

# ***Railway Preservation Society of Ireland***

## **REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Belfast Boat Club, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1989**

Lord O'Neill presided, and 55 members were present.

Apologies were received from Henry Jack, Robin Barr, Victor Corrie, Sam Carse, Mark Hodge, Leslie McAllister, Aidan McDonnell, Denis Grimshaw, Heather Boomer, Norman Foster, David Humphries, Henry Beaumont and Alan Edgar.

The President, Lord O'Neill, opened the meeting by announcing that Dr Garret FitzGerald had accepted the position of Vice-President of the RPSI.

The minutes of the 1988 AGM were agreed and signed on the proposal of Derek Carter, seconded by John Harcourt.

The reports of the Chairman, Secretary. and Treasurer were adopted on the proposal of Derek Carter, seconded by Paul Newell.

Coopers & Lybrand were re-appointed as auditors on the proposal of Jim McBride, seconded by Ernie Gilmore.

Sullivan Boomer reported that negotiations were continuing with a view to resolving the problems over insurance on NIR. He said things were looking a lot more hopeful than they had a week ago, and he was optimistic that the Society's proposed operations would go ahead.

Lord Dunleath asked about the possible long-term steam contract referred to in the Chairman's report. S.Boomer said the Society was waiting for a follow-up to an approach to provide steam traction on a contract basis. More details were awaited, but it would be a major operation.

Derek Henderson suggested the Society should operate slightly lighter trains. S.Boomer said all operations would have to be reviewed on a pure profitability basis, and the Society would have to run fully-loaded trains.

S.Boomer told Paul McCann he expected that NIR would substantially reduce its charges for steam train operation under the new insurance conditions. The RPSI had also made a case to Irish Rail for reduced charges. S.Boomer said it now seemed that the RPSI public liability premium would not be increasing as steeply as had at first been feared.

Jim McBride and Bob Hunter asked whether the Portrush Flyer would be reverting to a York Road based operation this year. S.Boomer said this had not been finalised, but it looked like being York Road. Malcolm Halliday asked about contingency plans to cope with any disruption to the Belfast - Dublin line. S.Boomer said three contingency plans had already been prepared.

Lord Dunleath asked whether the proposed Dundalk railway centre would conflict with Whitehead or Cultra. S.Boomer said the Dundalk project was a limited commitment as far as

the Society was concerned - the RPSI was simply being asked whether it would be able to provide locomotives and carriages and all funding would come from outside the Society. It was still very much at the negotiation stage, but it did not conflict with the RPSI's long-term plans.

John Richardson told Paul Newell that the bad debt referred to in the accounts had now been cleared up.

S.Boomer told R.Hunter the Whitehead train rides had been deliberately low key in 1988 but that it was hoped to reduce this trend in 1989. M.Halliday said the absence of the dining car had made the event less attractive.

Irwin Pryce expressed concern about the spiralling expense each year in the coach maintenance programme and urged the incoming Council to review the situation. He said a large part of Irish Rail, including Dublin - Dundalk, would soon be barred to wooden-bodied rolling stock and that the Society should be looking ahead to the provision of a steel-bodied set of coaches. J.Richardson said expenditure on coaches had been particularly high because of the commissioning of the Mullingar rake in connection with the Millennium trains. E.Gilmore said the Society needed two spare coaches in Northern Ireland and the Republic, and urged that investment should be made in bringing coaches which were already running up to standard. I.Pryce said he found it surprising that time and expense were going into the overhauling, of a full brake coach at Whitehead when passenger carrying coaches were required. R.Hunter urged that a proper shop should be built in the tour train. S.Boomer said Cravens steel-bodied coaches would not be available for another 10 years. Apart from Dublin - Cork and Dublin - Dundalk, there was no bar on the use of wooden-bodied stock on IR. It cost IR£350 per coach per day to hire Cravens. J.McBride said English enthusiasts liked the RFSI vintage stock. S.Boomer said it was hoped coach expenditure would be much reduced in 1989.

E.Gilmore outlined the proposed operations programme for 1989. A new feature was the proposal by IR to run mystery trains out of Dublin, about which discussions were continuing. He told P.Newell that the reason the Flyer did not make a profit was primarily the NIR charge.

I.Pryce expressed concern about the limited number of members prepared to work on locomotive restoration and repairs. He said it was a good Saturday when four people turned up to work on locomotives at Whitehead. He said the burden of an increased operations programme was falling on a decreasing band of members.

E. Gilmore told Ian Slaughter that the 24 June Sea Breeze excursion advertised in the English magazines was an RPSI operation aimed at the British market. A second Sea Breeze on 12 August was aimed at the local market.

P.Scott reported on the locomotive position as follows:

- 3      Boiler certificate expires at Easter. Locomotive needs retubing and firebox repairs.
- 4      Requires minor boiler and mechanical repairs. Should be in traffic.

- 171 Out of traffic for retubing, attention to boiler stays, new steam pipes, etc. Considerable repairs taking place to tender, which will run with No.85.
- 85 Requires new bogie centre to frame bolts, and hydraulic test. Should be in traffic with No.171's tender.
- 461 Major overhaul continuing. Project has slipped behind and No.461 will not now be coming on stream to replace No.171 as had been hoped.
- 184 Out of traffic. Requires retubing and tubeplate repairs.
- 186 In store.
- 27 In store.
- 3BG Robert Edwards of the Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway Society reported that No.3BG has been retubed and hydraulically tested, and it is hoped to have the locomotive in traffic in six to eight weeks. He invited members to visit the DARS project this year.

*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Chairman*      *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_