

**THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE AND TRAVEL SOCIETY
CROYDON AND SOUTH LONDON BRANCH**

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT 1930 HOURS ON MONDAY 13 MARCH 2017
IN THE SMALL HALL, EAST CROYDON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,
ADDISCOMBE GROVE, CROYDON**

Those present: Chris Meredith (Chairman)
John Archer (Treasurer)
Jeremy Harrison (Branch Web Co-ordinator)
Andrew Jones (Committee member)
Peter Wilson (Secretary)
13 other Society members and 9 visitors

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Alex Dasi Sutton, Keith Guthrie, Paul Ostle and Alan Snowdon.

2. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

2.1. Chris Meredith welcomed everyone to the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting of the Croydon & South London Branch.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1. The Minutes of the AGM held on 14 March 2016 were approved and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1. On Paragraph 10.1., Peter Wilson reported that building work on the East Croydon United Reformed Church, which were likely to affect the Branch's indoor meetings in 2018, would not now take place. Jeremy Harrison added that he had proceeded to make room bookings for 2018 and would do so for 2019 shortly.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT AND PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF BRANCH ACCOUNTS

5.1. Jeremy Harrison introduced the Report and Branch Accounts for the year ended 31 October 2016, which had been prepared jointly by him and John Archer, copies of which were available at the meeting. Their Report included the following:

(i). John and Jeremy had continued to divide the duties and responsibilities of Branch Treasurer between them, with John as nominal Treasurer dealing with the taking of cash and relevant banking and Jeremy as Assistant Treasurer issuing cheques, maintaining the accounts on a spreadsheet system, and producing returns for the Society. The arrangement was working well and they intended to continue largely in the same way.

(ii). In 2015-16 there had been a slight increase in donations at meetings compared with the previous year. They continued to fall short of covering the cost of running meetings and, therefore, the full cost of running the Branch. The shortfall was, however, made up by income from Branch sales. Support for the sales stand was therefore encouraged. No change was proposed in the recommended level of donations at present.

(iii). Sales income at exhibitions was greatly reduced in 2015-16, by about half, and, while sales at meetings increased, this did not come anywhere near making up for the decline in exhibition sales. Net sales income was down by about £550.

(iv). Overall, the Branch made a gain (increase in Branch balance over the year) of £20.08, substantially down on previous years due to the reduction in sales income.

(v). The cost of attending exhibitions fell to the Branch and came out of the Branch "share" of the takings. The Branch generally, but not always, made a profit from exhibition attendances. In the year 2015-16 the total amount was £114.

(vi). While it was Branch policy that expenses incurred on behalf of the Branch were repaid, not all had been claimed, so there was some understatement of the true amount in some of the cost items in the Accounts. Some expenses which were formerly met by the Society now fell to the Branch.

(vii). In accordance with a Management Committee recommendation, following auditors' advice regarding transparency, the Branch had placed a sum on deposit with the Society, who held it as a ring-fenced amount for the Branch within the Society's deposit account. The sum on deposit was increased from £1,500 to £2,000 during 2016, as recorded in the 2015-16 Accounts. The Branch Committee kept the position under review.

(viii). John and Jeremy thanked their Committee colleagues for their forbearance and support, and all involved with Branch sales, particularly Peter Wilson. They also wished to thank the Society Treasurer and his team, particularly Bob Ellison, for their efforts and forbearance.

5.2. Approval of the Branch Accounts for the financial year ended 31 October 2016 was proposed by David Beard, seconded by Ian King and carried by the Meeting.

6. OTHER REPORTS FROM THE BRANCH COMMITTEE

6.1. Copies of the following reports from Committee members were available at the meeting. Peter Wilson explained that, in a break with arrangements at previous Branch AGMs, the Committee had agreed that each report need not be proposed and seconded for adoption by the meeting.

Secretary

6.2. Peter Wilson introduced his Report which recorded the following:

(i). The current Branch list contained 91 members, compared with 90 reported at the 2016 AGM. The figure was shown broken down by postcode district. Since the last AGM, sadly, two members were known to have died: Mr R Lodge Davies and Mr William (Bill) Turvill. Five new Society members had been allocated to the Branch list in the past year and one existing member had moved into the Branch area. However, one member had moved out of the area, and others had not renewed their membership.

(ii). Since the 2016 AGM the Branch Committee had met four times.

(iii). Over the past year four Newsletters had been produced and distributed. Thanks were due to Jeremy Harrison for circulating the Newsletter and other items of information to the Branch e-mail group.

(iv). Reports of Branch meetings had continued to appear regularly in the RO, and grateful thanks were due to Paul Harrison who wrote most of them.

(v). The Branch had been represented at the London & South Regional Group Meeting held in June 2016 in Woking, but not at the Officers' Conference held in October 2016 in Grange-over-Sands.

(vi). In common with all other branches, CSL Branch received Newsletters from the Society's Branch Liaison Secretary. These were circulated to Committee members and recent issues were available at Branch indoor meetings for members wishing to see them.

(vii). The Branch had continued to foster relations with other transport societies in the Croydon area by the exchange of indoor meetings programmes and the annual Croydon Railbrains Inter-Society Competition. The Branch was also pleased to exchange information on activities with the Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society.

Fixtures

6.4. Chris Meredith reported that the Branch indoor meetings programme had continued to attract good audiences, though the average attendance had fallen slightly by two, to 28, over the previous year. The best attended meeting during the year, attracting an audience of 49, had been, for the second year running, an afternoon meeting at Redhill. Work on the indoor meetings programme for the forthcoming season was proceeding.

6.5. Peter Wilson reported that the 2017 Summer outdoor meetings programme would include a Summer Dinner, probably at the Porter & Sorter. Other possible events being explored were visits to Eastleigh Lakeside Steam Railway, Amberley Museum & Heritage Centre, Mid Hants Railway, Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway, and the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway.

6.6. In discussion, Fawley Hill railway and museum owned by Sir Robert McAlpine, and Adrian Shooter's railway were both mentioned from the floor as possibilities for future visits. It was noted that visits to Fawley Hill were usually by invitation only.

Sales and Exhibitions

6.7. Peter Wilson introduced his Report which included the following:

(i). Grateful thanks were due to all who had donated items for sale on the stand to the benefit of the Branch, and also to those who were prepared to help out on the stand at exhibitions and other events. In the past twelve months stand assistants had included John Archer, Graham Bird, Godfrey Gould, Keith Guthrie and Andrew Jones.

(ii). In the past twelve months the Branch sales stand had appeared at four events, compared with five in the previous year. Details of each event were included in the Report showing gross sales and net profit to the Branch compared with the previous year's sales where applicable. The best event for the Branch in terms of both gross sales and net return had been Brighton MRC's Model Railway Exhibition at Patcham Library and Community Centre.

(iii). For the future, the final event of the season was a Rail and Bus Collector's Fair to be held in July at Chiswick Town Hall. For the 2017/18 season, an invitation to attend Brighton MRC's Model Railway Exhibition at Patcham in November 2017 had already been received and accepted. Invitations to attend other events during the season were expected.

(iv). In addition to appearing at outdoor events, the Branch sales stand also made a significant contribution to Branch funds at indoor meetings. Details of gross sales and net profit to the Branch at each meeting were included in the Report. Thanks were due to Andrew Jones (again) and John Whitmore who regularly ran the stand at Branch meetings.

(v). In the longer term, as reported at the Branch AGM in previous years, the Branch would need to consider the future of the sales stand. The current team of assistants had been essentially the same for the past fourteen years and, with increasing age and reducing physical ability, most of its members were already thinking about how much longer they would be able to continue. The Branch needed new young, or at least younger, blood if the sales stand was to continue and, in particular, required a new Exhibitions Officer to step forward and take over the storage and organisation of the Branch book stock for both exhibitions events and indoor meetings.

Publicity

6.9. Chris Meredith and Peter Wilson reported as follows. In common with other branches of the Society, fixtures, both indoor and outdoor, were publicised in the RO. The Branch also tried to

make use of the Society's facility for publicising indoor fixtures in some national railway magazines and in recent months had started to take up free advertising available on the website of Railnews, the rail industry's monthly newspaper, and through the Society's Publicity Officer, a new post filled during 2016.

6.10. Arrangements for publicising Branch indoor meetings at a local level had been similar to those of the previous year. Chris Meredith had delivered copies of posters and flyers to Croydon Central Library for distribution to branch libraries - an arrangement which was still not working as well as the Committee would like - and also took copies to the Ian Allan Shop at Waterloo, the Tramlink Shop in George Street, Croydon, and the barber's shop at Purley station; Peter Wilson was able to have posters displayed in the Bulleid Shop at Sheffield Park station, by kind permission of Roger Cruse; Ian King provided copies to Coulsdon South Station and Coulsdon Library; Keith Guthrie arranged for posters to be displayed in his local shop; and Alan Snowdon, assisted by his wife, Heather, made distributions in the Redhill/Reigate area to publicise Branch afternoon meetings in Redhill, and Alan put up posters in the Redhill Methodist Centre on the day of the event. Anthony Bloye and Andrew Jones took copies of the Branch Fixtures Programme to other railway society meetings they attended.

6.11. Grateful thanks were extended to all who helped to publicise Branch meetings. Further offers of help were invited, particularly from any member interest in filling the post of Branch Publicity Officer which had remained vacant since Autumn 2013.

6.12. In discussion, Alan Walters and Ian King mentioned their local area residents' newsletters as possible places for publicising Branch meetings, and John Warby suggested local coffee shops. Chris Meredith thanked them for their contributions.

Branch Web Co-ordinator

6.13. Jeremy Harrison introduced his Report. He had continued to keep the Branch web pages up to date in the past year with meeting details and reports, and Branch Newsletters. The Branch e-mail list, for which he was also responsible, continued to function and e-mails were sent out on an approximately monthly basis with the Branch Newsletter and information or reminders for Branch and other events. The list currently had about 35 members, including some from adjacent branches. He invited others who wished to be added to the list to let him know, and slips of papers were available for that purpose at the meeting. He thanked David Jackman and all involved in producing and maintaining the website, fellow Committee members for their efforts and input, and Paul Harrison and Peter Wilson for writing meeting reports.

7. ELECTION OF BRANCH OFFICERS

Election of Chairman

7.1. Chris Meredith offered to stand as Chairman again for a further year. He was proposed by Peter Wilson and seconded by John Archer. There being no further nominations, he was duly re-elected as Chairman.

Election of Secretary

7.2. Peter Wilson was proposed by Alan Walters and seconded by John Whitmore. There being no further nominations, he was duly re-elected as Secretary.

Election of Treasurer

7.3. John Archer was proposed by Alan Walters and seconded by Paul Harrison. There being no further nominations, he was duly re-elected as Treasurer.

8. ELECTION OF OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

8.1. Chris Meredith reported that the other members of the Committee during the past year had been Jeremy Harrison and Andrew Jones, both of whom offered themselves for re-election. He

encouraged other members who wished to stand for election to the Committee to come forward: no one did so. Peter Wilson accordingly proposed, and Alan Walters seconded, that Jeremy Harrison and Andrew Jones be re-elected to the Committee.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1. None.

10. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10.1. The next AGM would take place at 1930 hours on Monday 12 March 2018 in the Small Hall, East Croydon URC, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon.

The meeting closed at 2016 hours.

Signed Date

Peter Wilson
23 August 2017

Footnote: Any member wishing to see any of the papers referred to in these Minutes may do so by contacting the Branch Secretary