

Annual Report of the Officers of the Irish Railway Record Society CLG for the year ended 31 August 2019

Chairman's Introduction

During the year under review the Society offered an attractive series of events to members in Dublin, Cork and London. The success of our programme of outings was thanks to the efforts of Shane Roberts and Alan Hyland. Weekly library nights continued under the successful stewardship of Tim Moriarty. The Journal achieved its usual high standard thanks to the efforts of the Editorial Team.

I would also like to acknowledge the input of many other officers and members whose work is often less visible but just as essential to the running of the Society. I take this opportunity, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Board, to thank all those members and supporters who contributed to our Society during the year under review.

Tony O'Shaughnessy, Chairman

Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the year ended August 2019 show a surplus of €7,159, compared with a surplus of €2,398 in 2018. While subscriptions were slightly lower, income from railtours was €26,563 compared with €13,043 in 2018. Book sales and donations were also up on the previous year. Expenditure increased by just over €10,000 to €72,416. This was mainly due to the additional cost of the railtours and expenditure on the Library and Archives. May I thank the treasurers in London and Cork for their assistance during the year.

Alan Hyland, Hon Treasurer

Secretary's Report

There were 1,032 members of the Society at the end of August 2019, an increase of 41 (4%) over the previous year. It compares with 1,022 members in 2016/17 and represents a welcome and hopefully sustained return to growth. The

biggest Increase was in the Ireland (outside Dublin) category with 26 additional members (an increase of 8%).

	2018/19	2017/18
Dublin	249	247
Ireland incl. NI	355	329
Britain	349	346
Overseas	36	36
Libraries	43	33
TOTAL	1032	991

We were notified of the deaths of the following members and offer our sympathy to their families and friends: Norman Campion, Jonathan Condell, Tom Davitt, Paddy Flanagan, Patrick Holahan, Gordon Magee, Anthony McDonald, and Peter Sutherland.

During the year the Board approved a policy on access to and use of its premises at Heuston (see Supplementary Report below for more details). It also carried out a GDPR legitimate interests assessment and made some revisions to its Data Protection Policy arising from that work. The Board reviewed both the risk register and compliance checklist during the year. Work commenced on a code of conduct for members and on compliance with EU Anti-Money Laundering Regulations.

The AGM was held on 25 April 2019 and was attended by twenty eight members. It approved an increase in the annual subscription for Great Britain and Northern Ireland members from £33 to £35 to reflect the reduced Euro value of Sterling and provided detailed feedback to the Board on the draft Strategic Plan.

Pat Mangan, Company Secretary

Archivist's Report

During the year the Archives continued to be a resource for researchers. A large proportion of the enquiries and consultations were in the fields of genealogy and local history. We were also able to assist the railway companies in matters pertaining to the history of the railway system. In the majority of cases, we are able to provide a positive response to the enquirer. Many enquiries also related to the Library's resources and especially our large collection of

books on the Irish railways. The Library and Archives contain one of the largest collections of research material in these islands relating to Irish railways. Our ability to help researchers is one of the distinguishing features of the Society and is perhaps more appreciated outside the Society than within its membership. I would urge our members to explore and make greater use of this wonderful and unique resource.

Our work would not be possible without the assistance of a dedicated team of helpers, and I thank Paddy O'Brien, Peter Rigney, Herbert Richards, Gerald Beesley, Richard McLachlan and the late Anthony McDonald for their assistance. Richard has continued to make our rolling stock and other drawing collections available in digital and print form for researchers and modellers.

Many of our records are in a fragile state. The biggest challenge facing us today is the digitisation of our records. The costs and expertise required are very considerable and progress is therefore slow.

Rev. Norman E Gamble BA Mod PhD (TCD), Hon. Archivist

Programme Officer's Report

Fourteen meetings were held in the Society's Heuston premises between September 2018 and April 2019. Highlights included:

- "From Derry to Kerry 1955 to 1958", an illustrated journey on Ireland's railways from the photographs of the Anthony E Bennett collection presented by Ciaran Cooney;
- "Irish Ambulance Trains of the Great War", an illustrated talk by Charles Friel.

There were four outings during the period:

- Lullymore Heritage Railway and Straffan Steam Museum (8 September, 42 participants);
- Carrick on Shannon and Dromod (17 March, 39 participants);
- Ardnacrusha Power Station (19 May, 52 participants);
- Bluebell Railway (overnight tour on 8/9 June, 58 participants).

An Open Day was held in our Heuston premises in conjunction with National Heritage Week and an Open Evening was held on 21 September as part of Culture Night. The latter was particularly well supported with some ninety visitors over a four hour period.

Seventy five members and guests attended the Annual Dinner in Wynn's Hotel, Dublin on 26 November.

I wish to thank everybody who participated in and helped with these events and look forward to your continued support.

Shane Roberts, Hon. Programme Organiser

Journal Report

Three issues of the Journal were produced during the calendar year 2019 - Nos. 198, 199 and 200, completing Vol. 28. Issue 199 had 68 pages while issues 199 and 200 had 64 pages each. The content was as follows:

Journal No.	Text pages*	Picture pages (excl covers)*	Word Count**
198 (Feb)	35	33	34,219
199 (Jun)	51	13	34,358
200 (Oct)	44	20	31,981

* Visual count

** <https://bit.ly/2CDTMTI> (Word counter for PDFs)

As reported in the 2018 Report, the viability of the long-standing editorial setup had, for some time, been a challenge for the (very) small Journal Team. For issue 199, a new method of Journal preparation was developed, involving standardisation of the sequence of subject matter sections in the Journal, predetermined space allocations, improved section heading and cover design, and delegation of detailed layout and picture placement to our designer.

This approach reduced the load on the Journal team, and enabled more attention to be given to genuinely editorial work. Regrettably, some authors continue to present poorly prepared material, while many papers are received with an excess of egregious errata and spelling mistakes. Dealing with these issues is both time-consuming and an unwelcome load on our hard-pressed voluntary workers.

Journal 199 also brought in an often-sought change, namely a move to a larger and more legible typeface. The majority response to this change was positive, one member remarking that he could now read the Journal without recourse to a magnifying glass! A very small number of members expressed a degree of hostility to the redesign, and took particular issue with what they interpreted as a reduction in the amount of reading material in the Journal.

In fact, as can be seen from the table above, there has been little change in the amount of text as between Journal 198 (old format) and issues 199 and 200 (new larger typesize format). While the new design has less pictures, the reader is rarely more than a single turn of a page from an illustration by virtue of the improved layout. The redesign thus provides an attractive and appealing appearance, without a significant loss of subject matter coverage, while also easing the image preparation workload.

The October issue, Journal No. 200, contained a number of special features focussing on example of rolling stock bearing the number “200”. Our long-standing member, Mr Gerald Beesley, contributed substantially to this issue, and was formally appointed to the position of Hon. Editor with effect from Journal No. 201.

Michael J. Walsh, for 2019 Journal Editorial Team

London Area Report

The London Area continues to promote the Society in South-East England, and provide a forum in London for people with an interest in Irish transport, particularly railways.

The London Area supports the parent body in various ways. Its meetings promote interest in the Society, helping retain existing members and encouraging new members to join. It often acts as a repository for the Irish collections (slides, photographs, books etc.) of members (and other English enthusiasts with an interest in Irish railways) on their death, and avoids such collections being assigned to the skip. A number of local members are involved in digitising photographs received by the Area but destined for the Archives in Dublin.

We meet at the Calthorpe Arms in Gray’s Inn Road. Our speakers were:

Thursday 18 October 2018

“Valentia Harbour Branch” by Barry Carse;

Thursday 15 November 2018

“Current and Future Fleet Developments on Irish Rail” by Peter Smyth (Chief Mechanical Engineer, Irish Rail);

Thursday 6 December 2018

London Area AGM and “Listowel to Cobh 1978-1986” by Gerry McMahon;

Thursday 17 January 2019

“A Magnificent Folly – the Burtonport Extension Railway” by Roger Crombleholme;

Thursday 14 February 2019

“NIR - the Good the Bad and the Ugly” by Colin McVea (Signalling and Telecom Engineer, NIR);

Thursday 14 March 2019

“Railways of County Wexford” by Oliver Doyle;

Thursday 4 April 2019

“Classic Irish Steam” by Ciarán Cooney.

Average attendance was around 40.

The Area organised its annual Transport Collectors’ Market in March 2019, once again in Chiswick Town Hall. This is an essential fundraising event for the Area but also provides a useful service to the wider enthusiast community.

Please visit our website (www.irslondon.com) for further information on our work.

Tim Morton, Chair of London Area

Supplementary Information to the 2019 Report

Because of the delay in holding the AGM due to the Covid 19 outbreak, a supplementary report is being provided to bring members up to date with developments and provide some additional background information.

Structural Survey of Premises

At the request of the Board, engineers from Irish Rail carried out a structural survey of the Society's premises at Heuston. They provided a written report on their findings and a walk through briefing for Board members. The Board adopted an action plan to respond to the findings at a special meeting in January 2020 and the following are its principal features:

- Limited structural works will be undertaken in the Archives. Irish Rail has agreed to procure and pay for them.
- A limit of 70 persons will be implemented for meetings held in the Currivan Room.
- Work will be undertaken to reduce and redistribute the load on the floors. Notices are displayed in the rooms setting out the relevant loading restrictions.
- A photographic survey will be undertaken once the action plan has been implemented to record the then current condition of the premises.
- The structural survey will be repeated every five years.

Work to implement the recommendations commenced earlier this year but has now been suspended due to the Covid 19 outbreak. The necessary works are likely to cause some disruption to the use of the premises and advance notice will be given of this.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance it received from the Irish Rail structural engineers and to express its gratitude to the company for agreeing to procure and fund the structural works.

Strategic Plan

The Board adopted a Strategic Plan for the Society at its September 2019 meeting having

considered the feedback received from members at the 2019 AGM and in individual comments. An electronic copy of the Plan can be provided to any member on request.

Premises Access Policy

In August 2019, the Board adopted a policy document on access to the Society's premises at Heuston. The objectives of this policy are to ensure as far as reasonably practicable:

- the safety of persons on the premises;
- the safety and security of the premises itself, the Society's collections and fixtures and fittings on the premises.

The document sets out the responsibilities of Board members and authorised keyholders. It restricts access by children and requires that they be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. It sets out rules governing third party access and filming and photography on the premises. It provides that access to the library, archives and photographic archives is always at the discretion, and with the consent, of the Honorary Librarian, Archivist or Photographic Archivist, as appropriate. A copy of the policy is displayed in the Society's premises at Heuston and can be provided to any member on request.

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct setting out the responsibilities of members and Board members was adopted by the Board at its February 2020 meeting. Broadly speaking it sets out the obligations of members towards the Society and each other and outlines the fiduciary duties of Board members under company law. Breaches of the code may be dealt with by the Board using its powers under the Society's constitution. An electronic copy of the code can be accessed by searching **Code of Conduct** on the Society's website.