

INTERCITY RAILWAY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE INTERCITY RAILWAY SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR YEAR 2007 HELD AT THE CREWE ARMS HOTEL ON SATURDAY 5th APRIL 2008

Present: *Simon Mutton, Gary Mutton, Maurice Brown, Martin Hall, Mark Richards, Peter Britcliffe, Trevor Roots, Ken Pitt, Bryan King, David Sharpe, James Holloway, Michael Hillier, Lawrence McCormick, Paul Bright, Philip Stevenson, David Croft, Tony Croft, Fred Consterdine, Alan Lowe, Ian Sant, John Stone, J.R Woods,*

1) WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from: Jeff Hall, Chris James, Robert Brown, Carl Watson, Peter King, George Palin, Buck Carveth, John Palin

2) CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS – Simon Mutton

Having just written this year's address I can confirm that it will be one of the shortest I have prepared, to the extent that it can all be fitted on one page!

The year under review can arguably be described in two ways. For those who wanted to see the significant rise in membership experienced up until last year continue, the slight reduction in membership again this year will no doubt be seen to reflect a disappointing performance. To do so however would fail to take into account factors better described by Maurice when he delivers his report, which, in my opinion, can be used to point to what has been overall a very satisfactory year for the Society.

In addition, concerns during the year regarding the sourcing of stock change information provided by the Society, which has resulted in a temporary reduction in our public profile, can also be viewed as disappointing. However, the action taken by senior members of the Society together with HB publications not only avoided any adverse publicity and minimised reputation damage, but also provided the opportunity to investigate and clarify the soundness of the information sources, enabling us to confront any future criticisms or allegations of plagiarism with confidence.

The Officials reports for the magazine/editorial, sales and publications and website will all demonstrate another year of progress which should not be underestimated or indeed underplayed.

As is the way of things, nothing stands still and how we as a Society move forward will be determined in very large part today, with the membership, quite properly, being asked to consider proposals for, amongst other things, our proposed tie-up with the GB Bus group and the future of the president.

A lot of work has also gone in to reviewing and updating the Members manual and risk assessments which will be subject to discussion today.

You will also confirm the officials to manage and continue developing your society over the coming year. It is here that I would take the opportunity as Chairman to thank once again all those officers who have contributed to the success of the society and all of its activities- Membership, Magazine, Publications, Website, Administration, Compiling and Editing. In addition I again thank all the Members who have given their support by contributing material or simply renewing your membership for another year.

One of the things you will be asked to consider today is the future of the AGM itself. I can't second guess the outcome of that discussion, but one thing I am clear on- whatever may be decided on what to replace it with (or indeed to continue with it)- key decisions relating to the affairs of the Society will continue to be decided by members unless specific authority to act has been given to officials. This is a member-led, member focused society and that it will remain.

Thank you all again for your support.

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE AGM 17/3/2007 NOT COVERED BY THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

Adoption of the minutes from last years AGM approved by the meeting.

4) ELECTION OF OFFICIALS FOR YEAR 2008

There were no additional nominations therefore all officials were re-elected en-bloc.

Officials were elected as follows:

<i>Simon Mutton</i>	<i>Chairman</i>
<i>Gary Mutton</i>	<i>Secretary and Treasurer</i>
<i>Maurice Brown</i>	<i>Membership Manager/Publications Manager</i>
<i>Trevor Roots/Peter Britcliffe</i>	<i>Editorial Managers</i>
<i>Martin Hall</i>	<i>Editorial & Publications assistant</i>
<i>James Holloway</i>	<i>Editorial assistant - sightings</i>
<i>Robert Brown</i>	<i>European Official</i>
<i>Peter Gregory</i>	<i>Visits Official</i>
<i>Bryan King</i>	<i>Publications – European compiler</i>
<i>David Sharpe</i>	<i>Publications assistant – Wagons</i>
<i>Chris James</i>	<i>Publications assistant – European</i>
<i>Carl Watson</i>	<i>Publications assistant – UK compiler</i>
<i>Mark Richards</i>	<i>Website Manager</i>
<i>Ken Short</i>	<i>Publications & website assistant</i>

Proposed by Paul Bright and seconded by Mark Richards

Pete Waterman as President, Jeff Hall and Peter King as Vice Presidents are honorary positions and are retained automatically.

5) PRESENTATION OF OFFICIALS REPORTS

a) Financial & Subscription rates for 2008

Gary presented the accounts for the year (attached):

The Society accounts at year end showed assets of £7565.27 and liabilities of £3325.60 giving a balance of £4239.67

Looking at the summary, the society made an operating loss on the year of £1366.44. The main reason for the loss was on membership. Gary reminded the meeting it was intended that membership should break even with profit coming from publications which made a profit of £1704.73.

The Strategy team had recognised the situation and had made the decision to cease colour on the magazine but to offset this by increasing the number of pages but still reducing costs.

Gary stated that this appears to be working as although we are reporting on last years accounts, the situation with the accounts for this year to date shows membership back in profit.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Paul Bright and seconded by Maurice Brown and approved by the meeting.

b) Editorial

Trevor presented the Magazine report:

*The development of the magazine has continued with new regular features and new contributors. ‘**Location Spotlight**’ appears to have been well received and continues to keep me occupied when out and about...remembering to gather the information first time round, which hasn’t always happened. There are many locations in draft form pending publication.*

The main changes during the year have been the loss of colour and the increase to 28 pages. The loss of colour to the front and rear covers was necessary to cut printing costs, but is offset however by the fact all photos can be viewed in glorious colour via the web site. The increase in pages from 24 to 28 was much welcomed, which can easily be filled as stated above. The extra pages do allow a good selection of photos to be included to accompany the articles, which I hope are appreciated by the membership.

*Only one problem has emerged over the year, the loss in recent months of **Stock Changes**, provided by Ken Pitt. The provision of up to date rolling stock changes for both the magazine and the web site has yet to be addressed.*

Overall I feel the magazine is in good health and has not stagnated, with the stock features bolstered by a variety of other features, but there is always room for good one-off articles or a new regular idea.

Simon thanked Trevor, Peter and Ken for the work over the year.
Following a suggestion from Gary, Mark and Trevor will explore the idea of putting the popular 'Spotlight' item onto the website.

c) Publication Sales/Production:

Maurice presented the publications report:

Our UK Publications especially the UK Combined Loco and Combined Wagon are selling very well indeed.

The UK Combined Loco is very popular and sales as stated above are doing well. The book is compiled by Carl Watson, who does such a brilliant job. We normally publish four editions a year but from this year (2008) we are publishing just two editions in January and July. We also publish the individual books, **Loco, EMU & DMU**. Carl also compiles the **Irish Data File** with updates provided by non member Tony Stubbings – whom we would like to thank.

UK Railway Publication Sales:

UK Combined	746	
Locomotive	128	
EMU	68	
DMU	73	
Ireland	71	
Name Directory	15	
Internal Users	62	
USF 1 Shunters	41	
USF 2 Diesel	45	
USF 3 Electrics	43	
		<u>Total 1292</u>

The Combined Wagon – Compiled by David Sharpe, who does such a great job researching and compiling. The book is gaining very much in popularity, by the number of enquiries we receive asking when it is going to be published. I believe our publication is now becoming the bible for the wagon enthusiast. Again like the UK Combined, we also publish individual wagon books, **Airbrake, Private Owner, RIV and Engineers Fleet**

Wagon Publication Sales:

Air Braked	24	
Private Owner	20	
RIV	23	
Engineers	106	
Combined	387	
		<u>Total 560</u>

The **Foreign** books sales were moving slow at the beginning but have now picked up a bit.

All the foreign research and updates are, of course done by Martin Hall, who again does a superb job updating.

Foreign Publication Sales:

Germany	76	German Private	87
France	96	Benelux	86
Switzerland	103	Austria	50
Iberia	100	Italy	77
Scandinavia	60	Czech	87
Hungary	71	Poland	78
The Balkans	108	Russia	31
Australia			
/ New Zealand	34		

Total 1144

Martin also does the **Preserved** books, which have all been updated for 2008 and sales are steady.

Preserved Publication Sales:

Preserved Standard, Ex Industrial Steam Locomotives	134
Preserved Wagons	78
Preserved Coaching Stock	148
Preserved Industrial Diesel	65

Total 425

The **Tram & Light Railway** publications are another popular series; again these are researched and updated by Martin Hall and again sales are steady

Tram Publication Sales:

Western European	68
Eastern European	34
European Metro Systems	64
Preserved trams & Funiculars	71

Total 237

Another new publication introduced by Martin Hall for our Steam Locomotive History series was the **Combined Volume 1948 – 68 (No.7 7)** which is gaining in popularity

Steam History Publication Sales:

No 1 LNER	32
No 2 LMSR	35
No 3 GWR	37
No 4 SR	37
No 5 BR St.	32
No 6 Names	21
No 7 Combined	39

Total 233

Combined Total of Publications Sold 3891

Pocket Datafile

A new joint publishing venture between Inter City Railway Society and HB Publications – saw the introduction of the **Pocket Datafile**, which was compiled by Carl Watson, who compiles the UK Loco Combined.

This was scheduled to be on sale in December, but a problem at the printers caused a delay and was not available to the public until mid January. Compensation has been claimed and received, due to lost sales.

Overall the Pocket Datafile has been well received by customers - saying it's a good buy at £6.99 - and a better buy still if you are in the ICRS with the 20% member's discount. There is also a special offer voucher in the book, which entitles you to a £1.00 off the UK Combined Loco

Sales to date for UK Pocket Datafile (2008) - Just for information purposes 410

Publisher Compilers

Finally, not forgetting the deadly duo from Norwich – Bryan King and Chris James who compile all the Foreign and Preserved books from Spreadsheets into Publisher format

- Thanks Lads.

Updates

I would also like to give a big thank you to members and non members, who took the time and trouble to send in regular updates for all the publications

HB Publications

A special thanks to HB Publications our printers and distributors, for the quick turn around in distributing our publications to members, mail order customers and the Ian Allan shops.

Publications Team – I feel that a word of thanks for a brilliant job well done by the team, considering we didn't have a publications team meeting for the 2008 publications, it was all done electronically and everything was published to the agreed schedule – so thanks to all the team for working so hard to achieve our goals.

d) Membership:

Maurice presented the membership report:

Membership at the end of 2007 stood at 651 – down 66 on the 2006 figure. The drop in 2007 was greater than 2006 where membership loss was only 24.

We gained 80 new and rejoined members but in reality lost 146 members which included 3 deceased)

A problem we do have is getting members to renew their subscriptions promptly, as you know the membership department sends out a renewal form, plus a second in the following month. The next procedure if they haven't renewed – is to email them, again we don't always receive a response, next step the friendly telephone call to the

member, this tends to work in most cases, by saying you can renew by credit or debit card. The follow ups retained 90 members for 2007 – but in saying that, some may have renewed anyway at a later date. But I believe it's still worth doing.

One problem we have when chasing up renewals is getting in touch with members who have no contact telephone number or email address (16)
So really it would be nice, if members could give us their telephone numbers and email addresses on their membership or renewal forms

Other reasons –

No response to the telephone call (telephone just keeps ringing out plus no response to message left on answer machine (30)

No reason given for not renewing (18)

Again one of the most annoying is when a member says – yes I will be renewing and do not (18)

Other reasons range from financial, no trips, lost interest and I don't get much out of it. A couple of other reasons were - I am getting married and moving to Scotland, I am giving up railways and going into comics and let me loose!

We attracted new members and rejoined via the following: -

HB Publications and Hotline	30
Web Site	28
Data Files	12
Ian Allan shops (ICRS Mags)	2
Railway Illustrated	1
GB-BG	2
Other sources	5

Total new members 80

The main reasons for joining ICRS is **PUBLICATIONS** and this is more so than ever now, I have noticed – especially when they join via the telephone, by saying I have bought your book and would like to join the society (this has been said more with the publication of the Pocket Data File)

If we didn't publish railway books, I would say our membership would back at 2003/04 levels – so it is important that the society maintains it publications programme

What I do find interesting with new members joining via the telephone, when you explain what the benefits of membership are, they say – “Oh you have a monthly magazine as well” (So I don't know what they think the £15.00 is for!)
Overall, they feel it is good value for money

Mentioning the magazine, with it being revamped and the ICRS essentially a “spotters” organisation, the Location ‘Spot’ light feature in the magazine could I believe help to retain and perhaps attract new members

As you know when new members join us, we send a survey to them to find out why they joined us.

*The main reasons given for 2007 were:-
(In popular order)*

- 1 – Publications*
- 2 – Magazine/Modern Traction Cover (Joint 2)*
- 3 – 20% Publications discount*
- 4 - To find out more about the Society*
- 5 – Web Site*
- 6 - Wagon coverage*
- 7 – Tram and Light Rail enthusiast*
- 8 – European coverage*
- 9 - I am into Preservation*
- 10- Friendliness of Society*

I would say at the moment, membership losses appear to be slowing down so our membership may have levelled out to around the 650 figure

Looking towards the future of the ICRS, my concern is the age profile of members; I know this is not just with the Inter City Railway Society, but with other national railway enthusiast societies. I also notice on their membership application forms, they also ask you to tick an age group box.

I may have to amend the age grouping on our application and renewal forms, as most seem to tick the 46/65. So might amend to 46/55 & 56/65 to get a clearer picture. I talk to a few new members and they are in the over 60 bracket and some over 70, although occasionally we do seem to have a youngster in the 36/45 group.

Ian Sant suggested the renewal forms were in a bright colour as it was easy to miss, something like bright yellow.

Maurice said this was a good idea and there should be no problem implementing it.

e) Website: www.icrs.org.uk

Mark presented the web site report:

During the year under review, few significant changes were made to the structure or content of the web site, following the overhaul that took place during the earlier part of 2006. However, opportunities were taken to refresh and extensively update the Site Index and the Photo Gallery underwent a partial reorganisation in May 2007. Some general ‘housekeeping’ was undertaken during the year and minor changes made to some pages and to remove out of date information.

From November 2006 to October 2007, the ICRS web site attracted over 177,000 unique visits or an average of 486 visits per day. Visitors from the UK account for around two-thirds of all visits to the ICRS web site with significant numbers also recorded for European countries, although we also attract visitors from as far away as Canada, USA, Japan and Peru!

These statistics show that the ICRS is a popular resource for railway enthusiasts. Although feedback is generally limited the comments we receive show that our visitors value the web site and the information that it provides.

Apart from the home page, the most popular pages on the ICRS web site are the Photo Gallery and Publications pages.

Contributions to the web site during 2006/2007 were at similar levels to those in 2005/2006. It is disappointing that relatively few photographic submissions are made particularly as the Photo Gallery pages are amongst the most visited pages on the site.

Members are always welcome to contribute to the web site and their information, sightings and photos are important in making the site interesting and relevant for our many visitors. I would also like to remind members that their feedback, whether positive or negative is always welcome.

Gary suggested that the date the site was updated should be more prominent as the existing home page does not make it clear, particularly as it is updated 3 time a week.

Gary also suggested that the photos shown as copyright the photographer & ICRS.

It was agreed that the site is a vast improvement and the Chairman thanked Mark on behalf of the Society for all the work he has put in upgrading and improving the site.

f) Advertising:

Gary reported that the bulk of advertising is within our publications and on the website.

We have advertised in mainstream magazines in the past which are expensive for little return.

Gary suggested Mark investigates the possibility of getting as many reciprocal links to other sites as possible which would increase the Society profile.

It was suggested from the floor that we use the membership by putting a flyer in the magazine to all members with a request they pass it on to non members who they know. If only 20% of the membership only got a 20% return that would be 26 new members.

Maurice will discuss with Jeff formulating a flyer comprising application form, Society info & publication advert.

COMFORT BREAK & QUIZ

Ken presented a small quiz during the comfort break.

The lucky winners were:

1st David Croft & Michael Hillier who tied with 13 points and following a tie break

David won 2 tickets with Virgin West Coast and Michael an Advenza sweatshirt.

2nd Trevor Roots with 12 points. Trevor won 2 tickets with First Great Western.

3rd David Sharpe & Bryan King who tied with 11 points and following a tie break

David won 2 tickets with Grand Central and Bryan 2 tickets with Scotrail.

4th James Holloway with 10 points. James won 2 tickets on the West Somerset Railway.

Simon thanked Ken for preparing the quiz, sorting the prizes and providing some 'freebies'.

6) MEMBERS HANDBOOK & RISK ASSESSMENTS

Gary presented to the meeting a draft of the new hand book for comment.

He apologised that it was taking longer than originally envisaged but was nearly complete.

There were some additional post descriptions, some formatting issues and the inclusion of the magazine publishing and distribution 'maps' along with the risk assessment process to add.

The strategy team will discuss the final version and distribute to Officials for final comment before signing off for distribution to the membership.

In an effort to reduce the carbon footprint of the society the main availability will be a printable version on the website with hard copies for those members who have no internet access.

7) INTERCITY TRANSPORT GROUP PROPOSAL –FEASIBILITY

As agreed at the previous AGM the issues of closer working with the Great Britain Bus Group (GBBG) have been looked at and Maurice opened the discussion.

Maurice said the idea was that the two groups would form an 'umbrella group', it was not a merger.

Advantages are sharing on costs to the benefit of both groups, Publications, advertising and promotional for instance.

Some 60 members of ICRS also belong to GBBG and promotional membership advertising for discounts on joint membership could be available to attract new members.

Simon we need to be clear about what it means, if it is a mutually beneficial business set up then there should be no problem.

David Sharpe proposed affiliation between the two groups and was seconded by James Holloway and carried by the meeting.

A decision still needs to be taken by the GBBG. If they vote in favour then the Strategy team will produce detailed proposals.

8) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FUTURE

Simon said this item had been suggested as an agenda item for discussion as in the past the turnout at AGM's had been traditionally quite poor bearing in mind the membership numbers and the cost of putting it on.

As the main decision making body, after Officials attending the ordinary membership was never well represented.

Having said that, the attendance today was good and everyone's effort to attend was appreciated.

There is no formal proposal to do away with the AGM but to explore possible alternatives whilst remaining fully accountable to the membership.

Gary said there was no pressing financial reason at present to do away with the traditional AGM and it was possible the Secretarial workload would increase significantly and any potential savings in meetings could be negated by other costs in communicating with the membership, all of whom have the opportunity to attend the AGM or communicate their thoughts to it.

The AGM is a straightforward way of doing business and an opportunity for those who wish to attend to meet up at least once a year to network.

General comments and discussion confirmed that attendance at formal meetings was always poor and this is common among many groups and society's unless there was a 'carrot' such as an LNWR visit to entice them.

The venue was another topic discussed and Gary explained we tried to pick a venue where there is at least a significant rail interest so those attending have an opportunity to indulge their hobby.

It was asked why we haven't used the Railway Age 'North Signal box' for the last couple of years.

Gary said that despite numerous attempts to communicate with the Railway Age there was no reply and we had to give adequate notice of AGM with a venue so we selected this venue which we have used before.

It was understood that the Railway Age had changed hands and Simon will visit following the meeting to try and contact the new management with a view to going back next year.

There was no proposal or decision to change the current AGM method.

The date of next years AGM will be notified once we have met with The Railway Age to explore the possibility of returning there and what dates are available.

9) ICRS PRESIDENT

Maurice raised the issue as to whether we should continue with Pete Waterman as President of the Society.

Simon said as Chairman he was not offering a steer on the issue and it was open to discussion.

Drawbacks

*He hasn't shown up to an AGM for some years now
There are no responses to letters etc.
He has no involvement in the Society.
We should replace him with someone else.*

Plus points

*He is still well known in the public's conscious awareness as having railway connections.
He is recognisable as opposed to an 'industry' name that may move on from within the railway.
There is no actual drawback in having his name as President – he has never formally resigned.*

*Mark felt PW should have more involvement.
Bryan felt he should at least offer apologies for non attendance or provide a message.*

*Simon said he would make one last effort to make contact and try to get PW's thoughts. He will bring back the result and any information if any for a final decision by the membership.
The strong feeling in some quarters is recognised.*

10) AOB & INFORMATION EXCHANGE

*Simon reported that a couple of instances regarding the integrity of the collation and supply of information for our publications had been raised with him.
He has responded robustly with those making these allegations and told them if the allegations were repeated in any form without proof we would take legal action.*

*Simon explained the process whereby Ken produces a TOPS report which Jeff has a program which compares previous reports and produces the differences.
This is backed up by reference to other publications that are in the public domain.
This is fair and legitimate where copying from other publications directly is not.*

David Sharpe confirmed any publication that is in the public domain can be used for reference and information as long as such information is not copied verbatim.

Simon had contacted Pip Dunn at Railways Illustrated and asked that until this clarification had been confirmed he had asked that the ICRS name be removed from the credits for stock changes.

With foreign titles we had been required to demonstrate the various sources of our compilation and had discussed this in detail with Martin Hall and Bryan King.

Simon has been in discussion with Maurice and HB Publications and in future we will note our own sources and credit accordingly in our publications.

*Approval was given by the meeting to pursue legal redress within affordable limits should we need to protect our integrity through the courts.
Proposed by David Sharpe, seconded by Maurice Brown and carried by the meeting.*

12) CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 15.10 p.m.

Gary thanked everyone for attending and wished all a safe journey home.