



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Management Committee, Society and Branch Officer's
Held at the Marriot Hotel, Swindon
Sunday 24th October 2010 at 9.15am**

PRESENT

Management Committee

John Redgate, Chairman
Alan Cooke, Secretary
Red Wood, Treasurer
Richard Morris, Membership Secretary
David Jackman, Webmaster
Callum MacLeod, RO Managing Editor

Gordon Davies, Deputy Chairman/ Branch Liaison
David Pick, Committee Member
Terry Silcock, Librarian
David Kelso, Publicity

Society Officers

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

Branches

Bristol:	<i>Callum MacLeod, Paul Udey, Roger Newman, David McCollum</i>
Cambridge:	Robert Bartlett, James Crane
Chichester:	Geoff Adams
Cheltenham:	<i>Richard Morris</i>
Croydon & South London:	Peter Wilson, Jeremy Harrison
East Midlands:	Rodney Allen, Mike Smith
Furness Lakes & Lune:	Not Represented
Hitchin:	Not Represented
Humberside:	Peter Louth, Les Brackstone,
Ipswich:	Eric Palmer, Peter Coghill
Lancs & North West:	Not Represented
Merseyside, Chester & N.Wales:	<i>Gordon Davies, Alan Donaldson</i>
Milton Keynes:	<i>Bob Ballard, Steve Dexter</i>
Northampton:	<i>David Pick</i>
North East:	Dave Tyreman, Jim Sedgwick, Malcolm Hammond
Peterborough:	Not Represented
Scottish:	<i>Ronnie McAdam,</i>
Sheffield:	David Munday
Solent:	Ted Vaughan, Mike Green
South East:	<i>David Kelso, John Holloway</i>
South Essex:	John Stone
South Wales:	Stuart Warr
Surrey:	Peter Bosomwoth, Irene Rabbits, Andy Davies
Sussex:	Not Represented
Thames Valley:	John Lewis
Watford:	Not Represented
West of England:	Not Represented
West Midlands:	Bob Barby, David Walker, Derek Morris, Mike Robertson
West Riding:	John Holroyd
Windsor & Maidenhead:	<i>Alan Cooke, Steve Ollive, David Goddard, Sally Goddard</i>

Branches Not in Attendance (7)

Furness, Lakes & Lune; Hitchin; Lancs & North West; Peterborough; Sussex; Watford; West of England.

In opening the conference John Redgate welcomed all those present and thanked them for taking the time out to attend. A warm welcome was extended to those attending their first conference and John hoped that they would find this worthwhile and more importantly return next year.

John expressed his thanks to the Bristol Branch for hosting another successful members' weekend and thanked Roger Newman and Paul Udey who have worked tirelessly to put this weekend's events together and John asked everyone to join him in expressing our thanks to them and their helpers for putting on such a well organised event. He commented that if anyone was familiar with the planning and timetable that Roger puts together then you know it will be an event run like clockwork.

John stated that since March he have taken on new work responsibilities which now requires him to be away from Society events at weekends during the football season. This is unfortunate as the MC meets in London on Saturdays to avoid members work commitments but his role has been more than adequately covered in his absence by our excellent Deputy Chairman, Gordon Davies who combines these duties with his other important role as Branch Liaison Secretary and Publications sub-committee Chairman to whom John extended his sincere thanks.

In conjunction with Gordon and his colleagues on the MC John will need to consider his continuation as Chairman commensurate with the significant demands on his time arising from this new work role.

Due to the financial success of our publications sales in the past two years the MC made the decision to invest surplus funds in additional larger issues of *The Railway Observer*, in August and October this year. Consequently the RO is on target for another record in the number of pages published in a single volume. In 2009, it reached page 700 for the first time but, by December 2010, it is likely that the last page will be 720. Based on the success of the Publications sales this year we expect to have new larger sized RO Binders on sale soon.

As you will be aware Callum has decided to stand down as RO Editor once the May 2011 RO has been published. Currently Callum and John were in the process of discussing a handover with his possible successor and it is hoped that this will be agreed after the next RO Editorial Conference. Callum's successor will be announced in the RO.

The MC has decided to increase the subscription for next year by £1 to £23. This is to reflect the recent increase in postage rates. With a larger sized RO the magazine represents excellent value for money and John hoped that each Branch is actively promoting from this month that new members can join for 15 months for the price of 12 so what better way to promote and feel proud of your Society than by encouraging your branch visitors and friends to become members.

Our Chairman then said a few words about some of those members who have recently joined 'Top Shed', Mike Burnett was RO Editor when John joined the MC in 1981 and although he had to stand down due to ill health he devoted much time to proof reading and assisting the publications team until the end. Tony Scarsbrook from Milton Keynes Branch who was involved with the Publicity and Marketing Sub Committee and was instrumental in establishing the concept for the society leaflets and new designs for branch fixture lists, and finally Stan Dart formerly Secretary of the Thames Valley Branch who has been a keen attendee of the Members Weekend over the last 30 years. They all made a significant contribution in their own way to the running of the Society and we shall miss them.

John reminded the delegates that 37890 which originally carried the name the Railway Observer has recently been scrapped and that 60001 has been put up for sale and whilst the Society have no intention of buying the locomotive the acquisition of the nameplates is something that the MC may consider. At the moment we are in contact with DBS concerning the future of these nameplates.

John stated that this is the first member's weekend that our President Hugh Gould has been absent. This is something that has caused High a great deal of anguish, however, as best man at a wedding 25 years ago he is in Scotland celebrating a Silver Wedding Anniversary and therefore tenders his profuse apologies for being unable to be with you all this weekend.

John hoped that all the contributions offered this morning are constructive and that we focus on maintaining Society activities and improving the service we give to our members in the years ahead.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Society President:	Hugh Gould
Vice President:	Rodney Lissenden
Society Officer:	Bob Ellison, Assistant Treasurer, Branch Finances.
Society Officer:	David Bird, Deputy Managing Editor
Society Officer:	Dick Taylor, LMS Series Editor

Branches:

Bristol:	Brian Arman
Cambridge:	Andy Dean, Mike Page
Chichester:	Bruce Oliver, Rosie Jacobs, Andy Perry
Croydon & South London:	Geoff Lipscombe
Hitchin:	David Cole, Stuart Little, Stuart Sanders, Cyril Crawley
Humberside:	John Foreman, Mick Hodge, Carrey Vessey
Ipswich:	Steve Cobb, John Day
Lancs & North West:	Ian Derrick, Noel Machell
Merseyside, Chester & N.Wales:	Richard Neale, Alan Turton, Geoff Morris, Norman Jackson
Northampton:	John Harrison, Ron Hart
Peterborough:	Roger Baily
Scottish:	Evan Williams
Sheffield:	Peter Hall, Les Nixon, Alan Lovecy
South East:	Geoff Dunster, Keith Mapley
South Essex:	Jim Waite, John Bennett
South Wales:	Noel Thompson
Surrey:	<i>Bob Ellison</i>
Sussex:	Paul Baston, Paul Snelling, Tim Stamp
Thames Valley	Stuart Hicks, John Hubbard, David Evans-Roberts, Andrew Jenkins, Dennis Brown
Watford:	David Fairhurst
West Midlands:	Ian Reid, Peter Smith
West Riding:	Dave Beeken, Bill Jagger, Bob Green
Windsor & Maidenhead	Jim Tucker

3. CONFIRMATION OF YEAR 2009 MINUTES and

4. MATTERS ARISING

Bob Barby, West Midlands Branch stated that his name as well as Peter Smith was missing as delegates attending the 2009 conference. Gordon offered his apologies.
Minutes of the 2009 Officers Conference were then confirmed.

5. PRESIDENTS ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

HUGH GOULD

A message from Hugh was read out to the delegates by John Redgate:

It is a matter of great regret and sadness to me that I am unable to attend this year's reunion and Officers Conference. I shall be attending the Silver Wedding of one of my closest friends, having been his Best Man at his wedding in October 1985. So I will be in Falkirk instead of Swindon. I'm really very sorry to break an eighteen year record of good attendance.

I have had another active year and have visited Cardiff, Cheltenham, Darlington, Watford, Sheffield, Maidenhead, Nottingham and Northampton branches so far this year, with two more to come. All of these have been most enjoyable, (for me anyway) as were the AGM and MC meetings I have attended. I continue to be full of admiration for the hard work put in by so many people to keep the Society going strong.

My very best wishes for another successful weekend, see you next time, hopefully without fail.

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 organizing the meetings and to those who take the minutes which in some cases is the same person.

All the group minutes are now received electronically which make the task of compiling the yearly Regional Meetings Points document much easier as he can 'cut and paste' information from each group minutes into the main document. Gordon also extended his thanks to his colleagues on the MC who attended each of the Regional Meetings to represent the MC. Their presence he is sure is of great benefit as they can answer any of the questions that arise.

Gordon was delighted to report that the Furness, Lakes & Lune branch were represented at the North West & Midlands group meeting for the first time in many years and the group extended a warm welcome to Peter Robinson who was representing the branch.

Two branches were not represented at the Regional Meetings this year with both Peterborough and the South Wales branches not being in attendance.

The Regional Meetings Action Points document had been distributed to the regional chairman on the 4th of October and this contained additional information added after the last MC meeting. Hopefully all the delegates attending the Regional Meetings will have received a copy by now.

The Regional Meetings Action Points September is a 12 page document and Gordon did not intend to go through it item by item.

He commented that if anyone wanted to raise a point he will be willing to discuss that matter or get a colleague from the MC to reply to the question.

There were no questions or comments from the floor.

7. THE LIBRARY SUB-COMMITTEE

DAVID PICK

David Pick commenced his report by stating that many of those in attendance have been aware of the project to relocate the Society library. For some twenty months David Kelso, David Pick and Librarian Terry Silcock have been in active discussion with Brunel University as to the possibility of their transport collection (mainly consisting of the Charles Clinker collection) and the RCTS Library sharing premises on the Uxbridge Campus. Despite many meetings and favourable professional analysis of the two collections, sadly the project has now been aborted due to the current cut backs in funding for higher education and the University's inability to find suitable commercial sponsors for the project.

At the behest of the Society Chairman it was decided to put the Library project on a more formal footing with the formation of a Committee. An informal meeting took place on the 23rd March and a second meeting took place on the 12th May at which a Library Sub Committee (LSC) was duly formed consisting of seven members, Alan Cooke, Denis Corley, Martin Elms, David Kelso, Peter King and Terry Silcock with David Pick elected as Chairman. The LSC Draft Terms of Reference and Ground Rules were also established.

During July contact was made with the British Postal Museum Archive (BPMA) as the committee discovered that they were planning to move from their current premises in South Essex which they have outgrown and relocate to the former Swindon Locomotive Works site using the old Chain Shop, an area of 42,000 square feet.

On the 4th August David Kelso, Terry Silcock and David Pick met the Assistant Project Officer Jo. Sullivan at the BPMA office at Mount Pleasant complex in London. Discussions took place on the BPMA project which is by now well advanced with funding in place, plans and artists impressions drawn up, with the move due to be completed in 2012. Further discussion then took place as to where railway interests fitted in with the growth of the Post Office and it was agreed that there was a considerable 'dove tailing' of interest and that another meeting should be arranged to progress the points made. This meeting had been arranged for week commencing 15th November 2010.

The LSC is pleased to announce the appointment of Bob Burchell as Society Archivist (not Library Archivist) as a result of a recent advertisement of the post. He will be taking up his post in earnest in early November.

At this point David mentioned that our Librarian Terry Silcock has indicated that he wishes to 'step down' from his role. Terry has held the post for some 41 years and feels that it is time to retire so as not to hinder the relocation of our Library. David stated that the Society owed Terry a great debt of gratitude not only for the success of the Library but also for the money raised selling books and other items. Terry has been supported throughout by his wife Beryl and David thanked Beryl for her efforts. David then asked the question 'Are there any potential Librarians 'out there' if so please contact David after the meeting so that we may discuss the point.

However, Terry has assured David that he will be on hand to advise the LSC on matters appertaining to the Library itself or relocation.

The LSC are currently looking for anyone interested in the future of the Library to come forward and either join or be co-opted onto the committee. Contact can be made direct to David Pick on 01604 810613 or e-mail David at: northampton@rcts.org.uk

Callum MacLeod commented that Uxbridge was not the most accessible place to visit and David Kelso reported that the new Library location would of course be influenced by the location of a suitable Librarian. He also commented that it may be possible to scan and digitalise the books currently in the Library however Terry Silcock disputed this as it may be illegal to copy some books as they are still in copyright.

John Redgate informed the delegates that the Society was not under any pressure to move at present however it is wise to look for an alternative place. The SLS currently have their Library stored in premises owned by Ian Allan and maybe in years to come we may amalgamate the two libraries.

8. FINANCE UPDATE

REG WOOD

Prior to Reg Wood's presentation he had distributed to the delegates a pack which contained examples of all the branch return forms which had been filled out as 'model' forms that are submitted to the treasurer.

Reg reported that he was 'getting to grips' with the Society's Treasurer's role and that he was supported by Bob Ellison as Assistant Treasurer, Branch Finances and that Noel Machell would be taking on the role of Assistant Treasurer, Publications.

The Audit of the Branch accounts had gone very well however it was hard work to keep our bank (Lloyds TSB) support and service levels to our requirements through one of the worst banking crises ever and one which affected Lloyds badly. Their communications have suffered with successive restructurings causing us some concern. The better news is that they are at last valuing our custom and talking to us about better rates for our business. We are looking for another bank to look after the Society's finances.

At the request of the MC the Society had tried to invest some money with Santander as their rate of return was deemed the best at the time. This process became so bogged down in administration and form filling the investment did not take place and an alternative institution is being investigated for the investment of some of the Society's money.

As reported in Parliament the VAT rate increases to 20% will take place on the 4th January 2011. All Sales after that date will require us all to account for VAT at the higher rate. Reg advised that where you are charged a VAT inclusive rate after January 4th that can be calculated by multiplying the total by 0.1667 or one sixth of the total.

Branches do not need to prepare separate VAT returns for 17.5% and 20% trading, they can be handled quarterly as usual with the November 10 – January 11 return including 2 months at 17.5% and 1 month at 20%. Reg reminded branches that if they state that there is an 'admission charge' to a branch event then that charge is subject to VAT. Donations at the door are not subject to VAT.

In response to an enquiry from Terry Silcock, Reg advised that any figures calculated for VAT purposes should be rounded up for inclusion on financial returns.

Reg commented that he is finding sales by Cardnet using the paper system increasingly difficult to control with fraud on the increase. Please be aware of this and please take care. Reg emphasised that branches must be careful and ensure the card details reproduce fully when using card machines. Reg asked all those using the machines to also show in the space to the upper right the name of the Society officer/volunteer making the sale and your Branch details. It can be many months before any errors or anomalies are highlighted by the bank and sometimes it is impossible to rectify errors thus losing the Society well earned cash. All Cardnet slips should be sent to the processing centre in Sheffield.

Terry Silcock asked why the Cardnet slips should not be sent to the Society Treasurer. Reg reported that the process was in place and all slips should go directly to the Cardnet processing centre at Sheffield. Whilst Cardnet is useful branches are encouraged to sell by other means than Cardnet.

David McCullom enquired that the cheque guarantee card was no longer acceptable are cheques still acceptable on sales stands. Reg stated that cheques did not cause any difficulties; fraud was minimal and should be accepted for any payments.

Derek Morris enquired as to the purchase of electronic hand held credit card machines as used by others at the Warley exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Reg commented that he was aware of these machines and the possibility of obtaining these for the Society in the future however he warned that cost may be prohibitive.

Mike Smith stated that any purchaser he dealt with was always asked to put their name and address on the back of the Cardnet slips.

Irene Rabbitts stated that at her branch sales stands they avoid the use of Cardnet at all costs and looked forward to the use electronic hand held machines if obtained.

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 your Treasurer is a qualified

Accountant, so is always ready to advise. The Society is planning to organise Branch Treasurers Training Days in 2011 to help you manage finances. We are planning one event in the north and another in the south.

All Branch Treasurer's work on behalf of the whole branch committee; Reg invited the Branch Representatives in attendance to follow up with their branch Treasurer in a couple of weeks to make sure their branch's returns are prepared and sent in.

Reg needs the branch information to be reported by the 30th November to Bob Ellison, to allow the Society to comply with HMRC VAT regulations. Bob's contact details are on the handouts. Reg thanked all for their co-operation in advance.

Your Treasurer reported that he is in the course of adding Bob to our bank mandate and providing him with a cheque book. This will allow your Branch VAT and any appropriate expenses to be refunded more promptly.

The quality of information you, the Branches return is important as not only Reg, but also HMRC and our External Auditors will rely on it. We have not so far 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 to discuss the various examples of the 'model' branch return forms that he had been distributed earlier. He requested that the forms are completed so that they are legible. All receipts submitted must have a VAT number on them if a claim is made for the refund of VAT. Some branches are slower than others in submitting their returns but Reg asked all branches to make every effort to get the returns in by the target date.

Bob Ballard enquired as to where the modified branch returns forms are available from to which Reg replied that they had been distributed to all branches by Bob Ellison.

Geoff Adams enquired as to the level of support that new branches get from central funds. Reg answered that new branches do get financial support from central funds to initially start a branch but it is expected that all branches are self financing. Central funds are there for special projects such as new publications, or the library project. Branch room hire charges should be covered from local funds and should not be drawn from central funds.

9. THE RAILWAY OBSERVER

CALLUM MACLEOD

Callum MacLeod started his report by stating that volume 80 will consist of 720 pages as will volume 81. Six issues will consist of 56 pages with the other six issues consisting of 64 pages. The covers for the 2011 volumes will be green and for the first time include an ISSN bar code. Quoted prices for the RO in 2011 will be £1.72 for 56 pages and £1.73 for the 64 page edition. The AGM supplement in 2011 will have four extra pages of photographs which will consist of photographs of branch activities that David Kelso and Callum have been collecting throughout the year. Mike Gayton has been appointed the new editor to deal with Query Corner.

So far four Branch Profiles have been submitted but only two with photographs to supplement the articles and he reminded branches those who will have their profiles published in the forthcoming editions of the RO.

Callum stated that he is definitely stepping down as RO editor after May 2011 edition and this which will be his 96th edition that he has produced as editor. A possible successor has been identified and it was 99% certain that this person would take on the Editor's role. Further discussions would take place at the Editorial Conference which will be held in Reading in November. Further details will be released at a future date.

Callum asked two specific questions of the delegates, do readers prefer text or photographs in the RO? All the praise for the 'good' ROs has been connected with picture quality and quantity.

Callum then enquired if anyone cared that 95% of the Scottish notes come from English visitors? There are other areas in the country which are weak areas as well.

Ronnie MacAdam stated that he will try and get more notes in the RO about Scotland.

David Tyreman stated that in the Preservation Notes that reported on the Bluebell Gala all the locomotive numbers should have been listed.

Roger Newman enquired as to the availability of information not published in the RO.

Stuart Warr enquired about digital images for the RO. David Kelso stated that all images should be straight from the camera and should not be altered in any way. The guidelines for the submission of digital images appear in the RO on a regular basis and are on the Society Website.

Bob Barby wanted to know if photographs would appear in the RO Index in the future. Callum replied that Paddy Carey was looking to that possibility in the future.

David Tyreman asked why the RO had on some occasions been late. Richard Morris stated that there had been a breakdown in the administrative procedures at the mailing centre however an on-line business account had been set up and that type of delay would hopefully not occur again.

At this point David Kelso reminded those who submit photographs in whatever format that detailed captions are vital if the photographer wants his/her image to appear in the RO. As much information as possible should accompany the photograph when it is submitted as neither the Managing Editor or the Picture Editor have any time to chase photographers for caption information. Photographs without sufficient caption information are doomed for non- publication.

Ronnie MacAdam enquired as to whether train reporting numbers would appear in the RO after May to which Callum replied that it would be at the discretion of the new Managing Editor

10. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

DAVID JACKMAN

David Jackman proceeded to report that 2010 has seen some major additions to the website, initially Diesel Dilemmas and Mystery Photographs and more recently Query Corner. Mystery Photographs in particular has proved very popular and doubled the monthly total of pages viewed. David thanked Cyril Crawley for Mystery Photographs and Peter Hall for Diesel Dilemmas. Access to the Society's photograph archive has been improved with an on-line search facility and the ability to order prints directly from the website. Both have proved popular and October 2010 saw the addition of a selection of thumbnail sized images to the search facility so potential purchases can see some of the photographs on offer.

Participation from Branches has been mixed. A couple of the more active web correspondents have started uploading material directly onto the site and there has been a small increase in the number of branches contributing photographs and other material. David reported that he is pleased to say that the website has current events for all but one branch but too many branches are missing meeting reports and the branch website consists of just fixtures and a list of officers, which isn't likely to attract too much new blood. He does not mind if the material has a historical bias, Northampton's historical pages always get a lot of hits from Google or describe the current scene examples include Hitchin, Sheffield, Thames Valley and West Midlands but your Webmaster would like every branch to contribute something over the next 12 months. Branches without a web co-ordinator need to try to find one as the role will become a lot more import over the next few years. It is not an onerous task; the basic requirement is to ensure that fixtures are up to date on the website.

Terry Silcock suggested that information not published in the RO should go on the Website. David had stated this previously and many branches put extended meeting reports on the Website and outdoor events with many pictures as demonstrated by the Merseyside, Chester and North Wales Branch.

The technology behind the website has also improved over the last year. Authorized users can now update fixtures very easily and quickly so if you do get changes to fixtures, last minute or otherwise, please tell David and he will update the site. A number of branches now have created lists of e-mail addresses to contact their regulars about future meetings and in the case of last minute alterations. The presentation of photographs has been improved as while most now appear slightly smaller they will open full size in a new window when clicked.

The most important development is that anybody with the appropriate authorisation can now add and edit text within the site. This works through the browser and does not require any special software on the PC. Work is still ongoing but it means that the task of updating the website can begin to be shared.

David emphasised that It is your site and it will only ever be as good as you the members make it, so if anyone has suitable content for the site please don't hesitate to get in touch. He would also like to hear from people keen to get actively involved in running the site and will always listen to your feedback and comments.

11. DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

ERIC PALMER

Eric reported that the Development sub-Committee (DSC) met three times during the year to make recommendations to again improve the facilities available to members and to encourage new members to join the Society. Andy Lickfold, late of EWS who provided helpful guidance in formulating the 'new image' of the Society in 2005, has joined the committee and we look forward to his future input.

The membership application form and information contained in the Members Recruitment packs have been redesigned and updated. Work is now continuing on the production of a booklet which comprehensively

covers all the activities and benefits of being a member of the Society. The booklet eventually will be sent to each new member recruited together with his or her membership card. The A5 size black and white recruitment leaflet has been replaced with an updated full colour version.

The British Transport Police (BTP) has set up a Passenger Forum Project to help combat crime on the railway networks and a DSC member attended the initial meeting of the Forum. A BTP officer attended the Society's Northern Home Counties Regional Meeting held in May at Digswell to outline the measures they intend to implement with the help of enthusiasts to combat crime and vandalism on the railways. Membership cards now carry the BTP telephone numbers which will enable members to co-operate with the police if they observe any attempts at vandalism. It is hoped that the BTP will provide an article outlining their activities which can be included in a future RO.

The Society's photographic collection has traditionally been held by Society Vice President, David Cole. The collection, now known as the Photographic Archive, has grown too large to be accommodated in a private residence therefore 20,000 prints, slides and negatives have now been relocated to secure storage in Stevenage. The committee feels that in the next ten years colour slides produced in the 1950s to 1970s will have deteriorated due to fading, emulsion breakdown and mould so an urgent efforts needs to be made to get the images scanned to enable them to be preserved printed and viewed on the website. Contact has been made with a scanning laboratory which will enable us to consolidate, catalogue and scan the Photographic Archive for the future benefit of the Society. Once it has been done it will be possible to offer for sale prints of various sizes which will bring in healthy revenue. Branches will be asked to provide information on any past or present member's slide or negative collections they may hold with a view to getting these safely scanned at a later date. The DSC will put forward a technical and commercial proposal to the MC for approval.

The society owns a number of locomotive nameplates most of which are held by the branches. As these items are seldom seen by Society members or the general public advances have been made to get some exhibited at preserved railway sites. The Bluebell Railway, The Severn Valley Railway and the Swindon Steam Museum have all expressed interest in displaying certain individual plates and negotiations are ongoing with this venture.

The DSC is striving to find a distributor for society clothing which until recently has been undertaken by the Humberside branch. A firm willing to both manufacture and distribute would be an ideal solution as this would solve the problem of storage space and this possibility is being pursued.

The Branch Officer's Handbook continues to be regularly updated and a new section was added to cover the process concerning the Wills and Bequests leaflet.

The DSC was involved with the planning of RCTS involvement in the Wolverton Works event which would have taken place in August including manning the shuttle train. Although considerable work had been undertaken by members of the DSC in arranging staffing, production of banners and posters the event was postponed at short notice.

The committee has commenced work on formulating a five-year plan for the future of the Society. The principle objective of the plan is to ensure that we maintain a modern vibrant railway society growing membership year by year throughout the United Kingdom. It is hoped that branches will offer suggestions for inclusion in the plan. It will be necessary to appoint a National Recruitment / Marketing Officer who will be involved with this project.

Peter Coghill enquired as to the future co-operation between the RCTS and the SLS and LCGB.

John Redgate reported that Andrew Dow has stepped down as chairman and Hugh Gould had taken on the job of Chairman. To date not much more progress had been achieved recently. John stated that certain branches within the Society are struggling however the Sussex branch was now holding joint meetings with the LCGB at Brighton. Regarding libraries and photographic collections, the SLS has a considerable amount of historic and unique information whilst the LCGB has a modern collection. The RCTS is by far the largest of the societies within the forum and we could easily take the lead but we do not want to pursue this role at present. The SLS and the LCGB have learnt a lot from the RCTS as we are a more commercial in our approach. Each society wants to keep their own identities and a 'crunch time' may come in the future but we are not there yet.

The first quarter of the year saw much activity within the publicity department with the launch of the Hughes and Stanier 2-6-0s book. David Kelso stated that press releases were distributed then review copies with half page advertising to a number of the major magazines. The end result was very healthy sales with more volumes sold than anticipated as reflected in the financial results. A number of these adverts were placed in the edition of the magazine that carried a review of the book. This had the effect of the reviews appearing in some magazines much more quickly than in the past.

After the success of our article in the Railway Magazine in 2009 we were able to secure the services of the editor, Nick Pigott, to make the opening presentation at the 2010 AGM in April at Derby. Publicity matters then calmed down through the middle part of the year to more routine activities. The four-fold publications leaflet produced last November was reprinted as a 2010 sales leaflet and order form and continues to be included in all membership packs and all book despatches.

As indicated in last year's report at the request of the Development Sub Committee a new recruitment 4-fold full colour leaflet was designed to replace the rather jaded black and white leaflet that has been included in membership packs since the launch of the "New Image". The new leaflet now goes into all membership packs. Stocks of both these items can be obtained from Bob Ballard in the usual way.

Work was carried out to produce some new advertising material for the Wolverton weekend but as you all know this event did not take place. As a result we now have a stock of yellow Hi-Vis waistcoats with the RCTS logo in black on the back. It was also decided to design some new banners for the stands at Wolverton and now we have utilised these designs to make a trial set of banners which Bob Ballard is using for the first time at the Peterborough show and they will be used again at the Warley show. Depending on these trials we may well make these banners available to branches if we feel the impact is right. The banners were on display at the conference and David invited comments on the new banners.

Geoff Morris had obtained one of the new Hi-Vis waistcoats and he wore it as 'Party Leader' when visiting outdoor events such as Basford Hall at Crewe. He also mentioned that his branch had obtained vests locally which conform to railway specifications.

To assist in our search for a new RO Managing Editor a high profile advert was designed and placed in the August RO and this appears to have done the trick. Watch out for similar advertisements for positions within the Society management machine and as the advert said "Give something back to your Society."

The publicity machine has now got into gear again with the release to the public this coming month of the late Brian Webb's Armstrong Whitworth book. Courtesy of Mike Robertson the book was available at the conference for members to purchase at the discounted price. Because of our involvement with Black Dwarf Lightmoor in publishing this book as a joint venture and because it is a specialist book on early diesels the advertising has taken a slightly different approach. Instead of half pages covering the new book as an addition to an established series this time quarter page advertisements have been placed in those magazines which are considered to be diesel weighted in their content. The advertisement will also appear in the Railway Magazine because of its breadth of readership and high circulation. David did not think we would get much response from an advert placed in the likes of Steam World. The advert, a copy of which was on display, only features this book to give it a greater impact. Review copies are being sent out to a more restricted list and the same advert will be run in the review edition. An A5 single page leaflet is being printed and this will be inserted in the 4 fold sales leaflet sent out with every book purchase and included in the membership packs. It will also be available from Bob Ballard for use as a handout at branch meetings and exhibitions and a copy was on display along with a copy of the Lightmoor Black Dwarf sales leaflet for the book. Early in 2011 the AW book will be incorporated in a new 4-fold sales leaflet for 2011.

The DSC is constantly looking for new ways to raise the profile of the Society and David hoped that you will see some results from this in 2011 for promotional material and in the railway press.

13. PUBLICATIONS UPDATE**GORDON DAVIES**

It was with great pleasure that Gordon Davies announced the publication of the Society's latest book 'Armstrong Whitworth - A Pioneer of World Diesel Traction' by the late Brian Webb.

Originally scheduled for publication in the early 1970's, publication did not take place and the manuscripts and photographs lay dormant until the project was revived in 2009.

This volume covers Armstrong Whitworth's involvement in the development of diesel traction from the beginning of the 20th century until 1937 when the company ceased production of diesel railway motive power. This book covers the company's involvement with diesel traction and includes rare photographs and

technical diagrams covering the development of shunters, railcars, railbuses, articulated train sets and main line locomotives. It retails at £19.95 and is available to members at a discount price of £17.50.

This book is a joint venture between the Society and Black Dwarf Lightmoor Press. They have undertaken half the production costs and therefore the Society is limited as to where we can distribute this book. Delegates will have read in the last Newsletter that the Society will promote the book within the Society, at branch meetings, sales stands and at national and model railway exhibitions.

The RCTS will advertise the book in the national railway magazine trade for sale by mail order, across the RCTS website and the printed publications brochure.

Lightmoor will be responsible for all "Trade" distribution and this includes museums and preserved railways. This means that branches (The Society) are not allowed to distribute the book to their local independent book shops or any other retail outlet, wholesalers or museums and preserved railways.

If anyone receives any enquires at branch meetings, sales stands or exhibitions regarding retail sales please forward the enquiry to Lightmoor, the contact details are in Newsletter 37.

The publications committee may need to work with Black Dwarf Lightmoor Press in the future so the Publications Committee expect every branch to follow the rules as set out in the last Newsletter and not jeopardize what has been a good working relationship with Blackmoor by supplying the book to the trade, museums and preserved railways.

Work continues on volume 5 of the BR Standards series and the manuscript is almost complete as the author John Walford has a bit more research to carry out. A mountain of high quality colour photographs has been collected and these are in the process of being edited so only the best will appear in the book. This book is expected to be published in 2011.

John Redgate reminded the delegates of the 'Whatever Happened to Steam' initiative led by Roger Butcher and advised all that if they had any information that should be with the PSC by the 31st of October.

Work continues with other titles and projects and we hope to publish at least one book per year in the future.

Gordon appealed to those present that if they know of anyone, friend or colleagues who have a book in preparation and wishes to have that book published to get in contact with either himself or David Bird, PSC secretary and we will see what we can do to assist. They may have an idea and want some support or advice then please get in contact with the PSC.

We have reduced in price further slow selling titles and this has generated more revenue for the Society. We have also recalled some titles from branches as these had been sitting around for years and were not being sold and were required back in Coventry as our stocks are getting low.

The PSC is very concerned how some branches store their book stocks. Some recalled books coming back to Coventry in pristine condition but more often they come back marked, dog-eared and are really no good for selling to the public. Gordon was given a set of books at the AGM in Derby and these had coffee stains on them which again make them useless for selling to the public. Publications are a valuable Society asset so should be kept in good condition. Gordon advised branches that if are displaying books at branch meetings or on sales stands to use just one as a review copy and keep the others out of the reach of grubby fingers and the dreaded coffee percolator.

In November last year we introduced a new colour Sales list which appeared in the November RO. This has been updated and spare copies are with Bob Ballard if you require them for branch meetings or exhibition sales stands. Mike Robertson puts one of these with every order he sends out from Coventry hoping that this will generate more sales. We have also devised a new flyer for the Armstrong Whitworth book which will also be available from Bob as a promotional leaflet.

Malcolm Hammond praised the new colour publications sales list and commented that it was most impressive.

All our publications are now included on the 'Neilsen' database. This is used by the trade to see what books are available and where they can be obtained.

John Stone reported that he has sold some LMS 2-6-0 books at a reduced price as they had some minor defects.

As John Redgate mentioned in his opening address, new RO binders are on order and these will be delivered to our store in Coventry shortly. The binders are slightly wider than the previous ones so they will

accommodate the much thicker RO's and will have 14 cords which means you will be able to file the AGM supplement as well as the index. We have very few of the old binders in stock and these are on sale at a bargain price. There will be an increase in price due to manufacturing costs and an increase in VAT.

Gordon would like to thank the members of the publications team who put in a large amount of time in getting books prepared for publication, a team that is working extremely well together and of course we must not forget the authors who spend many years researching and gathering material for the finished article.

14. DATE AND VENUE FOR 2010 OFFICERS CONFERENCE

Gordon Davies informed everybody that no branch or regional group had come forward to host the 2011 Members Weekend and Officers Conference therefore a one day Officers Conference would be held at a suitable location in the Midlands. Further details will be announced in future Newsletters and in the RO.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Roger Newman reported that £657.90 had been raised during the weekend's events and activities and this would be sent as a donation to The Railway Children's Charity. Roger also reported that there was literature available on The Railway Children's Charity and this could be used at local branch events. He appealed to branches to support The Railway Children's Charity as much as possible and suggested various initiatives that could be done at branch level to generate income for the charity.

Bob Ballard reminded all branches to submit their exhibition returns as soon as possible. Electronic version of the return form was available for completion.

There was no other business the Conference closed at 12.55pm

W. Gordon Davies
Branch Liaison Secretary
16th March 2011