

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

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

**The Pavilion, Whitehead, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March 1995**

Lord O'Neill presided and 66 members were present.

### ***Welcome***

Lord O'Neill officially introduced Sir Myles Humphreys to the members and welcomed him as the new Society Vice-President. He thanked Sir Myles for all the help given to the Society when he was Chairman of Northern Ireland Railways.

### ***Apologies***

M.Bolger, C.Boomer, W.Brazier, B.Carse, D.Carse, G.FitzGerald, J.Fitzpatrick, P.Fletcher, N.Foster, J.Harcourt, M.Harding, C.Holliday, B.Humphries, L.Kitchen, M.O'Brien, M.Taylor.

### ***Minutes of the 1994 AGM***

The minutes, previously circulated, were adopted on the proposal of H.Boomer, seconded by B.Gillen.

### ***Chairman's Report***

D.Humphries asked why the Dublin Area Operations Committee had not seen a copy of the Society's Operations document which was referred to in the Chairman's report. S.Boomer replied that the document was more relevant to northern operations since Iarnród Éireann took more of the responsibility for running the trains in the south. However, a copy should be available from any Council member.

The report was adopted on the proposal of P.Booth, seconded by J.McKeown.

### ***Secretary's Report***

Adopted on the proposal of J.McKeown, seconded by R.Forsythe.

### ***Treasurer's Report***

R.Rigney was told that there was unlikely to be any news of grant aid from the European Regional Development Fund until nearer the end of the year.

The Report was adopted on the proposal of D.Mackie, seconded by D.Humphries.

### ***Appointment Of Auditors***

J.Beaumont reported that the auditors, Dunne & Associates, continued to give a good service at a reasonable cost and he recommended their re-appointment. Adopted on the proposal of

B.Gillen, seconded by I.Gilmore.

### ***Reports Of Operations Officers***

J.McKeown read his report. The main problems during the year were: finding people to replace D.Humphries; confusion over ticket sales; the certification of the southern carriage set.

The Dublin based operations were a great success, starting with a running-in trip for No.461 in April, the event being used as a chance to thank a lot of people who had helped the RPSI during the previous year. The Royal Canal shuttles in May generated a surplus of £2,887. The Mid-Summer Night special in June cleared £1,917, the food being sponsored by Dawn Farm Foods and cooked by members of the Irish Army on the platforms of Mullingar station. The Strawberry Fair operation to Enniscorthy in early July raised £2,352. The Sea Breeze excursions to Wexford continued to be popular, with the first, in July, raising £2,476, and the second, in August, taking in a similar amount. The final scheduled summer operation was to Greystones in September and, despite having to use coaches from Iarnród Éireann, a profit of £1,497 was realised.

A surprise, but very welcome, addition to our season was the charter for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of the La Touche Hotel in Greystones, raising £1,404.

Finally, we ran two days of Santa operations to Maynooth in December. With two Santas on board and the newly acquired Park Royal coaches in operation, we raised £5,625.

J.McKeown paid tribute to H.Boomer, J.Fitzpatrick, B.Gillen, the Dublin Area Operations committee and the management and staff of Iarnród Éireann for all their help during the year in raising a total of £20,007. He finished by saying that he would not be standing for Council for the coming year.

B.Gillen asked why the catering income for the La Touche charter was so small. He was informed that the Hotel insisted that the prices charged should be the same as their own, these being more than the Society's.

The reports were adopted on the proposal of L.Gillen, seconded by B.Mullally.

### ***Reports Of Locomotive And Carriage Officers***

Adopted on the proposal of L.Walters, seconded by B.Quin.

### ***Reports Of Mullingar And Whitehead Site Officers***

J.McKeown gave an update on the progress at Mullingar. In the past year toilet and shower facilities have been installed, the lease negotiations with CIÉ are coming to a conclusion, the FAS carriage project negotiations are progressing. D.Humphries said the facilities at Mullingar have seen a vast improvement thanks to M.O'Brien and it was now an attractive place to attend - it only now remains for members to come and see for themselves.

The reports were adopted on the proposal of B.Mullally, seconded by E.Gilmore.

## ***Election Of Council and Office Bearers For 1995***

P.McCann reported that there were no contests, and nominations had been received for all posts excepting that of Dublin Operations Officer. Lord O'Neill called for nominations from the floor to fill the vacancy. J.Fitzpatrick was nominated by J.McKeown, seconded by B.Gillen. P.McCann said that as the nominee was not in attendance and written permission had not been forthcoming, he was not sure that he could accept the nomination. Following some criticism from J.Fitzpatrick regarding the previous year's Council elections, he was trying to ensure that the business was conducted in a proper manner. It was finally agreed by the members present that the nomination should go ahead subject to agreement being received from the nominee.

The 1995 Council is:

<b><i>Chairman:</i></b>	Sullivan Boomer
<b><i>Secretary:</i></b>	Paul McCann
<b><i>Treasurer:</i></b>	John Beaumont
<b><i>Assistant Treasurer:</i></b>	Barry Carse
<b><i>Locomotive Officer:</i></b>	Peter Scott
<b><i>Carriage &amp; Wagon Officer (Southern):</i></b>	Brian Gillen
<b><i>Carriage &amp; Wagon Officer (Whitehead):</i></b>	Mark Kennedy
<b><i>Belfast Area Operations Officer:</i></b>	Heather Boomer
<b><i>Dublin Area Operations Officer:</i></b>	Joe Fitzpatrick
<b><i>Mullingar Site Officer:</i></b>	Murrough O'Brien
<b><i>Whitehead Site Officer:</i></b>	Dermot Mackie

## ***Any Other Business***

B.Mullally informed those present that the turntable at Cork station was being re-conditioned and the water supply restored.

D.Henderson asked what the Council was doing to ensure that there existed a full set of coaches which could be operated anywhere on the mainline railway system without the need to hire from the railway companies. He said the RPSI was a steam preservation Society and we should obtain and re-gauge suitable British Rail steel body stock. I.Pryce said that despite huge amounts of funds spent on carriages, to the detriment of No.4 and the locomotive workshop, there was still an insufficient supply of seats for our passengers.

P.Rigney said it was true that the carriage fleet was run down, but the southern set was coming to the end of its useful life and there was a deliberate policy a few years ago to concentrate our efforts in getting the carriage shed built and this disrupted overhaul of the northern set. He said that the Society's main customers were the general public, who wanted vintage stock, and not the timers and enthusiasts who generally could accept company carriages. He said that two sets were needed, each with two brakes and a diner and sufficient seating for 300 to 400 passengers. He felt that some tension between the two departments might be healthy but should not descend into bickering. D.Humphries supported this view by stating that the money already spent may well be insufficient. He also said that he did not think the members joined the Society to preserve stock from mainland Britain, and he believed the Society's Articles support this view. C.Meredith suggested that any available money should be used to ensure two full vintage sets. B.Gillen believed that the ERDF money obtained for coaches would not have been made available to purchase modern stock.

R.Forsythe agreed with these comments with the proviso that they apply only if the current ban on wooden stock is not extended, although he felt that this was very unlikely.

M.Kennedy, in reply to these comments, agreed that the current funds were being spread too thinly over too many vehicles - £1,600 per coach per year is required to maintain a running fleet, and spending is a sixth of what it was two years ago. While he has plans to eventually purchase steel body coaches, they are not yet available and, when they are, they will most likely be at least as dear to maintain as our current vehicles, especially as the companies are unlikely to let them go until they are thoroughly worn out. Coaches unnecessary to Society operational needs are likely to be offered to other bodies better able to use them. Money may be in short supply, but this can be tolerated so long as volunteer workers are plentiful.

S.Boomer said that the Society is in frequent contact with the railway companies regarding coach availability but he was unsure if even they are certain of their plans for coaching.

P.Scott reported that the locomotive situation was good at the moment, with three out of four of our large engines in traffic, but there is no guarantee this will continue. No.461, followed by No.171, will soon have to come out of traffic for boiler overhaul. Very substantial funds will need to be available to maintain continuity of the locomotive supply, No.4 being a case in point.

C.Meredith said it would be a coup to have our three locomotives in steam for the “William Dargan” tour in May, even if NIR crews had to be imported for the Sunday evening, perhaps for a round trip to Malahide. H.Boomer said she was unsure but would look into it.

P.Bowen-Walsh suggested that the Society should pursue better links with the Tourist Boards and those at ministerial level in both parts of the country, and in Europe, to ensure that the obstacles we face might have some hope of being overcome. There is still a lot of good will out there to be tapped. H.Boomer replied that the Tourist Boards are becoming more aware of our needs. J.Beaumont said that European money might be available and this, together with Lottery funding, was being investigated.

I.Pryce suggested a day should be held for members, giving them a forum to become more involved in airing their views.

D.Henderson said it was encouraging to see so many southern members attending and suggested they might like to participate in more Belfast based operations.

L.Gillen asked for leave to thank all those who had helped her in her first year in charge of the Dublin catering operation.

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