

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Maysfield Leisure Centre, Belfast, Saturday 3rd February 1993

Sullivan Boomer had the Chair and 44 members were present.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the members from Dublin and the two English members present, but expressed his disappointment at the very low attendance by northern members.

Apologies were received from Lord O'Neill, T.Mounstephen, D.Mackie, T.Casterton, R.Forsythe, T.Forsythe, S.Forsythe, B.Spurle, S.Spurle, I.Gilmore, P.Emmett, J.Richardson, N.Hamilton, J.Fitzpatrick, C.Meredith, B.Carse, C.Boomer.

The Chairman paid tribute to the late Lord Dunleath. He said we all miss him as he was one of life's characters, and those who knew him could not help but like and admire him. Those present stood for a minute's silence in his memory.

The minutes of the 1992 AGM, which had been circulated, were adopted on the proposal of R.Rigney, seconded by P.Booth.

The Chairman's report was adopted on the proposal of J.McKeown, seconded by T.Tynan.

The Secretary's report was adopted on the proposal of H.Boomer, seconded by J.McKeown.

Dealing with the Treasurer's report, J.Beaumont told W.Coates that the Social Club at Whitehead is currently neither a drain on Society funds nor a source of income but had cost a few hundred pounds in the previous year. I.Pryce said the club idea was foolish and ill-conceived and had died a natural death. The Secretary said the club's committee were adamant that it had a future. H.Boomer reminded the meeting that the Society had used the premises for meetings and had further plans to do so. The Treasurer admitted that the club held a bank account separate from the Society's funds but for the Society's benefit.

D.Henderson asked for future accounts to give a break down of the catering income for each dining car, and for the reason for the low surplus of £4,500. E.Gilmore pointed out that the income was 30% up on the previous year. The Treasurer said that the advent of draught beer in the south should push the profits up.

The Treasurer told D.Henderson that overdraft facilities were necessary in order to allow for the the out of season ERDF cashflow requirements. He informed I.Pryce that the high phone costs were due to a few single payments.

P.Rigney, when he asked for detailed reports to be available for any member in their own area of interest, was told that the audited accounts were open to any member, and indeed to the public, for inspection.

I.Pryce asked that the method for setting the £250 charge to the Downpatrick Railway Society for the hire of the Guinness engine be reviewed. The Secretary replied that it was reviewed annually. The Chairman said any subsequent hire of an engine would probably be considered differently.

W.Scott asked if only the interest on money raised from Life membership payments was spent. The Secretary said that the recent life memberships were issued with the sole intention of raising funds for ERDF.

The Treasurer's report and the accounts were adopted on the proposal of J.McBride, seconded by J.McKeown.

The auditors, Dunne & Associates, were reappointed on the proposal of G.Martin, seconded by D.Humphries.

M.McMahon, reporting on 1992 operations, said that apart from a few running-in trips early in the year, operations carried on much as usual. There were charters from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Department of the Environment towards the end of the year and a very successful new Santa operation out of Yorkgate in Belfast. The usual appeal for members to help out was given.

When asked about the future of the "Steam Enterprise" operation and the possibility of fitting vacuum brakes to an NIR steel-bodied set of carriages, M.McMahon said that Council were not yet in a position to decide on this but the project was being included in the next ERDF programme. Because of current limitations at CSD in Belfast, cross-border operations are fraught with difficulties.

D.Humphries reported that the southern season was the most successful yet with the summer season contributing up to £16,000 to Society funds. The Guinness wedding, Irish Rail and European Broadcasting Union charters and the Santa operations had added a further £4,000 to this. Certain trains needed help from commercial sponsors and our thanks go to them. D.Henderson said the organization behind the operations had been first class. B.Walters asked the operations committees to attempt to keep fares as low as possible. B.Hill said it was ultimately the costs incurred that dictated fares.

P.Scott said he would only report on locomotive matters which had changed since his report in "Five Foot Three". No.3 is undergoing major repairs with extensive tank platework. The boiler is being re-stayed. No.4 has its boiler removed and being de-scaled prior to major work which will start soon. No.85 has had the foundation ring refitted and seam riveting completed. Consideration is being given to overhauling one of the ex-GN tenders currently at Mullingar to work with the engine. No.184 has been prepared for boiler removal. No.461 has moved to Whitehead for work on its axlebox but nothing obvious was found to be wrong. The Carlow diesel engine is being worked on as time permits. No.23 diesel has gearbox problems that will have to be attended to.

The ½" to one-foot scale model of GN SG3 No.202 which was built at Dundalk and exhibited at Amiens Street, Great Victoria Street and York Road stations is now in the care of the Society and it is hoped that it can be successfully overhauled after the bomb damage sustained in York Road station.

The locomotive workshop, which is the single major item in the ERDF programme, is hoped to be started soon as it is badly needed.

P.Scott ended his report by saying that he intended to fulfil Lord Dunleath's wishes to have No.85 out on the main line and running to Dublin.

G.Martin started his Carriage & Wagon report by stating that the completion of the carriage shed and the start of its fitting out had been the main event in the past year. Other matters include the increased need to have more traceability and verification of the safety and mechanical fitness of the rolling stock. To this end a more rigorous programme of examinations has started. Lighting and steam heating has been fitted to the sets this year and it is hoped to have 25 of our 43 coaches available for traffic in Mullingar and Whitehead during the coming season.

Plans for the future are hard to be definite about as the wooden stock ban means many decisions have to be played by ear as matters arise.

Members A.McRobert and C.Smith are celebrating the 60th birthday of the LMS railcar No.1 by heading up a team who are funding its restoration, and this has already commenced.

G.Martin told D.Henderson that all the coaches were being cycled through the pit road in the engine shed for inspection of the running gear. All vehicles are due to have the perishable items of their running gear replaced. Major precautions are being taken in respect of electrical and catering facilities to ensure compliance with the appropriate health & safety standards.

In the absence of the C&W Officer for Mullingar, P.Rigney gave a report. There are 9 coaches, one of which is undergoing major overhaul. All have commonwealth bogies and spares have been obtained which will allow cycling of the bogies for repair, with spares available should the need arise. The train has heat and light throughout and a generator is used to augment this. It is hoped to acquire the Park Royal coach currently on loan. Thanks were given to all those, including Irish Rail, who offered help and advice during the year. I.Pryce congratulated those who worked on the Mullingar set for its presentation and cleanliness.

The election of the 1993 Council then took place. W.Coates, seconded by J.Harcourt, proposed that the new Council structure be accepted - no objections were raised. Nominations were received for all posts and the Whitehead Carriage & Wagon post was contested by G.Martin and C.Smith. G.Martin was elected on a poll of the members present.

The 1993 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
Assistant Treasurer - Barry Carse, 2 Oakley Square, Ranelagh, Dublin 6
Belfast Operations Officer - Michael McMahon, 40 Balmoral Court, Belfast, BT9 7GR
Dublin Operations Officer - David Humphries, 33 Torquay Wood, Dublin 18
Locomotive Officer - Peter Scott, 17 Finaghy Park Central, Belfast, BT10 0HP
Carriage & Wagon Officer (Mullingar) - Peter Emmett, 4 Corduff Close, Blanchardstown
Carriage & Wagon Officer (Whitehead) - Gavin Martin, 64 Drumnabreeze Road, Lurgan

Mullingar Site - Joe Fitzpatrick, 37 Coolrua Drive, Dublin 9

Whitehead Site - Dermot Mackie, 23 Knockhill Park, Belfast, BT5 6HY

M.McMahon outlined the Belfast-based operations for 1993: 25th April, "Great Railway Journeys of the World" from Derry to Antrim via Portrush; 5th June, "Hills Of Donegal" to Derry with bus tour of Donegal; 19th June, "Mid-summer Night Steam"; July & August, "Portrush Flyer"; 18th September, "North Atlantic Express"; December, "Santa Special".

D.Humphries said the southern season would be as outlined in "Five Foot Three" with the addition of "Great Railway Journeys of the World" from Dublin to Rosslare on 2nd May. Some of the planned operations depend on sponsorship being obtained, and the Ballinasloe operation will only go ahead if Irish Rail allow our own stock to run. The September operation will be to Greystones.

The Chairman then called for any other business.

P.Newell asked what was being done to provide an adequate water supply to the site at Whitehead. E.Gilmore said that in the absence of the Site Officer he could say that the DOE Water Service have been asked to investigate the current pressure problems.

The Treasurer told P.Henderson that, on the matter of site security, quotations were being sought for more secure fencing.

B.Gillen asked if a reduced membership rate could be offered to those new members joining mid-season. The Secretary said he had no objection provided no added administration was involved.

P.Newell asked if a turntable would be provided for Whitehead. The Chairman said that the current ERDF programme could not fund it but it would be put forward for the next round.

The Secretary told A.McRobert that the number of new covenants this year was encouraging.

D.Henderson asked that it be minuted that a third party was responsible for the public announcement that he had organized a social function for ex-railwaymen under the auspices of the Society. He apologized for any embarrassment this may have caused although he was not at fault himself.

Signed: _____ *Chairman* *Date:* _____