



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Management Committee, Society and Branch Officer's
Held at the Coventry Hill Hotel, Coventry
Sunday 25th October 2009 at 9.15am**

PRESENT

Management Committee

Hugh Gould, President	David Jackman, Webmaster
John Redgate, Chairman	David Kelso, Publicity
Alan Cooke, Secretary	David Pick, Committee Member
Red Wood, Treasurer	Terry Silcock, Librarian
Richard Morris, Membership Secretary	
Gordon Davies, Deputy Chairman/ Branch Liaison Secretary	

Society Officers

Ronnie McAdam, Assistant Publicity Officer
Steve Ollive, Asst Treasurer, Membership Renewals
Bob Ballard, Exhibitions
John Wood, Sales Officer

Branches

Bristol:	Paul Udey, Roger Newman,
Cambridge:	James Crane
Chichester:	Not Represented
Cheltenham:	<i>Richard Morris</i>
Croydon & South London:	Jeremy Harrison
East Midlands:	John Hitchens, Rodney Allen, Mike Smith
Furness Lakes & Lune:	Not Represented
Hitchin:	Not Represented
Humberside:	Peter Louth, Les Brackstone,
Ipswich:	Eric Palmer, David Swale, Peter Coghill
Lancs & North West:	Not Represented
Merseyside, Chester & N.Wales:	Alan Donaldson, <i>Gordon Davies</i>
Milton Keynes:	<i>Bob Ballard,</i>
Northampton:	John Harrison, Ron Hart, Peter Juff, <i>David Pick</i>
North East:	Dave Tyreman, Jim Sedgwick, Malcolm Hammond
Peterborough:	Roger Bailly
Scottish:	<i>Ronnie McAdam, Isabelle McAdam</i>
Sheffield:	David Munday, Les Nixon, Peter Hall
Solent:	Ted Vaughan
South East:	<i>David Kelso</i>
South Essex:	John Stone
South Wales:	Not Represented
Surrey:	Peter Bosomworth, Irene Rabbits, Andy Davies, Bob Ellison
Sussex:	Not Represented
Thames Valley:	John Lewis
Watford:	David Fairhurst
West of England:	Tom Reardon
West Midlands:	David Walker, Derek Morris, Mike Robertson, Peter Smith
West Riding:	Malcolm Riley, John Holroyd
Windsor & Maidenhead:	<i>Steve Ollive, David Goddard, Alan Cooke</i>

Branches Not in Attendance

Chichester:	No apologies received
Furness, Lakes & Lune:	No apologies received
Hitchin:	Apologies from David Cole

Lancs & North West:
South Wales:
Sussex:

Apologies from Ian Derrick, Noel Machell
Apologies from Noel Thompson, Stuart Warr.
Apologies from Paul Baston, Alan Wesson, Paul Snelling

1. OPENING OF CONFERENCE

JOHN REDGATE - SOCIETY CHAIRMAN

John Redgate offered a particularly warm welcome to those in attendance and thanked all for taking the time to attend this year's annual officer's conference.

John stated that there would not have been a Member's weekend if it was not for the determination of Derek Morris and David Walker, who on their way home from Scarborough last year discussed the lack of a volunteer to host this weekend and agreed that the Society must have a Members Weekend in 2009 and so volunteered the West Midlands branch to host their third weekend in six years. Of the other 29 Branches there was only silence.

With that in mind John asked the delegates to join him in thanking the West Midlands Branch and particularly Derek Morris, Bob Barby, Ian Reid and David Walker in putting together a great weekend for all to enjoy our hobby at such short notice.

He also extended a warm welcome to those Branch delegates and Society Officers who were attending their first conference (asked by a show of hands), and said hopefully by 1.00pm those new attendees will have decided it is not their last!

Before he continued, John paid tribute to Ken Wilson who had recently passed away. Ken was the Secretary and one of the driving forces behind the Development SC, London & South Regional Chairman and Solent Branch Committee member. He had only just sponsored the change to Rule 9 at this year's AGM when he was so suddenly taken away from us. Ken was a great loss to the Society as he was such a committed and enthusiastic member of the RCTS, who also cared passionately about the Society Rules which he and John discussed during a number of lengthy late night telephone calls.

As a result of Ken's death there have been couple of changes on the Development SC. John thanked Steve Hodge who had stepped down from the role as chairman and handing over the role to the ever youthful Eric Palmer. John enquired with Eric whether volunteering to help the Society keeps you active and feeling young?

Looking forward John was pleased to report to the conference that the Subscription for 2009 will remain unchanged at £22 and he did hope that Branches are actively promoting the current 15 months membership to 31st December 2010 with their meeting visitors and at Exhibitions. He reminded everyone that member's could renew at branch meetings.

Finally the Chairman could not let this occasion pass without paying tribute to the Publications Committee who under the chairmanship of Gordon Davies has made great strides in the past 18 months. The Society had sold from the Coventry book store this year nearly 30% of our central stock with the 9Fs book selling extremely well. The next publication, the LMS 2-6-0 book will be the first the society has produced in house and with a number of new faces on the committee it has been a true team effort. John hoped that the LMS 2-6-0 book co-written by the late John Young of Bournemouth and David Tyreman would be published by Christmas with the possibility of the next book being published next year.

The Society continues to benefit from the significant contributions of the few and the support of the many and as Chairman he was very grateful for the continued hard work put in by all our volunteer officers on behalf of the Society. Without all our volunteers our activities would be much reduced and John reminded the delegates that we are the largest UK enthusiast group of which we should all be proud, but the hard work is to keep it that way and with an ageing membership recruitment is the key to our continued success.

If we continue to provide a valuable service and product to all our customers then the future of the Society will be in safe hands.

As ever John hoped all would enjoy the conference and he looked forward to hearing a lively degree of comment from those attending the conference.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Society Officer:
Society Officer:
Society Officer:

Callum Macleod, Managing Editor
David Bird, Deputy Managing Editor
Dick Taylor, LMS Series Editor

Branches:

Bristol:	Brian Arman, David McCollum, <i>Callum Macleod</i>
Cheltenham:	Stephen Wilson
Croydon & South London:	Geoff Lipscombe, Brian Lewis, Peter Wilson
Hitchin:	David Cole
Humberside:	John Foreman, Mick Hodge
Lancs & North West:	Ian Derrick, Noel Machell
Merseyside, Chester & N.Wales:	Richard Neale, Alan Turton, Geoff Morris
North East	Barry Burns
Peterborough:	Ken Quanborough
South East:	Geoff Dunster, Keith Mapley
Solent	Mike Green
South Essex:	Jim Waite, John Bennett
South Wales:	Noel Thompson, Stuart Warr.
Surrey:	Alan Norris
Sussex:	Paul Baston, Paul Snelling, Alan Wesson
Thames Valley	Stuart Hicks
West Midlands:	Ian Reid
West Riding:	Dave Beeken, Bill Jagger
West of England:	David Mitchell, Peter Gray
Windsor & Maidenhead	Martin Higgs

3. PRESIDENTS ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

HUGH GOULD

Our President commenced his address to conference in commenting that he was 'Still here!'. Since the last conference he had visited fourteen branches and he was very proud of what he has seen as branches seem to get better. Hugh commented that he apologised to the East Midlands branch as he turned up to give a presentation and realised he had forgotten to take the slides but he managed to waffle through the evening.

It is great being the President as he sees the good work that is being done and also sees how the Society is developing and has made many friends whilst travelling around the country.

He looked forward through the Joint Forum Committee to working with our colleagues in the SLS and LCGB, although each Society is active in its own way. It is good to work with our colleagues in other Societies.

Hugh stated that he will continue to be your President until someone tells him to stop. He has enjoyed the year and has yet to visit a few other branches.

Hugh thanked all for their efforts and considered the RCTS to be a very healthy Society and he also commented how much he had enjoyed the previous day's events. It had been a happy weekend with members enjoying their visit to the Severn Valley railway or travelling with the Midlands Day rover group.

Hugh referred to Chris Gibb from Virgin Trains who was the Society's guest at the dinner the previous evening. Hugh stated that Chris has been an excellent speaker and he hoped his career in the railway goes on but who knows what the future holds. Hugh had thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and looked forward to the coming debates at conference and wished everyone well in their endeavours.

4. CONFIRMATION OF YEAR 2008 MINUTES and

5. MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the 2008 Officers Conference were confirmed with no matters arising.

6. REGIONAL MEETINGS ACTION POINTS

GORDON DAVIES

Gordon Davies started his report by offering his thanks once again to the Chairmen of each group for organising the meetings. He also thanked the minute secretaries and in some groups the chairmen and secretary is the same person but no doubt double pay would be given for those doing two jobs. All minutes had this year received electronically which makes the work of compiling the RM Action Points Document much easier.

He reported that David Tyreman has stepped down as Chairman at EMNESH and Gordon extended his thanks to David and to John Foreman at Humberside Branch for taking over the role from David.

The Society sadly lost Ken Wilson this year and Ken was instrumental in the administration of the London & the South Group meetings and Gordon knew that Ken will be sadly missed throughout the Society. Mike

Green from Solent branch has taken over as Chairman of L&S and Bob Ellison from Surrey was now the new secretary of the group and he extended his thanks to Mike and Bob for taking on their new jobs. Special thanks also to Ted Vaughan who as Chairman of Solent Branch took it on himself to write to all in L&S group members informing all of Ken's death and Ted ensured that the L&S meeting took place as scheduled. Ted's efforts were very much appreciated.

Gordon reported that four branches were not represented at the Regional Meetings this each year these being Furness, Lakes & Lune, South Essex, Sussex and the West Riding branches. The Regional Meetings Action Points document had been distributed to all the RM chairmen on the 9th October for onward distribution to the branches. As this is an eleven page document he did not intend to go through it item by item but if anyone wanted to raise a point he will be willing to discuss that matter or get a colleague from the MC to reply.

Jim Sedgwick enquired if members car insurance would cover any passenger travelling in a member's car such as been taken from the railway station to an event hotel such as a Members Weekend, AGM or any other outdoor event.

John Redgate replied so long as no fare was charge the journey was regarded as 'social domestic, and pleasure' and car insurance would cover any member travelling in someone else's vehicle.

Peter Hall from Sheffield stated that there was an issue between the MC and his branch over the ownership of nameplates held at his branch and clarification was required on the current situation. The branch did not have plans to dispose of any plates as there was no need for capital or a financial injection. He enquired why 'Sir Massey Lopes' from the Society's main collection had been advertised for sale and why now the need to sell a nameplate? Peter Hall volunteered to become the custodian of the 'Sir Massey Lopes' nameplate.

John Redgate replied that in the last three years the SLS had been forced to sell a nameplate as with only 600 to 700 members this had been a drain on their resources and as they have a large collection of nameplates and they needed the money. Membership of the SLS was about £24 - £25 which is high for only six magazines a year.

The Society wanted to test the water in selling a nameplate to see what tax issues there were such as corporation and capital gains taxes. With the current recession major collections do come on the market from time to time. The present custodian of 'Sir Massey Lopes' was fed up of tripping over it in his garage as it was a large and long nameplate and it had been moved from custodian to custodian numerous times and as such the Society does not have much affinity with the plate. John commented that historically 'Beachy Head' was presented to the Society from the BTC. The Sheffield Wednesday and United plates have also a historical connection with the Society.

Paul Udey commented the 'Sir Massey Lopes' had been restored and was currently with the Bristol branch chairman.

John Redgate enquired as to whether the straight nameplate 'King Henry II' should be on display at the NRM? John has in the past moved the nameplates collection around the membership.

David Tyreman asked how much had been paid for the 'Falkland Islands' plate to which John replied that that some GWR cab plates had been exchanged for 'Falkland Islands'

Reg Wood stated that he was of the opinion that nameplates are a good investment

Regarding the Members Weekend John Redgate did appreciate the effort that goes to hold a successful event and it usually takes about 18 months to organise it. A summary of forthcoming events is published at on the last page of every Regional Meetings Action Points documents as well as in the Newsletters. These events are becoming more successful as more ladies and partners are attending, a trend that was started in Chester some years ago. John enquired had we become a victim of our own success and what can we do about it?

Tom Reardon asked if the one day event would become the norm as staying 4 to 5 nights is becoming expensive. John Redgate replied that the SLS, LCGB and the RCTS have their AGM on the same weekend and maybe we could combine some events with guest speaker addressing all attendees and then separate AGM's for the various Societies in separate rooms.

Derek Morris stated did not want to lose the social side of the Society's events.

John Redgate reported that at the June MC meeting it was suggested that a team be set up to organise the AGM & MW with co-operation from local branches or regional groups. This would need a team leader who would be invited to an appropriate MC meeting to give the MC specific proposals for the events.

As an example the Furness, Lakes and Lune area is ideal for an event and with a team in charge they could organise an event with the local branch being invited to assist. The team would look after the bookings which can be done remotely from the local area as well as organise the hotel, visits and other things associated with weekend events.

Peter Juffs had offered his assistance after the last regional meeting.

Ronnie McAdam stated that he had offered on behalf of the Scottish Branch to hold an event at Kingussie but it had been rejected to which John Redgate stated that it would be very expensive to hold an event so far north so it was not a practical location. Holding the AGM in the centre of the country was more accessible for most of the membership to attend.

David Kelso enquired with Ronnie why a suitable location somewhere between Glasgow and Edinburgh had not been considered and commented that there must be hotels in the Falkirk area that would be suitable. That central part of Scotland is far easier to get to than Kingussie. The Bo'ness Railway could be visited and Stirling Castle would be an excellent place to visit as the 'alternative trip' as well as the many other attractions in the area.

John Redgate stated that there may be other opportunities in Scotland to hold just a social event but we want the younger members to participate in Society events and if we go a long way to hold these event they would not be able to attend due to work commitments.

Steve Ollive informed the conference that an offer had been made from Scotland to host a weekend event and that Ronnie and Isabelle McAdam would need assistance. Peter Juffs, Irene Rabbitts along with David Tyreman, Malcolm Hammond and Jim Sedgwick offered to assist for an event in 2011.

Malcolm Hammond stated that some branches do not have many people to help on the day of these events and a list of helpers from all branches should be compiled to which Derek Morris replied that at the event that had just been held members from five other branches had assisted with various event functions.

John stated that the MC would give this organising team as much assistance as possible.

Much to the delegates amusement, David Walker asked John had he not considered 'leaving the country'. What he really meant was in have organising an event overseas. A joint event with the LCGB could be considered. Peter Juffs also commented that in 30 years he had learnt a lot about overseas tours.

7. PUBLICITY

DAVID KELSO

David Kelso informed the delegates that the first quarter of the year had seen unprecedented activity within the publicity department with the launch of the 9Fs book. Press releases had been distributed, followed by the distribution of review copies and half page advertising to a number of the major magazines. The end result was very healthy sales with more volumes sold than anticipated as would be reflected in the financial results. Combined with this came the opportunity to run a major article in the Railway Magazine in response to a rather down beat effort by Andrew Dow on the future of railway enthusiasts and societies such as our own. This was very well received and has resulted in an invitation for another article to appear early next year reflecting the course of the Society through the first 15 years of rail privatisation.

Publicity matters then calmed down through the middle part of the year to more routine activities such as the production of new posters based on some of the images submitted for last year's photographic competition.

Approaches were made to the BTP with regard to recognition of the Society and the perceived problems of railway photographers. This had been a struggle until the North London Division of BTP contacted Stuart Little, Hitchin branch, the end result of which is the appearance of the BTP telephone hotline number on our 2010 membership cards. This is but a first step in developing a higher profile for the Society with the BTP.

On the subject of raising the Society profile the Society still has a problem with some branches in promoting the Society through the use of the 3-fold leaflet and its distribution to other railway related operations. Also, David stated that believe it or not, after three years there is still a problem with the adamant refusal by some branches to adopt the Society corporate image even though the guideline's had been distributed to all branches.

The publicity machine has now got into gear again with the imminent release of the Hughes and Stanier 2-6-0s book in November 2009. Whereas with the 9Fs advertising David was not in total control of the advertisement content, this time with the use of new in house software he has a much better control on the content and the quality of individual advertisements. Also each magazine advert will have a tracker element which will allow David to monitor the response from individual insertions.

A new full colour publications leaflet has been designed and this will first appear as an insert in the November RO. Copies will subsequently go into the membership packs and a copy will be included with every order received for books when despatched from the Coventry book-store. Branches will be able to obtain additional copies for exhibitions etc. from Bob Ballard in the usual way. It is felt that the black and white leaflet that features in the membership packs has had its day and a new coloured leaflet will be produced in the new-year when stocks of the old leaflet are exhausted. Also developed were laminated posters using photographs submitted for the 2008 photographic competition and these were displayed at the conference.

The DSC is currently looking at a new style of recruitment advertisement to replace the quarter page that has appeared for too many years in Modern Railways and Railways Illustrated and the plan is to spread the new advert more widely. Finally David would mention that his own branch, South East, earlier in 2009 had invited to become a member of the Southeastern stakeholders group and as such two or three members of the committee had attended the stakeholders meetings regularly held within Southeastern's operating area.

David informed conference that this is a very important time for Southeastern as they attempt to do what no other Railway Company private or nationalised has ever done before in the history of railways in the UK. After a hesitant start the Society is now becoming recognised as a participant in these meetings and we are slowly able to project the Society and its activities amongst key railway people and others involved in rail transport in the south east. David would like to see other branches follow this lead and become active in this way with their TOCs as he believes it is a very good method of raising the profile of the Society within the railway industry and with others involved in Britain's railways.

12. FINANCE UPDATE

REG WOOD

Reg Wood informed those gathered that this was his first report as Treasurer since assuming this role from Tony Skinner at the AGM in April 2009. Tony is currently in New Zealand so transfer of the relevant files and documentation has been difficult. However the majority of the files had been transferred this weekend.

Arrangements for the change with the Society's bank, Lloyds TSB, has proved very slow though Reg is pleased to report normal service is now resumed on income and expenditure control, including expenses payments.

Our Treasurer referred to a table in the conference room where he had placed a list of Branch Treasurers drawn up earlier in the year. He asked delegates to please check and let him know if any Branch Treasurer had changed, and if so the identity of the current post holder, name, address, e-mail address, telephone number. Reg stated he would also like to communicate with them by email and could Treasurers email addresses be supplied please?

Also on the table there are packs of documents for each Branch Treasurer. If Branch Treasurers are not in attendance could someone from the branch pass the pack on to him/her?

Reg reminded all that the Society Year End is 31st October. He is required to prepare Accounts showing the Branches financial position at that date. The packs show the information he needs from each Branch and he appealed that each Branch sends the Books Stock figures to David Pick and all the rest to John Redgate for consolidation on Reg's behalf as he wrestles with the national society's financial information.

Reg emphasised that he needed the branch information to be returned by 30th November please and thanks the branches for their co-operation in advance.

The Branch Treasurer works on the behalf of the whole branch committee, Reg invited the Branch Representatives here today to follow up with the Branch Treasurer in a couple of weeks to make sure your branch's returns are prepared and sent in.

The quality of information the Branches, return is important for not only Reg as Society Treasurer but also the External Auditors. So far the MC has not been required to allow the auditors to visit or examine branch records, and high quality returns will help us maintain our good audit relationship.

Reg then went on advise all of current changes that effect the Society overall.

1. The VAT rate reverts to 17.5% on 1 January 2010. All sales after that date will require the Society to account for VAT at the higher rate. Where you are charged a VAT inclusive rate after January 1st, the VAT element can be calculated by multiplying the total 7/47^{ths}.
2. Branches don't need to prepare separate VAT returns for each 15% and 17.5% trading – they can be handled quarterly as usual with the November 09 – January 10 return including 2 months at 15% and 1 at 17.5%.

3. The Society is finding Sales by Cardnet using the paper system increasingly difficult to control and fraud is on the increase. Reg advised all to not accept transactions on the following cards.

Maestro or Solo cards beginning with the figure 6 (usually 6759)

Electron cards beginning 4917

The Management Committee are very aware that attracting volunteer Branch Treasurers is difficult enough. And expecting them to be financially numerate is a further challenge. Luckily Reg is a qualified Accountant, so is always ready to give any advice.

The Society is planning to organise Branch Treasurers Training Days in 2010 to help Branches manage finances and Reg is planning one event in the north and another in the south.

Reg is also seeking Assistant Treasurers to help him maintain financial control over areas of Society's activities including Publications and Branches. He appealed for help or does anyone at the conference know a person who could assist. Reg was pleased to announce that he already have two possible volunteers

With some branches having a high amount of cash in their accounts this may result in the external auditors wanting to visit branches and audit the Branch's accounts.

John Redgate reminded the conference that all branches should ensure they send in their publications returns as some branches had not sent them in for a considerable time.

9. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

DAVID JACKMAN

David Jackman informed the delegates that in the last twelve months there had not been many onward changes on the website, but that doesn't mean nothing had been happening. It has been kept up to date with fixtures and meeting reports with Bristol and Merseyside again being the most active branches. David expressed his thanks go Geoff Morris, MC&NW branch and Paul Udey at Bristol for the continuing bombardment of material.

The next few months will see a number of new features launched. Firstly in line are some of the photographs from Courtney Haydon which Cyril Crawley and David Cole are trying to identify and some information on diesel disposals where Peter Hall from the Sheffield branch is trying to establish what actually happened. These features will be interactive and visitors to the site will be able to contribute information which will go onto the site. David stated that new features would appear toward the end of October and he reminded all to look out for them and contribute their knowledge!

Later in the year the site would be changed and this will allow Web-Coordination to add their own content to their web pages if they want to (rather than sending an e-mail to the webmaster). The Web-Coordinator is very important role and David appealed to all branches to ensure that they have somebody responsible for submitting, as a minimum, the branch events programme. He informed those present that it really isn't an onerous job and an up-to-date branch page does boost branch attendances. He would also like to hear about changes to fixtures. During the bad weather last winter a number of meetings were cancelled at short notice and he was able to update the website, hopefully saving some wasted journeys. David is also very keen to include late changes to speakers so, if branches are organizing fixtures which get changed, please tell the Webmaster!

Finally an appeal from our Webmaster, David emphasised that it is the member's website and it will only ever be as good as members make it, so if anyone has any suitable content for the site please don't hesitate to get in touch with him. David would also like to hear from people keen to get actively involved in running the site and will always listen to member's feedback and comments.

John Redgate commented that the Website was the key to the future as it has unlimited capacity and can show many photographs and other articles such as Branch histories.

David Kelso asked if all branches had a Web-Co-ordinator and if so they should publish that person's details so members know where to send suitable material.

Ronnie McAdam enquired as to why the Web Co-ordinators annual meeting could for once be held north of the border to which David Jackman replied that his comments were noted.

10. DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

ERIC PALMER

Eric Palmer informed those gathered that the development sub-committee met formally three times during the year to consider a number of items designed to increase the value of the society to members and non-members. Steve Hodge had relinquished the position of Chairman in September and Eric informed the

gathering that he had been elected to the post with Bob Ballard as Deputy Chairman. David Goddard from the Windsor & Maidenhead branch had joined the committee and Rosemary Pick agreed to act as minute secretary.

A recommendation to revise the rules of the society was presented and passed at the Annual General Meeting in April. The introduction of a legal and executor service for the management of member's collections of railway items was formalised and a brochure entitled "Wills and Bequests" was sent to all members also in April.

The committee helped formulate an article on the future of rail enthusiasm written by Society Chairman John Redgate which appeared in The Railway Magazine in March.

Efforts have been made to raise the profile of the Society and many branches are adopting a standard meetings programme for distribution to members and visitors at branch meetings and exhibitions. National advertising of society publications had vastly improved. It is felt that efforts should be made to get press releases covering the activities of the society and branches to improve the public image of the Society.

DSC members will individually submit suggestions to the Publicity Officer for consideration for national press inclusion. An increasing number of branches are now holding successful afternoon meetings with many new visitors stating that they prefer afternoons to evenings during the winter.

From the last round of Regional Meetings it is hoped that efforts will be made by the North West and Midlands group to arrange a pilot afternoon meeting in the Manchester area. Additional amendments to the Branch Officers Handbook have been completed and circulated. The committee recommended that the sale of Society ties and sweaters should only be made to members and these have been withdrawn from the sales area of the Website.

The British Transport Police have set up a Passenger Forum Project to establish communications between the BTP and communities concerned with crime and safety on the railway network. The DSC has indicated that it wishes to be involved with this new project and Eric hoped that the Society shall be able to forge a closer relationship with the British Transport Police. Permission had already been granted to print the BTP telephone numbers on future membership cards. The first meeting of the forum would be held in November. Two members of the DSC would attend and represent the Society and they will report back on the outcome.

Eric was pleased to announce that the DSC had negotiated with the Ian Allan Publishing group a 10% discount on any publication published by Ian Allan including Oxford Publishing title. A 10% discount is also applicable to the Ian Allan range of DVDs on production of the membership card at any of the Ian Allan bookshops located in Birmingham, Cardiff, London and Manchester and Ian Allan Plus at Hinckley. This and further announcements on benefits for members will appear in future editions of the RO and Branch Newsletters.

DSC member Paul Chancellor has produced a paper on Health and Safety with particular reference to any risk assessment at RCTS meetings and visits. Guidelines for Officers will be incorporated in a future update to the Branch Officers handbook.

Guidelines had also been issued to society officers who may be approached by the press, radio or TV for details of the activities of the society. Branches have been asked via the Newsletter if they could prepare a history of their branch. The Managing Editor has agreed that branch histories will be published in the RO as and when space becomes available.

David Tyreman wanted to know if the benefits mentioned would appear in the RO to which Eric stated that all information would appear in a future edition of the RO.

Mike Robertson informed the delegates that he many ties at the Coventry store and sadly they were not being bought by the members.

David Kelso drew to the delegates attention that the Society clothing had been withdrawn from the website as the DCS considered it should not be offered for sale to anyone not in the Society. Clothing and ties need to be promoted in a different way than has been done in the past. The Humberside branch who took the initiative in obtaining the clothing should to be contacted and discussions need to take place with Peter Louth on the future of clothing sales.

10a THE LIBRARY

DAVID PICK

David Pick reported that the subject of the Library had been brought up during a Development Sub Committee meeting late in 2007, surprisingly a few members had never visited the facility. Subsequently a

date was arranged with Terry Silcock the Librarian and on the 5th December 2007 five members of the Committee made a visit. The Society has a major library collection of over 8,000 volumes.

A short verbal report was presented at the DSC meeting of 30th January 2008, when it was generally agreed that the library was unfit for purpose being housed in a double garage and being absolutely full with content. Concerns were, the access approach to the garages in an alleyway was poor due to sunken cobbles, and no parking available either there or 'on street' due to restrictions. Lighting for access after dark was either poor or non-existent.

Inside the buildings every available space was 'crammed full' and there was little accessible space for general movement between bookshelf aisles or to sit down and use reference or research facilities.

In conclusion a two year time scale project was agreed to be embarked upon to provide facilities more in keeping with the country's leading railway society. David Kelso and David Pick were requested to undertake the task, providing that the librarian Terry Silcock agreed. Terry was found to be supportive of the idea when approached, and agreed to assist in any way possible, thus Terry made up a third member of the group.

One of the avenues explored so far has progressed much further after an approach was made to Brunel University at Uxbridge enquiring whether space was available for the RCTS to rent. We were referred to Nick Bevan, Director of Library Services and in conversation it transpired that Brunel itself had a significant research collection on railway history and there was a potential synergy between the two collections.

An exploratory meeting was held on 2nd September 2008 with Brunel who were represented by Frances Dean – Head of Planning, John Aanonson – BURA/Research Manager and Nick Bevan – Director of Library Services.

During the meeting we discovered that the Brunel University Transport History Library Collection (BUTHLC) is currently housed, with the university archives at Runnymede, but this site will need to be vacated within the next two years and the collection re-housed at or near to the University's Uxbridge site. Currently the BUTHLC is being under-utilised with only 25 usages in the past twelve months. The BUTHLC could not be directly accessed and visitors are discouraged.

As a result of the facility being under used, the University had been considering the long term future of the collection which, despite being a major collection, does not at present support any university teaching or research. Following discussions it seems that there could be significant benefits for both parties in housing the collections together to form a single library at or near the Brunel campus, although each retaining their separate identities.

BUTHLC has a significant research collection on British railway history comprising of books, journals, maps, timetables, photographs and other material (notably train tickets). It consists of largely two bequests – the Clinker collection bequeathed by Charles Clinker in 1983, and the Garnett collection bequeathed by David Garnett in 1984. These have subsequently been augmented by further donations including a collection of tickets from Professor Stephen Bragg (ex-Brunel University Vice Chancellor) and the cuttings archive of the Channel Tunnel Association. The books represent a British railway history collection from earliest times to the early 1980's. The journal collection is smaller but there are some substantial runs of major titles. Most of the collection is catalogued and can be located through the BUTHLC catalogue.

The University is keen to use its railway history collection to support its research agenda by looking for funding to support a Professorship in Railway History. By bringing together two complimentary collections, it is possible to establish a more coherent research collection. The first stage has been to employ an external consultant to assess the research value and strengths of the two collections – this is being funded by the University and the outcome will be shared with the Society.

The Society requires more accessible space with better facilities to house its collections and make them available to members. Housing the RCTS collection with the University railway history collection would give members access to a much broader collection in a more spacious and pleasant environment.

If successful, the Society could be looking at a major collection on railway history supporting academic research within Brunel and the needs of RCTS members, in a pleasant and secure environment. Hopefully this will attract both researchers to Brunel and members to the Society.

On Wednesday, 6th May 2009 David Kelso and David Pick met Clive Gee, Director of Development at Brunel University at the British Library to discuss how the project could be advanced in connection with finance and sponsorship approaches. As a result of the meeting Clive Gee said he would produce a report with outline costs with a target date of being available for discussion by late May or early June. He asked if he too could visit our library during September, and a visit was subsequently arranged for Tuesday, 29th September.

David Kelso and David Pick were unavailable therefore Terry Silcock met a fairly high level team from Brunel consisting of Clive Gee, Mandy Mordue, Head of Archives and Records Management, Phaedra Casey, Archivist and Andrew Kershaw, Director of External Affairs (Clive Gee's boss). The report is awaited.

Terry Silcock stated that visits to the library were low and any more than six persons in the library at the same time made the place feel claustrophobic. Terry reminded all that Branches need to be encouraged to take a 'Library Box' which can be changed on a regular basis.

Ted Vaughan reported that there were many book collections around the country and did Terry envisage these coming to the library. At present there is no more room to store more collections at the library.

9. PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

GORDON DAVIES

Gordon Davies stated that this was his first reports as Chairman of the Publications sub-committee and that he would like to extend his thanks to Reg Wood who had stood down as the Society's Publications Officer after 23 years to become Society Treasurer. Reg has put in many years of service as the Publications Officer and in his time has helped produce many fine publications. Gordon was pleased to report that Reg is staying on with the committee as his vast wealth of experience and knowledge would be invaluable to the rest of the team. At present there are 10 members on the committee and he was extremely pleased to welcome back Rodney Lissenden after a short spell away off the committee. Also joining the committee was John Wood the Society's Sales Officer who Gordon was pleased to announce is staying on in the same role. John Walford who was co-author of the 9F's book has also joined the team.

'The Hughes & Stanier 2-6-0s' by John Young and David Tyreman which was about to be published is the first publication has been put together by the Society using desk top publishing. All the text was typed by David Bird and photographic compilation and scanning was completed by David Kelso. In the past all this work has been done by the printer which of course has been charged for. Work on 2-6-0s is now complete. All the text, photographs, captions, frontispiece and end sheets have been checked and deemed correct. David Tyreman the co author has seen the final draft and is satisfied with the outcome.

A memory stick with all the text and photographs has gone to Amadeus Press in Cleckheaton for printing and binding. Draft copies have been produced and the book is expected in early November. Retail price will be £22.95 discounted to £20 for members. Gordon thanked all the committee and others outside the publications committee who have been involved especially the author David Tyreman.

No discount voucher would appear in the RO as members could, on production of their membership card purchase the book at the discount price.

Mike Smith wanted to know what would happen if a member went from one branch to another and purchased two books at the discount price to which Gordon stated that if that meant one less book in the Coventry stock room then that was fine with him but as all our members are honest he could not envisage that happening!

Derek Morris enquired if the book would be ready for the Warley exhibition at the NEC to which Gordon replied, that it could not be guaranteed. The Publications sub-committee was not going to rush to get the book out just for one event.

In the Publications archives we discovered five proof read manuscripts plus all the photographs of a proposed book entitled 'Armstrong Whitworth, British Diesel Traction Pioneer' by Brian Webb. Printer's quotes existed but production did not take place. The publications committee felt that although this book had lain dormant for 30 years it was worthy of more work. Lightmoor Press in Witney, Oxfordshire were approached to see if it was worthy of publishing. This company was very interested, reporting that books on Armstrong Whitworth diesels were rare. After the last Pubs committee it was decided that more negotiations need to take place with Lightmoor and therefore this book may be in print sometime in 2010. The book would be hard backed with about 200 pages and would have the RCTS logo's on the covers if it is a joint venture.

John Walford has informed the committee that work is progressing with the text for 'BR Standard Part Five'. An appeal has gone out from Rodney Lissenden to some of the UK's noted photographers for good quality, hopefully unpublished colour photographs to accompany the text. The committee are also thinking up a suitable title for this publication.

Members are stating that they cannot get the thicker RO in the existing binders. 150 binders are still in stock which also includes those with the branches. David Tyreman commented that further orders for binders will need fourteen strings in the spine to hold the RO and the supplements. Gordon replied that at the next committee meeting the committee will review binder stocks and the re-ordering of binders which are slightly wider.

A review of Branch Stock holdings has taken place by a small team, Mike Roberson, David Pick and Tony Skinner with each branch contacted to see what stocks were held. An analysis of the audit showed that a stock of 1568 books which are held by the various branches with a cover price value in the region of £26,750. David Pick is now contacting branches and recalling some book.

All will have seen in the RO or on the website that the Publications sub-committee had discounted many books due to the fact that many books were printed many years ago and are really just gathering dust on the shelves in Coventry store. The Society will make a profit on sales even at these discounted sales.

On trade sales Gordon stated that David Pick has written to various preserved railways informing them of the books we sell. Feedback from the trade plus a request from Mike Robertson for a colour brochure to send with all orders, is being developed for the four page RO November publication insert as David Kelso mentioned earlier in the conference.

For a twelve month trial we have enhanced the info about Society publications on Nielsen Book database. This will contain details of 20 books will have pictures plus a resume of the titles on sale which we hope will generate far more sales from the trade and book shops.

Finally Gordon would like to thank all the members of the publications team for all their efforts in whatever part of publications they are dealing with and he was sure that the team have all learnt a lot since we started to produce the first book electronically.

12. THE RAILWAY OBSERVER CALLUM MACLEOD (Presented by John Redgate)

John Redgate informed the delegates that due to work commitments Callum was not a conference but had prepared a report that he would read out.

Callum apologies for not attending this year but his paid duties always take precedence over his voluntary activities!

When the December RO appears, readers will discover that Nostalgia Corner will be on page 700 – the first time the RO have ever reached this landmark page number. Add to this the 48 cover pages, 60 centre-insert pages plus two supplements of 20 and 16 pages apiece and members will realise that the Editorial team (all unpaid volunteers, despite what some people seem to believe) has been working extremely hard on behalf of the Society membership this year. In total 844 pages and as a result, the Publications sub-Committee is looking to source larger RO binders containing 14 binder strings.

Callum stated that it is a shame, therefore, that quite a few Branch areas appear to be 'no-go' areas as far as reporting events to the RO is concerned. Equal top of the list are the Lancs. & North West, Furness, Lakes & Lune and Cambridge Branches but the Scottish, Sussex, Surrey, Thames Valley and Windsor & Maidenhead Branches are not far behind in producing little news, despite each occupying busy and interesting parts of the network.

Contrast this situation with the enthusiasm of many other Branches from which so many notes flood in that the Editors have to apply their quotas to limit the news which appears. While this ensures that the editorial team can fill the RO every month, it does give curious regional distortions. For example, anyone reading the RO would think that the Western only operates west of Swindon and Westbury, the WCML stops at Warrington and train services in Scotland are confined to a six hour period around Edinburgh every day! Callum requested that delegates please take this message back to their branch members and encourage them to perk up and help redress the balance of reporting? Also, it would be courteous to their speakers if someone in Croydon & South London commenced reporting on the monthly branch meetings while reports from West Riding on outdoor visits also would be welcome.

Two innovations occurred this year. Firstly, thanks to the efforts first of the late Keith Brown and then of Paddy Carey, the 2008 Index appeared with the February RO, a month earlier than normal. Callum planned to make this the target issue for future years – but we do not intend ever to aim for January as we want to leave an incentive for members to renew their subscription if they wish an Index for the last year!

Secondly, thanks to the quality and quantity of excellent digital pictures now being received, Callum has managed to persuade the MC to allow him to increase the size of those issues which will be accompanied by supplements or booking forms rather than shrinking them as was the previous policy. The extra pages are largely taken up by colour photographs while the amount of text only increases a little in those months. On the downside, however, is the lack of information provided for some captions which has resulted in occasional embarrassment when he has tried to add extra details. And, no, he does not have time over the editorial weekend (when he is assembling the magazine) to try to contact those errant photographers whose good picture-taking abilities exceed their caption-writing qualities, so could the contributors please send in

enough details to describe their pictures adequately?

Sometime in 2010, Callum will be completing the series of Management Profiles and he will be looking to start a new feature on Branch histories. These will appear in alphabetical order so his own Bristol Branch committee needs to get its thinking caps on fairly soon but Windsor & Maidenhead will have almost three years to get ready!

It is disappointing that no permanent volunteers have come forward to replace Richard Neale and Kevin Law (who are retiring) as Editors of the Western and Rail Tour sections respectively. Callum has received tentative offers from John Redgate and Peter Clark but, if these already hard working members take over, then it could affect their existing important duties within the RCTS. All members have been advised of this impending problem in the October RO (following appeals in the June and August ROs which failed to prompt any volunteers) and now need to know that Saturday 31st October (the date for the 2009 Editorial Conference) is the drop dead date as to whether it is announced in the December RO the temporary suspension or loss of these sections from January 2010.

David Kelso showed the new front cover colours which are to be introduced on a four-year cycle from January. John Redgate has kindly agreed to field any questions that delegates may have on his report or may lead a discussion on other RO topics delegates might wish to raise.

Malcolm Hammond enquired if any special features would appear in the RO to celebrate the 1000th edition. Various suggestions were made from the floor and it was suggested this item should appear on the regional meetings agenda for 2010 so that branches can make their suggestions.

Roger Newman stated that the 'North of Warrington' editor had missed the date for publication for item sent into him for inclusion in the RO. The Editor will need to take that up with the regional editor.

Peter Hall has contacted various MC members requesting the possibility of space being made in the RO to cover preserved coaches. He had prepared sheets with amendments of stock movements, disposals and other information and this he gladly will send to members so long as they pay for the postage. He envisaged a book on preserved coaches and the concept of these documents would be for the benefit of the RCTS with any profits going to the Sheffield branch.

John Redgate informed Peter that an edited version of the information that he possessed could go in the RO as space was limited but David Jackman stated that all the information could be published on the Website. Terry Silcock also said that the information could also go on the RCTS Yahoo group.

Jim Sedgwick wanted to know why there was no section in the RO on wagons but he was informed that there had been no volunteer had come forward to collate that information for the RO.

David Kelso enquired why was there only one member in Scotland who possessed a camera as he only gets photographs of Scotland from one person and he appealed to the Scottish members and anyone else to send in photographs of the railway scene north of the border. David also reminded all the delegates that when they send in photographs they must also submit suitable captions with as much information as possible.

13. DATE AND VENUE FOR 2010 OFFICERS CONFERENCE

Gordon Davies informed everybody that the Members Weekend and Officers Conference would be held at the Marriot Hotel, Swindon on Sunday the 24th of October 2010.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Roger Newman gave information on the Members Weekend in Swindon in October 2010 which will be entitled 'The Experience of the White Horse'. Further details will appear in future editions of the RO.

There was no other business and the Conference closed at 12.50pm

W. Gordon Davies
Branch Liaison Secretary
24th January 2010