

Inter City Railway Society

MINUTES OF ICRS AGM FOR THE YEAR 2024

Held on Saturday 29th March at 11.30 at Brownhills West, Chasewater Railway

The meeting commenced at 12.15 with introduction by Simon Mutten (President)

Members Present

Gary Asquith, Darren Bailey, Daniel Baldwin, Lee Baldwin, Mark Baldwin, Oliver Baldwin, Thomas Baldwin, Ron Bamford, Alan Banks, Dave Benson, Ray Bond, Stan Bown, Paul Brack, Peter Britcliffe, Ken Bull, Anthony Burnham-Bamford, Claire Cowen, Richard Cowen, Michael Delaney, Neil Dix, Martin Eden, Christine Field, Peter Flintham, Hugh Guilford, Roger Harris, Derek Heath, Andrew Hills, Steve Hooley, Mark Ingle, Mike Jackson, Alan Jones, Andy King, Barry Knibbs, Stuart Moore, Andrew Murray, Gary Mutten, Simon Mutten, Richard Odysseos-Beaumont, Gareth Oliver, Gareth Patterson, Colin Pottle, Trevor Roots, Andy Scott, David Scott, Andy Taylor, Philip Timerick, Aidan Turner, Harvey Turner, Pete Turner, Sid Wilson, Paul Young.

Apologies for Absence

Tony Brzosko, Nigel Carvell, Paul Clifford, Graham College, Ian Ferris, Dave Finney, Martin Hall, Keith Hawken, Michael Hillier, James Holloway, Jeff Neale, Brian Stanway, Robert Trainor, Peter Venham.

Matters Arising from the 2023 Minutes

The minutes from last year's AGM were read and the only matter arising from these were the Nameplate on 57003. Approval of the minutes were proposed by Gary Mutten and seconded by Stuart Moore.

Treasurers Report - Peter Britcliffe *Also see attached Accounts*

All amounts shown in this report have been rounded to the nearest £100.

We showed a surplus of almost **£9,100**

Membership: With **TRACKS** moving online, the huge costs involved disappeared and we were able to reduce the membership fee to £12. Unfortunately, some members have continued to pay the incorrect amount when renewing and trying to get this corrected or refunded is an administrative headache. In discussion with Colin we have decided that in future any such overpayments will be regarded as donations to society funds.

Publications: Total sales fell for the third consecutive year but they still covered the production expenditure producing a surplus of **£10,000**. Together with the membership fees, this financed the costs involved in running society visits, attending shows and our administrative costs.

Visits / Shows: These will always produce a deficit with this year being almost **-£8,900**. Travel, hotel accommodation and food cost increases are beyond our control. This year there were 20 visits and special mention here to Andy for the time he spent arranging some new venues. Trevor, Colin and particularly Chris also spent many hours to ensure everything went smoothly.

Officials / Website: With no associated income these admin costs will always show a deficit. We have to maintain hardware and both the Treasurer and Membership laptops had to be replaced during 2024.

AGM: This is another area where costs always show a deficit, this year's was **-£2,000** but the venue at the YMCA, Crewe, again proved to be an excellent choice.

50th Anniversary: The nameplate was finally fitted to 57003, a LSL loco. One member, who wished to remain anonymous, donated the full cost of the fitting by Arlington Fleet Services, so on behalf of the Society I would like to thank him once again for his generous gesture.

Finally, our bank, Lloyds have reorganised their Club Accounts and will be introducing bank charges from January 2025, though these will be discounted for the first year. To counteract the charges, we have moved the bulk of our assets from what was the Current Account into the Savings Account which now pays better interest so should help cover the charges.

Looking forward to 2025, the society is in a strong position financially as the list of assets show.

Discussion: Bank charges are now payable on the account but the fee is covered by the interest on the savings account.

Fee for Eastleigh was raised which we said we would discuss under Visits.

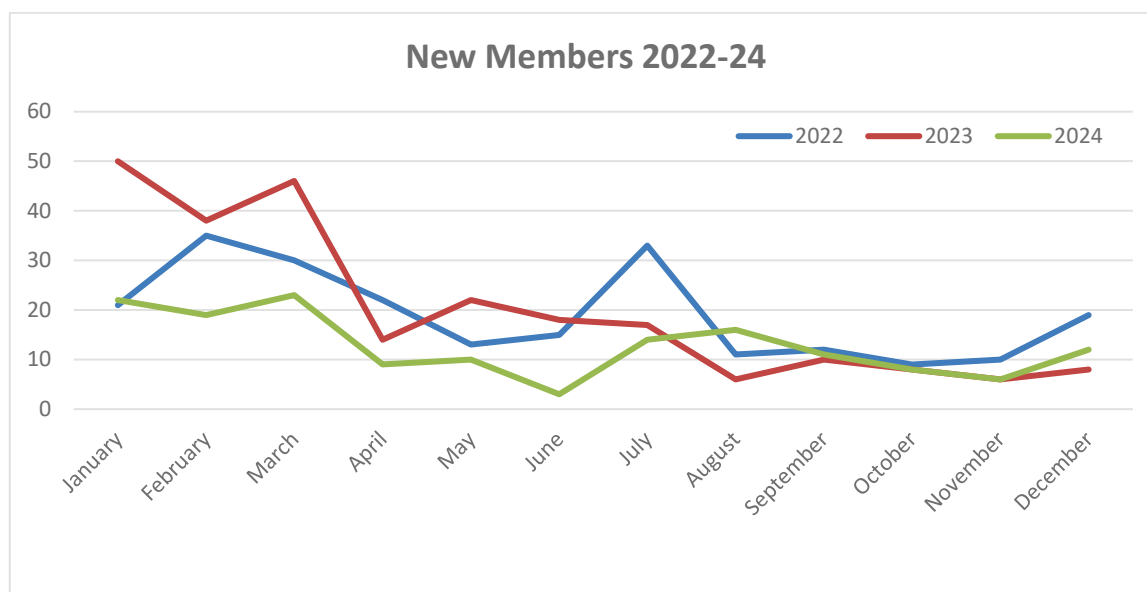
Approval of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Stuart Moore and seconded by Andy Scott.

Membership Report - Colin Pottle

Attracting new members in 2024 started about the same as 2022, then fell off, down on the previous two years but from July onwards, other than a peak for July 2022, the gain has been similar or better than the previous 5 years. As can be seen on the graph below, the blue and red lines represent 2022/2023 respectively, whilst the green line is 2024.

We continue to have members who don't renew on time and then re-join at a later date

The decision to stop printing **TRACKS** had a dramatic effect on membership numbers, down to their lowest level since June 2018, but still at a level nearly twice that it was in Jan 2013. By the end of the year membership had stabilised and hopefully will improve as new members join under the new system.



By the end of 2024 we had 1210 members, down by 254 from the previous year. This included 14 AFC's (Additional Family Child) aged between 10 - 16 years old.

To sum up 2024, we had 153 new members. People who resigned (or were resigned by me because they didn't respond to requests to renew) numbered 426 of which 124 stayed for one year only. Sadly, we also had 3 members who passed away, bringing the total who left to 429.

Renewals: I have been working on the best way to inform members that their renewal is due. Members will get an email informing them that their renewal is due in the coming month, followed by one towards the end of that month and yet another toward the end of the following month. This still gives everyone a month's grace but only works if you keep your details up to date. Email addresses seem to be changed on a regular basis so please, please let us know your new ones.

It should be noted that the first two numbers relate to the month of joining, while the next two relate to the year.

Discussion: Current Membership as at 28/03/25 - 1217
50 new members so far this year but we lost 86.

Editors Report - Trevor Roots

For those that chose to stay with us, the switch to a pdf **TRACKS** proved fairly successful and the vast majority adapted to the new system of downloading from the website. A few who were technically less able did struggle which required explanation and help. Remember it can often be as simple as refreshing your browser.

2023 finished with a record 1008 pages produced over the year and a successful start was made in Jan 2024 with an 84p issue, the average during 2023, whilst simultaneously compiling the record number of 2024 books which also had delivery issues (see Publications Report). This then coincided with a difficult year for myself and Chris, with two family deaths within the first three months of 2024 then a knee injury leading to a lack of time and the erratic release of issues thereafter. The ability to increase the content indefinitely to produce a bigger mag created its own pressures but the freedom to vary the pages as a pdf at least allowed bigger mags to be produced to counter the fewer issues. In the end the eight issues eventually released still managed a healthy 890 pages in total with an average of 111p per issue and led to a new record set of 150p in the Jun / Jul 2024 issue. This highwater mark will be unlikely to ever occur again. The pressures finally took their toll and the decision was reluctantly made to step down as Editor at the end of 2024 after 18 years at the helm editing 205 issues. A plea for a new Editor resulted in Paul Brack stepping forward to help but requiring myself to continue editing the photos for him. The mag will return to a more modest size and monthly production in 2025 under the Editorship of Paul with a new format.

With the mag now digital it makes no sense to continue producing it in a format that was designed for printing with a fixed release schedule that had by its nature a built in delay in passing on info to members. **VISITS** has already moved to the website where regular updates can be done quickly. Therefore in 2025 some more sections will switch to the website where they can be updated regularly and at speed if needs be. The sections to move are the all-important **STOCK CHANGES** and **FREIGHT MATTERS** on new webpages that will be finalised to coincide with the release of the new books at the end of Feb beginning of Mar 2025. The idea is that both **TRACKS** and the website become more integrated with the website providing critical date related info previously only shown in **TRACKS** and the latter becoming more article based.

Because of the problems during 2024 the blocking of access to previous issues over the last 12 months on the website was suspended to allow members easy access and to counter those that failed to download in time. It saved my having to email members. It has been discussed that all issues and some other info is secured behind a membership log in page.

As we embark on yet another new era in 2025, I reiterate last year's hope that members help me, Paul and other officials in seeing the website as their first point of reference for up to date info on **TRACKS** before they even consider emailing.

Discussion: With more information on the website it makes the production of **TRACKS** simpler.
TRACKS not blocked at the moment.

Suggestion of having a login so only members can see each edition of **TRACKS** but this is not easy as everyone will have to remember their membership number but if they don't who is going to be the person to contact. Agreed to postpone looking at this further until we change server.

2025 issues released: Jan (54p) Feb (53p) & Mar (73p)

Publications Report - Trevor Roots

Book Printing / Distribution: As proposed last year, we produced a spine Combine and the wire bound Pocket Book was split into two volumes as per the Combine and that both the spine and both Vol.2s of the PB and Combine included wagons so all books mirrored each other on content. With a separate Wagon book introduced again this resulted in a total of eight books, the largest number yet produced. Both the spine Combine and Pocket Book (mini Combine) are now massive tomes at 424 and 498 pages respectively and almost the ultimate data reference books....though we can and will add more !! The quantities ordered were adjusted to take account of the new spine Combine taking sales from the wire bound versions and the remaining surplus from 2023. The spine Combine proved popular exceeding sales of the spine Pocket Book from previous years though this increased itself, most likely due to the increased content and value for money.

The quality of the Micropress (MP) wire bound books did improve with the round holes but we were let down by a delay in the delivery of Combine Vol.1 which delayed posting out orders involving this book until the third week in March. The MP quote for wire bound books was £4116.00 (1400) compared to £3890.00 (1850) in 2023. Henry Ling now has two books to print and as usual the quality was excellent.

Book Sales: As can be seen from the figs below, in total we ordered and sold less books than in previous years but individual titles did better than others. As thought, sales of the wire Combines reduced with orders switching to the spine Combine and the separate Wagon book so the total Combine / Wagon sales were 984 compared to 1157 in 2023. The splitting of the wire PB led to poor sales of Vol.2 and this struggled to break even with profits of only approx £125. As discussed at the 2023 AGM the similar poor sales and profitable of the Loco book at approx £125 seemed not worth the effort, so will be reduced in content for 2025 to hopefully make it more attractive to annual loco bashers.

Book Ref / Title	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Order	Sold	Order	Sold	Order	Sold	Order	Sold
01S Pocket Book	250	191	250	180	200	192	250	250
01 Pocket Book	520 *	497	525	454	500	429		
01-V1 Pocket Book Vol.1							300	256
01-V2 Pocket Book Vol.2							150	93
02S Combine							300	210
02-V1 Combine Vol.1	725 *	719	775	676	700	668	400	407+
03 Combine Vol.2	502 *	497	550	533	550	489		
02-V2 Combine Vol.2							250	255+
03 Wagons & OTP							200	112
05 Locos	150	121	125	89	100	100	100	78
Totals	2147	2025	2225	1932	2050	1878	1950	1661
Individual Orders #	1373		1159		1023		950	
Total Net Profit (approx) #	£12,200		£12,920		£12,990		£9,800	

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

+ overs supplied allowed sold to exceed order

includes other books

As can also be seen from the table above the number of individual orders has been declining since 2021 and consequently our profits. Both have various causes. The former could be due a reduction in enthusiasts buying spotting books and relying more on digital recording, a general malaise with spotting, our books aren't bought each year or the content isn't what some buyers want. Probably all apply. The reduction in membership does not seem to be a factor as ex-members continue to purchase books. As to profit reducing, this is primarily because of lower sales, not increasing prices though that hasn't seemingly helped sales. Increased printing costs have not helped, which coupled with smaller runs increase the unit cost of each book. Fortunately, the lack of profit in 2024 hasn't meant an increase in membership fee as would have been the case had we still been printing **TRACKS**.

There were no plans to produce new editions of the other three existing titles, Name Directory and USFs Vol.1 & Vol.2 though it is proposed the ND will be produced as an A4 pdf for 2025 at a much reduced cost. If successful then the USFs could be produced as a single pdf.

Only another 13 Shunter Hunter Class 08 book were sold during the year and the book has still to break even.

Tornado Books & Hobbies in Birmingham continue to be our only retail sales with a total of 87 books ordered.

Sundries: Stocked up on baseball caps and new Hi-viz long sleeved shirts.

Advertising: Full page adverts were taken out in Railways Illustrated (RI) for the Mar and Apr issues and Railway Express (REx) for the Feb and Mar issues. 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.

Sales Stand: We attended the delayed DRS Open Day at Carlisle Kingmoor which unfortunately was a week after I injured my knee, which hampered preparation. The recently revised security arrangements also reduced the enjoyment of the day and with poor sales it is likely we may not bother attending Carlisle again, especially as it is likely it will not be held there again until 2028. The next DRS Open Day should be Crewe in 2026. This location is normally more productive but we'll see. Trevor passed over most of the sales stand equipment at Carlisle so that Colin now has it in his garage though trying

to fit it in his car was fun !! Over the same weekend as our Eastleigh Works event Colin & Gareth took the sales stand to Wansford on the NVR to attend the GBRf Open Day based on the line and at their Peterborough Depot. It turned out to be a successful trip.

2026 marks the 200th Anniversary of Rail Travel and the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Many events are to be held around the UK and an Open Day is planned in Derby by Alstom in August called 'The Great Gathering'. We hope to be able to attend with our stand.

Discussion: New 2025 book sales to date: 2025 ordered, 1063 accounted for by 26/03. Orders down about 30 from this time last year.

Stock, books, sundries, clothing, safety gear as at 26/03/29: Total £26,851.20

Notebooks - we will need to re-order as nearly sold out of 75p but decision was to just go with 50p.

Proposed format & price of 2026 books. Trams, Light Rail & Underground moved from Vol.1s to Vol.2s in PB & Combine to allow remaining NG locos and Preserved Trams to be added and keep each Vol approx the same size

Colin now has the marquee and sales stand which may allow attendance at a few more galas.

We applied for a sales stand for Derby once the ticket line opened, 3 times in fact, but even though 30,000 tickets sold out after a lot of hassle, we have heard nothing, as has no-one else apparently.

Website Report - Trevor Roots:

As outlined in the Editor's Report the website is to be the main reference point for up to date Stock Changes / Nameplate photos from the New Year. The 2025 books were advertised on Boxing Day. All issues of **TRACKS** on the Library page are freely available to download with none blocked.

On behalf of the Society, Carl Watson bought a SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificate which verifies a websites identity but was unable to implement it on the server due to technical problems and unhelpful provider. This would have removed the insecure warning which confuses some members. It is likely we will move to another website provider during the latter half of 2025 where we can try again to apply a SSL certificate.

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

The **TRACKS** photo database and Signal Box list have still yet to be put on the website.

As mentioned in the Editors Report please use the website as your first point of reference for up to date info before emailing.

Discussion: The website is now the main point for information.

SSL Certificate - not necessary as no personal information on the website.

We will need to change the server later in the year so we will possibly be going with Adrian Thurley - TrainSpotting.

Social Media Report - Gareth Patterson:

Another interesting year of social media for the Society, especially for our main public domain Facebook page. Out of all our social media platforms that we are on, this is currently the main one as it's the one used to promote the Society. Funnily enough when it comes to the public contacting me about potential membership or books this is and has always been the go to page. Over the past year we have been constantly advertising our books and also pushing membership, not to mention trying to gain more followers on our sites. More people joining the sites means more people getting to know about us and what we do.

Also over the year we have been keeping the pages very active with a daily picture going up every single morning at 08.30 which helps keep the pages very active. We have also streamed two live videos, one in which Colin and I did a Q&A session from our hotel room in Crewe in April last year in connection with our 2023 AGM. In July a live 40 minute video was streamed from DRS Carlisle Kingmoor Open day.

In September our social media went into meltdown when a certain 57003 was named and pictures / video were posted up from the event at Eastleigh. A few weeks before our locomotive was named, I had set up a page on Flickr ready for the official naming. Once the engine was named then this page went live and we now have a dedicated page on Flickr for our very own locomotive. Called "Where is 57003" this page is open to anyone, not just members to post pictures of sightings of our locomotive on the network. We have 17 contributors as at the end of the year. There are some great pictures on there so far, so if you haven't seen it then check it out.

The Facebook "Members Only Group", with 348 members as at the end of the year, is for you the members on social media and you haven't joined this particular group then I strongly urge you to, as it will keep you up to date regarding society matters such as when **TRACKS** is out and ready for downloading also up to date info on events as these are now only being shown on the website and this very group which allows changes and additions to be made to the prolific number on a rolling basis.

	end of Dec 2022	end of Dec 2023 (approx)	end of Dec 2023	Gain 2023-24
Facebook	4534	5644	6409	765
Twitter / X	2216	2452	2596	144
Instagram	3309	3446	3479	33
Train Siding	80	1063	1519	456

Discussion: Live stream on our Facebook page being taken down after 30 days.

Strange that not more members are on the Members Only Facebook page as this is up dated daily.

As at 29th March we have: Facebook - 6,590 / Followers - 9,215 / Twitter - 2,636 / Instagram - 3,528 / Members only - 347 with our Flickr (57003) loco sightings page - 18

Train Sidings is going off line on the 31st March which is a shame as we had nearly 1,600 members on this.

Visits Report - Trevor Roots / Andy Scott:

Through the efforts of Andy Scott who is now established as our Visit Co-ordinator ably helped by Trevor and Chris, a comprehensive programme of 18 visits between the 19th March and the 4th November were organised during 2024, a new modern day record. These were: FL Crewe Basford Hall (3) / Andrew Briddon & PEA / Scunthorpe Steelworks (2) / RSS Wishaw (2) / ELR (2) / Hope Cement Works (2) / Fawley Hill Rly / Tyseley Works / CHA / RSR / Grosmont, NYM & Eastleigh Works. The 2023 AGM was held at the YMCA in Crewe in conjunction with a visit to Basford Hall. The Scunthorpe visits were much better with a max of 24 per visit, ie 4 per veranda. As proposed, we issued wristbands for our Eastleigh Works visit which worked much better. This number of visits certainly kept Chris busy, who did a sterling job organising the hundreds of booking and keeping the members in check...as they need to be at times.

In addition, on short notice, a few members were able to join in with a visit organised by Freightmaster Forum to Laira Depot on the 4th Oct. With 6 places available we managed to fill 5.

The Tyseley and Grosmont visits were publicly organised tours that we asked for our own dedicated group or in the case of the latter, two on the same day. We are unlikely to organise these visits again as members can go independently. Similarly, we will not be attending Fawley Hill again in the near future.

With the visit programme now solely on the website it can be updated regularly and there are no conflicts with outdated info in **TRACKS**. Also with Chris taking bookings and Trevor managing the website, updates can be made immediately when places are filling up and cancellations readvertised, something not possible any other way. However **PLEASE** do not chase us up about proposed visits. We know no more than you and as soon as they can be confirmed then you will know. Similarly, if a visit is down to give you a heads up on a date or location but is not yet open for booking, it means that. On both counts it is more work for Chris if you chase or apply early.

It is expected that an even bigger visit programme will be planned for 2025 with Andy adding new locations to the itinerary.

Discussion: Members are asked not to keep asking about trips. LSL will hopefully happen but the contact has been in hospital. We try various sites but sometimes they do not respond and or we cannot get a contact.

Workshop is probably not possible all the time Harry Needle is involved.

2025 Itinerary: 2 visits concluded with 16 visits organised (including CHA) with new venues, FL Leeds Midland Road / EVR / BAT / MID / TSR. New locations proposed LSL / CAL & STP / Laira / Ely Papworth Sdgs

Andy is doing a good job.

Election of Officials

Existing Officials agreed to continue with Paul Brack (Editor) and Andy Scott (Visits Co-Ordinator) added.

Proposed Aidan Turner and Seconded Hugh Guilford

Constitution Revision

Health & Safety - No under 16's on visits.

Proposed Stuart Moore and Seconded Gary Mutten

Any Other Business

Vote of thanks from Gary Mutten for all the hard work the Officials do on behalf of the Society.

Colin pointed out that we now have photographs and post cards of our named loco 57003 available to purchase.

Presidents Closing Statement - Simon Mutten

It is once again a pleasure and a privilege to address the ICRS AGM.

The theme of my address this year can be summed up in one word- Gratefulness.

Much has happened in the last year which has made the world seem a much less secure place and the future for all of us a lot less certain. Indeed, its sometimes easier these days to avoid watching the news so as not to feed the worries and concerns we may feel about the world today, whether that be wars, political instability, recession or global warming.

It is worth remembering however that we still have much to be grateful for. And though it may seem somewhat insignificant in the grand scheme of things, the ability to be able to follow a hobby or interest – whatever that might be – that brings enjoyment, as well as an escape from the stresses, strains and worries of modern life is definitely something for which we should all be grateful. That is certainly true for me and, I would guess, for you as well.

It's also worth remembering that the issues the world faces today can – and does – bring out the best in human nature, be that aid agencies working in war zones or areas affected by famine, Charities, Carers, the NHS and of course Volunteers. And that brings me to ICRS, to our Society and the officials that run it. They are all volunteers – not conscripted or paid for the work that they do. And whilst I – and I'm sure they – would never equate what they do to a volunteer working in a war zone for instance, the basic principle of giving their time, energy, skills, hard work and commitment on behalf of others is the same -even if in our case it is simply to enable us to better follow and enjoy a pastime that takes us away from the real world for a while- and the fact that they are prepared to do that for us is something for which we should continue to be grateful.

And there is a lot of hard work that goes into running the society. The magazine and the books don't just magically appear; the trips and visits don't 'just happen' and Membership, Finance and Administration doesn't simply take care of itself. It takes many, many hours of work and dedication from the Officials in order for all this to happen. Take for instance the books- have a look at one of them and ask yourself- how many hours would I have to give up to produce – or even help to produce-this? To keep the databases updated with all the stock changes since last years edition, compile and edit it, proof read them for errors (that's detailed information on around 37000 items of stock in each version of the Combines), arrange for publishing, deal with all the orders and arrange collection and distribution. The result of course is one of the most comprehensive and high quality set of publications on the market. Or the magazine- similar to the books in many respects but with a monthly deadline. Or our on-line activities- Stock changes are now online so must be regularly updated with the

latest information. Our reputation requires it. How much time do you think you would have to give up to do that as well as keeping on top of all the Society's Social Media accounts? Trip organisation- all the phone calls to make and maintain contacts, arrange dates, liaise with the operators over conditions of visits, and collate and administer applications from members who want to come on the various trips.... how many hours do you reckon? Likewise, the hours spent on Finance, Membership and the Administration. Would you do it? Could you do it? It's worth thinking about. And be grateful for those who are doing it.

So as I do every year I offer on behalf of all Society Members our heartfelt thanks and most definitely our gratitude to Trevor, Peter, Colin, Christine, Gareth, Andy and James, along with our new magazine editor Paul Brack. My thanks and gratitude extends to you the membership as well. Its your reports, observations and photos, but most importantly your support, that makes the Society the continued success it is and makes everything the officials do so worthwhile.

So to conclude my Gratefulness themed address, I would be really grateful if you join with me in thanking the officials- and yourselves- in the time-honoured fashion. Thank You.

Meeting finished: 13.15