

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Irish Railway Record Society Premises, Dublin, Saturday 22nd February 1992

Dr Garret FitzGerald presided and 83 members were present.

Dr FitzGerald opened the meeting by saying how pleased he was to be able to preside over the first Society AGM to be held in Dublin.

Apologies were received from Lord O'Neill, Robin Morton, Henry Beaumont, Olwyn Lanigan, Nelson Poots, Derek Henderson, Johnny Glendinning, Michael Booth, Trevor Mounstephen.

The minutes of the 1991 AGM, which had been circulated, were adopted on the proposal of P.Booth, seconded by E.Gilmore.

The Chairman's report was adopted on the proposal of B.Mullally, seconded by N.Foster.

Dealing with the Secretary's report, S.Boomer replied to a question concerning the loss of £3,000 due to the collapse of the advertising agency handling the Satzenbrau adverts. He said that no contract had been made with Satzenbrau and therefore that company was not liable to reimburse the Society and had not been approached.

D.Humphries reported on a meeting he had attended with Irish Rail to discuss the operation of steam trains between Cork and Cobh. He said that Irish Rail, who had been asked by Cobh Heritage to run the trains, were unable to do so without RPSI help. As the matter had not been discussed by the Council, no decisions on RPSI involvement have been taken.

S.Boomer told the meeting that discussions with Westrail concerning No.27 had taken place, leading to draft lease agreements, and a further meeting was being arranged.

P.McCann told B.Pickup that no firm commitment had been given by Irish Rail on the future working of wooden bodied rolling stock but it seemed certain that this year's "Grainne Uaile" railtour could be run throughout with Society stock.

The Secretary's report was adopted on the proposal of D.Mackie, seconded by P.Booth.

The Treasurer's report and the accounts were adopted on the proposal of E.Gilmore, seconded by E.Lewis. S.Boomer said the auditors, Dunne & Associates, (formerly McHoul & Murray) had done an excellent job and they were reappointed on the proposal of P.Bowen-Walsh, seconded by J.O'Meara.

The Operations report was adopted on the proposal of B.Mullally, seconded by P.Bowen-Walsh.

Lord Dunleath said there had been several embarrassing failures over the past few years and

would the engines in service for 1992 be reliable? P.Scott replied that he very much hoped so - both engines, No.171 and No.461, had completed major overhauls and No.4 and No.85 were undergoing the same process with ERDF support which would mean the necessary penny pinching of the recent past could cease.

In reply to P.Bowen-Walsh, P.Scott said that plans to overhaul No.27 were not finalised in regard to whether the RPSI or Westrail would carry out the work. S.Boomer said the Society will maintain ownership and control of the loco.

The Locomotive Maintenance report was adopted on the proposal of P.O'Brien, seconded by D.Mackie.

S.Boomer said that coach No.9 was currently in Drogheda because a bearing had run hot while en route to Dublin.

S.Boomer told P.Bowen-Walsh that diner 87 would be running on the May tour. Some plumbing, electrics and floor coverings remained to be completed. He said the bar area had been enlarged and thanks were due to the Treasurer for obtaining sponsorship from a major brewery for the coach.

Asked why there was such a line up of derelict coaches at Whitehead, S.Boomer replied that the derelicts acted as a barrier and prevented the running rake suffering damage by vandals throwing stones. Also, some of the running coaches were restored from conditions such as existed among the derelicts. Some of the problem should disappear when the carriage shed is complete.

When asked about the difficulty of travelling to Mullingar, A.McDonnell said that vouchers for reduced train fares were available from him.

The Carriage & Wagon reports were adopted on the proposal of P.Booth, seconded by B.Pickup.

P.Emmett reported that repairs to the engine shed roof at Mullingar were completed; it was hoped to open a roadway into the site; and a general tidy up was planned. S.Boomer said that site officers probably had the least recognised job and they should be encouraged and congratulated for their efforts.

P.Rigney asked for an update on the carriage shed. D.Mackie replied that the foundations and steelwork were finished and the shed should be complete within a fortnight.

L.Mooney offered his congratulations to the team which had turned out the train in excellent condition for the launch of No.461. He said that the Society could be proud to have the President travel in such a train.

S.Boomer told P.Bowen-Walsh that some progress had been made in the attempts to get a lease for Mullingar shed.

The site reports were adopted on the proposal of B.Share, seconded by L.Mooney.

The election of the 1992 Council then took place. P.McCann reported that there were no

contests, but vacancies existed in the Northern Commercial and Northern Coach Running posts. No further nominations were forthcoming.

The 1992 Council is:

Chairman - Sullivan Boomer, 22 Town Lane, Islandmagee, Co.Antrim, BT40 3SZ
Secretary - Paul McCann, 148 Church Road, Newtownabbey, Co.Antrim, BT36 6HJ
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, BT40 3JF
Coach Maint(Sth) - Peter Emmett, 4 Corduff Close, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
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 - Rory McNamee, 19 Thornhill Road, Mount Merrion, Dublin 4
Publicity - Sam Somerville, 31 Milebush Pk, Carrickfergus, BT38 7QR
Publications - Nelson Poots - RPSI, Castlevue Rd, Whitehead, BT38 9NA.
ROfI Publicity & Marketing - David Humphries, 33 Torquay Wood, Dublin 18
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
Projects Manager - J.Glendinning, 23 Beechdene Gardens, Lisburn, BT28 3JH

M.McMahon outlined the Belfast-based operations for 1992: “Easter Bunny”; 27th June, “Hills Of Donegal” to Derry with bus tour of Donegal; July & August, “Portrush Flyer”; September, “Steam Enterprise” dependent on wooden stock situation; October, “Larne Lough”; December, Santa train rides.

D.Humphries outlined the planned Dublin-based operations: Early May, possible private charter; 13th/14th June, “Royal Canal” Maynooth to Enfield; 20th June, evening trip to Mullingar for mid-summer barbecue; 4th July, “Strawberry Fair” to Enniscorthy; August, “Sea Breeze”; 13th September, “Maynooth Shuttle”; December, Santa operations to be run from Dublin to Clonsilla.

D.Humphries said he was very pleased about the No.461 launch which should help the Society’s image immensely.

When asked about a trip from Dublin to Whitehead, D.Humphries replied that it had been considered but the logistics, before the Belfast cross-town link is complete, made such an operation not viable.

T.Gray suggested that a permanent loco would be required in Cobh if the operations there commenced. P.Scott reminded the members not to forget that currently only two mainline engines are available. D.Humphries said that nothing had been finalised and the RPSI had been regarded as consultants whereas now we were seen as contractors.

In reply to B.Mullally, C.Meredith explained that the Irish Rail list of steam drivers was reducing at an alarming rate and for that reason a training course was being set up to allow up

to 6 Connolly diesel drivers to train as firemen. It was hoped to train drivers from other depots in future but demands on manpower mean they cannot be released from duty for training at present. Irish Rail will meet the running expenses and the RPSI will provide the engine.

Dr FitzGerald then called for any other business.

L.Mooney asked P.McCann if membership cards could be made smaller and was told that, coincidentally, plans were under way for a new credit card size design for next year.

P.Scott asked for views from the meeting on whether original materials should be used in restoring Society vehicles. He said he had been faced with the question of a copper or steel firebox repair for No.85 recently, although he now knew that the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum wanted a copper firebox. Lord Dunleath said he felt it was perfectly legitimate to use modern materials that don't change the character of the vehicle. This meant that repairs were usually cheaper and more reliable. This was the generally held view of the members present.

J.Dwyer asked did the Society have any input into modern Transport policies, i.e. Harcourt Street reopening, cross-border line, Sligo line. S.Boomer replied that no submissions had been made to date but he did not rule out future involvement, but only where the RPSI would be effected by any policy. He said that RPSI negotiations with the railway companies and tourist boards were often far reaching and did not always deal with issues of immediate concern. Relations with the companies are good and we treat them respectfully and do not indulge in table thumping but we put our case forcefully when required. T.Gray said the Society could not be a lobbying group but individual members should endeavour to influence their own local representatives.

B.Share asked was a preserved branch line out of the question. S.Boomer said that Irish legislation would seem to rule out railways other than those owned by the main state transport body. Northern Irish law might allow light railways solely on permission of Secretary of State. However, the Society's main priority is to operate main line trains and unless circumstances dictate otherwise, this priority is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

A.McDonnell said the IRRS should be thanked for agreeing to the use of their premises for the AGM. Dr FitzGerald thanked Council for organising a meeting in Dublin and said the encouraging turn out was vindication of that decision.

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