side – and small bogie van Number 10.

These are painted in a shade of green that we had, until recently, considered to be correct. This shade matches some samples uncovered during the restoration of some of the little four-wheel carriages, but we cannot be certain that they relate to the Stephens period. It has an ever-so-slightly bluish tinge.

Our dilemma lies in the appearance a couple of years ago of a pair of *colour* pho-

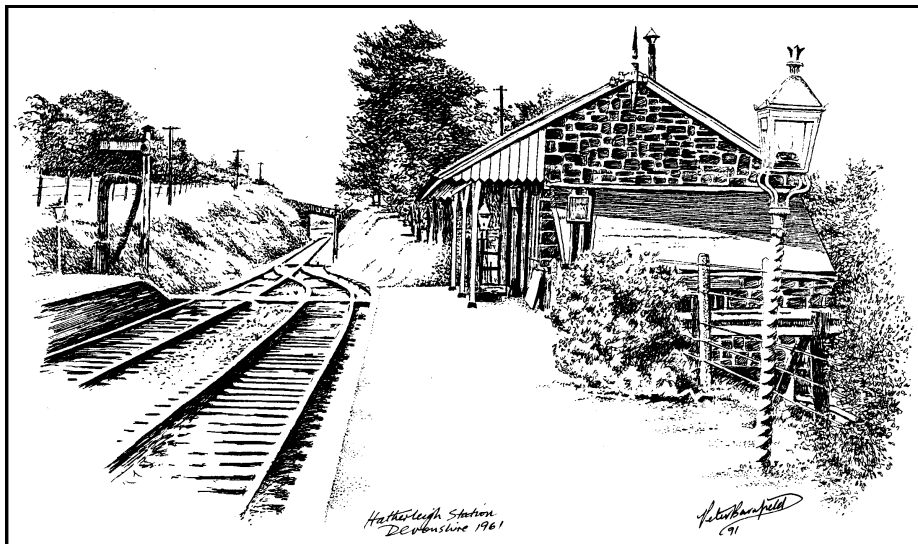
tographs of the railway, taken pre-WW2. These very clearly show carriages painted a dark olive green. It ought to be said that all other colours in these photographs, which were published in the Festiniog Railway Magazine, ring 'true'. We have concluded that the nearest well-known colour is Maunsell Dark Olive.

As the green on numbers 10 and 23 matches nothing else in the 'railway world', we begin to have our doubts. An ex-Southern Railway colour would fit with the perception that the Colonel acquired job lots of material at advantageous prices and re-used them.

So my question to members of the society in the last issue of *The Colonel* was: can anyone shed any light on the matter, to help us finish Number 16, and any future vehicles, in the correct colour? The journey to an answer to my question was, too say the least, convoluted. Quite a bit of it, being hearsay, would be inadmissible in a court! However, here goes...

Our common interests mean that I talk regularly with John Keylock, secretary of Welsh Highland Heritage and CSS member, who had noticed my little question in *The Colonel*. John referred me to another man I am quite often in touch with, Bill Rear. Bill gave me information that he had been given by *another* person I am often in touch with: Roger (R.W.) Kidner. To compound the irony, Roger is a long-standing member of the FR Heritage Group and I never thought to ask the question in that journal!

Anyway, Roger had observed the colour personally in the 1930s: his recollection is corroborated by Bill Rear's observation of derelict carriages before restoration of the FR began. Both recall that the green was a relatively dark colour, described variously as something akin to Brunswick green or



HATHERLEIGH STATION, ND&CJR

Thanks to Peter Barnfield for this superb drawing of Hatherleigh station on the North Devon & Cornwall Junction Railway in 1961, based on one of his own photos. The ND&CJR was the last standard gauge line to be constructed by the Colonel, opening on 27 July 1925 between Torrington and Hallwill Junction. Attractive stone station build-

ings such as this were a feature of the too-often overlooked 20-mile line, which is also pictured in John Scott-Morgan's book *Railways Of Arcadia*. The railway was substantially constructed by the Colonel's standards and was built partly along the route of the 3ft gauge Torrington & Marland Mineral Tramway. Closure came in the 1960s.

Southern malachite. Bill felt Southern olive had too yellow a tint, which rather scuppers my interpretation of the colour photos.

All this is very useful, but Roger relates that the original paint had come as a job lot, obtained by the Colonel from one of the other enterprises he was involved with. Apparently he was on the Board of Directors of the Maidstone Bus Company, who painted their buses a dark green!

This is so much like our perceptions of the Colonel that I am bound to believe the story, and I have absolute faith in the recollections of Roger and Bill. All that remains is for a kind-hearted member local to Maidstone to see whether any more information is available locally: please. ■

● **EDITOR'S NOTE:** some coaches on the K&ESR have been described as being 'bottle green'. I wonder if this might have been the same colour as used on the FR vehicles. And I wonder also if the 'Maidstone Bus Company' referred to by Adrian is, in fact, the Maidstone & District Bus Company, whose green and cream buses I remember from my childhood. Come on you Bus Nuts: put us out of our misery.