MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 73rd Annual General Meeting was held at the Hallmark Hotel, Midland Road, Derby on Saturday 25th April 2009. The Meeting commenced at 16.00 hours.

Present: Hugh Gould (President), John Redgate (Chairman), John Day (Secretary), Callum MacLeod (Managing Editor – *The Railway Observer*), Tony Skinner (Treasurer), Gordon Davies (Branch Liaison Secretary), David Kelso (Publicity Officer), Terry Silcock (Librarian), David Jackman (Joint Webmaster) ,Richard Morris, Alan Cooke and David Pick (Committee Members) and 79 other members giving a total of 91 members present.

1] Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from 27 members.

2] Confirmation of the Previous Year's Minutes: David Tyreman (7972) asked for the following amendment to be made: to the minutes of the 72nd Annual General Meeting held at Northampton on 26th April 2008 and published in the September RO; under **5B] Questions Relating to the Financial Report** that the West Midlands Branch's donation to the Severn Valley Railway was to help towards the Flood Relief Fund and not as stated.
Subject to this alteration the minutes were proposed for adoption by the Chairman John Redgate (13470), this was seconded by Malcolm Hammond (17454) with all present voting in favour. There were no matters arising.

3] Chairman's Address: The Chairman opened his address by welcoming everybody to the Society's 73rd AGM and expressing appreciation to see so many to support this meeting. He expressed thanks on behalf of everybody to the East Midlands branch who volunteered to host the AGM and in particular the organising team led by Branch Chairman Rodney Allen who have worked so hard on everybody's behalf to arrange the extensive programme of events over the weekend.

He then went on to report that during the past twelve months there have been no changes within the MC composition, however, change is inevitable these days so from the Agenda today he noted that there are to be significant changes to key positions in the management of the Society during 2009.

The Chairman then introduced the members of the MC and the President who travel far and wide to attend MC meetings coming from ten different Branches.

The MC was described as a very conscientious and hard working team who serve the membership with considerable energy, commitment, time and much effort so that the members can enjoy the continuing wide range of activities offered by the Society. However, there is a real danger that by trying to do too much we are putting an intolerable strain on certain roles and individuals involved in the management of the Society, and none more so than the Treasurer. To this end a different approach is needed and it is planned to bring in additional support to help the Treasurer function and it is intended to appoint two assistant treasurers , one to look after the Branches and another to assist with Publication sales and stock management.

There were some notable departures during the past twelve months; we said farewell to Keith Brown Deputy Editor of the *RO*, Bill Greenwood our former co-ordinator of the LMS series, and Jean Pollock our first lady member amongst others.

The Branches continue to thrive with more branches starting to introduce afternoon meetings, which appear to enjoy larger attendances than the evening meetings.

There is no further news to report as regards the reinstatement of our loco 60001. The MC has discussed this issue and when it seemed that EWS were going to reinstate members of this class we decided to follow a wait and see policy. Unfortunately, with the downturn in the economy this has meant that this programme has been put on hold and therefore, we are now going to seek an alternative operator who would be prepared to name a loco after the Society's in-house magazine.

In November 2006 the RCTS was invited to attend a meeting with the SLS/LCGB and The Railway Club with a view to establishing a working party to look at future mutual areas of co-operation. A report from the working party was issued in December 2007 and a second follow up meeting of the various Society Presidents and Chairmen was held on 27th January this year to discuss the recommendations with a third meeting planned for 21st July. Hugh will say a few words about this initiative later.

Until the end of March 2009 we have recruited 46 new members as compared to 39 at the same time last year. There were 23 new members joining in February no doubt in response to the article published in the March issue of the Railway Magazine. The importance of the Internet to the Society is reflected by the fact that over half of our new members are recruited via the Society's website.

From 23rd to 25th May the Society will be represented at The Eastleigh 100 Open Days with a sales stand being run by the Solent branch.

It was with much sadness that last August the Chairman received a resignation letter from John Day stating that he wanted to stand down as Society Secretary, John has worked hard in his time on the MC, first as Branch Liaison Secretary where he invigorated the production of the Branch and Officers Newsletter and latterly as Society Secretary a role he took over from Alan Cooke following the loss of John Baker so it is with grateful thanks that we welcome back Alan who readily agreed to take on this role again. In January after eight years as Treasurer Tony Skinner decided he wanted to stand down from the end of May 2009. Like John, Tony has worked tirelessly on the Society accounts over the last eight years and successfully implemented the computerisation of our accounts. This is the key role in the Society requiring a professional qualification due to the complexity of the role and after over 20 years as Publications Officer, Reg Wood has agreed to take on this role.

We all joined the RCTS because we have an interest in railways and the *RO* was, for many, the best way of finding out what was going on. It is one of our hobbies. For a minority of the membership it has led to an active participation in the day to day running of the Society, but please remember all these individuals are volunteers, who give freely of their time. It is not work, but rather meant to be a relaxation from the day to day stresses of life, so please remember not to take things too seriously, otherwise when the fun starts to wear of, the Society could be in danger of losing the assistance of very hard working members who we know from current experience are not easy to replace.

In 2008 we successfully introduced the Society Membership card during the 2009 renewals process and it is encouraging that when it ended the number of non renewals and resignations were lower than 2008. Much hard work is undertaken on our behalf by Steve Ollive and Richard Morris to whom he extended his thanks.

The April RO included the distribution of a Wills & Bequests Advice to Members leaflet concerning members Wills and collections of railway artefacts. Considerable effort has gone into developing this document over the past two years by the Development Sub-committee, which has also been assisted by a couple of our members from the legal profession. If the outcome of this initiative is that one member takes action, (and as I speak we have already received three nomination forms), to secure the future of their collection then the initiative will have been worthwhile. We should all take steps to preserve our collections and more importantly unique artefacts. Any forms submitted to the

Society Secretary will be acknowledged in writing by letter, and the information contained therein will be treated with the utmost confidentiality
In closing, the Chairman paid tribute to his colleagues on the MC for all their efforts and hard work over the last 12 months. In addition he extended his personal thanks to all Branch, Society Officers and RO Editors it's the team effort that makes us so successful. It is due to everybody's efforts that we have a Society that continues to flourish.

4] President's Address: Hugh Gould opened his address by saying that he was glad to be here at Derby and was finding it difficult to believe that it was 17 years since he became Society President. But he added that he enjoys the role and especially the Society's AGM and Members' Weekends.

He added that he had visited ten branches since the last AGM but with one failure due to snow. As in previous years he had his annual dinner with the Scottish Branch in October followed by a talk in January 2009. Unlike previous years he has been travelling by the WCML. Four branch visits are in prospect with a couple already in his 2010 diary. At all branch visits there is an opportunity to savour the unique atmosphere of the society.

Hugh complimented the MC and paid tribute to the colossal amount of work that they do on behalf of the Society and was very pleased with the new MC meeting location near to King's Cross.

Moving on to the Four Societies Working Party Hugh said the original four had now become three with the closure of The Railway Club due to declining numbers and increasing age. But along with the SLS and LCGB we are working well together because our interests overlap and compliment each other with the potential for collaboration in agreeing a future for our respective libraries.

In closing Hugh said that he continued to enjoy himself and was happy to continue while he was able.

5] Adoption of Management Committee Reports and Accounts: These were published in the Special Supplement for the AGM that accompanied the April 2009 *RO.*

5a] Questions Relating to the Report on Activities and Administration – None.

5b] Questions Relating to the Financial Report – None**.**

5c] Questions & Comments Relating to *the Railway Observer.* David Tyreman (7972) pointed out that a number of captions to photographs in the RO were not correct and asked if they could be put right in the future. Callum MacLeod (12817) agreed that there had been a few errors but said that some photographers do not supply complete captions and acknowledged the error concerning the top picture on the back page of the AGM supplement. David Kelso (4789) said he would reissue the guidelines for photographic submissions to the RO and include the need for full and accurate captions.

Ronnie McAdam (16090) asked whether there would be a cost saving in changing over to an all electronic RO. Callum MacLeod replied that a significantly reduced print run would become uneconomic for both the Society and our current printers. Furthermore a number of our members are not computer literate. Callum added that members who joined the RCTS Library Group on the internet could receive the electronic version of each month's *RO* a few days ahead of the printed version.

Adoption of the Reports was proposed by David Goddard (21347), seconded by Bob Barby (5843) and carried unanimously.

Adoption of the Financial Report was proposed by Bob Ballard (10372), seconded by Roger Newman (5961) and carried unanimously.

6] Changes to the rules of The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society. The proposed revision to Rule 9 was published in the Special Supplement for the AGM that accompanied the April 2009 RO.

In proposing this change, Ken Wilson (18966) said that the revision makes Rule 9 simpler and clearer than the current version. The change was seconded by Robert Colton (8974).
Ted Vaughan (18410) asked if anyone has contravened the current rule, he added that he believed that he did by putting out meeting programmes in local libraries. The Chairman responded that this was allowed for under Rule 3. Noel Thompson (16953) added that he was maybe doing so as well as he was asked to write an article about the South Wales Branch in his local paper. In response the Chairman said that again this was allowed. David Walker (18418) said that the MC would need to address the situation if a member used the Society's name to get out of a problem situation as in the case of a member in 1951 who was expelled during a shed visit. David Cole (4799) added that the individual concerned was expelled from the Society at the following AGM. He urged that the new Rule 9 be accepted. Irene Rabbits (20072) said the new rule 9 is clearer and keeps matters simple.

At this point the Chairman suggested that the revised Rule 9 be voted on by all the members present; this was to be achieved by a show of hands. 67 members voted for the rule change and 9 voted against. The rule change was therefore passed.

The Chairman than asked the members present if they thought that the rule change should be offered to the whole RCTS membership to vote on. The response was a unanimous no.
The Chairman thanked Ken for his efforts in carrying this rule change through.

7] Election of Management Committee Officers: The Chairman announced that he had received nominations for the following Officers to serve on the Management Committee.

For one year:
Treasurer **Reg Wood**
Proposed by Mike Smith (3833) and seconded by Rodney Allen (8149)

For two years:
Chairman **John Redgate**
Proposed by Rodney Allen (8149) and seconded by John Hitchens (6600).
Committee Member **David Pick**
Proposed by M Topley (10512) and seconded by J E Cox (12602).

For three years:
Secretary **Alan Cooke**
Proposed by John Hitchens (6600) and seconded by Mike Smith (3833).
Branch Liaison Secretary **Gordon Davies**
Proposed by J E Cox (12602) and seconded by M Topley (10512

There being no others the nominations were carried unanimously.

8] Appointment of Auditors: John Redgate (13470) proposed and David Cole (4799) seconded that Richardson, Watson and Co. be appointed as Auditors for the Financial Year 1st November 2008 to 31st October 2009.

9] Date and Venue for the 2010 AGM: Alan Cooke, Secretary Designate (17050) announced that as yet no firm offer had been received from a branch or a group of branches to stage the 2010 AGM. A provisional offer had been received and if confirmed an announcement would be made as soon as possible.

10] Any Other Business: Bob Ballard (10372) announced that the publications list was about to be reprinted and requested those present to place any orders.
David Tyreman (7972) commented on the poor quality of the Society's advertisements in the railway press. In response David Kelso (4827) admitted that there had been some technical problems with some of the magazines which he was hoped would be resolved soon.
Ken Wilson (18966) said that the Solent Branch was planning to have a stand at the forthcoming Open Day at Eastleigh and requested that branches, particularly those in the South East provide him with information on their forthcoming programmes for publicity on the stand.
Robert Colton (8974) asked that with the historically low interest rates at present whether any consideration had been made to putting some of the Society's funds in Premium Bonds. John Redgate responded by saying that these could only be taken out by individuals, not organisations. He further added that we had been using National Savings Treasurers account until that was closed in 2007.
Bob Barby (5843) announced that negotiation with the Severn Valley Railway were nearly complete for a commemorative seat in memory of Geoff Baylis at Kidderminster.

David Cole expressed a vote of thanks on behalf of everybody present to the Chairman, the Management Committee, the Development Sub-committee and the Publication Sub-committee for the hard work that they undertake on behalf of the Society and the membership.
Malcolm Hammond added his grateful thanks to Tony Skinner and John Day for their contributions whilst on the Management Committee.

Gordon Davies announced that the Annual Members' Weekend would be held during the weekend of 23rd – 25th October 2009 at the Coventry Hill Hotel, Coventry. Further announcements would be made about the programme for the weekend in the RO.

The Meeting Closed at 17.25

Alan Cooke
Society Secretary