

INTERCITY RAILWAY SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE INTERCITY RAILWAY SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR YEAR 2009 HELD ON SATURDAY APRIL 17TH 2010 AT THE KIDDERMINSTER RAILWAY MUSEUM, SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY COMMENCING 11.00

Present: Carl Watson, Simon Mutten, Gary Mutten, Trevor Roots, Mark Richards, Martin Hall, James Holloway, Michael Hillier, Mike Kemp, Brian Derricote, Kevin Bates, Peter J Foster, Anthony Ellis, Stephen Skewes(Guest).

1) WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Secretary/Treasurer welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from: Peter Britcliffe, Pete Mayer, Mike Rumens, Ian Sant, Scott Yeates, Dave Spencer, George Palin & Ken Pitt.

2) CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS - Carl Watson

My first Chairman's Address reflects on a year of many changes, both in circumstances and in people;

Firstly we offer our condolences to the families of Alan Gilmour, a previous Chairman, and John Palin, a regular contributor to 'Tracks', who both passed away since our last AGM. The Society is very grateful for their contributions over the years.

We also saw the departure of Maurice Brown, our Publications Manager, who had given many years of good service on behalf of the Society and without whose efforts we wouldn't have the successful Publications that we have today. I'd like to thank Maurice for his loyalty and service during his time with the Society.

We welcomed a new compiler into our Publications team, Scott Yeates who took over the Wagon publication from David Sharpe. I'd like to thank David for the considerable effort he put into the wagon publication in making it one of the leading publications on the subject and wish Scott every success in building on that strong position, a challenge that I know Scott is very enthusiastic about.

My first dilemma has been that the Society year runs November to October but, in keeping with the other Officials, much has happened since October that needs reporting at this AGM. There is, therefore, a proposal to change the Society year to run from March to February. More of this later but it does mean that there will be reports, this time around, from all of the Officials covering the extended period.

At last years AGM my predecessor, Simon Mutton, reported on the changes in the relationship between the Society and HB Publications in favour of a more commercial agreement in line with the wishes of both parties. It is regrettable that I have to report, despite significant efforts from Society Officials, this relationship deteriorated to the point that at the end of 2009 the relationship was terminated by HB Publications. At all times the Officials maintained a position of what was best for the Society and moving forward with that, rather than wasting time and effort in any negative actions or discussions.

Much has gone on and most of it will remain, quite rightly, known only to the parties involved as nothing is served by name calling and telling tales. It is sufficient to say that the relationship with HB Publications was no longer delivering the best for the Society and we needed to move forward and regain control of our own publications. The Publications report later will highlight some of the specific issues regarding sales information and what we've done about it to ensure that the Society continues to produce publications for both Members and non-Members alike that are viable and relevant to today's railway enthusiast's needs. It is my firm belief that we have done that.

In order to run a successful and dynamic Society it is necessary to hold meetings. The meetings for Officials and Publications Assistants can cost a significant amount when you look at how far people have to travel to meet 'face to face'. I have, therefore, introduced monthly Officials meetings and periodic Publications meetings via teleconference. In an average year this should save us over £800. I have also secured a much improved price for producing the 2010 Pocket Book from a different printer that saved us 50% on what it cost last year. It is my intention to look at other areas where we can save money and I'm already developing ideas with the other Officials...more of this at the next AGM.

Despite what can only be described as a turbulent year, the Society has continued not only to function but to build on already successful aspects such as the magazine and website. We also still produce good value publications aimed at the needs of today's railway enthusiasts to the same proven level of accuracy and now with a much better quality presentation than previously.

Last but not least, I'd like to offer my thanks to all the Officials who, in addition to the burden of addressing the Publications issue described above, have day jobs, families and also significant roles in keeping the Society functioning. All of this is carried out on a voluntary basis and very easy to take for granted. Running a successful Society is a team effort with contributions from all according to ability and availability.

It's an exciting time for the Society and I'm looking forward to the next year and I know my fellow Officials are too.

Thank you.

3) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE AGM 04/04/2009 NOT COVERED BY THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

Adoption of the minutes from last years AGM were proposed by Simon Mutton and seconded by James Holloway and approved by the meeting.

4) ELECTION OF OFFICIALS FOR YEAR 2009

There were no new nominations and it was proposed that all current Officials (as shown in the latest edition of Tracks) are elected en bloc. Proposed by Martin Hall and seconded by Simon Mutton and approved by the meeting.

5) PRESENTATION OF OFFICIALS REPORTS

a) Financial & Subscription rates for 2010

Gary presented the accounts (attached) The Society broke even on the year which is the target and considering the current economic climate it was a successful year.

With planned cost savings as outlined by Carl and to help member retention and growth, Gary recommended the current subscription level remains unchanged for 2010 year with the exception of the joint rate which would rise by £1 from May 1st 2010.

Carl Watson proposed adoption of the accounts, seconded by Peter Foster and approved by the meeting.

b) Magazine Editorial

Trevor presented the Magazine report:

*During a turbulent year, I hope and, from the many comments received, believe Tracks has grown to be the bedrock of maintaining membership with a growing mix of articles from many more members. New series have started and have become regular features with more on the horizon (some since introduced in 2010). Particularly fascinating is *Ramblings of a Rail Enthusiast* by David Spencer and that has many more years to go.*

*Having retired from the railway, John Palin, the compiler of *Lincolnshire Sightings* completed his final article for the July 2009 issue. As a replacement, similar sightings from Derek Sneddon and Nigel Hoskins, covering different parts of the country, were 'promoted' from *Out & About*. Sadly John Palin then suddenly died in late August.*

Sadly another stalwart of the club and previous editor, Alan Gilmour also died suddenly in March 2010. He was still acting as co-ordinator for articles under the

All Our Yesterdays banner and had only recently dealt with a new series of articles from Michael Smith, *A Life on the Railways* which started in the Feb 2010 issue.

Due to the breakdown in negotiations over a Service Agreement with HB Publications, the distribution of Tracks as with Trident had to be rearranged from March 2009 and I thank Peter Britcliffe, my former assistant editor for taking on the role of distribution of Tracks for the non joint ICRS members. Eddie Roberts, a GBBG member from Crewe took on the similar role of distributing Trident and Tracks for Joint members.

One pleasant problem is that with an increasing amount of material, the present 28 pages are now not enough. It has also been realised that whilst Ords, who currently satisfactorily print Tracks they are not the cheapest and have indicated that costs will increase. It is hoped therefore that we can make savings in the printing and thereby fund an increase in pages to 32.

SIMON PROPOSED A VOTE OF THANKS TO TREVOR FOR THE HARD WORK HE HAS PUT INTO 'TRACKS' OVER THE YEAR.

c) Publication Sales/Production:

Carl presented the publications report:

November 2008 - March 2010

Publications has seen much change in the past year or so. The breakdown of the agreement with HB Publications has been the most major change but we've also had changes in personnel.

David Sharpe, Wagon Compiler, decided it was time to call it a day. David has been replaced in the team by Scott Yeates who brings some welcome new blood and fresh ideas to build on the already successful Wagon book. Our thanks go to David for his hard work and dedication during his time with us and we welcome Scott into the fold.

Our Publications Manager, Maurice Brown, had been considering leaving for the last couple of years but had stayed to help see us through the necessary changes as a result of the changes in the relationship with HB Publications. Maurice finally decided enough was enough this year and we thank him for all his hard work over many years and recognise his significant contribution to the success of our new Publications Strategy. Trevor and myself have picked up the various activities relating to this role for the time being.

It's quite ironic that around two years ago it was Jeff Hall of HB Publications who suggested that ICRS should not be dependent on one printer for all of our publications and that we should seek to spread our publications between more than one. This began a whole series of negotiations that first attempted to negotiate a revised agreement between the two parties on a more commercial basis. Unfortunately this didn't last and withdrawal of key support functions by HB Publications with

little or no notice left the Society having to rapidly implement changes to replace these services (Credit Card payments, Magazine Distribution to name two).

Fortunately, due to the commitment of our Officials and with volunteers from our Membership we were able to introduce viable alternatives very quickly.

As a result of this worsening situation with HB Publications the Officials unanimously decided that we needed to regain control of our publications and seek alternative printers. At the same time we realised that we could not sustain the full breadth of titles that we had produced with HB Publications and so all European and Preserved titles were handed to HB Publications to continue producing whilst we concentrated on our core UK titles. Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, HB Publications then decided to release competing UK titles.

Throughout the last year, HB Publications refused requests from Officials for sales data that we have received in previous years. As a result of this I am unable to offer a detailed comparison between the year under review and the previous one. All we have is the data on how much HB Publications has paid us over the period, but no breakdown of what it was for.

2009

Income - Excluding Eastleigh 100 related items

HB Publications Sales (including 2009 Pocket Book)	£	3178.55
Ian Allan Magazine Sales	£	139.00
Total General Publications Income	£	3317.55

Expenditure - Excluding Eastleigh 100 related items

2009 Pocket Book (Joint Venture with HB Publications 50/50)	£	1275.00
Publications Expenses	£	414.10
Total General Publications Expenditure	£	1689.10

General Publications Surplus	£	1628.45
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Income - Eastleigh 100 Related

Eastleigh 100 Event Sales	£	643.52
Eastleigh Special Edition Pocket Book Sales	£	234.76
Total Eastleigh 100 Income	£	878.28

Expenditure - Eastleigh 100 Related

Eastleigh Special Edition Pocket Book	£	775.00
Total Eastleigh 100 Expenditure	£	775.00
Eastleigh 100 Surplus	£	103.28
2009 Publications Total Surplus	£	1731.73

Eastleigh 100 was a great event and a huge success for the Society. We managed to raise our profile in the enthusiast community and many people discovered for the first time our range of excellent publications.

The lack of detailed Sales data makes it difficult to judge 2009 in terms of improvement or otherwise over previous years. With the necessary changes that have been made and the reduction in number of titles we will see a reduction in income from Publications for 2010 and possibly into 2011 as we gain the necessary experience with the Publications we are retaining.

There are 37 titles that we will no longer be producing. These are Foreign, Preserved and Trams in the main. We plan to continue with 11 titles, starting with the first three early in 2010 which are already produced and selling well;

UK Rail Series No.1 - UK Pocket Book 2010 - Released on 1st March 2010

UK Rail Series No.2 - UK Combine 2010 - Released on 8th March 2010

UK Rail Series No.3 - UK Wagons 2010 - Released on 1st February 2010

Of these first three titles, as at the end of March 2010, we are already into profit on both the UK Combine 2010 and UK Wagons 2010.

We have invested significantly in advertising these first three publications in both online and printed media as well as our own magazine and website.

Currently in preparation are the following titles;

UK Rail Series No.4 - UK Name Directory 2010

UK Rail Series No.5 - UK Locomotives 2010

UK Rail Series No.6 - UK Diesel Units 2010

UK Rail Series No.7 - UK Electric Units 2010

UK Rail Series No.19 - Irish Railways 2010

Currently on hold are the three Ultimate Sighting Files titles.

In producing our revised range of titles ourselves we have been able to improve the overall quality and presentation of the publications to a very high standard indeed, whilst retaining the established quality and accuracy of the data within.

Looking forward, we still have a lot to learn but we are learning fast and we'll put all that we do learn into action in future publications.

d) Membership:

Trevor presented the membership report:

Firstly I must thank Maurice Brown for his work as Membership Secretary up until the end of July 2009, when he resigned. I took over under trying circumstances and have continued his efforts with many improvements to the analysis of our figures for other officials.

Record keeping has also been improved. As many will have seen, I have improved the membership forms and instigated three different renewal forms. I have also added extra information onto the envelope containing the monthly issue of Tracks. This now shows membership number, renewal state and if membership card is included. I have also introduced a new membership card with a silhouette of an CI.37 in the background...had to choose something.

Running throughout these changes has been a firm commitment to the original logo and font used (also used on Tracks cover) to give the society an overall coherent corporate feel.

Membership has maintained a steady state with new members balancing those that leave, so that by 31st December 2009 the figures were as follows compared with same period in 2008:

	2008	2009
Total	648	650
<i>included in total:</i>		
Joint members	85	124
5 year members - confirmed	?	40
unconfirmed	?	27

It is worth pointing out the strong connection with our younger sister society GBBG with whom we now share 124 joint members, a fifth of our total membership. The percentage has and is continuing to grow, up from 13% to 20%. I have and am continuing to put those joint members with differing renewal dates onto the same date, so they can take full advantage of the discounted joint fee. Hopefully this will be completed in August, once I have had a full years renewal cycle.

Coming up to date to the 28th February 2010, in line with the proposed change of year, membership is as follows:

	2010
Total	646
<i>included in total:</i>	
Joint members	131
5 year members - confirmed	40
unconfirmed	26

I have, as part of my more detailed analysis, allotted every member an area in the UK (the code is shown on my membership database) and it is interesting to see where members are located, 433 (67%) being south of a line from N Wales to the Wash (in GBBG it is a similar 68%)

England		
SE	(London, Southeast & East Anglia)	190
SW	(Southwest)	59
Mid	(Midlands)	165
NW	(Northwest)	102
NE	(Northeast)	92
Wales		
W	(incl English / Welsh borders)	19
Scotland		
ScoN	(North & Islands)	3
ScoS	(Central Belt & Borders)	14

International

IRE	(Ireland)	1
EUR	(Europe)	1
RoW	(Rest of the World)	0

e) Website: www.icrs.org.uk

Mark presented the website report:

The ICRS website continues to be successful and popular with both members and non-members alike. In this report, I would like to share with you some of the key statistics and measures of the website as well as what I believe have been the main achievements in the year under review.

ICRS Fotopic

The Fotopic gallery was launched in July 2008 and has proved extremely popular, attracting more than 79,000 hits and currently has 2,101 images in 71 different collections.

The most popular photo collection by far is that of 66048 which de-railed at Carrbridge in January 2010. Trevor Roots photos of the derailed loco have attracted a considerable interest.

ICRS Website (complete data is only available from March 2009 onwards)

Website traffic - unique visits by month:

Month	Unique Visits
November 2008	No data
December 2008	No data
January 2009	No data
February 2009	824*
March 2009	7,299
April 2009	6,235
May 2009	6,950
June 2009	8,144
July 2009	8,385
August 2009	9,178
September 2009	8,972
October 2009	10,521
February 2010	9,024

** February 2009 is incomplete data*

Note: A visitor is counted only when bringing up more than one page and taking no longer than 30 minutes between individual pages.

Most Requested Pages in 2009:

Homepage/Index page
European News
Wagon Updates
Publications
Features: Capital Stations
News & Messages
Downloads Index

In total, there were 163,121 successful page views in 2009.

I said in my report last year that my main objectives for 2008/09 were to consolidate the website as being the place to find out more about the ICRS and the benefits of joining our Society.

This has largely been achieved with a restructuring of the site to better focus on the benefits of membership as well as making it easier for new members to join. A key part of this was the introduction of a Join ICRS page with the idea of providing all the key information and benefits of ICRS membership and how to join on a single page.

For existing members, the Members' Area now has back issues of every Tracks magazine available to download since July 2006 in pdf format and I am grateful to Trevor for the work he did converting the older issues into pdf's.

Also, during the last year a Paypal facility was introduced whereby both new and existing members can purchase or renew memberships online. The Paypal option has in more recent months been extended as a facility to purchase ICRS produced publications and has been extremely successful.

Overall there have been few major changes to the website although the layout has again been refreshed and updated and there has been further rationalisation throughout the year with out of date pages and information removed and archived.

It should not be forgotten that in addition to the main website and Fotopic site that we also have a Yahoo Group, which has a small but active membership. I am very grateful to Steve Revill for the excellent work and commitment he has shown to keeping the Yahoo Group running and taking on most of the moderating responsibilities.

Feedback, positive or negative as well as members' contributions and suggestions on how to improve the web site are always welcome.

f) Advertising:

Gary suggested with the publications now out we need to target our advertising with Railways Illustrated and Railway Magazine as these had the largest circulation and widest general coverage recommended publications

looked at this as soon as possible, also to let people know we are still out there.

6) ICRS/GBBG - UKTG

It was agreed that this item would be put on long term hold as both ICRS & GBBG operated successfully as currently set up.

7) Change to ICRS accounting year:

It was proposed that the current ICRS accounting year of 1st November to 31st October be changed to 1st March to 28th February and the current financial year be extended by 4 months to 28th February 2011 to accommodate the change.

This would tie in better with publications and the fact that the AGM date has been regularly put back to April meaning we are already half way through the New Year before the AGM.

Proposed by Carl Watson, Seconded by Martin Hall and agreed by the meeting.

8) AOB & INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Carl said there had been some criticism of ICRS as being too focussed on publications. He hoped that that perception would be removed, yes we have publications which were highly regarded but we also had the website, the magazine which is our contact with each and every member and we regularly attend open days to meet with members.

The opportunity for members to get involved and talk to Officials about their Society will always be a high priority.

Peter Foster suggested the small badges could be larger and more of an advert for the Society.

Mike Kemp said the Society sometimes assumed everyone had web access. Trevor said that 'Tracks' was the primary contact with members and contact and submissions will be acceptable through all forms of communication and always will.

Brian Derricote raised the matter of change of venue for the AGM.

There was general discussion about the AGM venue which was favourably received and we would return.

It is still fairly central and there was the attraction of both the SVR and the National system at Kidderminster.

It was noted that in 2013 the Society will be 40 years old and we need to start thinking about how we can mark it including a suitable venue.

9) CLOSE OF MEETING

Our President Simon Mutton closed the meeting by observing that sitting in the audience this year he could look more objectively at things.

He noted it had been a difficult year for the Officials in a lot of ways and the fact the Society continues to be successful and that most members are unaware of the problems that sometimes have to be dealt with is testament to the dedication of the Officials at the front.

We are all in it to enjoy it the only difference is they are prepared to do the work to make it happen, It's easy to walk away when things don't go right but they don't. They all have families and day jobs and many wear more than one hat - which could be a potential problem - it's a big workload at times and it's carried out with enthusiasm and dedication.

So like me please go away from here with thanks to the Officials and maybe a thought as to can I help?

Thank you for coming and supporting us and have a safe journey home.