

Annual Report of activities from Directors - year-ended 31 August 2025



Irish Railway Record Society

Report of Hon. Secretary / Premises / Journal Managing Editor - Mark Merrigan

The Board met 5 times during the financial year. Stephen King and William Malone joined as Directors at the 2025 AGM. It was a busy year, and the Society continues to be in good health as can be seen from the activity reported across all the Directors Reports. We continue to attract much interest from the railway operators, their employees, researchers and those inspired by the resurgence in public transport usage.

Our premises in Heuston has undergone the usual cleaning, tidying etc over the course of the year with thanks to Tim Moriarty for organising this work. We also thank our member Paul O'Donoghue for his great work on managing many aspects of the premises during the year - it is very much appreciated. Heating the premises, which is by an inefficient single-zoned system and powered by oil, is very expensive and is a challenge to our finances. While the premises remains in generally acceptable order and fully accessible, it is suffering from age and a build-up of upgrade requirements and repairs. We have written to Irish Rail about this and there will be a discussion with CIE property from which our premises is licensed to us. With respect to the possibility of a commercial development which could affect the premises - we have had no further information on this during the year.

Journal Production continued to be satisfactory during the year, and members were sent both electronic and printed versions in October 2024, February 2025 and June 2025 - numbers 215, 216 and 217. Some new design language to the front cover and within was adopted in June 2025 to make better use of the IRRS logo. While the production team is generally satisfied with the design and production side, we had a late-notice change of design/print/distribution supplier in October 2025 - from Printbureau to Doggett Media. Thankfully all went well and the transition was relatively seamless. It is a reminder, however, that our volunteers and members are very dependent on the commercial arrangements which make Journal design, print and distribution possible. The infrastructure and level of expertise required from our contractor are not matters we can manage ourselves! Distribution of the Journal to the UK continues to be a convoluted process with postage managed by our contractor from Newry in Northern Ireland. We will need to plan for a more challenging change of supplier in order to have a safe harbour.

We thank all of our existing and new members for their support and for bearing with the Board as it continues to plan for a sustainable future for the Journal and the Society.

Report of Hon. Archivist - (Rev) Norman E Gamble BA (Mod), PhD, H.dipEd,

The Archives have been open throughout the year under review. The Hon Archivist attends on Tuesday afternoons (1430 to 1730hrs by prior appointment) (contact details Email: archivistirrs@hotmail.com) and also on those Tuesday evenings when the Library is open. E mail enquiries are dealt with by members of the Archives team, and I thank Ciaran Cooney, Richard McLachlan, John Martin, Dr Siobhan Osgood, Herbert Richards and Dr Peter Rigney for their hard work and their sharing of their time and expertise.

Many enquiries relate to genealogical matters, and while the recent digitisation of our genealogical material by Ancestry.com takes some pressure off us, we are often able to supplement the response through adding knowledge of the operations of the relevant railway companies thus setting the ancestor in the context of their daily work.

We also assist IE and CIE staff in searches about the physical railway, thanks to the large collection of plans and drawings given to us by Irish Rail at the foundation of the archives and assist students and scholars in their research through access to relevant material in our collection. We have now become a 'turn to' source of research for universities at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

The Archives have been used in a number of articles published in the Journal and I would encourage all members who wish to research topics in railway history for publication in the Journal or other relevant media to use the archives. The Hon Archivist however asks that contributions be acknowledged and where necessary permissions and copyright be obtained

The CIE Board have appointed a Group Archivist, Kevin Forkan who is in process of digitising the vast number of records in direct possession of the various constituent companies of CIE, past and present. Much of this material, such as Board Minutes and financial records, must legally remain in Board possession and custody. His work brings together all the surviving records of our railways and opens them to society as a whole. His initial digitisation was to be launched in November 2025, and we congratulate him on achieving this in such a short period of time. We also acknowledge the work in all this of Geraldine Finnucane, Group Secretary. In over 25 years in post, she has always been a great support and encourager of our Archives and the Society as a whole, and we wish her a long and happy retirement when she leaves CIE in the New Year.

Report of Hon. Photographic Archivist - Ciarán Cooney

Since last year's report, the Society's online photographic collection surpassed 28,000 archive images can now be accessed by our members, and to date, over 400 have availed of this facility. This represents a sizable proportion of the IRRS, and many of these applicants are new members. For those who have yet to apply for access and who are interested in consulting the digitised photo-archive (56 collections to date), please see instructions for access on the Society's website.

Two of our larger photographic collections, from the cameras of our late members David Murray and Les Hyland, are currently being digitised and prepped for Flickr access respectively. Both photographers comprehensively recorded Irish Railways during the 1950s. As before, I kindly request members to be patient while this archival work is undertaken; it is my aim to have both collections available to members for 2026.

Our archive film collection continues to attract significant interest from our members and the public via the IRRS YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/IrishRailwayRecordSociety>). In March 2024, we kindly received a superb collection of 8mm-cine film captured by our member Tom Ryan, featuring railways in County Cork during the 1970s and 1980s, and which featured in the 2025 "Annual Film Show". I wish to thank Tom again for this generous bequest.

Our photo-archive continues to receive donations of slides and negatives from photographers and members based in Ireland and Britain, and I wish to acknowledge thanks for this during the year under review.

Report of Hon. Membership Secretary - Willo Roe

Report End of 2024/5 Subscription Year

Region	2024/5	2023/4
Dublin	206	198
Honorary	5	6
Northern Ireland	109	110
Rest of the World	40	37
Republic not Dublin	309	309
Great Britain	293	318
Total Voting Members	963	978

Membership Changes

89 new members in this subscription year, compared to 76 in 2023/4

Most new members are from the Republic

Only 10 new members from GB and 8 from NI

Non-payers deemed resigned is 10 to 12% of each group. Some members who were removed subsequently paid and were re-instated. A small number of members have been re-instated after an absence of 2 or 3 years.

The drop in GB membership is due mainly to non-payment and the small number of new members from GB. In summary for GB, we had 10 new members, 6 resigned and 29 non-payers.

Membership Process

Our online form continues to be used successfully. The form is now integrated in the new website and works smoothly in the vast majority of cases.

We now ask people why they want to join, this has been gathering useful information.

We have introduced a renewals page with the new website. This page gives details of how to renew subscriptions and includes buttons to pay using PayPal directly from our site.

I have further documented the Membership Secretary activities, and I will continue to add more detail.

Report of Hon. Librarian and Hon. Journal Editor - Tim Moriarty, BA, MLS.

LIBRARY

The Library was open for members and visitors on 26 Tuesdays from September 2024 to June 2025. There were 174 attendances by members and 16 by visitors in the year under review. Attendances were generally in single figures, the highest was 12 on 12th November 2024 and on 22nd April 2025 just three attended. Outside of these opening times, library facilities were made available to a number of members and researchers. During the summer closure in July and August some re-organisation work was undertaken mainly on our Timetable Collection by two young members, Henry Alder and Weronika Iwaniec. This work is set to continue, and the library was cleaned and all the books dusted during the January Closure. A number of new publications were received but remain to be catalogued.

JOURNAL

The three issues of the Journal appeared in the respective publication months during the season. Details of production and distribution issues are already recorded in the Managing Editor's/ Hon. Secretary's report. The Hon. Editor would like to thank the Editorial Team and also Willo Roe, Stephen King and Weronika Iwaniec for all their help and input into the editing process. In addition to the features, the Journal continues to be a "one stop shop" for information about meetings, outings, event bookings and subscription payment methods.

Report of Hon. Treasurer - Tom Buckley

I have pleasure in presenting my report for the financial year ending 31st August 2025.

The annual accounts show a surplus of €1,871 for the year. This is up from a deficit of €3,190 for the previous year.

Overall income was €59,267. Membership subscriptions were up at €47,559. Donations were at a healthy €5,365. This consists of fees for the use of our premises by other societies/organisations, individual member donations and this year we received a substantial donation from the Modern Railway Society when they were wound up. Book sales continue to be a steady source of income and we are grateful to Clifton Fawcett for his continued dedication to this. The two external events this year – the Luas and Translink outings – generated a surplus.

Overall expenditure was €57,396. There were increases in the cost of insurance and the upkeep and maintenance of the premises at Heuston. Postage for the Journal also saw an increase. And the final payment for the website design and development was made during the year.

The new website has made it easier for members, new and existing, to pay the annual subscription with the addition of the PayPal buttons. However, there is a fee deducted from each payment. During the year under review, fees in excess of €1,000 were paid to PayPal. Where possible payment via electronic bank transfer is our preferred option.

Report of Hon. Communications Officer - Stephen King

I was co-opted to the Society's Board in December 2024 and formally appointed at the AGM in February 2025. The main areas under my responsibility are the Society's website, the monthly newsletters, social media feeds and engaging with Members and others who contact the Society through the Comms email address.

Upon joining the Board I also joined the then ongoing project for the development of the Society's new website under the guidance of the Website Management Committee led by the Hon. Programme Officer and the Hon. Membership Secretary. Through the collaborative approach already underway by the Committee and our design & hosting partners in Moocow Media, our excellent new website was launched in July 2025 to much positive review.

All Branches of the Society and their activities are now under the one roof with the new website, along with the ability to join/renew Membership, and also details on our Library and Archives. There are tentative plans to further develop the use of the website with the possible addition of a Members' only area. Members will be kept abreast of any such developments as they arise.

The revamped email newsletter continues to receive positive feedback from Members with the increased information contained about ongoing activities in the various Branches along with the Society in general being appreciated by Members who have made contact. I would like to thank those Members for their feedback, both positive and negative, as it all contributes to ensuring the newsletter remains relevant.

Use of the Brevo platform for these emails means design and scheduling is made easier, and plans are afoot for individual Branches to begin to use the system for their notifications in order to harmonise communications across the Society. There have been some un-subscriptions by Members during the year, as is their right. It does preclude them from receiving updates and indeed the Journal electronically. If anyone wishes to re-subscribe, they can contact me at comms@irrs.ie.

Our social media feeds continue to expand. The Flickr account continues to grow both in Members accessing it and also the number of collections available to view. This is testament to the hard work and time effort put in by the Hon. Photographic Archivist. Similarly, our YouTube page now contains 69 videos from our archive collection with over 2,000 subscribers. Our Facebook page also continues to grow with over 7,600 followers and remains a positive way to encourage Membership by showcasing some of our photographic and video archive along with other details to a wider audience. Use of our X (formerly Twitter) account has reduced, and its continued use will possibly be reviewed. Meanwhile in more positive news, we launched a LinkedIn profile during the year to reach a wider industry-based audience and potentially grow membership from that area. It now has close to 400 followers and is growing.

Report of Hon. Programme Officer - Neil Dinnen

This report covers the period between September 2024 to August 2025.

The Society had three outings during the period under review.

Traditionally our Annual Dinner event had been held in November, but following the deferral of our November 2023 event to January 2024, following on from the disturbances in Dublin City Centre, the board decided to hold future Annual Dinners in the new January slot. The 2025 Annual Dinner was held at Wynns Hotel, Dublin 1 on Monday 20th January 2025 and 41 members and guests attended along with 20 industry professionals from Iarnród Éireann, Translink NI Railways & Transdev Dublin Light Rail (LUAS). A presentation was made to Jim Meade, CEO of IE to mark his upcoming retirement from the company.



On Sunday 18th May 2025 with thanks to Transdev Dublin Light Rail (LUAS) we had an outing on the LUAS Green Line from Broombridge Depot to Brides Glen with several pieces of rare track on the itinerary, including Broombridge Depot, Broombridge Depot West Gate, Beechwood Emergency Crossover, St. Stephens Green emergency refuge siding (photo stop), Brennanstown (unopened station) (photo stop) Brides Glen outbound platform (photo stop) & Broombridge Depot East Gate. 71 passengers travelled on what was a very enjoyable and interesting tour hosted by Transdev Dublin Light Rail (LUAS). Our friends in the Branch Line Society (www.branchline.uk) also supported us with 18 members travelling from the UK for the outing.



On Wednesday 28th May 2025 the society headed north from Dublin to Belfast for a visit hosted by Translink NI Railways. 32 members travelled on the day with guests joining the outing in both Dublin and Belfast. We were shown the new Transport Hub at Belfast Grand Central which seamlessly integrates bus and rail into one shared terminal. Once our visit to Belfast Grand Central was over, we travelled by local train to Belfast for a visit to the training school and depot. At the training school we had

presentations from Louise Sterritt, Senior Programmer Manager with Translink about the development and construction of Belfast Grand Central transport hub and Hilton Parr, Customer Services Manager Translink. After the presentations we were shown the signalling simulator and driving simulator which are used to train and assess current and trainee signalling and driving grades. The final part of the tour of Adelaide was to the maintenance depot where the C4K 4000 Class DMU's are maintained. Our return to Belfast Grand Central was via a bus transfer kindly organised by Translink.



As noted in the 2024 AGM report, following trials at the end of the 2023-2024 season with hybrid in person and zoom meetings we returned to a full season of in person talks starting in September 2024. A total of 10 presentations were made during the year with a mixture of railway industry professionals and enthusiasts presenting to the society, including

- DART+ Programme by Paul Hendrick, Director Capital Investments, Iarnród Éireann,
- Overview of All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Related Developments, Andrew Ebrill, Head of Public Transport Investment and Policy, Department of Transport,
- Luas, 20 years of light rail operation in Dublin by Dave Rooney Operations Director, Transdev Ireland. (Luas).
- 50 years of Railway Photography--- A selection of photos from Ireland and the UK by Barry Carse.
- A random glance at 1990s, a decade of Change" by Colm O'Callaghan

Online attendance of the meetings continues to be strong with numbers joining varying from 60 to 100 persons. Attendance in person at IRRS Heuston HQ is well supported by members who are Dublin based, and the attendance numbers are on average 25. The hybrid model allows our presentations to be viewed by persons who are not Dublin based, and the in-person option allows members to attend the society HQ and mingle with fellow members and guests.