

MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 79th Annual General Meeting held at the Welcome Centre, Coventry
On Saturday 18th April 2015 commencing at 13.30hrs

Present: Reverend Canon Brian Arman (President); Hugh Gould (Past-President and Vice President); Gordon Davies (Chairman); Bob Green (Secretary); Mike Robinson (Managing Editor – “The Railway Observer”); Reg Wood (Treasurer); Alan Cooke (Branch Liaison Secretary); David Kelso (Web4 Co-ordinator); David Pick and David Goddard (Committee Members).

73 members registered their attendance and the meeting total was therefore 83 of which 7 were attending for the first time.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Management Committee member John Redgate (13470) apologised for his absence and 36 members submitted their apologies.
2. **Confirmation of the 78th AGM held in Coventry on 12th April 2014:** There were no amendments to the minutes. Chairman Gordon Davies (17822) proposed that they be adopted and Bob Ballard (10372) seconded the motion. All members voted favourably.
3. **Matters Arising:** Callum Macleod (12817) pointed out that the 2014 meeting approved the appointment of Richardson, Watson & Co as auditors for 2013/14 accounts. Subsequently, for ease of execution and financial reasons, they were later changed by the Management Committee to R S Porter & Co. He asked that should a change of auditor be necessary in future years that the minutes reflect the Management Committee has the authority to amend the Minute.
4. **Chairman's Address:** The Chairman thanked all for attending the meeting in such large numbers and proceeded to enlarge on what has been a very busy year for the Society, the highlight being the naming in June of a Network Rail Class 43 “The Railway Observer” at Derby. His thanks were expressed to Andy Lickfold, Bob Ballard and Jerry Smith of Network Rail plus everyone else who helped with the implementation of this significant event. In the effort to promote the image of the Society two adverts have recently been placed in “The Railway Magazine” with a further two to follow. Hopefully this will bring about an increase in membership for the Society. In the search for new members a special introductory membership fee for new and lapsed members at £15 was brought in during last year generating 159 new recruits, the highest since 2009. This was, and continues to be very popular, and already 76 new recruits have been added to the ranks this year (c.f. 57 at this point last year). Since the launch of Volume 1 of the Stanier Class 5 4-6-0's by John Jennison no new publications have been published but Volume 2 of this series is expected to be available by the Members' Weekend in October. Further along the line the author has commenced work on the text covering the LMS Pacifics which, hopefully, will be ready for publication in two years' time. Work is proceeding on the production of a book covering the Patriots but following the sad death of author Ray Townsin work has slowed down. However as most of the material is already in Society hands work towards publication continues to progress. It is also sad to report the death of Michael Mensing (7430), a member of the Solent Branch and the RCTS photographic portfolio for over 50 years. His vast collection of well documented photographs, amounting to more than 50,000, has been bequeathed to the Society which has therefore inherited what must be one of the finest photographic collections in the country. As proud owners of nameplates “Sheffield Wednesday” and “Sheffield United” the Society has made arrangements for them to be sent to a specialised restorer who is to mount them onto wooden reproduction splashers, complete with the brass footballs and when complete both will be put on display at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Sheffield (formerly the Sheffield Victoria adjacent to the Victoria Station). Within the AGM Supplement movements relating to the new library project and the Web4 Project have been reported and both continue to move steadily forward. In view of the many changes currently taking place with new motive power updated Society graphics have been designed featuring new EMU's and a Class 68 diesel locomotive These will appear on the launch of the new website and on membership cards from 2017 – however the Society logo is not to be replaced. The Chairman proceeded to give a special mention and thanks to Vice President David Cole, who has been a faithful servant to the Society for many a long year undertaking several roles. Due to a recent fall he has now relinquished his last remaining role which was associated with sales of photographic images. Thanks were also extended to David Jackman for his hard work and commitment as a member of the MC who, due to pressure of work, has relinquished his position as Society Webmaster. He will however continue as Acting Webmaster undertaking to maintain the current Website until a replacement is appointed. Congratulations were offered to David Walker who has recently been made Chairman of the West Midlands branch. Finally credits were afforded to the Chairman's colleagues on the MC for their efforts over the last year and to all Branch and Society Officers, RO Editors and Sub-committee members whose hard work and commitment continues to make the RCTS “Britain's Leading Railway Society”. At the end of his address the Chairman introduced the new President – Reverend Canon Brian Arman to the members. However, ahead of the new President's own address to the meeting he was presented with a signed certificate to mark his appointment. Retiring President, now Vice President, Hugh Gould was once again praised for his unstinting efforts in support of the Society over 23 years and was invited to say a few words. He remarked that he was very pleased and content at being made a Vice President of the Society after so many happy years in the Presidency, a position which gave him many pleasant and satisfying memories. In considering the Society to be in good shape he wished good luck and fortune to the incoming President.
5. **President's Address:** On giving his first address to the members of the Society Brian iterated that he was overawed at being made President of the RCTS but admitted that before accepting the appointment he sought approval from higher authorities. Given the green light he commented that following on behind Hugh Gould would be something of a challenge but his experience as Chairman of the Bristol branch would stand him in good stead. Briefly he explained that his interest in railways began at the tender age of 10 years when he was greatly influenced by a book describing Dean's Great Western tender engines. Further reading extended his knowledge resulting in a deeply embedded expertise in all matters Great Western. His objective is to visit every branch of the Society during his years of tenureship. We wish him well.

6. **Adoption of Management Committee Reports and Accounts:** These were published in the special supplement for the AGM that accompanied the April 2015 RO. The Chairman thanked the various Management Committee and Officers of the Society who have submitted the reports.
- a) **Questions Relating to Report on Activities & Administration:** Peter Hall (13999) sought to ascertain the nature and numbers of the membership. Up-to-date figures were given to him by the Chairman. However in seeking information relating to new member retention it was explained that figures were not immediately available as a detailed analysis would be required.
 - b) **Questions Relating to Financial Report:** John Dixon (19507) noted last year's loss and questioned why tax has been paid. Treasurer Reg Wood (10911) responded by explaining that the loss was chiefly due to reduced book sales. Tax payments arose from interest monies accrued from Society investments. Alan Norris (20883) asked for clarification regarding the transfer of branch funds (in excess of £2,500) to central accounts. The Treasurer explained the reasoning as to why this action became necessary was down to comments initiated by the auditors. Of the 30 branches only 8 are subject to this requirement. Tony Skinner (13596) commented that more detailed information should be made available within the published figures in order to allow for closer scrutiny. Whether or not this is taken up will be debated at the next meeting of the MC.
 - c) **Questions and Comments Relating to "The Railway Observer":** Editor Mike Robinson (10606) was asked by Ted Vaughan (18410) whether information supplied by outside bodies is published in its entirety or edited. In reply the Editor explained that all incoming material is scrutinised and edited by designated officers and the published word comes as a result of their work. Both Derek Morris (14276) and John Champion (5669) commented that the work is all done on a voluntary basis and thereby there should be a need to be tolerant of the output. Mr Champion continued and posed the idea that articles relating to heritage might offer more interest than locomotive movements, to which the Editor replied that such articles are not always available – despite innumerable efforts to gather such suitable material. Mike Robertson (20911) praised the quality of the photographic material and Chris Youett (17105) believed that book reviews should be more critical for which there was a measure of agreement.
 - d) **Questions Relating to Other Reports:** The non-publication of a printed RO Index, for which the MC has been criticised, was raised by Peter Hall (13999) commenting that insufficient consultation had been carried out. Chairman Gordon Davies stepped in to say that as a result of the many comments received it became clear that the original proposal whereby members could print off their own copies from the website should be reviewed. Consequently a special run of 200 indexes was implemented to be obtained either by attending the AGM or sending a stamped addressed envelope to Alan Cooke – Branch Liaison Secretary. To date a large number continue to remain "on the shelf". By way of comment 2700 indexes were previously printed every year and evidence is that the take-up so far this year will be less than 200. In view of this the same approach is likely to be followed next year. Mike Robinson (10606) further informed the meeting that by reducing the print run of the Index from 2700 to a more practical 200 generated annual savings of £750 for the Society. John Day (8775) was supportive of the new distribution methodology. Thomas Kolisch (22316) offered congratulations to "The Railway Observer" team but enquired whether the index could be adapted to be a "rolling index". Mike Robinson explained that as the magazine is now digitally published on PageSuite it is, consequently, already searchable through the archive facility. The value of Regional Meetings was raised by Alan Norris (20883) to which the Chairman stressed their importance in that the meetings are arranged to help the breaking down of barriers between the branches, members and the MC and to foster a cross fertilisation of ideas.
John Day (8775) proposed that the reports (excluding Finance) be adopted which was seconded by D Morris (14276). All members were in favour of the motion.
Adoption of the Financial Report was proposed by Bob Ballard (10372) and seconded by Arthur Turner (4751). Again - carried unanimously.
7. **Election of Management Committee Officers:** The Chairman announced that he had received nominations for the following officers to serve on the Management Committee as follows:-
All nominees to serve for 3 years.
- i) Secretary – Bob Green (20772).
Proposer – Bill Jagger (17401); Seconder – David Beeken (9131).
 - ii) Branch Liaison Secretary – Alan Cooke (17050).
Proposer – David Goddard (21347); Seconder – Sally Goddard (22000).
 - iii) Committee Member – David Goddard (21347).
Proposer – Bob Ballard (10372); Seconder – David Elsdon (18799).
- As no other nominations were received the proposals were carried.
8. **Appointment of Auditors:** Chairman Gordon Davies (17822) proposed that R S Porter & Co be re-appointed as auditors for the financial year 1st November 2014 to 31st October 2015. This was seconded by Steve Ollive (14617) and carried unanimously. In the event of a need to change the auditor during this financial year the Management Committee has the authority to appoint any suitable replacement.
9. **Date and Venue for 2016 AGM:** Provisionally this will take place on 16th April 2016 and will once again be held at the Welcome Centre, Coventry.
10. **Any Other Business:** John Day (8775) gave details of this year's Members' Weekend which is to be centred at Cheltenham on the weekend of 23-25 October. The event will principally focus on the Dean Forest and Gloucester & Warwickshire Railways. New President Reverend Canon Brian Arman will be the guest speaker at the Saturday evening dinner.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 14.59 hrs.

Bob Green
Society Secretary