



2011 Officers' Conference

Minutes of the meeting of Management Committee, Society and Branch Officer's
Held on 15th October 2011 at
The Hallmark Hotel, Derby

In attendance:-

Management Committee

Hugh Gould – President
Gordon Davies - Deputy Chairman
Bob Ellison – Assistant Treasurer (Branch Finances)
David Jackman – Webmaster
David Kelso – Publicity Officer
Richard Morris – Membership Secretary
David Pick – Chairman, Library Sub Committee
Reg Wood – Treasurer
Mike Robinson – RO Managing Editor

Society Officers

Eric Palmer – Chairman, Development Sub Committee
Steve Ollive – Assistant Treasurer (Membership Renewals)
John Wood – Publications Sales Officer
Dick Taylor – Publications Editor

Representing the Branches:-

Bristol – Not represented
Cambridge - Not represented
Cheltenham – *Richard Morris*
Chichester – Geoff Adams
Croydon and South London – Jeremy Harrison
South Wales - De Cymru – Stuart Warr
East Midlands – Chris Bush, Paul Clark, Michael Poole
Furness, Lakes and Lune – Not representative
Hitchin – David Cole, Cyril Crawley
Humberside - Not represented
Ipswich – John Day, Eric Palmer, Bev Steele
Lancashire and North West - Not representative
Merseyside, Chester and North Wales – *Gordon Davies*
Milton Keynes – Bob Ballard, Mark Richards
Northampton – John Harrison, Ron Hart, *David Pick*
North East – Jim Sedgwick
Peterborough – Roger Baily, Robert Warburton
Scotland – Richard Thorburn, Ronnie McAdam
Sheffield – Alan Lovecy, David Munday
South East – *David Kelso*, Keith Mapley, Mike Woodward
Solent – Mike Green, Ted Vaughan
South Essex – John Stone
South Wales – Stuart Warr
Surrey – Andy Davies, *Bob Ellison*, Alan Norris, Irene Rabbitts
Sussex - Not represented

Thames Valley – Andrew Jenkins, John Lewis
Watford - Not represented
West Midlands – Bob Barby, Derek Morris, David Walker
West of England - Not represented
West Riding – Bob Green, John Holroyd
Windsor and Maidenhead – David Goddard, Sally Goddard, Steve Ollive

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Gordon Davies on behalf of John Redgate

Ladies and Gentlemen it is with regret that I am unable to attend what would be my last Officers Conference as your Chairman today. My first conference was one of the last Annual Reunions held in Birmingham in 1981 and this would have been my first one day conference. In the intervening time there have been so many changes along the way as we have travelled around the branches. Anyway, enough of the past, what of the future for the RCTS.

I am pleased that Gordon Davies has agreed to take over from me as Chairman after next year's AGM and in that respect we will need to find a new Branch Liaison Officer to take over that role from Gordon. Whilst we have one volunteer, this would also create another vacancy on the MC so nothing is simple as it appears. In opening this year's conference I would like to welcome you all to Derby and thank you for taking the time to attend today. I would like, especially, to welcome those of you attending their first conference - at the last count that was 12 officers and I sincerely hope that you will find this worthwhile and more importantly this will not be your first and last OC.

I would like to start with expressing my thanks to Gordon Davies for arranging this weekend's venue, visit and refreshments although, with a venue we have used for the third time, this becomes easier each time! I should also like to thank Gordon for chairing the meeting today and Richard Morris for taking the minutes.

As I mentioned at the AGM the Society faces a difficult decision over the future of the Library and unfortunately we have had to temporarily close these facilities due to Health & Safety issues. David Pick will go into more detail with an update on progress and future plans later this afternoon. However, this action led to Terry Silcock standing down from the Management Committee. I feel that it is very important to place on record our thanks for the amount of time, effort, love and devotion that Terry and his wife Beryl have given to the Library since 1968. I doubt if anyone has worked harder and raised so much money to support the growth of the Library over the years and I am grateful that Terry is continuing as acting Librarian for a while whilst we decide on the long term future of the Library.

As we know Callum MacLeod stood down as RO Editor after the May 2011 RO was published and I am delighted to welcome Mike Robinson to his first OC as RO Editor today. I am sure Mike finds it hard to believe that he has probably just put to bed his sixth RO already and he will update you on his thoughts and plans for the future later on in our Agenda.

The MC has decided to increase the subscription for next year by £1 to £24 this is to reflect the recent increase in postage rates. The RO represents excellent value for money and I do hope that each Branch is actively promoting 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.

Whilst the Regional Meetings have been a great success, the lack of new initiatives arising from these meetings that impacts the future of the Society and associated costs has led to the MC to recommend that these should now take place every two years. However, if each Regional Meeting decides to carry on with annual meetings with the Branches agreeing to bear the expenses between the attending branches then this can continue. This will be discussed by Gordon when you review the Regional Meetings later.

I would just like to say a few words about some of those members who have recently joined Top Shed; Stuart Little, Hitchin Branch Secretary after a short period of illness; Peter Fox, Platform 5 Publishing and a former Sheffield Branch committee member and Terence Barry, one of our long standing Library Assistants. They all made a significant contribution in their own way to the running of the Society and we shall miss them.

You will all be aware that 60001 having been put up for sale was then withdrawn from sale by DBS. However we have maintained our interest in acquiring the nameplates in due course. As to the naming of another locomotive 'The Railway Observer' we have made an approach to another operator, who shall remain nameless at the moment, and are awaiting feedback on our proposal.

I do hope your contributions this afternoon are constructive and that we focus on maintaining and improving Society activities and the service we give to our members in the years ahead.

2. Apologies for Absence

John Redgate – Chairman
Alan Cooke – Society Secretary
Vron Cooke – Assistant Treasurer (New Members)
Rodney Lissenden – Vice President
Les Nixon – Photographic Portfolio Secretary

Bristol Branch – Brian Arman, Callum Macleod, David McCollum, Roger Newman, Paul Udey
Cambridge Branch – Robert Bartlett, Jim Crane, Andy Dean, Mike Page
Chichester Branch – Rosie Jacob, Bruce Oliver
Croydon and South London Branch – Geoff Lipscombe, Peter Wilson
East Midlands Branch – Rodney Allen, Mike Smith
Furness, Lakes and Lune Branch – Peter Robinson, Alan Sattenstall
Hitchin Branch – David Elsdon
Humberside Branch – Les Brackstone, John Foreman, Peter Louth, Mick Hodge
Ipswich Branch – Colin Prime
Lancashire and North West Branch – Ian Derrick, Noel Machell
Merseyside, Chester and North Wales Branch – Alan Donaldson, Norman Jackson, Alan Lewis,
Richard Neale, Alan Turton
North East Branch – Malcolm Hammond, David Tyreman
Peterborough Branch – Alan Burgess, Ken Quanborough
Scottish Branch – Ken Falconer, James Harrold
South East Branch – Geoff Dunster, Ian Feather, John Holloway, Ian Marsh
Solent Branch – John Godfrey
South Essex – John Bennett, Jim Waite
Sussex Branch – Paul Baston, Paul Snelling
Thames Valley Branch – Dennis Brown, David Evans-Roberts, Stuart Hicks, John Hubbard, John Starkey
Watford Branch – David Fairhurst
West of England Branch – David Hunt, David Mitchell, Charles Woodland
West Midlands Branch – Ian Reid, Peter Smith
West Riding Branch – David Beeken, Bill Jagger
Windsor and Maidenhead Branch – Jim Tucker

Gordon Davies reported that there were 7 branches not represented at the conference but was pleased to announce that there were 12 Branch Officers attending conference for the first time. Gordon extended to them a warm welcome and hoped that they enjoyed the event and that we would see them at future conferences. Those attending for the first time were:-

East Midlands – Chris Bush, Paul Clark and Michael Poole
Hitchin - Cyril Crawley
Ipswich – Bev Steele
Milton Keynes – Mark Richards
Peterborough – Robert Warburton
Scottish – Richard Thorburn
South East – Leith Mapley
Surrey – Alan Norris
Thames Valley - Andrew Jenkins
West Riding – Bob Green

3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2010 Officers Conference

Confirmation of the minutes of the 2010 Officers Conference were proposed by John Holroyd (WRD) and seconded Bob Ballard (MKY)

4. Matters Arising

Steve Ollive (MHD) asked about the mention in minute 7 of the 2010 conference minutes of the appointment of a Society Archivist, and asked if the role had been defined and published to membership? Peter Robinson (WMD) suggested that the post had been abolished 20 years ago. David Kelso and David Pick advised that the role is in fact Library Archivist, looking after the archive material – but David Pick had expanded the title. Cyril Crawley (HTC) thought the role was intended to include photographic archive material. Gordon Davies stated that he will circulate the information in the next Newsletter and in the RO.

5. President's Message

Hugh Gould

It has been another great year for RCTS, but not for myself. This time last year I had a long standing arrangement to attend a silver wedding anniversary. This would have meant my missing the Swindon weekend, the first time I would have missed a Members Weekend. As things turned out I was laid up at home and thus missed both events. Earlier this year I was taken into 'Doncaster Works' for a major overhaul. The Works staff did their job well and I was home within a few days. Things are more or less back to normal and here I am. I look forward to the coming year which will be my 20th as President. I did manage a reasonable number of Branch visits in the past year, although the works visit caused some postponements. As always I find these very enjoyable visits. I have every intention to continue with these visits. I also enjoy the Management Committee meetings and seeing the MC members in action serving the Society.

6. Regional Meetings – Discussion of Action Points Document

Gordon Davies

Once again I start my report by offering my thanks to the Chairmen of each group for organising the meetings and to those who take the minutes which is, in some cases, the same person. I also extend my thanks to MC colleagues who attend each of the Regional Meetings to represent the MC, taking another day out of their busy diaries to assist with the smooth running of the Regional Meetings. I am sure that having an MC member on hand is extremely useful in dealing with any questions or queries. The 2011 Regional Meetings Action Points document (Issue 2) was distributed to the regional chairman on 1st October and this contained additional information added after the last MC meeting on 17th September. Hopefully all the delegates attending the Regional Meetings have received a copy from the Regional Meetings Chairman by now.

You will have read in the Action Points document that, at the MC meeting held on 17th September, it was decided that future Regional Meetings will be held every two years. The Regional Meetings have served the Society well and in the early years generated many ideas and raised issues of importance with the MC. In the last couple of years there have been no major issues between the branches and the MC and attendances at the annual Officers Conference have declined. It has been debated as to whether the Regional Meetings have, in some way, taken some of the sparkle away from the conference. The cost of holding the yearly meetings does not justify an annual event however if a regional group wishes to continue to organise a local meeting these can be held but should be funded by the branches themselves. Indeed, the EMNESH group notified me recently that they are seriously considering doing this next year. Your Regional Meetings Chairman will contact you with the dates, time and venue for the 2013 round of meetings.

The Regional Meetings Action Points document is once again a 12 page document and I do not intend to go through it item by item. If anyone wants to raise a point I will be willing to discuss that matter or get a colleague from the MC to reply to the question.

David Walker (WMD) remarked at his surprise on seeing his name on page 4 of Regional Meeting Action Points with reference to the photographic archive. He believed it should have been David Pick's name. Similarly on the same page with reference to the Library, David Walker should also be David Pick.

David Goddard (MHD) highlighted the forum with British Transport Police, mentioned on page 3 of the Regional Meeting Action points, that this forum had taken place in January 2010. Also in the same place his home Branch was incorrect – David is a Windsor and Maidenhead Branch member, not Thames Valley.

Gordon Davies explained that the Action Points Document was a compilation of the five sets minutes of minutes supplied so any incorrect names against comments was as reported. The document will be amended accordingly.

7. Library Sub Committee

David Pick

The RCTS Library has been situated at Uxbridge for nearly thirty years in premises which have now become inadequate in both size and user friendliness. Following a Safety Inspection earlier in the year, a number of

potentially hazardous situations were identified which needed to be addressed urgently. They were as follows:-

1. The rear fire exit route had been blocked by the owners of the garden next door.
2. All the internal passageways are less than the statutory minimum of 90cm wide – at Uxbridge they are between 31 and 41cm.
3. The routes to the remaining fire exit all have trip hazards in the form of boxes and crates.

These issues have resulted in the temporary closure of the library whilst some of the major points of the report are rectified and more suitable premises found for re-locating the entire library. Much of the material causing the obstructions is books which are surplus to library requirements, former library material and in the form of member's bequests etc. and various other items of second-hand material. To affect the clearance of the floor space this material has been removed from the shelves, documented, boxed and prepared for resale in deference to the givers wishes, that if not required they should be sold to benefit the Society.

In our search for new premises, as you are all probably aware negotiations with Brunel University and the British Postal Museum (BPMA) both ended in failure due to lack of finance on behalf of the other parties. The LSC are currently looking at 3 other premises but I am able to tell you that an exploratory visit has already been made to former Stationmaster's house at Ingatestone (by David Kelso and myself) at the invitation of Network Rail and that a further visit by the full Library Committee will take place on Tuesday 18th October in conjunction with Network Rail.

David Cole (HTC) asked if the premises were ground floor or more than that. David Pick reported that the accommodation is over more than one floor. Floor loadings have been taken into consideration!

Ted Vaughan (SOE) asked if Terry's role in dealing with the disposal of books would continue, or what now happens now to collections of books awaiting disposal. David Pick said we should continue as normal. Gordon Davies reminded conference that using book dealers to assist with disposing of members' book collections is a possibility as they can be quite generous with payments which can be paid to the family or to the Branch, depending on the family's wishes. More information on the disposal of material is available in section 12 of the Branch Officers' handbook.

Stuart Warr (SWL) asked about the procedure now of getting their hands on surplus library stock to sell to help raise funds for Branches? David said this facility will continue.

Cyril Crawley (HTC) asked about disabled access at Ingatestone. David Pick said the LSC need to look at this.

John Stone (ESX) asked which building we are looking at, at Ingatestone? David Pick reported that it is the Edwardian Stationmaster's house on the down side which we are looking at.

8. Finance Update

Reg Wood

My annual report was presented to the AGM and has been published in the RO. If you need a further copy please see me. The economic downturn is affecting the Society like many of us. This year's income is forecast at £81,200 compared to last year's £108,500, a 25% reduction. This is primarily on Publications, our largest earner, which normally accounts for 44% of our turnover. The Society must therefore be sensible with its expenditure, and one element of that is the one day event today. For Branches, the messages are:-

- (a). Consider what your Branch can do to promote and help the Society. Could you visit book retailers, (suggest the independent owner occupier model shops and heritage railway shops) routinely, to present our RCTS published books, take orders and supply stock to them? Branches earn 15% commission on their sales earned as a thank you for this work
- (b). Explain the benefits of joining the society to guests at meetings, and take new membership subscriptions and renewals for us
- (c). Publicise your meetings to grow attendances at your events, e.g. local radio 'What's On', local newspaper 'What's On', promote your events on local websites, the Society website and in local libraries
- (d). Insert a local branch promotion sheet in the books you supply to others

(e). Make sure you claim for all the input VAT you are entitled, and for VAT as appropriate on your sales. The Society reclaimed from HMRC, VAT input tax of £4,200 last year, equivalent to about £1.50 on the subscription rate. I hope your Treasurer attended our two recent training events.

(f). Know the Society's timetables e.g. for financial returns (book stocks, sales, VAT, etc) – and work to them. This will help make time for your national officers to complete their jobs on time (e.g. the audit, the Budget, published accounts for the AGM), and focus efforts on initiatives to develop the Society.

(g). Work as a team within your Branch committee. If your Treasurer, or any other officer, is struggling to meet his responsibilities, he needs help from the Committee. Our size means we are legally compelled to register for VAT, publish accounts to members etc., and our independent auditors must see the information we ask for from Branches in good time.

David Walker (WMD) commented that book shops take 30-40% of book prices. Reg said that book shops buy books at a discounted rate of 33.34% of the cover price. The Branch 15% commission is given on top of that to any Branch that secures a book sale deal with a local bookshop.

Cyril Crawley (HTC) mentioned that we cannot sell the Armstrong Whitworth book by this method because agreement was reached with Lightmoor (who jointly published the book with us) that we wouldn't put these books to commercial shops to sell.

David Cole (HTC) suggested the discount procedure is put into the Branch Newsletter. Gordon Davies stated that this information would be contained in future Newsletters

Stuart Warr (SWL) asked about the surplus figures at the bottom of the accounts balance sheet. Reg advised that any Branch needing to spend money they don't have on items, such as digital projectors, can approach the MC for assistance with finance.

David Cole (HTC) asked a procedure point about VAT where the Society assists a Branch with finances. Reg said that, as we want Branches to run themselves financially, he is content to let the Branch have any VAT recovery back even if they've had support from central funds.

David Munday (SFD) asked if we had considered holding an annual raffle, in the same way the preserved railways do. Gordon Davies said we've never considered it, but there was no reason not to. John Day (IPS) reminded us that we would need to register if we planned to do this type of raffle.

9. The Railway Observer

Mike Robinson

Having taken over as RO editor from the June issue, I must first pay tribute to my predecessor Callum McLeod for handing over the editorial desk in such a well organised and robust condition. Whilst I had shadowed his editorial activity for some months early in the year, I was delighted that when I eventually assumed responsibility, the training and support Callum had provided paid off well with us achieving an almost seamless editorial transition.

The strength of successful military expeditions is often said to depend more on the size of the 'tail' at the back rather than the 'teeth' at the front. If the editor is considered the 'teeth' of the RO, then the 'tail' is undoubtedly the two dozen or so members of the editorial team who compile the many reports not to mention the dozens of nationwide members who supply both original notes and images. It is the 'tail' which really ensures the magazine arrives on your doorstep - hopefully early - each month and I thank all of them for supporting this relatively unknown newcomer to the editorial chair. Having got to grips with the quirks of Quark, the software package we use for producing the final production copy for the printers, my prime concern has been to ensure a smooth and predictable path for RO production. Whilst collating and editing reports and images causes few problems, when the RO is handed over to the printers the visibility of what is happening is lost, and despite theoretical publication dates, members will be aware from experience this year that there is no certainty they will be achieved. The October issue for example was in the hands of our printers for 13 days and then took a further 8 days to arrive on the doorstep - during which time three editions of Railway Herald had dropped into my electronic mailbox! In the short term, I am trying to improve this with both Stoate & Bishop and the associated mailing house by calling them to assess delivery progress. Hopefully this will help to improve the short term position.

For the longer term we are considering design options for the future magazine. These include things such as a larger – possibly A4 – size, use of larger print font sizes, and much more integration between text and pictures. In short we want something which meets the needs of our currently ageing membership, looks commercially attractive in winning us more members, and fulfils its traditional role as a magazine of record. It is also important to achieve a much more responsive production process and whilst the basic editorial elements will be tightened as much as is possible with a volunteer team, the most important element is to take control of what happens after proofing is complete and the magazine is sent to the printers. I am therefore setting a basic objective for the RO in 2012 to move gradually towards achievement of a 1st of month delivery to members. This may take some time but unless we set the target we will never hit it. We have also now produced a revised print specification for the magazine and shall shortly be going out to the market to enable us to understand the cost and technical achievability of our aspirations.

It is clear from membership records that the Society membership profile is changing, with the average age profile gradually increasing and relatively few new younger members being attracted. To understand whether the RO meets the needs of current members and assess their views as to content and presentation, changes to which may improve the general attractiveness of the RO, a readership survey is being planned which will be both in the RO and on the Society website. No date for this has yet been determined but as we do need the feedback to determine the future, it should hopefully be early in the New Year.

June 2012 sees publication of the 1000th edition of the RO and we are currently developing plans as to how this will be marked via the magazine. Thoughts currently are of a one off ‘bumper’ issue of the RO in June possibly incorporating perhaps 32 extra pages focusing on the RO’s life and times. The editorial team would welcome ideas for articles or approaches which might be developed – and would, of course, be delighted to receive offers to produce complete articles for publication.

As a result of one of our editors resigning and no member volunteering as a replacement, we shall shortly be reorganising some of the current editorial responsibilities. Whilst there is no immediate danger of this impacting the RO’s future, were such a trend to continue, the RO’s long term viability may be jeopardized. I would urge you all to make representations at branch meetings etc. to encourage suitably ‘aware’ younger members to consider becoming involved as part of the RO team. The only qualifications are an interest in railways, an awareness of what is happening in a particular area, and a willingness to become involved with a team of like minded individuals. Members who are familiar with the more modern aspects of ‘gricing’ – using smart phones, blackberries etc. and confident with computers, would be particularly welcome. There is no minimum or maximum age and length of Society membership is entirely irrelevant.

Speaking as Editor, until taking on this role as a result of attending my first Society AGM in 2010, I had had no personal involvement with the RCTS for over 40 years, but I have since made many new friends and found my RO involvement extremely rewarding.

Despite pleas in the RO for comments on the RO, we get very few. Please encourage your members to let us know what they think we are doing well, what they would like to see more of, and conversely what they would like to see less! All contributions on any subject to the Managing Editor – just drop a line to me via e-mail or post to the usual address.

Bob Ballard (MKY) – wondered about the seemingly extra large content of the Northampton Branch history in October RO? Mike agreed there was a lot but the extra was included simply because he found he had a bit of space and could get it in.

Paul Clark (EMD) mentioned that postal costs would go up astronomically if we make the RO A4 size. Derek Morris (WMD) mentioned that another organisation he belongs to found A4 magazines were cheaper to post. Richard Morris said he would check postal costs but thought our costs may be higher with A4 size magazines than is currently the case.

Bob Barby (WMD) asked that we don’t change the size of the RO.

Irene Rabbitts (SRY) said an A4 magazine won’t fit in her handbag! Irene also reminded us that the new member information pack would also need to be changed if we change the magazine size.

Andrew Jenkins (TVY) asked about an e-edition of the magazine. Mike replied that such currently exists and can be accessed via the Yahoo groups server.

2011 has been a steady but unspectacular year on the website. The 'mystery photographs' section has continued to generate a lot of traffic and some fascinating nuggets of information but other areas of the website have had a quieter year. Traffic has been steady. Participation from Branches has improved, with all but one branch (Humberside) having current fixtures on the site. Most Branches are supplying meeting reports but I would like to make that 100% going forward. The policy on meeting reports has changed this year – except in exceptional circumstances the report that appears on the website should be the same as the one sent to Steve Batty, there isn't a lot to be gained from writing two! Not enough branches send me ad hoc features – typical examples might be workings in the local area or an illustrated report of a branch outing.

The technology behind the website has continued to evolve and authorised users can now create pages, add and change text and upload photographs. Special thanks to Bob Barby and Norman Hill who joined the ranks of active contributors during the year. Also thanks to Norman Hayllar who keeps the Pool Codes section of the site up-to-date, and to everybody who has submitted material. I am always looking for additional material, for people prepared to assist running the website, and also for any feedback or comments you have.

Irene Rabbitts (SRY) felt that keeping web reports down to RO meeting report size was not making best use of the greater capacity of the web site. David said he is happy to receive longer reports, but thought it is simpler to send reports simultaneously to him as well as Steve Batty.

David Walker (WMD) wished to praise David Jackman for his prompt responses to items and articles being submitted for publication on the website. Gordon Davies reiterated this praise.

11. Development Sub Committee**Eric Palmer**

The Development Sub Committee (DSC) continues to meet three times during the year and considerable advances have been made to overcome some of the problems facing the Society. Carey Vessey of Humberside branch has joined the committee and he is busily working on improving the availability of branded Society clothing for sale to members.

The 5 year plan has now reached a further stage and the details of this have been accepted in principle by the Management Committee. The plan is very comprehensive and its success will depend on the support of Branch officers and members. Recommendations include a members only section on the website, more favourable joining fees for new members, local Branches to assist with the recruitment of new members, a change of emphasis towards recruitment at exhibitions, increased advertising to promote the Society and its products, and to become more closely involved with the railway industry such as sponsoring a conference with high level speakers. The advertisement in the March RO for a Marketing Officer produced only one possible candidate. As it was possible that the job description was too wide it has now been split into internal and external jobs. A member of the DSC has offered to oversee the external promotion of the society.

The Development Sub Committee has been deeply involved with finding new premises for the Society library. The present library is housed in very over crowded unsuitable accommodation and it was closed on 3rd June 2011. Although it has proved to be a very time consuming exercise several alternative sites have been examined and currently the former Stationmaster's house at Ingatestone station looks likely to provide a near ideal solution in which to house much of the Society book collection and archive material.

Past and present members have donated considerable collections of prints, negatives and slides to the Society and we are concerned that many will deteriorate if steps are not taken very soon to remedy this situation. The Photographic Archive already exists from which members have been able to order conventional photos which were later produced as digital prints. The Society holds over 50,000 slides, prints and negatives which will have to be sorted. This will prove to be a time consuming exercise and interested members will be invited to help with the task. A company has been contacted (Farnell Photographic Laboratory) which has been entrusted with the job of scanning much of our colour image material so that it can be safely stored for the future.

Display of Society nameplates. In the past these plates have been held by individual branches and have seldom been seen by Society members or the general public. Arrangements have now been made for two nameplates to be displayed at the Bluebell Railway Museum at Sheffield Park, two at the Severn Valley Railway Engine House Museum at Highley and a fifth plate to be displayed at the Isle of Wight Railway.

The Development Sub Committee is actively investigating the possibility of attaching the nameplate The Railway Observer to a locomotive of a TOC. The nameplate is currently attached to 60001 which is stored out of use at Toton.

John Wood (WMD) asked Eric to expand on DSC thoughts about clothing. David Kelso answered that Carey Vessey is currently investigating and some samples of polo shirts and fleeces were produced at the last DSC meeting.

12. Publicity

David Kelso

Since my report last year we have successfully launched the late Brian Webb's Armstrong Whitworth book in conjunction with Black Dwarf Lightmoor. This involved the now well established practice of advertising the book in the edition of the magazine that carried a review of the book. The book was very well received by the historical railway magazines where our efforts were mainly focused. Some of the reviews almost bordered on the ecstatic! As mentioned last year we have been taught a lot on how Lightmoor handle their sales which was one of the many reasons for entering into a joint venture. The book has sold very well to the public and into the industrial heritage world which we felt Lightmoor were well placed to do. From our 50/50 split of the print run we have had to support Lightmoor sales from our stock on two occasions. Each sale by Lightmoor brings us publicity in areas where we are not active. However the book has not sold well to RCTS members. Members discounted sales have been poor, as have Internet sales across the RCTS website which perhaps says something about RCTS members.

As usual after a book launch the publicity activities have been at a lower level in the early part of this year. Much input has been made to the DSC with respect to the projects detailed in Eric Palmer's DSC report. All of these projects present an opportunity to raise the profile of the Society to the outside world. For example we have been careful to ensure that where we are planning to display Society name plates at preserved railway sites that as part of the deal we will have ample space in which to promote the Society with additional displays and provision of our promotional literature. We hope these displays will be in place prior to the start of the 2012 preservation visitor season.

We have also been trying to raise the Society profile with the BTP and a number of meetings have taken place in London. We have recently received an article from them written for the RO detailing the BTP planning and role in the 2012 Olympics. This will be going to Mike Robinson for possible publication in the near future. They are also interested in exploring how we might help them with the cable theft problem, in terms of our members reporting directly to BTP if we observe any suspicious line side activity.

The delay in publication of Standards Volume 5 means that the launch activity for this final volume will come in early 2012 before or at the time of the AGM. This has had the knock on effect of delaying the issue of an updated sales list until next year. 2012 looks to be shaping up as a busy year for RCTS publicity and I am looking forward to working with our new External Publicity Officer to raise the profile of the Society among railway enthusiasts and the general public. The ultimate aim is to increase the Society membership numbers.

13. Publications

Gordon Davies

I would like to commence my report by thanking all members of the publications team who work so diligently in getting books prepared for publication, and the committee is undoubtedly a team that is working extremely well together.

Reg Wood (Society Treasurer) now has a substantial amount of work on his plate looking after the Society's finance, which means he has decided to step off the committee, but he remains available as an advisor and will occasionally attend committee when his expertise is required. Noel Machell from Lancs & North West Branch has joined the team to assist with publications finance.

Work is virtually complete with the text for volume 5 of the BR Standards series. We have racked our brains for a suitable title and we have decided that the book will be called simply 'The Final Volume'. Author John Walford has spent many hours researching information and even I spent a most interesting day with John at the NRM delving into the engine record cards for information. The book will contain no black and white pictures as it was decided that the final volume to the series will go out in a blaze of colour.

Rodney Lissenden has amassed a large quantity of high quality photographs and these have been whittled down to about 140. We have discovered a superb photograph for the cover and when you see the book I think

you will agree with the choice. With regard to the photograph captions, Rodney Lissenden has started the exercise of seeking expanded information for the photographs. He is also seeking assistance from other people in an effort to find local knowledge on some pictures where the information was merely train, place and date. A lot of the information is contained in Volumes 1 to 4 but it is taking Rodney a considerable amount of time to do the research. If there is anyone here today who could assist Rodney with the captions will you please come and speak to me at the end of the conference.

Initial proof reading has commenced and quotations have been received from various printers, and although I reported last year that we hoped to have this title published this year, due to the amount of work involved this has not been possible. However the book hopefully will be available next year.

Dick Taylor continues to work on the WD Austerities book and has completed much research into the history of the classes including the whys and wherefores, the build programme and the initial distribution of the locomotives. John Walford is going to help Dick with some of the work once BR Standards part 5 is complete.

Our other authors continue to beaver away with their individual projects and I will deal with these individually. Ray Vickers from Huddersfield is working on his book on the 'Fowler, Stanier and Fairburn tanks' but will require some assistance in the future with some technical details. Ray Townsin in Peterborough who was the author of the Jubilees book continues working on a book on the 'Patriot' locomotives however Ray has been unwell but is making slow progress. Jim Waite at Billericay has the relevant material for his book on the Stanier 8F's but the material needs to be collated and put into a workable manuscript. In Middlesbrough Dr. Mike Oglesby has completed the basic text on his book on 'Locomotives of the L&Y' however he has unearthed additional material and is now building this into the text. With the publication of 'The Hughes and Stanier 2-6-0s' book in 2009, David Tyreman in Newcastle has now volunteered to start work on a book on the 'LMS Pacifics'. Joining the author's team is John Jennison from Sutton Coldfield who has had various works published at other sources. He is now going to tackle the immense project on the 'LMS Class 5' locomotives and this we envisage will be a two volume work when published. You will have noticed in the October RO that we have put out a 'Call for Authors' appeal for authors and I am pleased to report that I have already had one response. If you know of anyone whether in the Society or an outsider who has a book that might be a candidate for publication please get them to contact myself or any member of the publications team.

We are looking at the possibility of updating and reprinting 'The Railways of Weardale' which was first published in 1965. David Tyreman, John Askwith and others have taken this project on board, offering to get the book back into print with updated text and more recent photographs.

Sadly due to the financial situation nationally our sales of publications have been extremely low and contributing to this is the fact that we have not had a new publication on offer. Hopefully with the publication of BR Standards part 5 this trend will be reversed next year. We have investigated publishing some future publications as e-books. You may be familiar with the BLURB website where you can virtually make your own book and then offer it for sale. We may go down this route in the future for what could be possible low print run or specialised books.

On a final note I appeal to branches that require new publications stocks for sale at exhibitions and sales stands. Please place your orders in plenty of time. We sometimes receive orders for books with only a week or so before the exhibition is held. It is only with considerable amount of effort by John Wood our order processor and Mike Robertson at our Coventry dispatch that we are able to fulfill these late requests for books.

Andy Davies (SRY) asked that when book prices are changed on the website can information be also published in the RO. Gordon Davies said that we would do this.

John Wood (WMD) reminded us that we haven't got a new book to offer for Christmas. Gordon Davies said we are looking at some sort of Christmas offer to go in the December RO.

Cyril Crawley (HTC) wondered if it was worth putting the Standards 5 photographs with sparse information onto the website where we need to glean additional information.

Gordon Davies said new RO binders are now available to order from the bookstore in the usual way.

14. Date and Venue of 2012 Members Weekend and Officers Conference

Gordon Davies reported that 28th April is a provisional date for the 2012 AGM for members to pencil in their diaries however a venue had not yet been agreed.

The Management Committee has set up a national team led by John Day, working with Irene Rabbitts and Jacky Wood to organise Members Weekend and Officers Conferences for the future. The first fruits of their labours are that we go to Scotland in 2012, which will be the first time we have visited Scotland for a Members Weekend. Dates are 12th to 14th October 2012 using the King Malcolm and Pitlochrie Hotels in Dunfermline. The team are now looking to sort out the visits for the weekend.

John Day (IPS) gave a brief overview of the reasons for the events committee. It is intended that this sub-committee will take some of the pressure off the Branches in organising national weekends. Tracking down suitable hotels will be Jacky Wood's territory, whilst Irene Rabbitts will look out for suitable places to visit. Andy Davies will handle the bookings for these weekends.

David Walker (WMD) wondered about having the Officers Conference on the Saturday afternoon in order to make the best use of the morning light in Scotland by doing a visit, rather than the conference on the Sunday morning? The committee will think about doing this. John Day replied that discussions were well in hand with various establishments for the events for the Saturday so a change at this time may not be advisable. Gordon Davies stated that this suggestion will be discussed by the MC at a future meeting.

15. Any Other Business

Steve Ollive advertised the Society holiday visit to Switzerland in 2012, staying in Zurich. This will be advertised shortly in the RO.

The meeting ended at 16.35.

Richard Morris
(Minutes Secretary)