



Inter City Railway Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2012/13

Held on Saturday 13th April 2013 at Nene Valley Railway, Wansford

Present:

Carl Watson, Simon Mutton, Trevor Roots, Peter Britcliffe, Mark Richards, Stuart Moore, Nigel Fairbrother, Roger Thomas, Keith Hawken, Mike Kemp, Tim Atkin, Neil Tomkins, Martin Hall, Tim Stamp, Christine Field, James Holloway, Mick Specht, Jack Watson

Apologies From: David Elliott, Michael Hunter, Fred Lyon and David Spencer

Chairman's Welcome:

Welcome to the Inter City Railway Society AGM for the year 1st March 2012 to 28th February 2013. Today has also been the first of our 40th Anniversary events of 2013.

Despite the financial challenges that everyone has faced with the long running recession, we've managed to maintain our Membership. Our Publications continue to bring in significant profits which allow us to fund extras, such as the colour magazine, without the need to increase our Membership fees in hard times such as these.

Stuart Moore and Peter Britcliffe have completed their first year as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. It's been a welcome relief for the rest of us Officials who needed the extra hands and also ideas.

Trevor has continued to improve the magazine with more photos, varied articles and, crucially, more contributions from our Membership.

Our Publications continue to do well. A much needed year of stability with only some small changes aimed at making sure we produce what our Members and other customers want.

It's important that we don't forget that the profits from Publications fund the colour printing of Tracks and only through continued success of our Publications will we continue to enjoy the vastly improved Tracks magazine.

The website remains useful, informative and, most importantly, updated regularly. It remains the one area we've not made major changes in the last couple of years. I know Mark has plans to revamp the website over the next year or so.

I would like to remind everyone that all of what I've just described is achieved by a dedicated team of volunteers and I'd like to thank each and every one of them for their time, dedication and sheer hard work to make all these good things happen.

As I mentioned at the beginning, 2013 is our 40th Anniversary year and we have plans for events up and down the country throughout the year. Today is the first of those and I hope you've enjoyed it. We are also planning a summer event in the Midlands/North West area but that is proving somewhat challenging. The aim is to finish with a big event in the autumn at Eastleigh Works. More details will be published nearer the time for each of these events so keep an eye on Tracks.

The minutes of the previous AGM were read and agreed to be an accurate reflection of the meeting. Gary Mutton proposed that they be accepted as such and this was seconded by Simon Mutton. All voted in favour. There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

Election of Committee Members:

All the present committee have agreed to stand for another year and all present voted to accept this. Proposed by Martin Hall and seconded by Neil Tomkins. The work of the committee was noted and acknowledged by the members present at the AGM.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance:

This year saw 3 major changes. I took over from Gary as treasurer at the last AGM, we moved our bank from Yorkshire to Lloyds TSB and we have changed the layout of our accounts from the one that Gary inherited a few years ago.

Changing banks enabled us to have a branch close to where the 3 signatories live, namely Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Publications Officer and this has eased the monthly payment of cheques into the account. We now have online banking which means the 3 officers have instant access. It enables me to pay our bills online. It also allows members to pay their renewals straight into the account using BACS and in doing so avoid the commission charged for using Paypal. This year the commission paid to Paypal for membership and publications amounted to £337.15. While this method is convenient for members it means that a not inconsiderable sum is lost to the society. Can I urge members to either use BACS or standing order for their future membership renewals.

Membership fees do not cover the cost of our monthly magazine which is nearly £1,000 per issue. I am sure you all agree that in its present form of 40 colour pages the magazine is second to none. Fortunately the profits from our publications have continued to more than make up this shortfall and as a result we have been able to maintain membership fees at the current level.

Over the year a small loss was made but a look at the figures will show the purchases of the sales stand and the 40th anniversary headboard more than accounts for this. Financially we are in a strong position in this our 40th year.

Simon Mutton proposed accepting the accounts which was seconded by Mike Kemp and agreed by all present.

Membership:

Unlike last year, the year can almost be said to be boring in that there has been no major upheavals or restructuring.

Membership has been quite settled over the year with a high of 634 (Oct) and a low of 619 (Jul) with new members joining exactly replacing leavers, so that by 28th February 2013 the figures were as follows compared with the previous two years:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Total	634	627	627
included in total:			
New Members	110	74	73
% of above compared with 2010/11 & 2011/12	17%	12%	12%
Members left (including died / ill health)	122 (4)	82 (5)	74 (6)
% of above compared with 2010/11 & 2011/12	19%	13%	12%
Members leaving after only one year	36	40	21
% of above compared with 2010/11 & 2011/12	34%	33%	26%

The membership has increased to 641 by the 31st March with a further 17 new members having joined and 3 leaving since the end of February.

It is interesting to note that the loss rate of new members who leave after just one year has decreased. This could be due to the quality of **Tracks** and that they appreciate the generous discount on books.

Significant reasons for members leaving have been the effect of the economy (7) with members cutting back on spending and loss of interest in the hobby (3). The other sad reason is to do with the age profile ie. deaths, which have remained static thankfully. Pleasingly no one cited the quality of **Tracks** or the books as a reason for leaving.

The 5 year membership rate of £75 is still good value and whilst it stood at 72 members at the start of the year a surge leaves it standing at 90, a not insubstantial 14% of membership. It says something that many members still feel confident to pay 5 years in advance and whilst saving money, feel we have a product to satisfy them and that we project stability going forward.

One new membership system introduced was for the benefit of 2 international members who traditionally paid the extra cost of posting. However with the huge postal increases the membership rate was unsustainable and caused one member to resign. Therefore the option was offered to take **Tracks** as a pdf only via email. This proved to be a success and the lost member re-joined. It further helped another member based in the USA who also now takes this option.

By the end of year we had completed 11 months using the new renewal system of forms printed on the reverse of the **Tracks** mailing carrier sheet. This seems to have been widely accepted and successful...apart from the odd crumpled form, clearly rescued from the bin !! I do know that some were shredded before realising they had to be returned, thankfully I never received those.

Coupled with the new forms, the alternative direct banking forms of payment offered via BACS and standing order (SO), has also been a success. By the end of February, the stats were as follows:

Payment Method	Annual	5 Year	Total
Cheque / PO / Cash	360	69	429
BACS	49	4	53
SO	11	0	11
PayPal	117	16	133
Honorary	0	1	1

627

Many members have switched from using PayPal to direct banking which reduces the loss from the PayPal fee. Those members who have switched from sending cheques have also saved themselves the postage, the only slight downside being no new form is received each year.

Of those using PayPal, 44 were new members, so 60% of new members join via this payment method, so it is still a valuable asset.

For a bit of interest, 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 and in comparison over the previous two years. No huge swings are apparent though the northeast and southeast have declined whilst the midlands and southwest have grown.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
England			
SE (London, Southeast & East Anglia)	194	185	189
SW (Southwest)	57	62	64
Mid (Midlands)	158	160	168
NW (Northwest)	102	100	95
NE (Northeast)	82	79	76
Channel Islands	0	1	0
Wales			
W (incl English / Welsh borders)	23	23	19
Scotland			
ScoN (North & Islands)	2	3	3
ScoS (Central Belt & Borders)	13	12	10
International			
IRE (Ireland)	1	0	0
EUR (Europe)	2	2	2
RoW (Rest of the World)	0	0	1
Total:	634	627	627

Magazine:

That promised period of stability materialised resulting in a quiet year with no real issues. The outstanding problem over the oversized polybag settled down and no more unexpected costs ensued during the year. The only real problems were with some poor printing of **Tracks** which have hopefully all been resolved after making our dissatisfaction known to Henry Ling.

With regards our 40th Anniversary, a logo was designed and is being used on all issues throughout 2013. Articles have been included on the history of ICRS in the January and February 2013 issues and more will be penned for future issues.

Members appear to be satisfied with **Tracks** judging from the many comments received.

Publishing:

Introduction

2012 was the third year of producing our publications in house and builds very successfully on our previous two years.

Sales Figures (2011 and 2012)

Here is the comparison between 2011 and 2012 sales figures. It's important to remember that the figures are total sales for books dated in the respective years, rather than sales for the calendar year. This is an important distinction due to the overlap of books from one year into the next and the fact that we do sell small numbers of back issues from time to time.

2011 Sales	Members	Non-Members	Trade (Ian Allan)	Direct (Open Days)	Total
01 - Pocket	98	73	277	11	459
02A Combine -	147	72	161	12	392
02B Combine -	79	47	116	0	242
02C Combine -	58	32	91	29	210
03 - Wagons	174	109	148	16	447
04 - Names	Not Published in 2011				
05 - Locos	18	3	23	4	48
06 - DMUs	7	1	26	1	35
07 - EMUs	8	2	26	1	37
19 - Irish	13	9	31	9	62
2012 Sales	Members	Non-Members	Trade (Ian Allan)	Direct (Open Days)	Total
01 - Pocket	141	110	297	27	575
02A Combine -	190	98	180	3	471
02B Combine -	80	39	40	34	193
02C Combine -	Not Published in 2012				
03 - Wagons	173	117	131	8	429
04 - Names	43	16	48	5	112
05 - Locos	Not Published in 2012				
06 - DMUs	Not Published in 2012				
07 - EMUs	Not Published in 2012				
19 - Irish	16	4	15	9	44

Sales Summary

Sales of the Pocket Book picked up in 2012, but we still want to increase these further. Sales of the first Combine increased significantly, whilst the second Combine was down on 2011 and we didn't produce a third Combine. The Wagon book was slightly down and the Irish Railways was significantly down.

The individual Loco, DMU and EMU books were dropped in 2012 due to the lack of return compared to the effort to produce them.

Profit and Loss Figures

The following figures show Profit/Loss for each book, compared to the two previous years. Included are all direct costs such as printing, postage, advertising and PayPal fees.

Profit/Loss	2010	2011	2012
01 - Pocket	2379.04	720.51	2130.96
02A - Combine	1458.95	2017.62	2281.68
02B - Combine	1341.88	960.82	397.88
02C - Combine	Not Published	696.59	Not Published
03 - Wagons	1646.09	2284.06	2172.81
04 - Names	27.69	Not Published	159.77
05 - Locos	5.92	97.35	Not Published
06 - DMUs	-65.02	36.09	Not Published
07 - EMUs	-86.80	41.33	Not Published
19 - Irish	108.03	158.64	12.04
Total	6815.78	7013.01	7155.12

In 2012 we increased our prices and our Members discount. This was aimed at increasing the profit from both non-Member and Trade sales without increasing prices significantly for Members. The overall increase in profits suggests that this strategy was successful, despite lower sales of some titles.

The Pocket Book sales increased and by ordering fewer copies we managed to get the profit back to previous levels.

Postage prices again increased in 2012 but not significantly for most of our books. It remains an aim of ours to offer free postage to all customers.

2013 Publications

The first 2013 books had been released by the end of the 2012 financial year and sales are strong across the board. The Combine and Wagons almost sold out within 2-3 months of release. We are looking to bring forward the Summer Combine and, for the first time, produce a Summer Wagons.

We've only ordered 500 Pocket Books for 2013 in order to further reduce costs. We would rather sell out than have hundreds left that end up being thrown away, as in previous years. The Pocket Book is expected in mid-April and early sales are steady.

The long awaited Ultimate Sighting File (USF) is planned for the Summer of 2013.

Website:

This is my seventh year of running the ICRS website and I am pleased to report to the AGM that our website still remains a popular destination for both members and non-members alike. As in previous years, I would like to share with you some of the key changes and notable statistics from the last 12 months.

Flickr Gallery

Currently we have around 450 railway photos loaded to our Flickr site showing a broad range of railway subjects but mostly focusing on the current scene. Since the site has been running it has attracted more than 79,000 hits so is proving popular!

I would like to expand the number of galleries that we have and would also like to encourage more of our members to submit photos for the site. Any railway subject will be considered and all photos are credited to the photographer. Please do ensure that you provide good clean images in a sufficient resolution to be displayed on the Internet. If you are not sure whether what you have is suitable, a few samples sent through first would be appreciated.

I am aware that regular updating of this site needs to become the norm and I will work towards doing a regular weekly update. For all those photographers who have sent me photos and then waited several weeks for them to appear, I am grateful for your patience. Please keep your submissions coming!

ICRS Website

Our average number of visitors per month has slipped slightly from what I reported at the AGM last year but remains at a healthy level of over 9,200 per month. The busiest months for website traffic were October and December 2012.

Updating what I reported to last year's AGM, the analysis of all visits to the website show that 77% (up 5% from last year) are from direct requests either by entering the domain in the browser or via favourites, 14% from referrals on other websites and 9% are referrals from search engines such as Google or Yahoo, both slightly down on the previous 12 month.

Not surprisingly the most viewed pages remain as last year publications, rolling stock, wagon updates and events and open days. These represent what seems a continual appetite for news and information amongst enthusiasts about the current railway scene. We do get good traffic through the website for purchases of our own books and it is pleasing to see this continuing. Downloading copies of *Tracks* is also proving popular with the sample copy of the March 2012 issue viewed a total of 12,670 times in the last 12 months. This was also the most popular issue in terms of downloads from the Members' Area.

Yahoo Group

Our Yahoo discussion group continues to perform well and since our last AGM the membership has grown by almost 100 additional members to 416. The number of messages being posted has also seen a steady increase and is now regularly between 250-300 per month with our best ever month last September with a record 718 messages posted.

A large part of this success is due to the diligent work done by Steve Revill who is our Group Moderator and as well as ensuring posts are in line with our posting policy does most of the day to day admin work. I am extremely grateful to Steve for continuing to do an admirable job running the site.

Finally, as in previous years' reports I would like to remind the membership that the website is there for your benefit and I welcome feedback, positive or negative as well as your contributions and suggestions on how to improve the website. I would be particularly interested to hear from members who would like to contribute articles or photos specifically for the main website or Flickr and the more topical the latter, the better!

40th Anniversary Celebrations:

Carl stated that today's visit to the Nene Valley Railway was the first of hopefully three events to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the society. We have hopes for a trip to Crewe to include the Heritage centre, the LNWR works, the Freightliner yard and Gresty Bridge (DRS). However, to date we have not had any responses from any of the sites. Simon Mutton is dealing with this and we hope to have more to report in the future. Keep an eye on the website and the magazines. We are also planning an afternoon at Eastleigh works and Carl is taking this further. It is hoped to have access to most of the site and maybe even cab rides. Again check the web site and the magazine.

AOB:

No AOB was submitted prior to the meeting

Some stated that they had not received details of the plans for today. For some reason the email sent out about the day did not seem to get to everyone.

Gary Mutton presented the group with the mug he received from the society when it celebrated its 25th anniversary. Carl then handed out the mug and tankard that have been produced for the 40th anniversary.

Close:

Simon closed the meeting by expressing his thanks to all who attended. He thanked the committee for all of their work over the year reminding all that the work that is put in is voluntary and asking that if people wanted to get more involved they just have to ask. He concluded that there were some good events in the planning stage to celebrate the 40th anniversary year and hoped that people would take advantage of them.

Meeting closed.