

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

North Star Hotel, Dublin, Saturday 9th March 1996

Sir Myles Humphreys presided and 72 members were present.

Apologies

H.Beaumont, C.Boomer, M.Booth, W.Brazier, P.Cox, G.FitzGerald, E.Gilmore, I.Gilmore, D.Mackie, P.Newell, Lord O'Neill, S.Somerville, K.Walker.

Minutes of the 1995 AGM

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

Chairman's Report

S.Boomer asked to make two additions to the report circulated to the members.

Firstly, he reported that it was Council's intention to review its structure and composition following two years of the previous review. It was hoped that members would respond with their views on the subject.

Secondly, Council is currently looking at developments of a commercial nature to secure the future of the Society operationally and financially. We are still at the stage of putting together a marketable structure. It had been hoped to have news of those developments to release to the members but discussions are not yet at an end and Council would rather have a clear and definitive view of a future policy before any statement is made.

The report was adopted on the proposal of P.Booth, seconded by B.Mullally.

Secretary's Report

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

Treasurer's Report

The report was adopted on the proposal of B.Mullally, seconded by H.Boomer.

Appointment Of Auditors

J.Beaumont reported that once again Dunne & Associates continued to give good service at favourable rates and he proposed their re-appointment, seconded by P.Bowen-Walsh. The proposal was agreed by the meeting.

Reports Of Operations Officers

In addition to the circulated report from the Dublin area, D.Houston reported that a successful season had been operated, with all trips making a profit with the exception of one which was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. He wished to thank his predecessor, J.Fitzpatrick, and D.Humphries for their help in easing him into the post. Also, thanks were due to the locomotive team who kept No.461 running during the year, the carriage representatives and to Iarnród Éireann for allowing the operations to take place.

The film work which materialised during year was a welcome bonus and it allowed the carriage set to have a much needed face lift. Unfortunately, this income can not be guaranteed from year to year and already a small contract has been lost despite our best efforts.

In 1996, the format will remain much the same. We are dealing with a number of charter propositions at present and if these come to fruition, some additional revenue will come our way.

H.Boomer added her thanks to all who had given help and support during the operating season.

Reports Of Locomotive And Carriage Officers

P.Scott gave a report in addition to that circulated. He asked the members to note that the job of Locomotive Officer entailed more than restoring and operating locomotives. The job also meant being a keeper, in so much as items like No.27, No.184 and No.186 must also be preserved in a state where they could be returned to traffic one day, even if they were not currently earning anything for the Society.

On the subject of locomotive availability, No.461 is due out of traffic in 1996, No.171 the following year and No.85 two years later. No.4 should be in traffic by 1997. The return to traffic of all these engines is a matter of manpower and money and without the aid from ERDF the situation would be much worse than it currently is. The proposed locomotive workshop has been pruned to suit the likely grant aid which we might expect from the next ERDF and it is very important that this gets underway as the current cramped situation at Whitehead poses a safety problem and does not facilitate the speedy return to traffic of locomotives under repair. Likewise, despite the convenience of the shed at Connolly, it is not suitable for even simple tasks on a steam engine. However, at present no suitable alternative is available in the Dublin area.

The recent crew training exercise in Dublin is much welcomed, but the increasing threat to turntables and water facilities everywhere is not. The weekly classes at the Technical College in Belfast continue and more students from the membership would be appreciated.

B.Mullally asked about No.461 returning to traffic in DSER livery but was told that it was unlikely it ever ran in those colours. P.Rigney suggested that another main line locomotive was required to ensure sufficient numbers in traffic with the current regime of boiler overhauls every 5 or 6 years. He suggested No.131 (with another society), No.74 (in the UFTM) or a re-gauged Woolwich from England. J.Harcourt asked why No.27 was not offered to the Downpatrick Steam Railway and S.Boomer replied that a meeting had been held in which the engine had been offered, but the cost of overhaul was probably why nothing further had been heard from Downpatrick.

B.Gillen reported that at the start of the year, only 6 coaches were available for operation out of Dublin. All efforts were concentrated on 1916 and diner 2421 and by May both had been returned to traffic, 2421 with a 17ft long bar area. In addition, diner 88 was converted to use solely as a tea car. Park Royal 1419 was fitted with a shop and reserve snack bar, and as a consequence was renumbered 2423, its old number in the CIÉ catering series. Ongoing work included internal decorating of 1335, installation of a 220V train line, replacing broken windows and generally attempting to keep up with damage done by vandals.

Unfortunately, the consequences of concentrating work in Dublin meant that work at Mullingar suffered, and two coaches there, 1327 and 1445, which otherwise might have been in the shed or back in traffic, were destroyed by fire in July. It is hoped the underframes can be used again if the insurance claim is met.

The State Coach is now with FAS and work will commence soon on restoration. TPO 2981 was swapped for laminate 1470, diner 2420 and heating van 3156, all of which were subsequently scrapped. 2981 is now in use as a store at Heuston. AM13, an ambulance coach is still in Inchicore in the open.

M.Kennedy said work at Whitehead had concentrated on maintenance to the running set, restoration work on 243, refurbishment of the sleeping coach, improvement of the stores organisation and a general tidy up. Most of this work is organised on a day to day basis by D.Henderson. A new sub-contractor has been found to replace D.Marcus who sadly died before Christmas.

Mainly due to the lack of willing members, work in 1996 will concentrate on maintenance, bogie overhauls, work on 243 and a possible extension of the concrete floor in the carriage shed.

Thanks are due to A.McRobert who, with very little help, is responsible for cleaning the running set.

Reports Of Mullingar And Whitehead Site Officers

J.McKeown congratulated outgoing officer, M.O'Brien, on the vast improvement in facilities at Mullingar over the past two years.

Election Of Council and Office Bearers For 1996

J.Beaumont paid tribute to B.Carse, who was resigning from the post of assistant Treasurer, for his work in the Finance department over the past 6 years. He suggested that, with increased computerisation of the accounts, he would not be concerned if this post was not filled. P.Rigney said it was usual to seek nominations from the floor for vacant posts.

C.Meredith said that before the elections got under way he would question whether the Society had the right to seek elections to named posts rather than to a board of directors. He suggested that being able to run one of the Society's departments did not necessarily qualify a member as competent to sit on a board which has managerial and financial responsibilities to the Society. B.Gillen said that in the past some members of Council from Dublin refused to attend meetings in Belfast, and vice versa, and this did nothing to aid the continuity of sound management. S.Boomer said he was happy that the Society conducted his business legally and there was nothing wrong elections to named posts.

A proposal by C.Meredith and seconded by B.Gillen was put to the meeting:

It is proposed that a steering committee be set up to establish how best a board of directors could be constituted, that committee to make recommendations to the membership prior to the next AGM.

The proposal was accepted unopposed. C.Meredith and P.Rigney were appointed to represent the southern membership on the committee. Two northern members will be selected from J.Creaner, W.Coates, E.Gilmore, C.Friel or D.Henderson. Council will select two of its number to join the committee. It was agreed that the committee would advise the membership what was intended and invite suggestions on all aspects of the Council structure.

N.Foster was nominated by L.Gillen and seconded by B.Mullally to the post of Assistant Treasurer. All nominees for the 1996 Council were elected unopposed:

<i>Chairman:</i>	Sullivan Boomer
<i>Secretary:</i>	Paul McCann
<i>Treasurer:</i>	John Beaumont
<i>Assistant Treasurer:</i>	Norman Foster
<i>Locomotive Officer:</i>	Peter Scott
<i>Carriage & Wagon Officer (Southern):</i>	Brian Gillen
<i>Carriage & Wagon Officer (Whitehead):</i>	Mark Kennedy
<i>Belfast Area Operations Officer:</i>	Heather Boomer
<i>Dublin Area Operations Officer:</i>	David Houston
<i>Mullingar Site Officer:</i>	David Humphries
<i>Whitehead Site Officer:</i>	Dermot Mackie

Any Other Business

P.Rigney reported that proposals for streamlining the Society's safety and operational procedures were being put before Council and these should be considered as soon as possible. S.Boomer agreed to do so but warned against loading Council members, all part time as part of a hobby, with matters relating to safety to the exclusion of all else.

J.Beaumont told P.Booth that currently the imposition of VAT on subscriptions looked likely to remain. P.McCann thanked all members for renewing despite the recent rate increase.

R.Henderson asked why diner 87 had leaking pipes on a recent operation. M.Kennedy said that a shunter on a previous operation had neglected to drain the tanks and frost damage had occurred.

L.Mooney was informed by S.Boomer that Belfast to Dublin operations were too costly to operate if coaches were to be hired. D.Henderson suggested operating to Dundalk on a Sunday following a Portrush operation to attract more participants from the UK market.

Sir Myles thanked members A.Hamblin and D.Lucas, both from England, for their continued attendance and support at AGMs.

When asked by D.Humphries why the present venue had been chosen in preference to the IRRS, P.McCann replied that it was for no other reason than he personally thought it would be more suitable.

P.Bowen-Walsh asked would it be possible to bring the Great Southern Railway Preservation Society into the fold of the RPSI, but no member was able to shed any light on the current

state of the GSRPS other than that locomotive No.131 was dismantled with parts in Mallow and Kinsale.

Sir Myles closed the meeting with thanks to those attending for bearing with him on his first time as chairman of a Society meeting.

Signed: _____ *Chairman* *Date:* _____