

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Belfast Boat Club, Friday 22nd February 1991

W.S.Boomer presided and 42 members were present.

Apologies were received from Lord O'Neill, Lord Dunleath, R.Morton, H.Jack, M.Kennedy, T.Charters, H.Boomer, C.Boomer, P.Scott, J.Mounstephen, V.Corrive, J.Taylor, J.Creaner, A.McDonnell, M.Hodge, B.Carse, D.Carse, C.Meredith, T.Moriarty, J.Deegan, D.Grimshaw, P.Rigney.

The minutes of the 1990 AGM, which had been circulated, were adopted on the proposal of B.Hill, seconded by I.Gilmore.

The Chairman's report was adopted on the proposal of J.McBride, seconded by D.Henderson, and the Secretary's report was adopted on the proposal of N.Poots, seconded by W.Scott.

D.Henderson stated his displeasure at the non-attendance, or late arrival, of some members of Council. He said that a good example was required from Council.

C.Friel asked why "Steam's Silver Lining" had not been mentioned in any of the reports. P.McCann replied that it had been included in the Secretary's report for 1989.

It was explained that the change in auditors from Coopers & Lybrand to McHoul & Murray was solely due to the fees being levied by Coopers. J.Beaumont said that the accounts were straightforward as very little money had passed through the books. C.Friel was told the reason there was no letter from the auditors to the membership was their non-availability at the time of circulation. J.Beaumont said that the money taken at the Belfast area meetings was included in the commercial income and donations. C.Friel asked that it be shown as a separate item in the accounts. N.Poots asked if the recommendations in the 1989 audit for tighter control of finances had been followed up. D.Humphries said that a finance committee had been set up and control of finances was gradually being tightened. J.Beaumont stated that the southern accounts were kept on computer, with the northern accounts to follow.

The Treasurer's report and the accounts were adopted on the proposal of P.Newell, seconded by B.Quin. I.Gilmore proposed, and M.Darragh seconded, the re-election of McHoul & Murray as auditors for 1991.

E.Gilmore reporting on operations said that 1990 had been a difficult year but 1991 was encouraging with over 380 bookings for the 2-day tour. The 1990 tour had been a risk that hadn't paid off but No.4 had made up for her earlier setbacks with a very successful summer. It should be noted that thanks are due to Irish Rail for not charging for the rescue by diesel. He said the hire of IR Cravens stock was a burden, and likely to continue, as a final decision on the wooden-bodied stock ban was still up in the air. The decision to run diesel Flyers was an attempt to keep support which might be lost if no trains ran at all - not one of our best

decisions but we were right to try. Hopefully, traffic in 1991 will be recovered and the Flyers will be successful, as will the return of the Atlantic Coast Express in conjunction with the Foyle Valley Museum. The Steam Enterprises will be difficult to run with steel coaches required south of Dundalk, but Council and the operations committees will do their utmost to run these trains. Joint operations with Rotary and the Friends of Cultra will be new ventures this year, as will a Friends of Thomas the Tank Engine weekend at Whitehead in August. The latter will be run in co-operation with the Whitehead Community Association with whom we hope to foster closer relations in the future. Support from all local members, which has been lacking of late, is required for this operation.

D.Henderson asked if consideration had been given to postponing the 2-day tour until September if the advertised engines were not available in May. E.Gilmore replied that a one engine tour was not a disaster, but the date was important as income was needed prior to the summer season. E.Gilmore told N.Poots that the suggestion to vacuum brake Mk II stock came from NIR, not RPSI, as NIR were being asked by the NI Tourist Board to run summer steam trains. P.Newell and D.Henderson suggested that the 2-day tour return by the DSER to save on hire of Cravens. S.Boomer said that photography angles and the attraction of Kilkenny were big factors to be considered.

I.Pryce said that the northern trips should be pushed as it was only human nature that workers at Whitehead would be reluctant to outshop engines only to see them go to Dublin.

M.McMullan said publicity at Portrush should be better coordinated. N.Poots said that lifting of fares should be more rigorous as some fares had not been collected on No.461 running-in trips.

C.Friel suggested that information on the ansaphone should be more reliable as it was the public's first point of contact with the Society. S.Somerville said that it was hoped a better service could be provided when the machine was moved to the RPSI shop. I.Gilmore suggested a new ansaphone as the present one was life expired.

The operations report was adopted on the proposal of T.Mounstephen, seconded by R.Forsythe. E.Gilmore thanked everyone who had helped in 1990 despite all the setbacks. B.Hill proposed, and D.Henderson seconded, a vote of thanks to E.Gilmore on his retirement from the operations post. This was endorsed unanimously.

Adoption of the carriage report, which was previously circulated, and the written loco report was proposed by D.Henderson and seconded by E.Gilmore.

No site reports from Whitehead or Mullingar were available.

The election of the 1991 Council then took place. P.McCann reported there were no contests, but there was a vacancy in the Southern Commercial post.

The 1991 Council is:

Chairman - Sullivan Boomer, 22 Town Lane, Islandmagee, Co. Antrim, BT40 3SZ
Secretary - Paul McCann, 19 Ferndale Road, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, BT36 8AH
Treasurer - John Beaumont, 30 Strangford Road, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT27 4BL
Loco Maint - Peter Scott, 17 Finaghy Park Central, Belfast, BT10 0HP

Loco Running - Brian Hill, 39 Prospect Downs Sth, Carrickfergus, BT38 8SD
Coach Maint (Nth) - Jeremy Saulters, 32 Willowbrook, Kells, Co. Antrim, BT42
Coach Maint (Sth) - Mark Hodge, 83 Springhill Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Coach Running (Nth) - Thomas Charters, 7 Chichester Gdns, Whitehead, BT38 9NG
Coach Running (Sth) - Aidan McDonnell, 29 Bothar Beann Aoibhinn, Dublin 11
Operations - Michael McMahon, 40 Balmoral Court, Belfast, BT9 7GR
Whitehead Site - Dermot Mackie, 23 Knockhill Park, Belfast, BT5 6HY
Mullingar Site - Peter Emmett, 4 Corduff Close, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
Publicity - Sam Somerville, 31 Milebush Pk, Carrickfergus, BT38 7QR
Publications - Nelson Poots - RPSI, Castleview Rd, Whitehead, BT38 9NA.
ROfI Publicity & Marketing - David Humphries, 33 Torquay Wood, Dublin 18
Commercial (Nth) - Henry Beaumont, 148 Hillsborough Rd, Lisburn, BT27 5QY
Southern Finance - Barry Carse, 2 Oakley Square, Ranelagh, Dublin 6
London Agent - Leslie McAllister 22 Lansdowne Road, Frimley, Surrey, GU16 5UW
Fund Raiser - Ernie Gilmore, 20 Chichester Road, Belfast, BT15 5EJ

S.Boomer then explained that there were some deficiencies in the Articles of Association of the RPSI, and Council, on advice from our solicitor, wanted to change several clauses in the Memorandum and Articles. He said that to do so required the present gathering to vote in favour of waiving the statutory notice. D.Humphries proposed, J.McBride seconded and the motion was carried with one against and no abstentions.

S.Boomer said the first change was to delete paragraphs 5 & 6 of the Company's Memorandum, which require changes in the Articles to be referred to the Dept of Commerce, as these were no longer required because of a change in the law. He said, if the change was agreed, Articles would not be changed without legal advice being sought, and an AGM or EGM was always required. The motion was passed unanimously on the proposal of A.Wickham, seconded by J.O'Meara.

S.Boomer explained that the first change to the Articles was to replace Article 8 with:

Every candidate for admission as a member shall complete a Society membership form which shall be laid before the Council at its next monthly meeting. The election of all members is vested solely in the Council and shall be by ballot, and unless two thirds of the members of Council present shall vote for the admission of a candidate, he shall not be a member of the Society.

The clause change was adopted on the proposal of B.Hill, seconded by N.Poots, with none against and one abstention. The second change was to replace Article 9 with:

If the Council shall be of the opinion that it is not in the interest of the Society that any member shall continue to be a member thereof the Council may request that member in writing to resign from the Society. Thereupon his name shall be removed from the register and he shall forfeit his interest and privileges in the Society (provided always that any member in relation to whom such action is proposed shall be entitled to address Council in regard to such action).

S.Boomer explained that the decision to expel a member would rest with Council rather than an EGM, but if the member concerned could gather enough support to call an EGM, he could appeal his expulsion there. B.Carson suggested that such members first be given a warning. P.McCann replied that any Council would be rash to expel a member without first attempting to resolve any problem more discretely. C.Friel asked if the membership would be informed of the use of Article 9. S.Boomer replied that the nature of the problem causing expulsion might prohibit publication, he thought that a level of confidentiality should probably be maintained. The clause change was proposed by J.McBride, seconded by E.Gilmore, and passed unanimously.

S.Boomer then called for any other business. J.Matthews said that the Whitehead Social Club was officially opening on 16th March, but it would be two years before a drinks licence could be applied for. He said that 6 RPSI members (1 from England) had taken up the offer of membership. S.Boomer recommended the club with its excellent facilities to all local members. I.Pryce warned that a drinks licence and its attendant publicity might prove a problem when trying to maintain good relations with the local community. E.Gilmore said the club was an example of the RPSI liaising with the local community as it was Whitehead residents who had asked for the club.

B.Quin offered congratulations to the publications team who produced excellent magazines and newsletters.

C.Friel suggested the new Whitehead site officer should clean up the Tarry as a first priority.

I.Sinclair asked why the RPSI had turned down the request of the Irish Traction Group to have one of the NIR Hunslet locomotives. S.Boomer said that it was NIR who insisted the ITG should not get one of the locos, and the implication in a recent ITG newsletter that the RPSI was to blame was grossly unfair and based on misquotations from a letter to the ITG from S.Boomer. J.Hughes asked if the RPSI was going into competition with Southern Railtours. S.Boomer said there was no intention to compete with anyone, the Council was only interested in co-operation.

J.Richardson asked if the 6 wheel coach at Whitehead could be lent to the DARC as the RPSI had no current use for it. S.Boomer replied that there were on-going discussions with the DARC and other societies on the exchange of locos and coaches. I.Pryce said that the DARC were getting the Guinness engine for very little and the opportunity to increase the hire rate should be taken at the earliest chance.

Signed: _____ *Chairman* _____ *Date:* _____