



MINUTES OF ICRS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2022

Held on Saturday 1st April 2023 at YMCA, Crewe

The meeting commenced at 14.00 with introduction by Simon Mutton

Members Present: Mark Beaman, Bill Belgrove, Robert Boak, Tony Brosko, Graham Colledge, Claire Cowen, Richard Cowen, John Craig, Anna Crowson, Robert Dalton, Neil Dix, Nigel Fairbrother, Martin Hall, Keith Hawken, Ben Hemming, Nick Hemming, Mike Hillier, Mike Holland, James Holloway, Barrie Jeremy, Russ Kinder, Lawrence McCormick, Keith Morey, Gary Mutton, Andy Scott, Philip Stafford, Roger Thomas, Robert Trainor, Aidan Turner, Billy Walker.

Apologies for Absence: Mark Beresford, Bryl Berry, Chris Brelsford, Andy Frusher, Alexis Griffin, Ian Grove, Roger Harris, Phil Hutson, Brodie James, Jonathan Longbottom, Fred Lyon, Jeffrey Neale, Andy Norman, Ed Pritchard, Gareth Taylor, William Waugh.

Matters Arising from the 2020 & 2021 Minutes:

The minutes from last year's AGM were read and there were no matters arising. Approval of the minutes were proposed by Tony Whitehead and seconded by Gary Mutton.

Treasurers Report - Peter Britcliffe: Also see attached Accounts

The costs involved in printing and distributing **TRACKS** increased twice during the year to almost £2,000 above what had been budgeted. Given the problems members experienced receiving their copies in the latter part of the year we certainly didn't get value for money. More importantly as a result, the membership fee had to be increased by £5 to £25 in November. Unfortunately, some members failed to make changes to their standing orders giving extra work to both me and Colin to chase them for the extra amount. Please, when you receive your renewal notice, ensure that you are paying the correct amount. We both lead very busy lives.

By the end of the year we had decided, due to the onerous pressures on the Editor, more info in the Editor's Report, that the Membership structure was to be radically changed with the fee halved. All new members from 01/01/23 will be offered pdf only membership at £12 and that all existing eMembers equally be offered the new £12 fee on renewal. For those existing members continuing to take printed **TRACKS** (until 31/12/23) Trevor compiled figs to show how we could taper existing members fees throughout 2023 as they renewed to bring them all down to £12 by the end of the year. AFA membership will be discontinued with all converted to ordinary members at £12. AFCs will continue at £5. This further simplifies the Membership structure with the anticipated streamlined income from fees to better cover all Society admin costs going forward, negating the reliance on book sales.

2022 saw the society return to a full visit programme. However, given the increases in travel and accommodation prices for officials to attend these events our expenditure reached its highest level in my time as Treasurer. Our income was also the highest and covered these increases allowing a small surplus for the year.

As we enter our Golden Jubilee year, as will be discussed in more detail in the Editor's Report, the society is in a strong financial position and looking forward to many more years of providing our top of the range books and visits for our members to get the most out of their hobby.

Discussion: Printing costs for **TRACKS** have increased over the past twelve months which has therefore necessitated us having to increase the membership fee by £5. Members were requested to make sure they send the correct amount and if paying by standing order to ensure this is amended.

With effect from January 2024 **TRACKS** will only be produced as a PDF due to the increase in printing costs and postage. Mileage allowance for officials to be increased. End of year profit £252.34.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Andy Scott and seconded by Nick Hemming.

Membership Report - Colin Pottle:

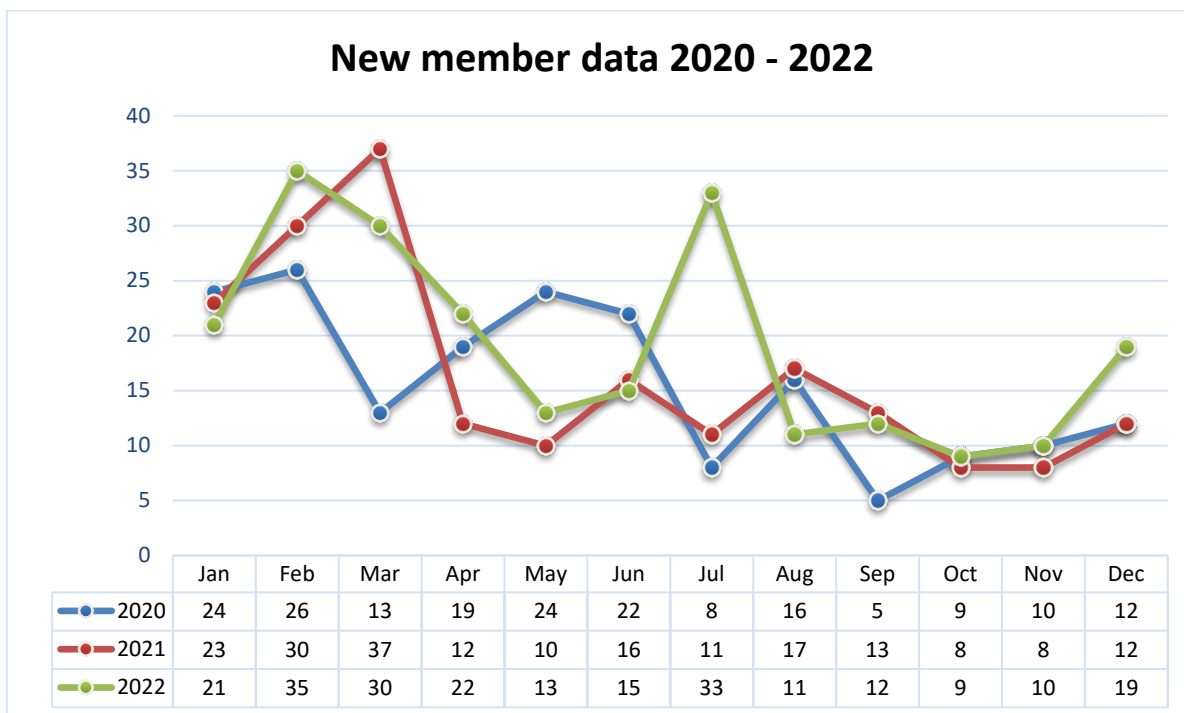
2022 started with 1448 members, 99 up on the previous year, and throughout the year, we gained 230 new members and 143 left, of these 60 only stayed for one year. We finished the year with 1527 members. With the Covid restrictions eased, we were able to get out to shows and events and this shows in the positive figures. 'Additional Family Members' were: 13 Children and 44 Adults. There were 144 members who took **TRACKS** as pdf only with 404 taking both the pdf and a printed **TRACKS**.

2022 saw new member highs in February and July, February due to advertising and July due to the DRS Crewe Gresty Bridge Open Day, consistently one of our best shows. The rest of the year was fairly average.

Over the year sadly 6 members passed away, though this is the lowest level for the last three years.

The overall trend for members is up, we are constantly gaining new ground especially with 'word of mouth' recommendations, so keep spreading the word.

The following chart shows the comparisons of new members over the last three years.



With outside variables pushing up prices and the Membership fee increased by £5 to £25 in November, by the end of the year we had decided, due to the onerous pressures on the Editor, more info in the Editor's Report, that the Membership structure was to be radically changed with the fee halved. All new members from 01/01/23 will be offered pdf only membership at £12 and that all existing eMembers equally be offered the new £12 fee on renewal. For those existing members continuing to take printed **TRACKS** (until 31/12/23) Trevor compiled figs to show how we could taper existing members fees throughout 2023 as they renewed to bring them all down to £12 by the end of the year with members notified of their respective renewal fee each month by email, or telephone if needed. AFA membership will be discontinued with all converted to ordinary members at £12. AFCs will continue at £5. This further simplifies the Membership structure.

We continue to have members who don't renew on time and then re-join at a later date. I would speculate that the reason for this is that the renewal message isn't always getting through. Along with the two reminders sent with **TRACKS**, I also send two email reminders, a gentle nudge in the first instance and then a final reminder (this has now changed). If these are going to your spam folder then you haven't followed the instructions on joining and making 'Membership' one of your trusted contacts.

As always, it is important to keep your details updated, a quick email preferably, text or message left on the phone to myself is all that is required.

Discussion: Colin reminded members to advise him when they change address or telephone number. AFA membership to cease as membership fee reduced. As the year progresses there will be less members taking the printed version of **TRACKS** which increases the costs of printing and postage.

New members since 01/01/23 - 144

Current Membership as at 29/03: Total - 1591, pdf - 381, AFA - 33, AFC - 16, **TRACKS** + pdf - 352

Editors Report - Trevor Roots:

My last words in my 2020-21 Report after a turbulent two years were "...I look forward to a settled 2022". Well that didn't pan out !! With everyone still reeling from the pandemic and its disruptive effects, severe storms wreaked havoc in January and February, then Putin invaded Ukraine. The subsequent result was an energy then food crisis pushing prices through the roof. We were not immune as mentioned in the Treasurers Report which ultimately pushed up our membership fee which coupled with constant printer issues and family ill health led to a major rethink about my future and consequently my participation in the Society. But this was not before we had further major upheaval with rail strikes that lasted all year, most only being resolved by this AGM a year later. Having had a successful Platinum Jubilee, we sadly lost HM Queen Elizabeth II just two months later in September followed by a turbulent period of political instability. So after welcoming a new King, two Prime Ministers and a major economic shock later we got to Christmas accompanied by the last straw as far as I was concerned, ongoing postal strikes disrupting delivery of **TRACKS**. Enough was enough and I compiled a comprehensive report on the re-structuring of the Society which was largely beneficial, namely stopping printing **TRACKS**, offering new membership as pdf only and lowering the Membership Fee by half. This was to be announced in the bonus January 2023 issue of **TRACKS**. Whilst the revised membership fees would be brought in immediately there would be a year's grace on switching to pdf only for existing members, starting in January 2024. Without repeating myself the overall effect was to reduce costs to the Society and members, remove outside variables and pressures on myself. Whilst successful in the first two the latter was increased, though hopefully only temporarily, but more in next year's AGM Report.

In December I was called out of the blue by another printer by way of knowing a previous printer, touting for our business. As reported in **TRACKS** I was reluctant to go through the hassle of changing again but knowing it was to be for

only one year I requested a quote. The subsequent 25% cost reduction meant it would help with the likely uncertainty in the 2023 membership income as members opted for the pdf option at the lower fee. The new printer was Micropress who were to start from January 2023.

Discussion: As the year progresses, we will lose members as they will either not be able to take the PDF version for various reasons or simply choose not to. With a PDF magazine there will be no restriction on size which means more articles can be put in as against the printed version which can take days to get it to fit 80 pages and there are time restriction for sending it to the printers. To remove pressure on press dates, Trevor tried doing the magazine bi-monthly but it just didn't work because articles were then not up-to-date and it was more time consuming in the end as emails / photos continue to be sent in which still takes up the same processing time and then not enough pages to fit everything in.

Publications Report - Trevor Roots:

Book Compilation: As outlined in the last AGM Report, the 2022 books were successfully compiled in Word.

Book Printing / Distribution: Again, as outlined last year we did move production of the four wire bound books to Lavenham Press (LVP) but had to order all up front with no 'print on demand' capability. With posting out having to taken in house, all books (1975) were delivered en masse to me in Scotland, over ½ tonne of them, 25 days after receiving the files. Unlike Minuteman (MM), we were able to check all books and prevent poor copies being posted, but as it turned out LVP did a pretty good job. After a very busy week, all pre-orders were therefore posted out by the 8th March using a Drop & Go account with the PO which proved successful over the year. This provided 'proof of posting' and was a good way of double checking orders before they went out resulting in very few delivery errors. We never had this with MM though they were able to start sending out pre-orders by the 11th February so nearly 4 weeks in advance of this year.

Book Sales: With having to guess up front what books we would want based on previous years, I did however over order as it proved subsequently orders were down on 2021 which were themselves down on 2020, see below. This meant we had an unwanted surplus at the end of the year of 4 of the 5 books, unlike previous years, with the exception of Combine Vol.2 which sold out, no doubt because it included Wagons. The cost of printing the four wire bound 2022 books was £6046.00 (1975) as compared to £8595.19 (1897) in 2021 and with the quantities fairly similar you can see LVP were substantially cheaper. However, that hid the issue that printing a small quantity as with the Loco book (125), LVP were much higher and that book never broke even. At MM the unit cost was £2.46, whereas LVP charged £4.21 and though we sold it at £5 to Members, so theoretically should have been ok had the same quantity as in previous years been sold, but we only sold 60% of the total.

Book Title	2020		2021		2022	
	Order	Sold	Order	Sold	Order	Sold
01 Pocket Book (spine)	250	224	250	191	250	180
01W Pocket Book	500 *	480	520 *	497	525	454
02 Combine Vol.1	736 *	721	725 *	719	775	676
03 Combine Vol.2	550 *	546	502 *	497	550	533
05 Locos	150	120	150	121	125	89
Totals	2186	2091	2147	2025	2225	1932

* printed to order, Sold includes complimentary etc, faulty books not included

The price of three of the existing titles, Name Directory and USFS Vol.1 & Vol.2 were reduced during the year to shift remaining stocks but not many have been sold.

In August we released the first, hopefully, of a new series of general pictorial books, Locos in the Pre-Privatisation Era. Compiled by Colin Pottle utilising photos by Doug Slater, the first book was Shunter Hunter Class 08. The initial production costs were paid for by the Society, who once the book has broken even will get 50% of the income from further sales. By the end of the year 140 out of 1000 ordered had been sold.

Micropress (MP) were asked to quote for printing our wire bound spotting books following their lower quote for **TRACKS**, but as of the end of the year nothing was forthcoming.

Advertising: Full page adverts were taken out in Railways Illustrated (RI) and Railway Express (REx) for the Feb issues only. We also continue to get our books advertised on WNXX, which can be seen when you scroll to the bottom of the Latest News page under Members Marketing. In addition, Gareth continues to push us on social media.

Sundries: Other than stocking up on large **TRACKS** binders and clothing, no new items were ordered.

Discussion: Decision to change printers was to save money but in the end this did not work out well as caused a lot of extra work due to the fact a considerable number of the books were faulty and had to be reprinted. The local Post Office has changed hands so not sure if the Drop & Go system will work as well, only time will tell. Less books have been sold to members but non-members sales holding up. It will be interesting to see if more members purchase books with the membership fee going down. Considering splitting the wire bound Pocket Book - any feed back on this. Will obtain quotes from Lavenham Press to see if this is feasible. The Loco book would then stop as this would be part of the Pocket Book. Suggest producing a perfect bound Combine - any feed back on this idea. Possibility of producing a PDF for books by subscription which would be up-dated quarterly and several members were interested in this idea. This is also looking ahead to the possibility of losing the Post service. USF needs up-dating so possibly trial this as a PDF version to see how this goes. We need to be in control of things and the printers and Post Office have caused problems. Emailing **TRACKS** does work better as more capacity to receive by email.

MP quote for wire bound books was £3891.00 compared to LVP £7394.50, LVP price in 2022 was £6019.00. Chose MP however quality and delivery awful from MP. Remaining books to be delivered 04/04 nearly 8 weeks after files supplied.

Website Report - Trevor Roots:

The website has been constantly updated and tweaked to add new books and sundries as they are released or made available with yet more user friendly guidance. It is amazing how some still do not read the guidance !! As at the end of the year all relevant pages were amended to show the restructuring to start from the 1st January 2023.

Gareth Patterson is doing an excellent job with Social Media, see his report below and the three advertising platforms are continuing to generate new members and book sales.

The **TRACKS** photo database has still yet to be put on the website as no time to fully check it but it is kept up to date as each issue is released.

Discussion: Up-dated regularly so refer to this first.

Social Media Report - Gareth Patterson:

2022 was another successful year for the ICRS Social Media sites. The figs for each site were:

	end of Dec 2021	end of Dec 2022 (approx)
Facebook	4357	4540
Twitter	1975	2245
Instagram	3348	3335

The members only Facebook group nearly doubled from 148 to 270 by the end of the year.

Thought the cause is unknown, numbers have been fluctuating on Instagram, going up and down over various months and finishing lower than the year started.

On the 19th December 2022 we set up a page on a new Railway Social Media Platform called 'Train Siding'. This is a dedicated online community within the hobby covering all things railway including Photography, Modelling, Trainspotting and Simulators. In just three weeks up to the 9th January 2023 (no figs for 31/01/22) we gained 80 followers. Numbers are now starting to steadily rise on our members only Facebook page, possibly due to our lower membership fee pulling in more new members and the switch to more online involvement.

As always, the Spotting books have been getting plenty of advertising on social media as has the revised membership structure.

Our photo source / drivers have been steady supplying material for the pages which are much appreciated, as have our members, with a daily picture going up every morning at 08.30.

Discussion: Instagram varies most from month to month. Figures as at 1st April were: Facebook 4578, Instagram 3357, Twitter 2203, Facebook Members Group 335, Train Siding 529. Possibility of a Train Spotting App.

Events Report - Trevor Roots / Tony Whitehead:

A comprehensive programme of events was implemented during 2022 with visits to Crewe Heritage Centre for our AGM / WCR Carnforth (4) / Crewe Basford Hall (3) / Scunthorpe Steelworks / Goodmans Yard Wishaw / Andrew Briddon Collection, Darley Dale / ELR / KWV / Eastleigh Works. Apart from a disappointing start to the year with only 18 attending the March visit to WCR, all others were well attended though covid did wreak havoc with Andrew Briddon after the AGM. The annual Eastleigh visit had the biggest turn out ever with 233 attending though it did cause some logistical problems and a gate crasher. To smooth things out and prevent abuse, the 2023 event will be advance payment with tickets issued on the day to gain entry and exit to / from the site.

The DRS Open Day returned at Crewe Gresty Bridge and we attended with our sales stand which proved successful in selling books and gaining new members.

Having given his all in attempting to secure visits and deal with sometimes infuriating bookings, Tony eased back from organising visits at the end of the year but will help out as required in conjunction with Trevor & Christine in 2023.

It is hoped most of the same visits can be replicated in 2023 and an additional visit to ELR, as it was naturally oversubscribed. It is also hoped we can return to Long Marston plus keep trying for Toton and LSL, the latter having provisionally agreed.

Discussion: Unfortunately Tony Whitehead had to give up organising visits due to health issues but thanks expressed to him for all his hard work done in the past. Trying to organise events is sometimes very difficult. Members do say "Have you tried so and so" and usually we have but do not get anywhere. Long Marston have not got back to us about our visit this year and Toton we cannot get a response from them.

Nameplate - thank you to everyone who have donated for this. It will definitely happen, possibly on a Freight Liner, emails have been sent to them but not even had an acknowledgement. Could even approach a preserved railway. Perhaps West Coast Railway but it is up to who runs it and we would like the nameplate on for a long time.

Election of Officials:

The election of the committee en mass. Proposed by Gary Mutten and seconded by Neil Dix.

Constitution Revision:

Alterations as indicated on document attached. Proposed by Keith Morey and seconded by Martin Hall.

Privacy Notice Revision:

Alterations as indicated on document attached. Proposed by Aidan Turner and seconded by Tony Whitehead.

AOB: 50th Anniversary Loco Naming - Trevor Roots:

A decision was made mid-year to see if we could get a loco named for our 50th Anniversary year in 2023 and an approach was made by Carl Watson to GBRf who were initially positive, so much so that it was believed a temporary naming could be made at our Eastleigh event in September. We got stick-on vinyl nameplates made in anticipation that it might be 69006 which had just been repainted and would be on display. Unfortunately this was not to be, so one of the vinyl nameplates was shown on our sales stand. At the event we told members for the first time about the loco naming plan and started collecting donations towards the naming, which was still expected to be before the end of the year. In order to not be caught out if a loco became available, we went ahead and ordered the permanent cast nameplates at a cost of £1200. Fitting in due course would cost £750 extra if done by Arlington Fleet Services.

Current Donations Total - £547.57

AOB - Other Points:

Discussion: Perhaps put an article in Rail Express and Gary Mutton suggested that Simon Mutton could do this. Point out everything we provide that other societies do not. It is a case of getting across various issues.

Gary Mutton proposed a vote of thanks from the floor to all the Officials for all the work carried out for the Society.

Trevor Roots suggested a vote of thanks to Christine Field for putting up with him!

Andy Scott suggested a visit to Locomotive Services (LSL).

A major advantage of having TRACKS as a PDF is that you can have it as soon as produced.

East Lancs Railway (ELR) - this is a popular visit and is always oversubscribed

West Coast Railway (WCR) - This is also a popular visit as a lot of stock being scrapped.

Perhaps arrange more Heritage site visits but needs someone to run with this.

Presidents Closing Statement - Simon Mutton:

As is customary, it is my job - and privilege - to provide the closing address to the Society AGM.

2022 has certainly been another challenging year for the railway industry, with those challenges continuing into 2023. Likewise the Society has faced its own challenges, ably illustrated by Trevor in his monthly Editor comments in the magazine, and which resulted in the major decision for TRACKS to go digital only.

Trevor's comments throughout the year also again highlight the amount of work which goes into the running of the society - sometimes stressful, sometimes challenging, sometimes frustrating.

I will never tire of reminding members that all this work is done on a voluntary basis, and the debt of gratitude that we owe to all the Officials for making the society the success it is, allowing us to enjoy our hobby through the arranged visits, publications and website.

This year the Society celebrates its 50th anniversary; a significant milestone which we hope you will be able to take advantage of through the visits and activities that the Officials have been working hard to put together.

With the indulgence of the meeting I therefore intend to direct my address this year specifically to the Officials and those Society members who provide the practical help and support that is so important to our success both now and in the future. In so doing I am sure I speak for the membership as a whole.

We would never have reached this anniversary without Officials and volunteers both past and present. From the early days when Depot visits were organised by regional branches of the Society and newsletters prepared on a ribbon typewriter were the order of the day, to today's digital world providing the society with high quality books and a monthly magazine coupled with specially organised visits to railway installations, it has been the Officials that have made it all happen. You matter. You make a difference. Your generosity in providing your time and effort has had a profound and lasting effect on the success of the InterCity Railway Society. Your willingness to share both your time and your talents says a lot about each of you and doing so in the face of the challenges that regularly present themselves speaks to both the strength and quality of your character.

While I know that you volunteer without expectation of recognition and reward, today I intend to do just that. I want you to know just how much your dedication and hard work is appreciated, and on behalf of the membership express our gratitude for everything you have done and continue to do that adds so much in enabling us to enjoy our hobby. Your hard work is recognised, valued and appreciated.

Finally a big thank you to you, the membership. Your continued support and overwhelmingly positive comments (in contrast to the very small negative ones) is what makes it all worthwhile.

So thank you for attending today. Have a safe journey home, and can we once again close in the time honoured fashion of a round of applause for the Officials – and indeed yourselves!

Thank you.

Meeting finished: approx 17.10