



Inter City Railway Society

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 2015/16

held on Saturday 8th April 2016 at Locomotion, Shildon

The meeting started at 11.00

Members Present:

Carl Watson, Louise Watson, Simon Mutton, Trevor Roots, Christine Field, Peter Britcliffe, Stuart Moore, Martin Hall, Gareth Patterson, Darren Pavitt, Mark Richards, Paul Young, Davy Pratt, Peter Foster, Jacob Moore.

Apologies for Absence:

Michael Hillier, Ronnie Dunn.

Chairman's Report – Carl Watson:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to the Inter City Railway Society AGM for the 2015/16 year.

This is the part where I try to avoid stealing the thunder of the other Officials whilst pointing out some of the highlights of another successful year;

Membership has continued to increase over the last 12 months and we've reached and maintained the milestone of 1000 members. More importantly, the feedback continues to be good. Colin has settled in well to the Membership Secretary role and we'll hear more from him shortly.

Funds are holding up, but, as before, we are finding plenty to spend it on! The coming year will be one where we have to focus on costs and value for money to ensure we're doing the best we can for you, the Membership, with your money. Peter is keeping a very close eye on things. More from Peter shortly.

TRACKS' continues to be well received and is seen as one of the key benefits of Membership. Trevor does a sterling job of making it varied, accurate and up to date with all the latest topics and news as well as plenty of history and nostalgia. This is largely thanks to you, the Membership, sending in the information and photos in the first place. All Trevor has to do is make it all fit in 64 pages!!!!!! I'm sure Trevor will have plenty to tell us shortly, without revealing all his secrets.

Our Publications sales continue to do well with the income funding much of the spending in other areas. It's important that we don't forget that the profits from Publications fund the extra pages and colour printing of 'TRACKS' and help subsidise our annual Eastleigh Works event and only through continued success of our Publications will we continue to enjoy these benefits.

The website continues to be a gateway into ICRS, not just for sales but for the Society as a whole. Trevor continues to maintain the website to a high standard and in a timely fashion. Social Media is becoming something we 'can't do without' and so we now have our own Social Media expert, Gareth, who's steering us through this, for us, uncharted territory.

Events is becoming a key part of what we do with our participation at galas such as Swanage and Open Days at various locations as well as our own private visits to Eastleigh Works, Gresty Bridge and Basford Hall. Louise does a great job of coordinating these various events throughout the year and you'll hear a little more from her shortly.

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.

Matters Arising from the 2014/15 Minutes:

The minutes for last year's AGM were read and there were no matters arising. Approval of the minutes were proposed by Darren Pavitt and seconded by Simon Mutton.

Treasurers Report - Peter Britcliffe:

See attached. Approval of Treasurer's Report was proposed by Peter Foster, seconded by Darren Pavitt

Membership Report – Colin Pottle:

The first major change was the new Membership Rates which were ratified at the 2015 AGM and which came into effect on the 1st May 2015. The new **Standard Membership** rates of £17.50 (Annual) or £80.00 (5 year) only apply to those taking **TRACKS** by post each month. It was agreed at the AGM that those only taking **TRACKS** by email, **eMembership** can continue to subscribe at the existing £16.00 (Annual) or £75.00 (5 year) rates. This option is available now but will be offered as an alternative to **Standard Membership** on renewal forms from May and may encourage a few to switch to receiving **TRACKS** by email only. The membership subscription is still heavily subsidised by the sale of books and by not fully raising the rates, as was discussed at the AGM to nearer £20.00 we are still offering a very good deal, which there is every intention to maintain for the foreseeable future.

The second change during the year is that after 6 years Trevor Roots handed over the reins of Membership Secretary, hopefully permanently this time, to myself Colin Pottle at the end of November 2015. This was a quiet time and allowed me to get my head around the mammoth undertaking. Prior to the handover Trevor had completed a Membership Manual (Idiots Guide) for my use or anyone else's reference in the future.

Membership continued to increase with another 50-60 members added until July 2015 when we topped the 1000 mark, however it then stalled, the first time for 3 years, bouncing around under the 1000 mark. With the release of the new 2016 books it picked up again in the New Year but the rate of increase is not as high as it has been for the previous 3 years. Perhaps not surprising that the rate of new members has tailed but we still attracted 179 new members. However with the higher number of new members who have joined, we have seen a sharp increase in leavers (79) particularly after 1 year (45) ie. 57% of the total, resulting in just a net gain of 91 members over the year. This is exactly half of the previous year. This may well be that our drive to sign up members at shows etc has not resulted in 'stayers'.

As of the 29th February 2016 the figures were as follows compared with the previous two years:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total (included in total)	739	925	1016
New Members	159	233	179
Members left (including died / ill health)	47 (4)	37 (10)	79 (11)
Members leaving after only one year (including died) and % of all leavers	13 28%	16 (1) 43%	45 57%
5 Year members (including joined from new)	102 (15)	144 (13)	193 (7)

Significant reasons for members leaving have been loss of financial constraints / domestic issues (6), loss of interest in the hobby (4), working abroad (4), illness (5) and sadly 11 deaths with a further 3 unknown Full members not renewing, so assumed to have died as no contact details. The largest 'reason' is still actually no response. Pleasingly no one cited the quality of **TRACKS** or the books as a reason for leaving and often specifically say the opposite.

The 5 year membership rate is still good value and is now a substantial 19% of membership with a 34% increase during the year to 193. It is good that 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 Overseas Member joined during the year and the **eMembership** offered to them which was extended to all with the change in Membership rates has resulted in an increase from 25 to 51 **e-Members** and includes 10 who taken out the five year option.

The offer to receive **TRACKS** by email as well as a printed copy has now been taken up by 154 members.

Though the question "where did you hear about ICRS" resulted in 163 out of 179 respond in the following way compared to 2014/15 in brackets. In addition with Social Media links added to our website from the end of 2015 a new category has been added to reflect members joining via this way. This category is sure to grow during 2016. Of the 18 members gained since the start of the 2016/17 financial year, the split is shown in square brackets. As with advertising (see below), notwithstanding the comments on shows, they do throw up new members throughout the year:

ex-member -	16 (43) [4]	RI advert -	21 (19)	member / friend -	37 (45) [2]
books -	16 (25) [1]	REx advert -	14 (20) [4]	ICRS website -	23 (19) [4]
shows -	28 (48) [3]	other advert -	0 (2)	IA / TRACKS -	4 (3)
social media -	2 (n/a)				

Advertising via full page adverts in two magazines Railways Illustrated (RI) and Rail Express (REx) seems to produce results throughout the year and a further single ad was placed in both in Jul / Aug 2015. A further series of 6 ads has been placed starting in Feb 2016 but only with Rail Express, as Railways Illustrated is losing readership. It will interesting to see what the results are as REx had the lesser respondents in 2015.

Though not everyone has responded the average age can now be said to be 61 years.

The request to provide an SAE on renewal by post has resulted in several members helping out, though it would be great if more could do it.

Unlike in previous years we have abandoned the extra work involved in ascertaining where members are located.

Trevor would like to thank members for their support over the years, many of whom he has contacted and wishes myself success in the future. I would like to thank Trevor for all his hard work during which time membership has grown by over 50%.

Editors Report - Trevor Roots:

We are now in a settled period at last, with no trouble filling a 64 page **TRACKS**. More members are contributing, mainly photos but it would be great if more articles could be submitted. New series have been introduced during the year: **RAILWAYS & MUSEUMS**, **ACCIDENTS, GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN** and **SIGNAL BOX SURVEY**. A series of articles **MEET THE OFFICIALS** was started with 3 officials so far covered.

With the membership now over the 1000 mark we were printing 1020 copies per month as of the end of February 2015. It would have been more but for the increase in **eMembers**. The extra quantity has pushed the printing unit cost down, however the postage went up by a 1p per copy from January 2016 to 37p. It is likely to rise again during the year. The printing costs are as follows.

MONTH	Pgs	Qty	PRINTING	POSTAGE (Qty) Members	Mem. Sec	POLYWRAP (Qty)	TOTAL
Feb 2015	64	940	£988.80	£316.80 (880)	£7.60 (60)	£115.72 (880)	£1428.92
Feb 2016	64	1020	£1006.40	£358.16 (958)	£7.30 (26)	£127.60 (958)	£1499.46

Extrapolating from the Feb 2016 figures above the costs per issue per month for **Standard Members** are:

Printing	£0.99	Postage	£0.37	Polywrap	£0.14 (single sided)	TOTAL	£1.50
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Therefore to just supply 12 issues of **TRACKS** per annum per **Standard Member** costs **£18.00**

The postage of £7.60 pm to send the spares for new members also covered Ian Allan and archive copies, but the later two are now omitted so the cost has dropped to £7.30 pm. See below for IA. Archive copies (5) are now included as separate copies posted out direct to the Editor at a cost of £2.55 pm (5 x £0.51).

IAN ALLAN SHOPS:

With the change of Membership Secretary it was decided that the printers could send the 26 Ian Allan copies direct, which costs £9.68, only an extra £1.44 over the postage of £7.79 + 45p envelopes. The figures below show the IA costs:

IA Shop	Qty	Total Cost	IA Discount	Gross Income	Postage (HL)	Net Income
Manchester	10	£25.00	£7.50	£17.50	£3.50	£14.00
Birmingham	10	£25.00	£7.50	£17.50	£3.50	£14.00
Waterloo	6	£15.00	£4.50	£10.50	£2.68	£7.82
TOTAL	26	£65.00	£19.50	£45.50	£9.68	£35.82

With printing costs of **£25.74** (26 x £0.99 based on Feb 2016 printing costs) we now have a surplus of £10.04 pm or £120.48 pa. so we are in the black with Ian Allan. This surplus therefore covers the courier cost for the spares to the Membership Secretary and the additional archive copies to the Editor of £9.88 pm or £118.56 pa.

Publications Report - Carl Watson:

Introduction

Another good year for Publications sales.

Sales Figures (2014 and 2015)

Below is the comparison between 2014 and 2015 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.

2014 Sales	Members	Non-Members	Trade (Ian Allan)	Direct (Open Days)	Total
01 - Pocket	195	83	237	109	624
02A - Combine	267	108	178	24	577
02B - Combine	79	50	69	91	289
03 - Wagons	171	85	105	30	391
04 - Names	Not Published in 2014				
09 - Irish	18	17	37	11	83
10 - USF Vol 1	133	36	42	36	247
11 - USF Vol 2	124	28	45	27	224
Total Sales	987	407	713	328	2435
2015 Sales	Members	Non-Members	Trade (Ian Allan)	Direct (Open Days)	Total
01 - Pocket	194	103	240	85	622
02A - Combine	303	106	135	40	584
02B - Combine	69	39	97	45	250
03 - Wagons	213	87	90	46	436
04 - Names	54	11	30	10	105
09 - Irish	10	7	8	10	35
10 - USF Vol 1	Not Published in 2015				
11 - USF Vol 2	Not Published in 2015				
Total Sales	843	353	600	236	2032

Sales Summary

Overall sales are up. This isn't clear from the figures above as all the USF sales are in 2014 as there wasn't a USF in 2015. If you exclude the USF figures you have a total of 1964 books sold in 2014 versus 2032 in 2015, that's almost a 3.5% increase.

Ian Allan sales are slightly down but not by much. They continue to make up a significant part of our total sales.

Open Day/Event sales are down but we didn't have a Derby type event in 2015 and our visit to the Mid Norfolk was very disappointing.

Sales of the main Combine are up but sales of the second Combine have dipped and if they continue to reduce we will have to look at the viability of producing the Summer edition.

Sales of the Irish Railways book have plummeted compared to previous years. As a result we have decided not to do a 2016 version. I believe that sales of this book have been affected by the release of other publishers books and as it's not an area we know a great deal about we are unable to add any further value or detail to our book. It may, therefore, be that we simply withdraw from producing this book.

The Ultimate Sighting File books have been a big success. Sales have continued in 2015, albeit slower than in 2014. We are now sold out of Volume 1 and have only a few of Volume 2 left. The specialist nature of this book means it is only produced every few years so the next version will be 2017/18.

Our sundry items continue to sell slowly and mostly at events with our Sales Stand. In 2015 we added navy Polo Shirts but sales of these have been disappointing. It may be that the small quantities we have to buy mean that the price is too high.

Tracks Binders are selling steadily but we could do with selling more as we have plenty of them in stock.

Printing and Postage

Our relationship with the printers of our A5 books is crucial to the success of our sales. We have an excellent relationship with the team at Minuteman in Hedge End near Southampton and the printing of our books in batches is working well. The flexibility of having additional covers printed in case we need to order more of a particular book has worked well with the USF.

Postage prices again increased in 2015, seemingly confirming this is to be an annual event now (especially as they've just gone up in 2016 too!)

Postage is a significant part of the costs of all of our books but we remain committed to including postage in the pricing of our books.

The Franking Machine has proven to be very useful in cutting down the effort required, although it does have its eccentricities which often elicit the odd naughty word from my mouth when franking a large quantity of parcels!

Now that we've had the Franking Machine for just over a year it is clear that any saving is eaten up by the multitude of hidden costs associated with the process, somewhat galling it has to be said! However, it's not costing us any more than normal postage and it does make life a lot easier.

Still with postage, I have been combining books together wherever practical in order to reduce postage. However, it is not always as easy to achieve this as you might think. For example; one Pocket Book is classed as Large Letter and costs £0.91 to post with the franking machine but if you put two in the same envelope it becomes a Small Parcel due to thickness and costs £2.50, that's 68p more than if you sent them separately!

2016 Publications

The first 2016 books had been released by the end of the 2015/16 financial year, Combine in January and Pocket Book and Wagons should be delivered just prior to this AGM. Sales of these are very strong across the board. We've ordered similar quantities of each book this year as we had plenty left over of all the main books last year. We are advertising more so we hope that will increase sales.

And finally, in 2014 we had a new Compiler start with the Irish Book. In 2015 he took over the Combine from me and early signs were promising. However, the Combine this year suffered from some problems and the Pocket Book had major problems. As a result both books were later than planned.

Compiling is a difficult task that isn't suited to all. You have to have plenty of time, attention to detail and a high accuracy of work. This is very difficult to maintain over an extended period.

Unfortunately, we have had to stop using this Compiler. I have returned to the task and have sorted out the master sheet which both the Pocket Book and Combine are produced from. This has resulted in the Pocket Book being updated to later than the Combine for the first time.

Initial orders from Ian Allan shops are very low compared to previous years but there is still plenty of time for them to pick up.

Website Report - Trevor Roots:

Nothing much to report other than the website ticks over and is still generating new members and hopefully many book orders.

A useful database of all photos featured in **TRACKS** since December 2006 is being compiled by John Barton and Colin Pottle and will be put on the website when ready.

Event Co-ordinators Report – Louise Watson:

We have had 4 successful visits this year and 3 trips with our sales stand. The first visit being for our AGM last year where we had 65 Members, the largest attendance ever!

Our annual Eastleigh Works event on 6th June was a great success with 84 people attending and enjoying full access to the site plus cab rides and a hog roast. It's a good opportunity for the committee to socialise with members and nice to put faces to names.

On Saturday 25th July we had another visit around Eastleigh Works with just 9 members attending and Norman as host.

We visited DRS Crewe Gresty Bridge Depot on Saturday 28th November. Carl attended as ICRS representative. 18 members attended. There were not many loco's on site so a little disappointing but the visit was well received and I would like to thank DRS for allowing us access to their site.

Saturday 12th December saw the next visit, this being Freightliner at Crewe Basford Hall Yard. Carl attended and although we had quite a few booked on this visit, on the day the weather was awful, and many dropped out. We did however have 35 members on the day and those that attended enjoyed their visit. Once again, I would like to thank Freightliner for allowing us to visit their yard.

We had 3 trips out with our sales stand this year, Swanage Diesel Gala for 4 days in May, DRS Open Day at Kingmoor Depot, Carlisle in July and 2 days at Mid Norfolk Railway in September. Again, interest in the Society at Swanage and Carlisle was well received as were the merchandise sales. The Mid Norfolk was a little challenging as there were huge gaps between trains leaving a deserted Dereham Station between times. The weather forecast was awful too, which I am sure kept many people away, but it did turn out to be quite nice albeit a little chilly.

Our first visit for 2016 was a visit to Eastleigh Works on 5th March. We will be attending the Swanage Diesel Gala on the 5th to 8th May. We have our annual hog roast and visit at Eastleigh Works on Saturday 4th June (with full access to the site and cab rides) and DRS Crewe Open Day on Saturday 23rd July, which we will be attending with our sales stand.

I am looking at booking visits again at DRS Gresty Bridge and Freightliner Basford Hall again this year and this will probably be at the end of the year again. We do have to consider the cost of providing these visits to depots. With Carl attending both this year as no one else was able to, the travel and accommodation costs soon mount up. This is something members of the committee do have to think about in the future as to whether we pass this cost onto members on top of the cost to visit the depot.

I say this every year, but if anyone has any contacts with any depots they would be happy to pass to me I will try and get us a visit there.

Election of Officials:

The existing committee have agreed to stand for a further year.

Election of the committee en block was proposed by Martin Hall and seconded by Gareth Patterson.

AOB:

Gareth's Social Media officer (unofficial post) set up the ICRS Facebook page on 2.11.15 and so far has 389 followers. There are also 132 followers on the Twitter page. The response to the pages has been varied from not knowing the society exists to not knowing the society was still going. Nobody has yet 'liked' the pages but they are being regularly read. Could we post news on the page? Yes this is possible but it's not clear if this is what people want to do. We want to see the system grow and if passing on news via social media raise people's awareness to the pages that would be good.

The society hasn't properly tried social media properly before so we are happy to support Gareth in his efforts. People can also send pictures to Gareth of new or unusual things. We committee would like to thank Gareth for all he has done so far and look forward to seeing things progress in the future.

Presidents Closing Comments - Simon Mutten:

Thinking about value for money and looking at the number of readers of Railway magazine and Rail magazine (37000+ and 20000+ respectively) and looking at the cover price and the discounts both magazines offer it's estimated that the magazines bring in £1.2-£1.3million p/a. Compare that to the cost of Tracks and membership to the ICRS it shows that Tracks is very good value for money.

Look also at the number of people who produce the magazines:

- Railway magazine 9 people
- Rail magazine 17 people

Both exclude the contributing editors. We have Trevor!!! So membership is very good value for our members. All of those involved in running the ICRS are volunteers and all of their efforts are much appreciated.

The meeting closed at ?