



MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 77th Annual General Meeting held at the Britannia Hotel,
Fairfax Street, Coventry on Saturday 13th April 2013
The Meeting commenced at 13.30 hours

Present: Hugh Gould (President); Gordon Davies (Chairman); Bob Green (Secretary); Mike Robinson (Managing Editor – The Railway Observer); Reg Wood (Treasurer); Alan Cooke (Branch Liaison Secretary); David Kelso (Publicity Officer); David Jackman (Webmaster); John Redgate, David Pick, David Goddard and Bob Ellison (Committee Members).
63 members registered their attendance and the meeting total therefore was 75 of which 10 were attending for the first time.

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from 30 members.

2. Confirmation of the AGM held in Coventry on 28 April 2012: There were no amendments to the minutes and were therefore proposed for adoption by Chairman Gordon Davies (17822) and seconded by Bob Ballard (10372). All members were in favour. There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Address: The Chairman Gordon Davies thanked all for attending the 77th Annual General Meeting of The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society and was pleased to see such a large gathering. Members were reminded of the changes to the Management Committee (MC) with he himself taking over as Chairman from John Redgate (13470) who remains on the MC as a "Minister without Portfolio". John was thanked for all the work he has done over the past 8 years. Two new members joined the MC, they being Bob Green (20772) from the West Riding Branch as Society Secretary and David Goddard (21347) of the Windsor and Maidenhead Branch who was co-opted to the committee during the year. The Chairman then introduced the President and members of the MC. He continued by noting, sadly, the passing away of Hugh Ballantyne (4717) some two weeks ago. Hugh was a very loyal supporter of the Society, a superb photographer who contributed many a fine photograph to the RO, Society publications and furthermore had a number of books published; some of which are amongst the Chairman's own collection. Society condolences went to Hugh's family and also to the families of other members that have passed away over this past year.
It was announced in the December RO that Network Rail have agreed to allocate the name "*The Railway Observer*" to one of their Class 43 locomotives which power the rail network's measurement trains. This has yet to materialise and negotiations are continuing but no date is forthcoming as to when this will come about.
Locomotive 60001, which is in the process of being refurbished, has been stripped of its "*The Railway Observer*" nameplates. He was pleased to announce that the Society has acquired a set of these for our collection whilst the second set is to be sold to a private collector. You will have seen in the RO that several of our other nameplates have gone on long term display at various preservation sites around the country and that we are in further negotiations with other sites for the display of our nameplates as this is excellent publicity for the Society. On display within the room are two roller banners designed by the Publicity Officer David Kelso (4827) for display at either branch meetings or exhibitions and if any branch would like to purchase one then they should contact David Elsdon (18799) the Society Exhibition Officer. At this point a thank you was expressed to all who fly the flag at exhibitions and sales stands throughout the country.

A recruitment initiative offered new and lapsed members the chance to join the Society for £15 and the scheme has thus far recruited 51 new members this year. The total of new members who have joined the Society this year, up to mid April, stood at 71 and the overall membership, as of March 23rd amounted to 2,542.

The May edition of "*The Railway Magazine*" contains a third article in the series "What Really Happened to Steam". It was disappointing to find that half way through it became highly critical of the RCTS and our publications. The article contains a number of misleading statements and factual errors regarding the Society and its members. As a result the Editor of the "*The Railway Magazine*" has offered the Society the right of reply and you can rest assured that a robust response is being prepared.

In looking forward to the coming year it is planned that Volume One of the LMS Class 5's, currently being written by John Jennison, will be launched at the Members' Weekend in October. Secondly the MC is seriously considering the launching of a fully digitised RO with page turning facilities which could possibly lead to a digital only membership for those who might prefer this option. An electronic RO has the potential to attract new and younger members to the Society especially those who embrace Blackberry and other mobile technology. As ever the printed RO will always remain available.

Treasurer Reg Wood (10811) is reinvestigating the possibility of introducing membership renewals by direct debit.

The Library Sub-Committee is still in negotiations regarding the future location of the library and once this is finalised the material will be moved from the present location to be then combined with our huge photographic collection which is currently held in store elsewhere. The massive task of sorting the thousands of slides, prints and negatives can then begin.

In bringing the Society into the modern era those of you who log onto the website will now notice that the Society has a Twitter account. When you next log on simply tab the little blue bird symbol at the bottom of the home page. Other projects aimed at enhancing the image of the Society and the services offered is currently being worked on and these will be announced in the RO and/or the Website as they come to fruition.

Finally the Chairman paid tribute to and thanked the members of the MC for all their hard work and efforts over the last year and also thanked the members of the West Midlands Branch who have assisted in the running of this meeting. Thanks were extended to all of the branch officers, committees, Society officers, RO editors and Sub-Committee members for all of their hard work and dedication. However it is the members that continue to support the RCTS who in so doing make us 'Britain's Leading Railway Society'.

4. **President's Address:** The President Hugh Gould opened his address by welcoming all to the meeting and especially the ladies who were amongst the gathering. Two points to note were that he has no intention of Twittering and that he is not normally in the habit of "cabbing" engines. (*See photograph in AGM Supplement with the April RO.*) For him the year has been a good one – visiting 9 of the branches, and he had enjoyed them all and was looking forward to visiting more of them in the coming year. He commented that all of the branches are doing their best and was happy in the fact that they were doing so. On a more critical note it was disappointing that 25% of the branches were not represented at the Officers' Conference/Members' Weekend in Dunfermline and that 5 had offered no response or apologies at all. In passing a major age milestone he intimated that the time may be drawing nigh for him to withdraw from the Presidency in the none too distant future. In concluding he thanked all for attending.

5. Adoption of Management Committee Reports and Accounts: These were published in the special supplement for the AGM that accompanied the April 2013 RO.

a) Questions Relating to the Report on Activities and Administration: None.

b) Questions Relating to the Financial Report: Peter Robinson (6659) commented that sundry income at £12,192 looked to be a high figure. Treasurer Reg Wood (10811) explained that compared to 2011 at £17,049 certain numbers had been distilled out. This last year has been a good year for sales of photographs and slides. Advertising revenue forms part of this grouping as do sales from the Library. Donations are also included. Peter Hall (13999) noted that monies held within individual branches were not included within the accounts. Reg Wood responded by informing members that this matter had been raised by the Auditor and as there are substantial amounts of monies held at branch level that some change might become necessary. This is currently under discussion within the MC but some change is likely to materialise.

c) Questions & Comments Relating to the Railway Observer: Mike Robertson (20911) commented on the vast improvement in the reproduction quality of the colour photographs and also that Mike Robinson's (RO Editor) photographs appear too often. In response the Editor pointed out that the pictures used are balanced for each area and that appropriate alternatives are often not submitted by members. Nevertheless members are continually being encouraged to submit their photographs for the RO but must be mindful of the submission requirements. As a third point Mike Robertson was critical of the fact that within the RO there is now no information as to how anyone can purchase any publication or items from the Society. The Editor noted the issue and agreed to give it consideration. Lastly Mike Robertson sought information relating to the number of RO sales that go to external sellers such as WH Smith etc. He was informed that only about 60 copies/month were sold to Ian Allan.

Cyril Crawley (10911) made reference to the fact that the use of smaller print is a problem for some of the older members. In response the Editor said that 8pt print is now the standard for the RO and that he tries to keep to this as much as possible and generally only deviates from this with captions for photographs. Cyril Crawley also sought the reason for the discontinuation of the "Every Picture Tells a Story" feature to which the Editor commented he had simply run out of these articles.

Ted Vaughan (18410) regretted the removal of the centre information spread which prompted the reply that this was purposely done in the effort to improve the overall image of the RO such that good top quality photographs might be viewed on these pages in a larger format. The information formerly seen on these pages is now being published via a bi-annual loose insert within the RO mailing package. Additionally all of this information is fully available on the website.

Derek Plumb (4290) questioned the co-ordination between David Kelso and Mike Robinson relating to the publications in the RO of articles containing both narrative and photographic details. The officers in question explained that the Editor requires both the article and the pictures but the pictures, in isolation, should also be sent to David Kelso. Pictures inserted in a text document are not acceptable for reproduction in the magazine.

Adoption of the reports was proposed by Irene Rabbits (20072) and seconded by Bob Barby (5843) and carried unanimously.

Adoption of the Financial Report was proposed by Callum Macleod (12817) and seconded by Peter Robinson (6659) and carried unanimously.

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

For 3 years:

Treasurer Reg Wood
Proposed by Mike Holt (13228) and seconded by Bill Jagger (17418)

Managing Editor – Railway Observer Mike Robinson
Webmaster David Jackman
Proposed by Bob Green (20772) and seconded by John Holroyd (9185)

For 2 years:

Committee Member David Goddard
Proposed by Sally Goddard (22000) and seconded by Jim Tucker (21733)

There being no other nominations these were carried unanimously.

- 7. Appointment of Auditors:** Gordon Davies (17822) proposed and Tony Skinner (13596) seconded that Richardson, Watson & Co be reappointed as Auditors for the financial year 1st November 2012 to 31st October 2013. This was approved unanimously.
- 8. Date and Venue for the 2014 AGM:** Bob Green (20772) announced that this would take place on 12th April at some location in the Midlands area.
- 9. Any Other Business:** John Day (8775) announced that the 2013 Members' Weekend is set for Friday 18th October to Sunday 20th October and went on to describe the outline arrangements for the event which will be based at The Holiday Inn at Crawley. Derek Morris (14276) made the observation that a new style RCTS banner was well received at the Warley Model Show but any shortcomings in the siting and appearance of the stand were entirely down to the organisers' inability to provide us with the requested floor space. Stewart Greenaway (21467) commented that within the AGM notices a map giving directions to the venue could prove useful. Ian Baird (17184) sought to establish how many nameplates the Society possesses. John Redgate (13470) responded that the Society has 16 (including the recently purchased "*The Railway Observer*" ex-60001). Peter Hall (13999) gave thanks to David Jackman (16198) for his work on the Website and Callum Macleod (12817) thanked the members of the MC for their work over the last year.

The Meeting closed at 14.55.

Bob Green
Society Secretary